Home in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction:
Canadian Contemporary Photographers and the Contested Terrain of Home

by

Helen Parkinson, B.F.A (York University)

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Abstract

Home in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction
Canadian Contemporary Photographers and the Contested Terrain of Home

While home appears natural, innate and universal, in contemporary cultural apparatuses such as mass circulated magazines, it is constructed to appear as an ideological given. This thesis examines the historical and contemporary construction of this ideology. While discussing ideology as described by Louis Althusser, I seek, through an interdisciplinary exploration inspired by the writing of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, the dissemination of “home” in the specific context of its photographic iteration. The singular iteration, or *model home*, is analyzed in Canadian home magazines and critical works by artist-photographers Lynne Cohen and Susan McEachern. Exploring “home” from within the context of its appearance, I reveal those undecidable, and negotiating forces within its ideologically contained signification in order to question, as McEachern’s and Cohen’s domestic photographs do, the naturalized coherency of the ideology of home.

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Introduction

Home in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

This thesis seeks to destabilize, through an interdisciplinary analysis, the ideology of home as it is disseminated through contemporary photographic reproduction, including the realms of popular culture and art history. I do not seek to negate the importance an abstract desire for home plays in everyday life, rather I destabilize, through an interdisciplinary analysis, a popular ideology of home that co-opts this desire in service of a consumer-driven culture. This thesis thus works between the possibility of fulfillment through the home and the ideological controls through which the idea is given presence. Ostensibly, this investigation concerns art history, specifically, the work of artist-photographers Lynne Cohen and Susan McEachern. However, rather than begin within the discourse of art history, I continue from outside (and inside), an analysis that follows from their work, a critical examination of the dissemination of the ideology of home in contemporary culture, and specifically as it is iterated within contemporary Canadian magazines. In reading the artists' works in comparison to commercial depictions of home, this thesis raises questions regarding the role of photography in framing ideology and the extent to which an idea of home is conceptually maintained. This thesis draws on recent critical and artistic challenges to the concept of home. Exhibitions such as the Winnipeg Art Gallery's 2002 "The Home Show," have sought, in a variety of media, to question the social role, place and meaning of that seemingly innocuous word, "home."¹ What is evident from these explorations is that the place of home can no

¹ Exhibits on the subject of home in the last two years include: Winnipeg Art Gallery "The Home Show" (September 12, 2002 – January 26, 2003). Rico Maresca Gallery, New York. "Home" (July 24

longer be conceived of as obvious and natural. It must instead be experienced as culturally and temporally contingent. Towards this end, I explore, in an interdisciplinary manner, the ideology of home as it is re-presented in specific instances, in architectural history, popular magazines, and artists' practices, not to perpetuate an ideological formation but to reveal its cultural indeterminacy.

The word "home" connotes feelings of warmth, togetherness, comfort, family and place. It seems immutable and universal. Commonly, it refers to a physical location (house), but its full meaning surpasses this concrete signification. Home stimulates not only emotional reactions and physical images, but it infers a stability of place, reflecting a desire for structure and location that perpetuates a feeling of safety connected with "being in the world."

The "home" explored within this thesis connotes both this abstract sense of home, as well as specific architectural, and visual paradigms representative of the term. Moreover, emphasis is placed upon the middle-class, and frequently, suburban "home." While home can imply many physical forms, it is my contention that the

–August 2003). Robert Mann Gallery, New York. "American Typologies, 1987-2003" featuring photographic works by Jeff Brouws such as Freshly Painted House, Daly City, CA, 1991 (Summer 2003). Objectif _exhibitions, Antwerp. Exhibit of Pedro Abrita Reis whose work mediates between the house-city, installations around architectural typologies and discusses them as vehicles for memory, (November 22, 2003 – January 31, 2004). Galerie 165, Hull. "Silence – The Home Before and After Catastrophe, A Photo-based installation by Denis Wall," (December 4 – 17, 2003). Arts Council of Switzerland, Liaison office Cairo. "In a Furnished flat in Cairo" "brings together seven artists, Francoise Bridel, Pascale Favre, Michael Grunzburger, Hala Elkoussy, Maha Maamoun, Sarah Rifky, and Inas Sediq, to share a furnished flat for one month. The transient nature of the artist's interventions in the space serves to question the preconceived ideas of the 'home' as a provider of security, and a definer of identity. The space becomes a platform for the deconstruction of familiar structures, domestic behaviours and the mechanisms through which one's surroundings work to reinforce identity and social status." Arts Council of Switzerland, exhibition notice, (January 1, 2004 – February 25, 2004). Aceartinc.Winnipeg. "The Décor Project: White on White." – artists redecorate curator's home, Hadley Howe and Maxwell Stephens – do the décor, Sven Boecker's takes photos for exhibit (June 7 – July 5, 2003). Third Avenue Gallery, Vancouver. "W(Hole)." – series of work/installations by Vessna Perunovich – "mediations on home and one's sense of belonging," Third Avenue Gallery, exhibition notice, (April 3 – 26, 2003). The Ottawa Art Gallery, "At Home: Views by A.J. Casson," (June 25 – October 31, 2004).

paragon of home perpetuated in popular culture, such as within Canadian home magazines, refers to the formation derived specifically from a middle-class suburban home – that is - home as a physically separate location designated exclusively as a leisure environment. The middle-class suburban home, as it has developed since the nineteenth century, epitomizes the spatial and conceptual separation that contemporary visual paradigms emphasize. The ideal home is ideologically framed according to social, political, cultural and economic values. Furthermore, this paragon is posed as a sign external to its historical context.

Ideology, for Louis Althusser, provides “a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to the real conditions of existence.”² Ideology proposes a univocal explanation of being and meaning. It maintains an idea of stable subjectivity. Ideologies construct frameworks of transcendent truths, these normative visions of “reality” appear to the subject both natural and obvious. As such, it is difficult to speak from outside all ideology, as one may or may not always already be subject to a given ideological construct.

Ideologically framed, home appears metaphysically transcendent; while referring to an ideal location it posits this environment and state of being as abstracted from a specific historical context. Furthermore, by providing a desired stable place in the world, home interpolates subjects as individuals. As an ideological formation, the coherency of home is guaranteed through a series of hierarchical oppositions that position the meaning of home. Chief among these binaries are private-public, order-chaos, place-space, feminine-masculine, moral-amoral, family-society, nature-

² Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Toward an Investigation)” (1969) *Visual Culture: The Reader*, eds. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (London: SAGE Publications, 2002) 317.

technology and leisure-labour. These binaries seek to make present a concrete conception of home that appears to transcend both culture and history.

Within the bounds of this thesis I examine how home is ideologically framed by the medium of photography. The photograph presents its subject in an ideological manner; through its supposed indexicality, it appears to capture an external and independent “real.” The interior of the photograph appears free of mediation, although the frame itself edits the content. Through exploiting the supposed veracity of the medium, popular representations of home appear believable. The faith placed in the initial appearance of the medium, despite contemporary digital media, is exploited by mass circulated magazines that, especially in cover photographs, visually situate home as virtually present and natural.

Magazines seek to present an ideological conception of home, one that not only reflects the popular mythos of the place, but that furthers the goals of the magazines, which most often reflect a consumerist ethos. I suggest that the ideology of home takes form in part through the context of contemporary home magazines. Within the Canadian magazines addressed here, the ideology of home is visually invoked through maintenance of such hierarchical oppositions as place-space, inside-outside, self-other, home-house, private-public, natural-man-made and feminine-masculine. Home, in these publications is also presented within the conceptual framework of consumption and nostalgia. The cover photographs of contemporary national publications seek to constitute an audience as subject to an ideology of a specific paradigm, they seek to act as ideological guides to home.

The ideology of home, culturally propagated through mass circulated images such as those provided on the magazine cover, is the subject of critique within the work of Susan McEachern and Lynne Cohen. While neither artist directly comments on the specific magazines cited in this study, both Cohen and McEachern denaturalize the popular idea of home within their photographic work. Through self-reflexive uses of photography, the medium exploited by these magazines, Cohen and McEachern emphasize the means by which “home” is ideologically framed. Furthermore, by working within this contemporary archetypal formation, both artists expose gender, spatial and cultural assumptions propagated by a univocal ideology of home.

This thesis takes a decentered, interdisciplinary approach to the work of Lynne Cohen and Susan McEachern. I examine not only their work, but the dissemination of the ideology of home within and without their oeuvre, tracing its appearance through art history, communication studies, critical theory and architecture. While largely focusing on ideology, I examine its formation via an approach derived from the post-structuralist writing of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault and their shared focus on the construction of centre or presence within conceptual models, in spite of the interruptions and disruptions that commonly affect univocal formations. Influenced by their modes of “reading” in and around the borders, in spaces of dispersion and intertextuality, I approach “home” in such a way as to destabilize, but not replace, the ideology. In this approach I value the heterogeneity of concepts rather than a homogenous approach, and as such, my thesis traces a variety of texts that weave through the ideology of home as it is analyzed in the work of Lynne Cohen and Susan McEachern.

Continuing a process without a beginning or end, I *deconstruct* the ideology of home as it appears within a specific context, in this case, as it is made present in photography. For Derrida, deconstruction does not imply destruction, but rather the analysis of warring forces of signification within a text.³ Following this logic, I work within a specific iteration of home to examine the binaries that present it as well as the indeterminacy suggested by the constant negotiation between binary poles within its signification. In this manner I challenge the univocality and transcendence of the signifier. In revealing the ruptures within the ideology of home, I refer to two key terms that suggest the instability within its visual communication – *model home* and *unheimlich*.

The term *model home* is derived from the writing of social-architecture historian Gwendolyn Wright, but is given added significance within this thesis as a signifier for the contextuality of visual communication. The term “model home” was used by Wright to refer to the physical and social structure implied by the model homes represented in architectural and home planning catalogues. The phrase was intended to unite a real object and an abstract concept in the physical image of home. For Wright, the term “model home” refers to a physical standard and imaginary paradigm supported by ideas and values surrounding the home. To this term I have grafted the idea of *iterability*: that in communication when a sign is repeated within a context it differs from the signification to which it refers.⁴ Thus, “model home” as *model home* infers that signification is contained within a specific context; when

³ Barbara Johnson, “Translator’s Introduction,” *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981) xiv.

⁴ Jacques Derrida, “Afterword: Toward an Ethic of Discussion,” *Limited Inc.* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988) 119.

repeated in visual communication it refers to the physical and ideological paradigm, but is changed and mediated by the singularity of its occurrence – it is no longer transcendent. Therefore, while ideologically framed as non-contingent, home is always partly defined by the context of its communication.

While *model home* refers to the undecidability of home external to the term, in its visual iteration, *unheimlich* refers to the instability of meaning within the paradigm in its construction and presentation. Derived from the writing of Martin Heidegger and Sigmund Freud, *unheimlich* occupies two opposing conceptual poles simultaneously, thereby mediating between them. In Freud's "Das Unheimlich," the term refers to both homely (*heimlich*) emotions connected with safe and everyday home life as well as the unhomely or uncanny (*unheimlich*) aspects concealed within the first term.⁵ Heidegger, in "What is Metaphysics?" similarly permits the term to refer to both the anxiety of nothing and the space in which transcendent being is realized.⁶ Building upon the dual significance given the word in these pivotal writings, I use the term, *unheimlich*, to signal the negotiation between hierarchical oppositions that conceptually frame the ideology of home. For example, the logic of *unheimlich* is used to deconstruct the opposition within the ideology of home of private and public space, it emphasizes the undecidability between the pair – that both poles are part of the economy of the same. Influenced by the writing of Jacques Derrida, *unheimlich*, by its relation to the home (*heim*) is employed to refer to the undecidability of "home." *Unheimlich* points to the frustration of the possibility of

⁵ Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," (1955), *Art and Literature*, ed. Albert Dickson, trans. James Strahey, *The Penguin Freud Library* 14 (London: Penguin Books, 1985) 342 – 345.

⁶ Martin Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?" (1967) *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (1977; New York: Harper Collins Publishers Inc., 1993) 101 – 103.

completeness in confining the meaning of home within a coherent ideological framework.

Approaching home, as it appears framed by its context – as a *model home* open to an *unheimlich* play within – this thesis flows through five chapters/encounters with that paradigm. In each section, the boundaries of the formation are elucidated not to perpetuate an ideology but to deconstruct its signification, the testing of the framework is most evident in later chapters that deal specifically with the work of Lynne Cohen and Susan McEachern. Chapters One to Three discuss those elements that frame the concept, while suggesting the contingency of this containment. Chapters Four and Five directly introduce, through reference to the artists' work, the *unheimlich* elements that continually destabilize coherency within the *model*.

Chapter One, "Negotiating the Construction of Home: Methodological Approaches," discusses in more detail the theoretical foundations upon which this thesis is grounded. Specifically, it introduces the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to ideology derived from the writing of Michael Foucault and Jacques Derrida. Moreover, it reviews the procedures used to analyze the magazines and artists studied. This first chapter also gives detailed explanations of *model home* and *unheimlich* and the relationship of these key terms within the tracing of a dissemination of home in photography.

While Chapter One reviews in brief the concept of home, Chapter Two, "Placing Home" goes into more depth regarding the paradigm of home analyzed throughout the thesis. This chapter reviews the etymology of home and a brief social-architectural history of home in North America. Moreover, it suggests the influence

of mass media, political and economic interests in the development of a paradigm of home, a paradigm structured around the ideological separation of home from labour, economics and a specific history. Furthermore, Chapter Two links the contemporary ideology of home to the growth of capitalism in North America.

“The Model Home in Canadian Magazines,” Chapter Three, concentrates attention upon home as communicated in Canadian home magazines over the past thirty years. The magazines, Style at Home, Canadian House & Home, City & Country Home and related forerunners, are analyzed in terms of how they present a national paradigm of home. The chapter discusses a generalized national paragon in comparison to a past Victorian idealization that is frequently cited in nostalgic cover images. While introducing a generalized contemporary model, this chapter deconstructs the model’s coherency by reference to its contextual appearance – noting in specific the mode of presentation, significance and construction of the ideal in order to pose from within the inconsistencies and ruptures within that formation. In addition, this middle chapter importantly introduces not only a contemporary visual formation, but the extent to which this paradigm is mediated by audience reception and interpretation.

Work by Lynne Cohen and Susan McEachern covers many of the conceptual foundations discussed in previous chapters, but further disperses the ideology of home. “Lynne Cohen and the Consumer Home,” Chapter Four, reviews the depiction of home in a selection of Cohen’s photographs. Cohen, through three spatial typologies, dislocates “home” from its naturalized place. In residential, commercial and educative environments home is evaluated as an ideal that is structured by the

mediation of nature-control, individualism-conformism and domestic-commercial economies. Drawing upon the writing of Michel Foucault, I analyze Cohen's photographs as to how they reflect the influence of consumerist society as a disciplinary force. Specifically, discussing the intrusions of hierarchical controls, normalizing judgement and pedagogical models in the supposedly private space of home. Cohen's work not only critiques the (public) effects of consumerist and social forces within the (private) home, but she poses the home as a possible site of resistance.

In Chapter Five, "Susan McEachern and the Domestic Home," McEachern's photographic series On Living at Home is read for its critique of home in terms of economic and gender constructions. The dictum "the personal is the political" reverberates throughout this body of work, which denaturalizes the spatial and conceptual restrictions of the ideology of home. Various pieces within the series are interpreted as open-ended analyses of domestic narratives, domestic isolation, domestic production and domestic consumption. Like Cohen, McEachern disrupts the ideology of home from within its formation. She problematizes and politicizes the place suggesting it as a site for resistance, furthermore, she suggests that home is constantly negotiated by both public and private values.

"Home in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" traces the dissemination of an ideology of home as it is communicated in the visual language of photography. In this endeavor I both frame and deconstruct the ideology in the specific context of its occurrence. Following the examples provided within the work of Lynne Cohen and

Susan McEachern, I trace the disruptions and inconsistencies in the formation as seen in the related visual and conceptual fields.

Chapter One

Negotiating the Construction of Home: Methodological Approaches

Home, one's "natural" place in the world is not natural at all. Home as it is cited in popular media is a construct, a sign supplementing the feeling and place but forever deferring its presence. This chapter negotiates in-between those frameworks that contain home, exploring the ideology,¹ philosophy and culture of that ambiguously naturalized ideal. In encircling home, this chapter, like the thesis as a whole, is decidedly interdisciplinary. The form of this approach, as will become apparent, is heavily influenced by the mode of reading suggested by Jacques Derrida. This chapter introduces one of the focal points of the thesis: how the medium of photography is used to both present and critique the ideology of home. As will be discussed, the supposed veracity of the photograph confers upon its subject a degree of realism that in turn supports ideological constructions within its frame. Therefore, when magazines such as those discussed in this thesis (Style at Home, Canadian House & Home and City & Country Home) present a photographic depiction of the ideology it appears both real and unmediated. However, this same medium in the hands of critical artists like Lynne Cohen and Susan McEachern, self-reflexively points to its own construction and complicity in ideological constructions. This chapter introduces the importance for tackling ideological frameworks in an interdisciplinary manner. Moreover, within this approach it introduces the negotiation of undecidable constructions of home dispersed through photomechanical

¹ What I imply by ideology, as will be elaborated later, is specifically Louis Althusser's description of it as an apparatus that presents an ideal connected to conditions of reality, but extending beyond it. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (notes toward an investigation)" (1969) Visual Culture: The Reader, eds. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (London: SAGE Publications, 2002) 317 – 323.

reproduction. Home is encountered in the thesis four times: in history, in magazines, in the work of Lynne Cohen and in Susan McEachern's work. What this chapter provides is the foundation for the coming engagements.

A continuing theme throughout this interdisciplinary inquiry is the importance of maintaining a discursive space of *in-between-ness*: at once between conceptual opposites within a discourse. As Derrida describes, "in the spacing between desire and fulfillment, between perpetration and its recollection ... this ... has nothing to do with a center."² Similarly, neither this chapter nor the thesis seek to depose and re-center an ideology of home, but rather to discuss an ongoing process of negotiation within that concept. This thesis mediates between home and its ideological construction within the instance of photographic reproduction. It is written between disciplines - touching upon architecture, communication studies and art history - yet does not become fully present in any one discourse.³

Ideology and Home

The signifier "home" is culturally positioned as a natural fact that transcends its communication. Within this particular exploration one of the devices that frames the presentation of home is photography. However, both home and photography as they are culturally encountered are limited by their ideological construction. Such terms, contained by ideology, cannot be discussed from an external point but must instead be encountered within the context of the idiom or concept.

² Jacques Derrida, "The Double Session I," (1970) *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (1972; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981) 212.

³A secondary goal of this thesis is to suggest an interdisciplinary approach to art history.

Ideology, as defined by Louis Althusser, “is a ‘representation’ of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.”⁴ It *presents* an Ideal as accessible and real. Ideological constructions, in as much as they advance one ideal presence, are univocal in their assertions.⁵ This centered presence of ideology promises access to an *a-priori* knowledge or truth that is accessible and immutable. A subject’s desire for presence and stability in the world lends ideological constructs authenticity. For the subject, ideology appears as reality. Ideology makes allusions to real situations, giving it the guarantee of veracity and an appearance of Truth.⁶ The truth to which it apparently gives access can be understood in terms of an Idea existing before language that is represented as present by the construct;⁷ the Idea appears *as such* rather than a sign differed and deferred from its referent. Moreover, the metaphysical weight of ideology appears to transcend signification; thus the idea of being becomes the transcendental Ideal, Being. Ideology gives meaning; it provides the subject with a natural and meaningful place within its framework. Indeed, the individual becomes a subject, is interpolated, through ideology;⁸ yet, the position of the subject within ideology appears natural and unmediated. As Althusser writes, “what really takes place in ideology seems

⁴ Althusser 317.

⁵ By constructions, I imply not only the conceptual borders of the ideology, but also refer to the specific ideology of home as created and “built-up” from the signifier “house.”

⁶ Althusser 217.

⁷ This appearance relates to what Derrida, in his essay “Plato’s Pharmacy” describes as the desire for the presence of the idea. Jacques Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” (1968) *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (1972; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981) 61 - 117.

⁸ “Ideology interpolated individuals as subjects... ideology is made possible only by the subject; meaning: *by the category of the subject* and its functioning ... *the category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology only in so far as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of ‘constituting’ concrete individuals as subjects.*” Althusser 320.

therefore to take place outside it. That is why those who are in ideology believe themselves by definition outside ideology.”⁹

Ideology, then, endows the Idea with presence. Thus individuals who invest themselves in ideology are constituted as subjects by its guarantee of Being; but at the same time these individuals are subject to an ideology that nonetheless seems non-ideological. Ideology thus becomes difficult (if not impossible) to discuss as something external to one’s subjectivity. As Althusser describes, “one of the effects of ideology is the practical *denigration* of the ideological character of ideology by ideology.”¹⁰ Thus, one cannot discuss ideology from an external point of view, or with a view to dismantle it, rather one must accept that one writes from within ideology. Therefore, in order to discuss home or photography as ideological, I must admit that I am already speaking from within their influence.

In order to discuss ideology then, I turn to critical discourses that work within conceptual formations – specifically I turn to the writing of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. For Derrida and Foucault, one of the problems of ideological constructs is that in positioning an idea as present and coherent, they normalize that which they contain, thereby discarding marginal relations. In an effort to open the field of ideology to critical analysis I approach home around and in-between its conceptual boundaries, following its dissemination in an interdisciplinary manner.

Approaching Interdisciplinarity

⁹ Ibid. 321.

¹⁰ Ibid. 321.

In order to discuss the ideology of home in a manner that does not reconstitute the univocality of its formation, the method of my analysis draws heavily on the critiques of conceptual models by Derrida and Foucault. While each author's writings are distinct in form and content, each in its own way suggests an intermixing of texts and interlacing of meaning that frustrate the coherency of ideological constructs. In his "Afterword" to Limited Inc., Derrida describes the weakness of classical conceptual models as their univocality. The idealizations posit an "all or nothing" logic¹¹ that presences (a metaphysical notion of) Being over nothing.¹² In an "all or nothing" framework *in-between-ness* and negotiation are discarded.¹³ In Limited Inc., Derrida writes that an ideological construct

... does not integrate the *possibility* of borderline causes, the *essential* possibility of those cases called 'marginal' ... inasmuch as it does not account for how, *in* the ideal concept of a structure said to be 'normal,' 'standard,' etc. ... such a divergence is *possible*, it may be said that the formation of a general theory or of an ideal concept remains insufficient ... idealization practiced itself remains defective.¹⁴

The ideal posed in ideology is lacking as it represses within itself those contingent and contextual others that insinuate its full nature.

Despite the attempt to pose a coherent model, ideological constructs always contain, no matter how concealed, the marginal elements they seek to suppress.

Accordingly, an ideological framework is always *undecidable* in and of itself.

Undecidability refers to the impossibility that a given thing is absolutely this *either/or*

¹¹ Jacques Derrida, "Afterword: Toward an Ethic of Discussion," Limited Inc. (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1988) 111.

¹² The focus in ideological constructs on presence is reminiscent of what Derrida describes as the logocentrism of Western metaphysics. Even the paper discussed later in this chapter, "What is Metaphysics?" by Martin Heidegger, tends to follow this idea by positioning the transcendental Dasein over Nothing. Martin Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?" (1967) Basic Writings, ed. David Farrell Krell (1977; New York: Harper Collins Publishers Inc., 1993) 89-110.

¹³ Derrida, "Afterword," 117.

¹⁴ Ibid. 118.

that. In Limited Inc., Derrida describes *undecidability* as “*heterogeneous* both to the dialectic and to the calculable. In accordance with what is only ostensibly a paradox, *this particular* undecidable opens the field of decision or of decidability.”¹⁵ It is between - its meaning as heterogeneous is never fully closed. Thus it is between this-that, negotiating, and in many ways nullifying, the poles opposed in conceptual constructions. Despite ideological positioning, the Idea is not accessible as such, in order to communicate, it must be both supplemented and substituted by language.¹⁶

Thus, within this thesis I seek not to confront from an external point ideologically framed signifiers, such as home or photography. Rather, I will seek within, the mode of ideological construction not to destroy it, but rather to reveal its concealed *undecidability*. The undecidability of the ideology of home will be suggested through an analysis of home as it appears within a variety of contexts. The interdisciplinarity suggested within this thesis is largely derived from the “post-structuralist” writing of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault and, more specifically, their focuses on *intertextuality*, *différance*, *dispersion* and *discursive formations*. This reading of home, in order to frustrate the coherency of ideological constructs flows in an interdisciplinary manner from the field of art history to related visual and cultural occurrences. Focusing on subjects common in the work of Lynne Cohen and Susan McEachern, I embark on an exploration that traces the ideology of home through histories and contemporary photographic representations.

¹⁵ Ibid. 116.

¹⁶ Jacques Derrida, “Différance,” (1968) Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982) 2 – 27.

The writing of Jacques Derrida, which has been a foremost influence in the writing of this thesis, repeatedly, though in different guises, focuses on the interplay between text and signification. A major theme of his work revolves around the influence of context upon the meaning of signs in language. In opposition to much Western philosophy, Derrida is not concerned with an *a priori Eidos*, *Cogito*, *Telos* or other transcendental concept that exists external to language. Derrida's writing suggests that language mediates knowledge, meaning and ideas. Throughout the texts referred to in this chapter, Derrida uses a variety of non-synonymous substitutions for this language play between texts. Of these "concepts," that mark the limit of idealization,¹⁷ *intertextuality*, *différance* and *logocentrism* provide three general areas of communication explored by Derrida that greatly influence the interdisciplinary approach taken by this thesis.

Logocentrism describes a desire Derrida finds in much Western metaphysics for the presence of thought, in an ideal form, to be purely communicated through language. This he relates to a use of language that assumes that the signifier is able to communicate the signified in an unchanged manner. The term is derived from Derrida's re-reading, in Dissemination, of a variety of Platonic texts, most notably, The Republic. In "Plato's Pharmacy," Derrida writes that for Plato written communication, while at times necessary, was posited as the lowest form of communication.¹⁸ The hierarchy of communication, that for Derrida has in many ways pervaded Western thought, is described by Plato in The Republic by reference

¹⁷ Derrida, "Afterword," 119.

¹⁸ Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," 65 – 117.

to the analogy of the cave, in Book VII.¹⁹ For dwellers in the cave, the Sun, the Father, or the pure Idea (*Eidos*) appears only as shadows and reflections (writing) on the cave wall. This filter is considered necessary as the apprehension of pure Idealism, the Sun, would blind the cave dweller. However, there is an intermediary form of communication that can access and communicate the Idea – this is direct speech (*Logos*). Thus, according to Derrida, Plato sets up a hierarchy of Idea, Speech and Writing. Derrida traces this relationship throughout Western Metaphysics as a desire for the presence of intention and thought, or *logocentrism*. This desire is re-enacted in conceptual frameworks that seek to guarantee direct access to the Idea as such.²⁰ However, in the absence of the speaker, one must turn to writing. At this point, Derrida notes, the author can no longer retain control over what is understood, and *différance* comes into play.²¹

Différance as a noun or verb implies the differing and deferring of ideal meaning in the communication of a sign, or in a text as it travels through a variety of contexts. *Différance* “has neither existence nor essence. It derives no category of being, whether present or absent.”²² It is in-between. It insinuates play. “Essentially and lawfully, every concept is inscribed in a chain or in a system within which it refers to the other, to other concepts by means of the systematic play of differences.”²³ It always already affects communication. It spaces the link between

¹⁹ Plato, *Republic*, trans. GMA Grube, 2nd ed. (ca 380BC; Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1992) 186 – 212.

²⁰ Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” 65 – 117.

²¹ Oddly, this can be demonstrated within *The Republic* as Plato writes in the absence of Socrates’ speech. The words that Socrates supposedly spoke are, within the text undecidably supplemented and supplanted by the writing of Plato.

²² Jacques Derrida, “Différance,” (1968) *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (1972; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982) 11.

²³ *Ibid.* 11.

signifier and signified, assuring that no sign can totally encompass in every repetition its referent. The signified as ideal presence is changed and never present in and of itself in communication. What this implies is that no sign is necessarily fixed as wholly present.²⁴ Similarly, it implies that communication, verbal and especially written or visual, is subject to the context the signifier appears in. Furthermore, it describes a play *between* texts (be they visual, conceptual or written). *Différance* refers, in this manner to what Derrida calls *intertextuality*.

For Derrida, one cannot access “a fundamental or totalizing principle ... in short, the classical system’s ‘outside’ can no longer take the form of extra-text.”²⁵ Therefore, meaning is always mediated by communication that is situated within a web of relational texts. *Intertextuality* describes the constant negotiation between text and meaning as language is mediated by a play of *différance*. Thus, concepts, such as home, cannot be said to be external or *a-priori* to their communication and positioning. They are constructed according to a desired *logocentrism* that tries to restrain this *intertextuality*. In language, however, concepts are subject to the play of *différance*, dependent as they are on the broad web of meaning that is implied by the term *intertextuality*.

Michel Foucault, in The Archeology of Knowledge suggests a similar relation between systems that attempt to contain meaning to a central locus in opposition to the play between texts, or *statements*, which dislocate this centrality. Like Derrida, Foucault suggests that past systems of philosophy have tried to explain coherently,

²⁴ This description is culled from various texts. Derrida, “Afterword,” 143 – 145. Derrida, “Différance,” 2. – 27. Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” 139.

²⁵ Jacques Derrida, “Outwork,” Dissemination, trans. Barbara Johnson (1972; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981) 5.

and give access to meaning, without accounting for the discrepancies within the conceptual frameworks. In contrast to a totalizing form of history, Foucault suggests a general history that includes the ruptures and breaks discarded from discourse in a desire for centre. While a total history, Foucault describes, organizes occurrences and subjects into a continuity that “provide a privileged shelter for the sovereignty of consciousness,” a general history operates to include historical and theoretical inconsistencies, in this general field “the methods, limits, and themes proper to the history of ideas are questioned.”²⁶ General history is staged in a space of *dispersion* that implies recourse to these discarded breaks, ruptures and mutations.²⁷ *Dispersion* also implies the interactions between statements and groups of different kinds.²⁸ The relationships formed between groups and statements, Foucault describes as part of a *discursive formation*. According to Foucault,

... whenever one can describe between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statements, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (as order, correlations, positions and functioning transformations), we will say ... that we are dealing with a *discursive formation* ...²⁹

Discursive formations, for Foucault, in contrast to ideologies, insinuate interplay between fields of knowledge. Furthermore, the use of *discursive formation* suggests construction of coherency, whereas *ideology* implies naturalized and invisible assumptions.

While Foucault’s work denaturalizes cultural and historical assumptions, I find at times the writing to be too structurally restrained, often not leaving enough

²⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge, 1989) 12 – 15.

²⁷ Foucault 10.

²⁸ Ibid. 26 – 29.

²⁹ Ibid. 38.

room for the idea of *in-between-ness* that is essential to my interdisciplinary approach. However, in reading Foucault, some of his discussion of the structures of discourse as containers of knowledge helped to form the interdisciplinary approach to art history that this thesis takes. According to Foucault, “we must ... question those divisions or groupings with which we have become so familiar. Can one accept, as such, the distinction between the major types of discourse, or that between such forms or genres as science, literature, philosophy, religion, history, fiction, etc. ... they are not intrinsic.”³⁰ In a similar manner, I question the bounds of art history, seeking to stage the exploration of home both within and without the field – *in-between* idioms. As a consequence, throughout the thesis I follow the ideology of home across genres, examining the systems and structures in which it is perpetuated.

Drawing on the work of Derrida and Foucault, I explore the theme of home presented in Lynne Cohen’s and Susan McEachern’s work as its ideology is dispersed in related texts. I do not assume that home exists external to its communication, but that its representation is partly determined by the idiom within which it is staged. Thus, I explore the concept within the frame of photographic reproduction. The ideology of home, its *logocentric* construction, and its fallibility to the play of *différance* is traced in an interdisciplinary project that is *dispersed* from art history into related discourses in a play of *intertextuality*.

Photography

The idiom of photography, and the conceptual baggage of the medium, provide both the site of the construction of the ideology of home and simultaneously

³⁰Ibid. 22.

the stage for its critique. Writing from within the ideology of home, I am bound by its broad frame. Therefore in the case of the images of home I will discuss in subsequent chapters, an important one of these frames is the medium of photography.³¹

The photograph presents itself idiomatically. It appears to privilege an ideal, an *a priori* truth through *indexicality*. *Indexicality* refers to the belief that the photograph is physically a record of its object. The term *index* is derived from the work of C.S. Peirce. In his essay “What is a Sign?” he describes three types of signs: icons, symbols, and indices. For Peirce the sign-index has a physical link to its referent, like footprints in the sand. “The index is physically connected with its object; they make an organic pair. But the interpreting mind has nothing to do with this connection.”³² This indexicality implies that the signifier, the photograph, is physically derived from the referent, the object of the camera’s attention. In this manner, the photograph appears to be an unmediated form of representation. Victor Burgin has reiterated this appearance in describing that elements within the photograph appear to be “provided free of charge.”³³ The photographic referent appears to be without any context external to the photograph’s frame. However, it is my contention that the apparent indexicality of the photograph is over-estimated, and

³¹ While much of the specific “conceptual baggage” of the idiom is derived from the analog photograph, I believe an argument could be made that the continuing use of the digital photograph as a mnemonic and documentary device speaks to our culture’s investment in the manner in which *all* photographs are seemingly capable of presenting a “real world.”

³² C.S. Peirce, “What is a Sign?” *The Essential Peirce* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1988) 9.

³³ Victor Burgin, “Looking at Photographs,” *Thinking Photography*, ed. Victor Burgin (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1982) 148.

that, like other ideological constructs, the photograph is similarly open to a play of *différance*.³⁴

Photography is a method of communication and as such it deals with a central problem of language – how to re-present the idea in the absence of the writer. In this case - how to represent the absent intention of the photographer, the writer in light, and the absence of the object. The supposed indexicality of the photograph seems to fulfill a desired *logocentrism* in (visual) communication. The desired indexical presence permits a separation of knowledge from belief in the gaze of the viewing subject; the photographic image appears “real.” The emphasis on presence, rationality and veracity within the photograph make it a consummate ideological medium. Form and content, as well as language and meaning, *appear* free of mediation in the photographic window, thus permitting the contained idea unmediated and naturalized presence.

However, photography as a sign is not external to the play of what Derrida terms *différance*. While appearing as the same, the photograph’s referent is not precisely the object depicted, but rather light rays reflected off and around the referent that have reacted with light sensitive silver salts in the negative. In this manner the final representation is not directly analogous to what it appears physically to capture. In fact, the photograph, like Derrida’s concept of the *supplément*, both supplements and supplants that which it represents – that is to say, it does not ‘trace’ the referent but augments and replaces its object.³⁵ The image produced differs from its apparent

³⁴ Much of this has been derived from an earlier unpublished essay. Helen Parkinson. “Re:Framing Photography.” 2002.

³⁵ Jacques Derrida, “Signature Event Context,” (1971) *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (1972; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982) 313.

referent; other than slight resemblance, the representation and the absent object share no ontological connection. Through the photographic act, the referent is made different and deferred, becoming a text within *intertextuality*, open to new meanings and plays of significance. Thus, the photographic act in its moment of traced “presence” becomes open to what Jacques Derrida has termed the play of *différance*. While the concepts of presence and indexicality are constructed as a non-inherent frame for the medium, they do not preclude the mediation and play at work within the photographic medium itself. The photomechanical (and digital) act endlessly defers the object’s presence; the presence of that object as it was in the space/time captured is now forever absent.

The framing of photography, the way that the idiom suppresses the elements of its own *undecidability*, serves to promote the photographic print as a space in which subjective desires can be fulfilled. It is this contained idea of the photograph that is most often given prominence in mass communication. While the medium’s *undecidability* lingers, ideology suppresses it within a framework so as to make that which is presented within appear natural and innate. In such a manner, photographic depictions of home serve to presence a desire for the stability of a transcendent idea of home.

Home

The desire for home is often symptomatic of a desire for place, structure and history. Home is supposed as a place that guarantees subjectivity through the maintenance of the individual’s and family’s memory and being. According to

Maxine Van DeWetering, it has been conceived widely as “humanity’s ‘natural place’ in the world.”³⁶ Nostalgic images of home exemplify this notion. By eschewing reference to any specific moment in time, they present home as an ideal that is ahistorical, innate and immutable.³⁷

Home is ideologically constrained. As with other ideological formations, home seems both obvious and timeless. Unlike “house,” it does not refer directly to real conditions, but rather to an ideal representation of being in the world.³⁸ It locates a stable staging ground between the individual and the world. Home locates the subject in space; it gives meaning to the subject’s being past, present and future.³⁹ In addition, having a home guarantees one’s existence within a society of fellow subjects similarly interpolated by the ideology of home.⁴⁰ Home refers to a concrete space, most often the house, but it adds to this “real” other more ephemeral elements.⁴¹ Home, like other ideologically framed signifiers is pictured and discussed as being and having always been present.

In discussing home as an ideology, framed, in this thesis, specifically within photography, I make recourse to a term borrowed from the writing of architectural

³⁶ Maxine Van DeWetering, “The Popular Concept of ‘Home’ in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Journal of American Studies* 18 (1984): 17.

³⁷ This vision of home will be elaborated upon in later chapters.

³⁸ Althusser describes ideology as that which “represents existence to the subject, it is not their real conditions of existence, their real world, that ‘men’ ‘represent to themselves’ in ideology, but above all it is their relation to those conditions of existence which is represented to them there.” Althusser 318.

³⁹ Again, returning to Althusser, “ideology interpolates individuals as subjects ... gives meaning and being to the subject.” Althusser 320.

⁴⁰ As noted above, for Althusser ideology offers a subject an accessible real that confers stability on being. “The category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology only in so far as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of ‘constituting’ concrete individuals as subjects.” Althusser 320.

⁴¹ As home becomes more and more ideologically employed one witnesses, as Kimberly Dovey has commented, “a confusion between house and home ... it is the image of home that is bought and sold in the market place ... [with its] connections to the past, to other people, and to place.” (Kimberly Dovey, “Home and Homelessness,” *Home Environments*, ed. Irwin Altman and Carol M. Werner [New York and London: Plenum Press, 1985] 54.) Thus ideology seems to replace the real, substituting uncertainty with stability.

historian Gwendolyn Wright. Gwendolyn Wright's texts, such as Moralism and the Model Home (1980), Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing an America (1981) and "Prescribing the Model Home" (1993), expand upon an architectural history of the home, most often the suburban house, in the United States. To this history of architectural developments in the nineteenth and twentieth century Wright adds the exploration of the social, economic, political and cultural developments that shaped what she describes as a "model home." This use of "model" is meant to evoke a given period's image of a typical house and a notion of the family and cultural values incumbent upon that standard. The paradigm, as Wright describes it, refers to both literal house designs and model showrooms, as well as the paragon of home-centered values.⁴² According to Wright's description in Moralism and the Model Home, the word "evokes an abstract artificial construction, following ideal laws, against which ambiguous and complex social situations are judged. The model, then, in all likelihood becomes not just an intellectual construct but a rigid structure imposed on a social situation."⁴³

Concomitant upon the model are various ideologies of home, such as "Victorian Domesticity." The model, and its ideological biases are presented as something to be achieved and perpetuated in everyday life. This model, Wright expounds, is made available to wide audiences through industrialised technologies, such as the printing press, that permit the wide circulation of pattern books, home manuals, domestic guides and builders texts. Moreover, the model is further propagated in sentimentalised accounts of suburban middle-class home life in

⁴²Gwendolyn Wright, Moralism and the Model Home (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980) 2 – 5.

⁴³ Ibid. 2.

nineteenth century literature.⁴⁴ The importance of mass-produced media in the circulation of an ideal model of home Wright reiterates in her more recent work. She writes,

Our culture's ideas about home are passed down through such morality fables and fairy tales, though advice books, popular magazines and newspapers, television shows and movies, laws and public programs. The messages can be poignant, reassuring, and inspiring. Yet, as with all myths, there are underlying lessons about deceit, danger and the toll of breaking a rule or convention.⁴⁵

In "Prescribing the Model Home," Wright focuses on the repercussions of various models in addition to situating them within a social and historical context. In this later work, "model home" takes on abstract and ideological significance. As Wright describes, "The 'model home' is, first, a physical prototype. It exists as an object: both an ideal place conjured up in our minds eye and multiple architectural interpretations of the ideal seen in the landscape. Produced over and over again in a similar manner, the home can then be exchanged or sold within a particular market system."⁴⁶ The model home in Wright's texts is situated as a paradigm; one that reflects not only a shifting cultural environment but one that also aspires to a measure of stability. This desire Wright alludes to as a cultural "longing for stability in a world that is often alienating ... [in which] we seek stronger evocations of the self or the family we want in our homes, gestures to buttress what we want to be."⁴⁷ The model home is such a gesture. It refers to everyday life, but its representation in popular culture aspires to depict a transcendent ideal.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 31 – 98.

⁴⁵ Gwendolyn Wright, "Prescribing the Model Home," *Home: A Place in the World*, ed. Adrien Mack (New York and London: New York University Press, 1993) 219.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 213.

⁴⁷ Brackets my addition. Ibid. 223.

While much of what Wright describes as the model home is reflected in my use of the term, I wish to reposition it to a space of *undecidability* in order to reinforce the malleability of cultural paradigms, such as home. The term as it is used within Wright's work, especially in her latest text, insinuates the extent to which the ideal is constructed rather than natural. However, I wish to go one step further to suggest that this construction is necessarily always in a process of negotiation in-between its interior positioning and exterior cultural resistance.

In an effort to position the model home as a concept open to a play of *différance*, I once again find recourse to Jacques Derrida's writing – in this case, to his description of *iterability* in written communication. Through reference to this idea, I wish to elaborate upon the model home and position it not as a repeatable sign, but one that is *iterable*, that is, repeated but as changed and other. For Jacques Derrida, *iterability* is a necessity of written communication. As he describes in "Signature Event Context,"

My 'written communication,' must, if you will, remain legible despite the absolute disappearance of every determined addressee in general for it to function as writing, that is, for it to be legible. It must be repeatable – iterable – in the absolute absence of the addressee ... This iterability (*iter* ... from *itara*, *other* in Sanskrit, and everything that follows may be read as the exploitation of the logic which links repetition to alterity), structures the mark of writing itself, and does so moreover for no matter what type of writing ... [a] writing that was not structurally legible – iterable – beyond the death of the addressee would not be writing.⁴⁸

In Limited Inc. Derrida elaborates upon this explanation. *Iterability*, he suggests, is a concept, but one of a different order. It is "an ideal concept, to be sure, but also the concept that marks the essential and ideal limit of all pure idealisation ... 'iterability' does not simply signify ... repeatability of the same, but rather alterability of this

⁴⁸ Brackets my addition. Derrida, "Signature Event Context," 315.

same idealised in the singularity of the event.”⁴⁹ Thus *iterability* while meaning that a given term or word is generally repeatable as a sign, implies that its signification and significance changes through repetition in different contexts.⁵⁰

The positioning of model home as an *iterable* concept, *model home*, therefore suggests the repeatability of the ideology in various social and cultural environments, as in Wright’s use of the term, in addition to the alterity and singularity of each iteration of the *model*. This *iterability* then further implies the *undecidability* of the ideology of home. “Home,” as such, can never be present as transcendent; its full significance is differed and made other in each *iteration*.

Reading Canadian Home Magazines

While critical theory – and in particular discussion of ideology as it pertains to home – are central to this thesis, I also employ tools adopted from communications studies in analyzing the form in which the *model home* is presented. In Chapter Three, I analyze the components of the covers of Canadian home magazines in order to denaturalize the *model home* depicted within. In reading these covers, the ideology of home is introduced to its *undecidability* within the context of its visual “writing.”

My treatment of these magazines draws on scholarly analyses of women’s magazines and popular culture in general. One of the most influential of these explorations is Tania Modleski’s Loving with a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women (1982) which reviews harlequin romances, soap operas and gothic novels

⁴⁹ Derrida, “Afterword,” 119.

⁵⁰ “Iterability is at once that which tends to attain plentitude and that which bars access to it. Through the possibility of repeating every mark as the same it makes way for an idealization that seems to deliver full presence of ideal objects ... but this repeatability itself ensures that the full presence of a singularity thus repeated comports in itself the reference to something else, thus rending the full presence that it nevertheless announces.” Ibid. 129.

as spaces for female imagination and resistance.⁵¹ Unlike earlier cultural theorists, Modleski does not dismiss the value of these fictions, but rather takes a more balanced approach to their detrimental and beneficial aspects. Another influential text that dealt more specifically with women's magazines is Jennifer Scanlon's Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies' Home Journal, Gender, and the Promises of Consumer Culture (1995).⁵² While Scanlon's has been critiqued in recent articles by Cynthia Duquette Smith and Beth Dalia Snyder for being overly critical to the point of ignoring the negotiation of the material by the reader,⁵³ Scanlon nonetheless draws important attention to the influence of the magazine on constructions of gender and consumer culture. Recent writing, in contrast, has encouraged a balanced approach that investigates the constitution of ideology and its resistance within the magazine itself. Cynthia Duquette Smith's 2000 article "Discipline – It's a 'Good Thing': Rhetorical Constitution and Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia," for example, discusses in what way the audience is constituted as passive consumers and in what manner the audience is resistant to the messages supplied by Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia (MSLO).⁵⁴ One of the leading influences upon my reading of Canadian magazines is the work of Valerie J. Korninek whose approach, discussed below, provided a methodological model for my analysis.⁵⁵ Korninek's discourse

⁵¹ Tania Modleski, Loving with a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1984).

⁵² Jennifer Scanlon, Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies' Home Journal, Gender and Promises of Consumer Culture (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

⁵³ Beth Dalia Snyder, "Confidence Women: Constructing Female Culture and Community in 'Just Among Ourselves' and the Ladies' Home Journal," American Transcendental Quarterly 12. 4 (December 1998): 311 – 325.

⁵⁴ Cynthia Duquette Smith, "Discipline – It's a 'Good Thing': Rhetorical Constitution and Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia," Women's Studies in Communication, 23. 3 (Fall 2000): 337 – 366.

⁵⁵ Valerie J. Korninek, Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Inc., 2000).

similarly reflects the multi-vocal readings of popular culture found in the work of Tania Modleski and Cynthia Duquette Smith that focus upon the negotiation between the subject and object of the discourse.

My approach both to framing and deconstructing the frame of the *model home* in Canadian magazines took a statistical approach, at first in order to assess how pervasive certain trends are. The magazines examined for this study - Style at Home, Canadian House & Home, City & Country Home and their antecedents - were chosen for their national availability and production date (which I felt should coincide with the period in which the artists discussed later in the thesis practiced, 1970 – 2003). The method of inquiry was derived from a blend of basic statistical analysis derived from Richard C. Sprinthal,⁵⁶ other similar studies and a post-structuralist approach dependant upon a degree of self-reflexivity. Furthermore, many of the procedures used can be described as commensurate with what Michel Foucault describes as the “analysis of the discursive field.”⁵⁷ In seeking the ideology of home as presented in Canadian magazines I first sought to establish a boundary in which to encounter a *model home*. This follows the logic of Foucault’s discursive field in that it seeks to “grasp the statement in the exact specificity of its occurrence; determine its conditions of existence, fix at least its limits.”⁵⁸

I also turned to previously published works on popular culture, and specifically on mass circulated magazines. Many of the initial limits of my inquiry are derived from the modes of investigation employed by Fraser Sutherland and

⁵⁶ Richard C. Sprinthal, Basic Statistical Analysis, 4th Ed. (Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, 1994).

⁵⁷ Foucault 28.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 28.

Valerie J. Korninek. My general evaluation method was drawn primarily from Valerie J. Korninek's Roughing it in the Suburbs. Korninek, in her examination of two decades of Chatelaine Magazine, looked in brief across all issues in a given year, but only analysed three issues in depth. As Korninek states, "each January, May, and September issue of the magazine was read closely in its entirety ... Those months were selected to allow for seasonal differences in advertising and departmental content, without including major religious or public holidays."⁵⁹ The clear demarcation of fields of enquiry, in Korninek's work, forced methodological divisions to appear as such, rather than naturalised assumptions. In analysis of specific components of each magazine, I adopted not only this practice of demarcation, but also Korninek's idea of examining primarily three issues a year. Where possible I examined each February/March, May/June and September/October issue in depth, focusing on February, May and October in twelve month publications. Within this field I outlined the publication date for each issue, marking any editorial or publication changes. In this endeavour I was also influenced by the method adopted in Fraser Sutherland's The Monthly Epic.⁶⁰ In each periodical I took note of the editorial team, owner, publisher, and contributing editors. Of special concern was the editor, for, as Sutherland notes, (s)he holds much of the power over the magazines' content, article assignments and the direction of traffic flow.⁶¹

With regard to the interior of the magazine, I kept notes on content, departments, feature articles, and the focus of each issue. This first stage of analysis

⁵⁹ Korninek 17.

⁶⁰ Fraser Sutherland, The Monthly Epic: A History of Canadian Magazines 1789 – 1989 (Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1989).

⁶¹ Sutherland 10. A discussion of changes to the editorial team and subsequent changes in the magazine is found in Appendix A.

also includes initial comments on cover imagery. While providing background data on each separate periodical these notes illuminated the general biases of each series of publications, as well as the general focus for nationally distributed Canadian home magazines. The second phase of analysis required the demarcation of the specific boundary within which the *image* of the *model home* would be sought. This involved both a limiting of the domain to cover imagery as well as a broadening of the sample size to include all magazine covers (instead of only three publications a year). This change permitted enquiry into both a more specific and more representative field. The second stage also required more specific statistical analysis. As such, the broad confines of “cover photography” were divided into three groups for further analysis. These groupings - “room style,” “room type” and “repeated elements” - permitted statistical analysis on a nominal scale⁶² intended to yield a clearer view of the depiction of the *model*.⁶³ From the combination of information noted in phase one, and the statistical analysis of phase two, I was able to then discuss what a generalised Canadian *model home* looked like, in addition to what ideologies were presented through its representation and repetition.

From this stringent methodological approach to home magazines, I could discuss the *model* in comparison to the history of home and current artistic representations of the domestic. The *model home*, thus made present, was exposed to exterior texts as well as the discursive formations promoted in the interior of the magazines. This interdisciplinary examination of the *model home* sought to displace

⁶² A nominal scale “is created by assigning observations into various independent categories and then counting the frequency of occurrence within those categories.” Sprinthall 15.

⁶³ The findings of this analysis are discussed specifically in Appendix B, and within the context of the thesis, in Chapter Three.

the ideology from its central locale in order to be repositioned at the margins of its own construction. By alluding to the manifest elements within the discourse of home, made clear through interior and exterior exploration of the *model*, ideology is thus caught within a play of *undecidability*.

Artistic Responses

Following the dispersion of home through photographic means, the thesis turns to critiques of the ideology of home posed through the work of artist-photographers Lynne Cohen and Susan McEachern. This section of the enquiry emphasises the open-ended interdisciplinarity of this exercise by frustrating conclusions regarding the ideology of home. The artists' works in comparison to the magazine models critique and question the cultural function of home. Principally, they critique the lingering domestic ideology linked with the idea, in addition to the continued co-opting of "home" as a consumer sign. In works by Susan McEachern and Lynne Cohen, the ideology of home is represented within a field of constant negotiation.

This thesis does not address the full oeuvres of Lynne Cohen or Susan McEachern. Instead it focuses upon the interrelation of select pieces of their work within a broader cultural context, and specifically in relation to a Canadian ideology of home. As such, the thesis exceeds the boundaries of the discourse of art history, as a history that centers on art and artists.⁶⁴ Unlike more traditional approaches, I situate the artists' work in-between discursive formations of home. I read around and in the boundary lines of the related visual fields of magazines and artists work,

⁶⁴ This is one of the underlying aims of this thesis – to explore other options for composing an art history. For example, how can one speak from within a discourse through a conceptual space of intertextuality?

contextualising relations, where appropriate, within the history of home. Through this interdisciplinary approach, the construction of home is explored between frameworks. In this manner, my enquiry follows a path of analysis suggested by Michel Foucault. I examine

relations between statements (even if the author is unaware of them; even if the statements do not have the same author; ...) relations between groups of statements thus established (even if these groups do not concern the same, or even adjacent, fields ...); relations between statements and groups of statements and events of a quite different kind (technical, economic, social, political).⁶⁵

Thus, rather than confining my investigation to the constructed frame of an art history discourse, I read across visual fields, both illuminating the dissemination of the ideology of home, and leaving open its further discussion.

The interdisciplinary drive behind this enquiry is not something external to the artists' work, but rather is motivated by a disregard within the works for conceptual boundaries. For example, both Lynne Cohen and Susan McEachern are centrally engaged with the question of the individual's place within culture. Similarly, the use of photography in McEachern's and Cohen's work forms a self-reflexive basis for their explorations.⁶⁶ The artists, working with a culturally multivalent medium, speak from within, about and around that culture in which they nonetheless participate. Thus I suggest that this interdisciplinary approach to their work is consistent with the artists' own concerns.

⁶⁵ Foucault 29.

⁶⁶ Photography excites this intertextuality by its multiple cultural uses as a medium of private, artistic and commercial expression.

Das Unheimlich

The subject of the uncanny, *unheimlich*, lingers, concealed, throughout the pages of this thesis. It makes its appearance, emerging throughout the work to destabilise the ideology of home. Like the term *model home*, it forms a key conceptual theme within the enquiry, although *unheimlich* is often repressed in discussions concerning the construction of home. The *unheimlich* as a term, furthers the *undecidability* of home, shedding light upon those marginal elements that are *constrained* by the presentation of an idealised *model home*.

The word, *unheimlich*, in itself describes an undecidability of being. While the prefix - *un* seems to mark it as a negative, as the opposite of *heimlich* or *homely*, as will be discussed below, it does not in fact negate anything, but rather makes present previously concealed elements. My understanding of the term is primarily derived from Sigmund Freud's influential 1919 paper "Das Unheimliche" (generally translated as "The 'Uncanny'" in English), in addition to Martin Heidegger's 1967 paper "What is Metaphysics?" While Heidegger's work draws upon Freud's work in a large part, together the two writers provide the most complete and exhaustive series of enquiries into the subject of the *unheimlich*.

Sigmund Freud in his paper "Das Unheimlich" looks at the psychological repercussions of the *unheimlich* by exploring the term's use in literature, but also by examining its etymology. Specifically Freud compares the *unheimlich* (uncanny) to its close relationship with the *heimlich* (homely). According to Freud the *homely* (from *heim* [house], *heimlich*, *heimelich*, *heimelig*) means "belonging to the house,

not strange, familiar, tame, intimate, friendly, etc.”⁶⁷ in addition to referring to family roots, domesticity, comfort and ease.⁶⁸ A second meaning of homely, writes Freud, augments the understanding of home as a place of family domesticity and more specifically privacy. This focus on privacy also refers to concealment, hiding and the unseen.⁶⁹ The *unheimlich*, explains Freud, is closely related to the term *heimlich*, its seeming opposite.⁷⁰ However, the *unheimlich* dwells closer to home than this suggests. Freud notes that the addition of the prefix “-un” does not oppose the *heimlich* totally, but rather emphasises the second meaning that is already contained within “homely.”⁷¹ While *heimlich* is related to home, family, domesticity, comfort and ease, its second meaning implies ideas of privacy, secrecy and concealment. Thus the prefix, emphasising the second meaning of *heimlich*, causes homely to reveal the elements concealed “that ought to have remained hidden but [have] come to light.”⁷² The *unheimlich*, then, is not separate from the *heimlich*; rather “the prefix ‘un’ ...is the token of repression.”⁷³ Freud, later in the paper, elaborates upon the experience of the *unheimlich* describing it in terms of the resurfacing of repressed subconscious beliefs and complexes.⁷⁴

Unlike Freud, Martin Heidegger’s description of the *unheimlich* is related more to a general symptom of his metaphysics rather than a specific psychological

⁶⁷ Square brackets my addition. Sigmund Freud, “The ‘Uncanny,’” (1955), *Art and Literature* ed. Albert Dickson, trans. James Strachey, *The Penguin Freud Library* 14 (London: Penguin Books, 1985) 342.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 342 – 343.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 344.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 345.

⁷¹ Ibid. 345.

⁷² Ibid. 345.

⁷³ Ibid. 368.

⁷⁴ “An uncanny experience occurs when infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more relived by some impression or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once more to be confirmed.” Freud 372.

reaction to the resurfacing of suppressed ideas. Heidegger describes the *unheimlich* as that anxiety one experiences of hovering in pure existence “where there is nothing to hold onto.”⁷⁵ As David Farrell Krell notes, “Heidegger defined human existence itself in terms of *not-at-home*...our being in the world, the world that is our only home, is marked by the uncanny discovery that we are *not* at home in the world.”⁷⁶ The subject’s apprehension of not-being-at-home, the *unheimlich*, then spawns a desire for presence as opposed to the absence of Nothing, a desire that in Heidegger’s work is fulfilled in the being of *Dasein*. For Heidegger, *Dasein* is Being that transcends the single human. It is within the *unheimlich* anxiety of nothing that one is brought before *Dasein*. “Da-sein means: being held out into the nothing ... *Dasein* is in each case already beyond beings as a whole. This being beyond beings we call ‘transcendence, which now means, if it were not in advance holding itself out into the nothing, then it could never be related to beings nor even to itself.’”⁷⁷ While *Dasein* transcends, its appearance is marked by *nothing* and one is confronted by it in the grip of *unheimlich* anxiety. The *unheimlich* anxiety of nothing becomes then, the anxiety of Being.

The *unheimlich* while anxious does not imply fear of something, but rather, for both Freud and Heidegger, an apprehension of something that was previously concealed, but part of being. While they provide broadly different accounts of the *unheimlich*, in both Freud and Heidegger there is the implication that what is

⁷⁵ Heidegger 101.

⁷⁶ D. F. Krell, “Das Unheimliche: Architectural Sections of Heidegger and Freud,” Research in Phenomenology 22 (1992): 44.

⁷⁷ Heidegger 103.

considered as uncanny has an undecidable nature. For Freud it means both heimlich and not, whereas for Heidegger it signifies the experience of nothing and of Being.

My interest in unheimlich, then, is in the *undecidability* of the term; the way it, in both author's work, situates a space in-between (between heimlich and unheimlich and being and nothing) without conforming to either one or the other term in any calculable measure. Within Freud's etymology of unheimlich, for example, the "un-" does not negate heimlich but rather excites an indeterminacy of meaning within the term. My aim in using unheimlich then is to apply the play of the word to the ideologies explored within this thesis. Unheimlich, as *unheimlich*, then becomes a nonsynonymous substitution for Jacques Derrida's *undecidability* in that, by its in-between-ness, *unheimlich* frustrates the possibility of completeness in an absolute framing of the meaning of home, just as *undecidable* implies the impossibility of completeness in meaning and structure.⁷⁸ Thus in discussing *unheimlich* elements of home, or *model home*, I will be referring to the other parts that constitute the terms which have been repressed in ideological framing. While *model home* speaks to those present constraints that pose the concept of home, such as its necessary privacy, *unheimlich* refers to the suppressed other opposition, such as its publicity, and the *undecidability* between the two poles. In this manner, *model home* and *unheimlich* belong to the economy of the same as nonsynonymous substitutions for each other. Like Derrida's *iterability*, *unheimlich* is between hierarchical oppositions that frame conceptual models, "it does ... less to disturb them than to bring into the open that which is disturbing them and menacing their consistency, their order."⁷⁹ The "un"

⁷⁸ Derrida, "Afterword," 115.

⁷⁹ Ibid. 127.

of the heimlich, as *unheimlich*, works within and between the ideology of home, as *model home*, to call attention to those elements that exceed ideological constraint and introduce *undecidability* between hierarchical oppositions.⁸⁰

In each of the following chapters, the *unheimlich* is posited as the concealed other of the ideology of home. In the history of home the *unheimlich* draws attention to the singularity of each iteration of home and its construction as a transcendent signifier. The *unheimlich* lingers in each *model home* presented in the home magazines returning to each paradigmatic representation its necessary context. Furthermore, Lynne Cohen and Susan McEachern invite and excite the play of the *unheimlich* in their domestic photographs as a method to destabilise the *model home*. In each iteration of a *model home* as it is dispersed in this thesis, the *unheimlich* is consequently revealed as that which frustrates the absolute framing of the ideology of home.

Home is not a given sign, it cannot present itself as such, rather it is represented within ideological frameworks that guarantee its being. Through an interdisciplinary investigation, this thesis seeks home between ideological constructs as it is iterated, primarily, in photographic communication. It tracks the contained concept through various photographic appearances in Canadian home magazines and contemporary artistic practices. In-between artistic representations and popular culture, home is presented as an iterable *model* and exposed to its *unheimlich* other. This other reveals the *undecidability* of the ideal and shows the two relations to be part of the economy of the same. As a sign caught in an ongoing play of *différance*,

⁸⁰ Such oppositions as: female/male, private/public, inside/outside; will be discussed in later chapters in regard to how they contribute to the framing of home.

home is thus *undecidable* in itself. While presented as whole and ahistorical, its *unheimlich* lingers, reconfirming the instability of the ideology. This thesis, then, finally seeks to destabilise the ideology of home in a continual process of *undecidability*. Through the following chapters the ideology of home will be presented in context, as an ideal, only to be shown to what extent that *model* is dependant upon its contextual framework. Exploring home *in-between* I will pose the binary relations that bind the term only to propose the instability of their opposition.

Chapter Two

Placing Home

Home is a word frequently encountered and understood without too much contextualization. This chapter “places home” within a web of social, etymological and cultural connections through which the suburban ideology of home has been realized. The purpose is to unsettle the idea of home as universal.¹ Rather than speaking of humanity as having the place – home – in common, one would instead refer to specific groups as identifying with specific *model homes*² according to their cultural values. While as a whole this thesis discusses a contemporary Canadian *model*, this chapter introduces the context for the development of a broad Western *model home*. The foundations for this exploration begin with an account of the etymology of “home.” Moving from specific details of the word, the chapter continues with a discussion of a Western history of home and housing. The history given is necessarily brief, as it is not the goal of this chapter to provide an expansive history of housing in the West or in Canada. In attempting to relate a fully coherent history of home this chapter would be in danger of tracing what Michel Foucault describes as a “total history.”³ This would run counter to the goal of this thesis to introduce *undecidability*⁴ into the ideology of home. What this short history of home attempts to provide is what Foucault describes as a “general history,” one that rather

¹ This however, is not a process with an end, but rather without beginning or end, for the ideology of home is only stabilized by an act that covers the *unheimlich* elements.

² *Model home* as described in Chapter One refers to a physical and cultural paradigm that is ideologically framed as repeatable, but is nonetheless different in each repetition.

³ Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (1969; London: Routledge, 1989) 10.

⁴ *Undecidability* is a term employed by Jacques Derrida to describe “free-play” in language, an incompleteness of meaning and heterogeneity regarding the dialectic and calculable. Jacques Derrida, “Afterword: Toward an Ethic of Discussion,” *Limited Inc.* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1988) 115 – 116.

than seeking cohesion “would deploy the space of dispersion.”⁵ This history of home traces the construction of the ideology, but also other histories that disrupt and question the ideological whole. While navigating the history of housing, this chapter recounts social circumstances that had a significant impact on the shape and value of what is considered heimlich (homely). While not discussing in particular a contemporary Canadian *model home*, this chapter does examine some of the contexts through which Western (and specifically Canadian) iterations of the *model home* have been presented.

The foundations for the contemporary usage and meaning of home can be found within an etymological analysis of the word in contrast to its related cognates house and dwelling. This serves to stage the word “home” as multivocal in meaning, and thereby having at its core an uncertainty of signification common in language. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, in common usage home signifies “a dwelling-place, house, abode; fixed residence of a family or household; the seat of domestic life and interests; one’s own house ... in which one habitually lives, or which one regards as one’s proper abode, sometimes including members of a family collectively.”⁶ Home is also connected with native land, place of attachment, “where one finds refuge, rest, or satisfaction,” and is connected to one’s own place or country.⁷ In addition, “home” can function as a noun, adjective, adverb and verb.⁸ The term can refer to both a physical reality and a metaphysical relationship, this two-fold usage can be observed in its etymological formation. Due to the complexities of

⁵ Foucault 10.

⁶ J. A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, eds., The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd Ed. Vol. VII. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 322.

⁷ The Oxford English Dictionary, Vol. VII. 322 – 323.

⁸ The Oxford English Dictionary, Vol. VII. 322 – 326.

its usage, in discussing its etymology I find it more instructive to begin with a discussion of the related terms house and dwelling, as derived from The Oxford English Dictionary and Carl Darling Buck's A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages.⁹ While "dwelling" and "house" are connected to "home," neither fully encompasses the varied connotations of the latter. According to Buck, "dwelling," and "to dwell" are connected to "house" through the common Greek root *oikos* (house), from which *oikéō* (dwell) is derived. While house represents a physical dwelling space, dwell connotes "being, existing, and living" as well as "to remain, abide, and sit."¹⁰ While the existential aspects of "dwell" tend to relate more to "home," it nonetheless maintains its connection to the physical structure. House (*oikia, oikos, domus, maison, hūs, hous, haus*) signifies both a building and a dwelling, however, as Buck notes, "the former notion is more dominant etymologically, the majority of words reflecting the notion of 'build,' 'cover,' or some other feature of construction."¹¹ While corresponding to the phrase "at home," it does not correspond to the phrase "home" in the widest sense,¹² limited as it is to physical reality.¹³

Home, in contrast to dwelling and house, suggests a wider range of signification. As Buck relates, "home... is a conception that belongs distinctively to the word *home*, and some of its Germanic cognates, and it is not covered by any

⁹ While many of my other sources also included etymological analyses of home, many were either derived from Buck and/or not as complete.

¹⁰ Carl Darling Buck, A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principle Indo-European Languages, 2nd ed. (1949; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1965) 455.

¹¹ Buck 456.

¹² Ibid. 456.

¹³ In contemporary housing developments one finds that the idea of constructing a house is frequently confused with constructing a home, a strange turn of phrase given the etymology of the terms. This shift is noted in The Oxford English Dictionary as being predominant in North America. The Oxford English Dictionary, Vol. VII. 322.

single word in most Indo-European languages.”¹⁴ Home is derived primarily from a Germanic language group, but is also connected to the Greek “lie” (*kei*) and “place of abode” (*keĩmal*), both of which later evolve into various terms such as: “dwelling house,” “household,” “village,” etc. Additionally, “home” is related to the Latin for citizen (*cĩvis*).¹⁵ However, the word is primarily derived from Northern European roots. The etymology according to Buck is as follows:

Gothic *haims* ‘village,’ Old Norse *heimr* ‘abode, world,’ Danish *hjem*, Swedish *hem*, both ‘home; in wide sense, Old English *hām* ‘home,’ mostly as ‘dwelling house,’ ... Old Saxon *hēm*...Old High German, Middle High German *heim* (New High German mostly adverbial), Old High German *heimuoti*, middle High German *heimuote*, new High German *heimat* ‘home’ as native town or country’: Lettic *saima* ‘household, family,’ Lithuanian *šeimyna*, ‘family.’¹⁶

Within the etymological history of home lie the seeds of its ideological framing. Its relation to both being (dwell)¹⁷ and physical protection (house) in addition to its connection with citizenship and family, position the word as having a physical existence with additional emotional¹⁸ and metaphysical connections. Moreover, this physical home is located as the place of being unto oneself and family sheltered from the world as a whole, but connected to one’s nation and culture as a citizen and

¹⁴ Buck 459.

¹⁵ Buck 459. This connection to citizenship is interesting historically as in Hannah Arendt’s description of the Greek Public and Private realms she writes that in order to attain full citizenship, i.e., in order to participate in the public world, it was necessary for a man to possess a private house/home. (Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* [Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1958] 29 – 30.) Similarly Margaret Marsh notes that in the late 1870s in the United States the idea that “citizens of a free nation should be property-owning” was popularly circulated. (Margaret Marsh, “From Separation to Togetherness: The Social Construction of Domestic Space in American Suburbs, 1840 – 1915,” *The Journal of American History* 76 [September 1989]: 510.) This signals a connection between citizenship and home that persisted well into the nineteenth century and could be seen to influence contemporary desires for home.

¹⁶ Buck 459.

¹⁷ As *The Oxford English Dictionary* describes, one of the meanings of dwell is “to continue in existence, to last, persist” implies the existential aspects of the word. J. A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, eds., *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd Ed. Vol. V. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 2.

¹⁸ These emotionally connections are especially signaled by the adjective “homeliness,” which describes “the condition of being homely; familiarity, intimacy ... kindness, kindliness ... simplicity.” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. VII. 328.

homeowner. Home, through its cognates, is attached to both a physical and existential reality. As such, when one invokes the word home, one stirs many powerful emotions.

The above discussion may suggest that home as a word is mostly stable, however, I wish here to emphasize that while etymology does give an account of a word in a history, it does not account for its localized connotations, or the cultural shifts that similarly change the word's common usage.¹⁹ The etymology of home provides a grounding upon which the word has been understood to be constructed. Home, as any other signifier, changes with each *iteration* and context.²⁰ Throughout history the word has been endowed with various values, dependant upon cultural morays of the time. For example, according to Anne Brydon, Victorian middle-class culture "wove the social forms of the private house and the nuclear family into 'home' as a sanctuary from the competitive, impersonal masculine public sphere of work and commerce."²¹ While the dictionary definition of home remains more or less stable, its usage in speech and various forms of communication shifts with each new context.

In addition, home shifts in connotation and meaning according to culture and language. As discussed earlier in relation to its etymology, what I, as an English speaking writer, understand as the word home has a specific linguistic history related primarily to other Germanic roots. While what I may loosely mean by home can be translated into other languages it does not necessarily retain all the original

¹⁹ These shifts are apparent in the outline of the home given in The Oxford English Dictionary that lists not only current but obsolete meanings attributed to the signifier.

²⁰ *Iterability* for Derrida refers to the affect of context and use on a given signifier. Specifically, a signifier, in written language is repeatable as wholly different and Other due to its changed context and thus reference. Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context" (1971), Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass (1972; Chicago" The University of Chicago Press, 1982) 315.

²¹ Anne Brydon, "Intimate Dwelling: Finding Our Way Home," Home Show (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2003) 21.

connotations of the English word. Within this thesis, home refers to an even more localized idea. The “home” discussed throughout is specifically a Canadian (and often more broadly North American) middle-class home. The reason for this specificity is two-fold. First, it is my contention that home, so invested with the individual and native country/place is necessarily a word that refers to a localized descriptor. Secondly, I suggest that the idea and image of home is culture-dependant, not ahistorical as it is often presented. While retaining its broader meanings home is *iterable* as a *model* within a specific context. For these reasons I find it necessary to repeat that to discuss home in general, as a “total” signifier,²² is to invest value in the ideology that places an ideal vision of home as such. However, in discussing home as an *iterable model* one is able to explore the boundaries of the ideology of home.

The difficulty in discussing home as a specific model is the extent to which many texts on the subject discuss home in a general sense. While much of this chapter is by necessity derived from these general texts, I wish once again to stress that home is always bound by its historical and textual context. The majority of texts and essays consulted have unfortunately focused upon European and American sources, which while not dealing with a specifically Canadian history, do discuss broad trends which have influenced the Canadian *model*.²³ One of the most initially helpful texts, and also the broadest, is Witold Rybczynski’s Home: A Short History of an Idea. The text is largely Eurocentric, focusing upon a specific idea of home

²² “Total” referring to Foucault’s description of total history as seeking a center and cohesion. Foucault 10.

²³ Unfortunately, during the completion of this thesis a useful history of Canadian housing was released in July of 2004, but time did not permit its inclusion. Richard Harris, Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban, 1900 – 1960 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

defined by an overriding concern with comfort.²⁴ Other texts such as Kenneth T. Jackson's Crabgrass Frontier²⁵ and Clifford Edward Clark Jr.'s The American Family Home²⁶ similarly give an overview of the development of home, specifically the suburban home, since the nineteenth century. These texts more directly focus upon a North American history of the home that is nonetheless helpful as English-speaking Canada, especially in Ontario, has frequently been influenced by American housing styles. Other helpful texts that focused upon American housing include Dolores Hayden's A Grand Domestic Revolution²⁷ and Gwendolyn Wright's Building the Dream²⁸ and Moralism and the Model Home.²⁹ Within Hayden's and Wright's texts I was provided not only with a brief overview of North American housing, but also a greater focus upon how labour and feminist movements effected and were affected by the ideology of home. Numerous other texts and recent articles also helped to fill in some of the gaps in critical architectural history.³⁰ Finally, historical outlines, derived

²⁴ The home for Rybczynski is constructed out of an evolving desire for comfort. Witold Rybczynski, Home: A Short History of an Idea (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1986) 217. Rybczynski's focus on the continuity of the theme of comfort in many ways reflects a historical discourse one could describe in Foucault's words, as a *manifest discourse*, (Foucault 25) a form of discourse this thesis tries to frustrate through reference to *undecidability*.

²⁵ Kenneth T. Jackson, Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

²⁶ Clifford Edward Clark Jr., The American Family Home, 1800 – 1960 (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986).

²⁷ Dolores Hayden, The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods and Cities (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1981).

²⁸ Gwendolyn Wright, Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981).

²⁹ Gwendolyn Wright, Moralism and the Model Home (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980).

³⁰ Most helpful among these were: Tamara K. Harevan, "The Home and the Family in Historical Perspective," Home: A Place in the World, ed. Adrien Mack (New York and London: New York University Press, 1993) 227-260; Margaret Marsh, "From Separation to togetherness: The Social Construction of Domestic Space in American Suburbs, 1840 – 1915," The Journal of American History, 76 (September 1989): 506 – 527; Joseph Rykwert, "House and Home," Home: A Place in the World, ed. Adrien Mack (New York and London: New York University Press, 1993) 47-58; Maxine Van De Wetering, "The Popular Concept of 'Home' in Nineteenth-Century America," Journal of American Studies, 18 (1984): 5-28.

from the history of the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, provided a Canadian-centered history.³¹ As can be determined by the texts used, this chapter does not necessarily provide a critical history of Canadian housing, nor is it my intention to do so, rather I wish to provide a general historical context through which physical *iterations* of home have developed.

The popularly repeated ideology of home, as it has developed, has its uncertain beginnings in architectural history with the emergence not only of the middle-class but a specifically middle-class dwelling. According to Witold Rybczynski, the middle-class has been an expanding section of the population since the Middle Ages. Producing and selling their wares from within their houses, their buildings had a configuration that separated them from the large upper-class dwellings and the lower-class hovels. However, the bourgeois townhouse had little in common with what Rybczynski describes as home – it was neither comfortable nor private.³² Nonetheless the demarcation of a specifically middle-class dwelling marks an initial break with the housing styles that preceded it.

What is now most recognizable as conforming to a definition of home (a place that is private and family orientated), developed out of continuing changes in middle class housing between the sixteenth and eighteenth century. Reflecting the Middle Ages focus on the multi-functional bourgeois house as a locus for work, sixteenth century *iterations* continued to grow in size to accommodate both the immediate and

³¹ The website as a whole was quite helpful. "History of the CMHC," Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 11 March 2003 <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/about/hiry/hiry_001> 1 –4. Particularly helpful was David B. Masur's history. David B. Mansur, "A Sense of Mission," Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 11 March 11 2003 <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/about/hiry/hiry_002>. 1 – 5.

³² Rybczynski 25 – 28.

extended family, but also those persons connected to the family business.³³ However, as Rybczynski discusses, and as noted by the French social historian Phillippe Aries: between the sixteenth and eighteenth century the structure of the family and its values changed.³⁴ Over these centuries the family became of greater importance within the house. Instead of leaving home at an early age, children by the sixteenth century had begun, especially in middle-class families, to attend school, necessitating their prolonged presence at home.³⁵ Moving into the seventeenth century, most prominently in the United Provinces of the Netherlands, the house was viewed as a more intimate environment with a socially-orientated downstairs and a private upstairs.³⁶ In addition, the focus on the family in the Netherlands was reflected in the declining fashion for domestic servants within the home and by the separation of work from the home.³⁷ The *model home* of the seventeenth century Netherlands, had by the eighteenth century, garnered much favour throughout Northern Europe, which, according to Rybczynski had resulted in a greater attention to intimacy and privacy in middle class houses.³⁸ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall echo similar sentiments in their social history, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780 – 1850. As they recount, until productive work was physically separated in the home – domestic work to the back of the house, and other labour to outside the house

³³ Ibid. 38 – 39.

³⁴ Rybczynski 48; Phillippe Aries as discussed in Kenneth T. Jackson, Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States (New York and London: New York University Press, 1993) 47; further discussion of changes within family structure found in: Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780 – 1850, Rev. ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) 358 – 362.

³⁵ Rybczynski 48.

³⁶ Ibid. 51.

³⁷ Ibid. 59.

³⁸ Ibid. 83.

– the home continued to be more a social construct than a physical reality.³⁹ Between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century cultural, social and architectural fashions cultivated the middle class home, shaping the ideology into something similar to that familiar today: the home as a separate, family-orientated space and place.⁴⁰

By the nineteenth century, the middle class *model* of home as it had evolved since the sixteenth century had become generalised as representing the ideals of home. The home was conceived as an ideal place of family leisure and private contemplation. However, the shape of the *model* continued to evolve as advances brought on by industrialisation linked the social idea of home with the physical reality of the middle class, and specifically the suburban home. However, the consolidation of the *model home* as the suburban home was not easily cemented, for responses to industrialisation were varied at best. For the sake of simplicity, I will discuss the story of home in the Victorian era from two points of view. On the one hand the advances of industrialisation were conceived of as ushering in a period when technological ideals and advancements could help change society including the home and housing for better. Opposing this idea, a large portion of society was more anti-modernist, viewing industrialisation as a blight to retreat from to the safety of the separate and idyllic home.

For many feminists and socialists the ideas of industrialisation offered a new beginning for society, one in which the worker was valued and in which the reforms of industrial production would revolutionise labour both within and without the home. For early feminists the home no longer had to be a separate space for women's toil,

³⁹ Davidoff and Hall 358 – 359.

⁴⁰ However, also between these times one could read an architectural history of the middle-class dwelling as seeking coherency by reference to a dominant model in place of other less popular styles.

but instead could be recognised as a form of labour. Dolores Hayden, in her influential text The Grand Domestic Revolution relates the history of a variety of women who saw in industrial methodology a way to introduce housing reform. Described under the loose term “Material Feminists,” Hayden discusses how these women throughout the nineteenth century worked toward changing domestic labour and the home itself. Some of these women wished to implement the practices of mass production into domestic work, some envisioned new housing options through communal living, new residential design, shared kitchen space, apartment hotels and similar housing initiatives. Others demanded wage and social benefits for their work, and some just demanded recognition.⁴¹ What these women had in common was the desire, with options made possible through industrialisation, to challenge “the physical separation of household space from public space, and the economic separation of domestic economy from the political economy.”⁴² However, as Hayden relates, pressure from big business, government initiatives, changing social and cultural morays, and conflicts between various feminist and socialist groups resulted in the marginalization of the housing alternatives offered by the “Material Feminists” and similar reformers.⁴³

The industrial revolution, while offering hope to some, also ushered in an era of civil unrest. Both women and men dissatisfied with the state of labour and society as a whole looked back to the pre-industrial era as a pastoral ideal. For socialist critics industrialisation had caused a final separation between production and the home to the detriment of men and women alike. According to Marxist-feminist

⁴¹ Hayden 3 – 68.

⁴² Hayden 3.

⁴³ Ibid. 301.

writer Eli Zaretsky, mass-production isolated the worker from the product, redirecting energies instead toward “wage slavery.”⁴⁴ Drastic social upheavals from feminists and socialists alike led many corporate and government groups to seek possible solutions. Initially, industrialists attempted to solve problems through plant management schemes and wage hikes, however, the most effective solution was found within the confines of domestic ideology. As Stuart Ewan writes,

Given the antisocial character of a productive system which had routinised work into a series of time-managed, mechanical gestures, the family – the scene of leisure and consumption – continued to be a repository of social relations. For the radicals as well as the newly conscious ideologues of business, the image of the family characterized the good life.⁴⁵

This good life in turn was promoted through wage-hikes, shorter hours, and suburban housing initiatives. Moreover, domestic ideology was popularly circulated in songs such as “Home Sweet Home,”⁴⁶ women’s journals, verse, prose, pictures and prints.⁴⁷

While the desire for stability seemed to be shared by an uncertain society, the ideological form it would take was influenced not only by big business and governments, but also by growing mass media outlets.

Feeding nineteenth century nostalgia for past iterations of the homely in opposition to industrialization and civil unrest, the Victorian “Cult of Domesticity” supported a *model* of home that perpetuated ideas of separation and seclusion in opposition to the goals of reformers such as the “Material Feminists.” According to The Oxford English Dictionary, the domestic (from the Latin root *domus*),⁴⁸ primarily

⁴⁴ Eli Zaretsky, Capitalism, The Family & Personal Life (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1976) 57.

⁴⁵ Stuart Ewan, Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976) 134.

⁴⁶ Written by John Howard Payne in 1823. Jackson 49.

⁴⁷ Jackson 49.

⁴⁸ Relating not only to the root of house, but to domain, a distinct and controlled area, and to dominate, “to bear rule over, control ... to master.” J. A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, eds., The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd Ed. Vol. IV. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 947.

relates to the household and family affairs.⁴⁹ As a concept that has been closely allied with a nineteenth century *model home* it gained wide appeal from 1830s as a component of the Victorian “Cult of Domesticity.” Reaching its pinnacle in the last decades of the nineteenth century, it engendered a greater focus on the separate sphere of the home and family. According to Gwendolyn Wright, “novels, poems, lithographs, children’s books, and domestic guides” during this time “extolled the virtues of domesticity so much that the good family, and their suburban home became almost interchangeable.”⁵⁰ Scholars, such as Eli Zaretsky, have noted that the force behind the Victorian penchant for the domestic can be understood as symptomatic of a split between the realm of the productive and reproductive within Industrial society. Women were deemed too delicate for the new mechanized cities and as such were relegated to the safety of the private home, men in contrast, moved further into the time-managed, production-focused, public realm.⁵¹

Closely connected with the rise of Victorian domesticity was a widespread nostalgia for the pre-industrial home. The imagined ideal of home, modelled after both the small Dutch house and the English country home, provided a safe and peaceful retreat from the chaos of Industry and over crowded urban life. While, as Margaret Marsh notes, Victorian domesticity and suburbanization developed independently in the nineteenth century, they often overlap in both environment and

⁴⁹ The definition of the domestic reflects the control insinuated by its root relations. The definition is given as: “having a character or position of the inmate of a house ... intimate, familiar, ‘at home,’ ... pertaining to one’s place of residence or family affairs ... attached to home; devoted to home life or duties; domesticated.” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. IV. 944.

⁵⁰ Wright, *Building the Dream*, 107.

⁵¹ Similar accounts appear in: Davidoff and Hall 359; Ewan 115 – 134; Joshua M. Price, “The Apotheosis of Home and the Maintenance of Spaces of Violence,” *Hypatia* 17, 4 (Fall 2002): 49; J. Tosh, “New Men? The Bourgeois Cult of Home,” *History Today* 46 (December 1996): 10; Wright, *Building the Dream*, 108; Zaretsky 29.

ideology.⁵² Victorian ideals of domesticity were centered on the private, middle-class, single-family house, often best represented by the suburban design.⁵³ This exodus to a serene, suburban haven was largely a product of the middle class; specifically it was a product of the desires of white middle class Protestant males, who wished to separate themselves from the overcrowding (primarily by poor and immigrant workers) of the city.⁵⁴

In the eighteenth and nineteenth century what identified a home as “suburban” was its separation from the world of commerce. According to John Archer, suburban residences “were architecturally suited for little other than leisure pursuits. They were sited on parcels of land too small for the production of significant revenue through any form of husbandry, and in most cases the grounds were landscaped in a manifestly uneconomic manner according to aesthetic conventions of the period.”⁵⁵ The suburban home, as deified in Victorian ideology, was economically, physically and emotionally removed from the working environment.⁵⁶ Furthermore, this retreat was a haven for the single, middle-class family. However, the concept of the home as a space of leisure and retreat, especially in the Victorian era, was only consistent with a masculine experience of the place. Kenneth T. Jackson offers a further broad definition: he describes the suburban residence as defined by four components: “function (non farm residential), class (middle and upper status), separation (a daily

⁵² Margaret Marsh, “From Separation to Togetherness: The Social Construction of Domestic Space in American Suburbs, 1840 – 1915,” *The Journal of American History* 76 (September 1989): 506.

⁵³ Noted in: Davidoff and Hall 360. Clark Jr. xii. Jackson 4 – 52. Wright, *Building the Dream*, xvii – 108. Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home*, 5 – 32.

⁵⁴ Rybczynski 105. Also echoed in accounts by: Jackson 70; Wright, *Building the Dream*, 96.

⁵⁵ John Archer, “Colonial Suburbs in South Asia, 1700 – 1850,” *Visions of Suburbia*, ed. Roger Silverstone (London and New York: Routledge, 1997) 33.

⁵⁶ Although, “working environment” did not include domestic labour.

journey to work), and density (low relative to solder sections).”⁵⁷ In the Victorian imagination, however, the suburban home was more a phenomenological experience than a spatial demarcation.

The Victorian home was conceived of as a safe, secluded, natural place, a moral and family orientated center in contrast to a radically changing industrial urban environment.⁵⁸ It was posed around a series of hierarchical oppositions: order-chaos, place-property, suburban-urban, white-other, moral-amoral, personal-impersonal, family-society, private-public, nature-technology, feminine-masculine, safety-danger and leisure-labour.⁵⁹ Influenced by the ideals of Victorian domesticity and nostalgia, and made possible by advances in technology and transportation, the suburban house became in the nineteenth century the *model home*. Commensurate with moral ideals, architectural designs reflected the nostalgia for a simpler, “wholesome” time before Industrialism (albeit with all the amenities that new industries offered).⁶⁰ In the United States and Canada, styles such as Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Shingle Style and Cape Cod with their separate rooms, bay windows, gables and porches became popular.⁶¹ These styles emphasised the privacy and security of the small, single family home, and it is these same designs that continue to be referred to in many North American home designs.⁶² The late nineteenth and early twentieth

⁵⁷ Jackson 11.

⁵⁸ Discussed in: Clark Jr. 131-238. Jackson 70. Marsh 507. Maxine Van DeWetering, “The Popular Concept of “Home” in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Journal of American Studies* 18 (1984):14. Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home*, 2 – 29.

⁵⁹ Derived from: Davidoff and Hall 360 – 370. Clark Jr. xii – 238. Jackson 4 – 70. Marsh 506 – 517. Van DeWetering 6 – 21. Wright, *Building the Dream*, xvii – 113. Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home*, 2 – 83.

⁶⁰ Van DeWetering describes the Victorian home as endowed with old fashioned positive Christian morals. Van DeWetering 17.

⁶¹ Rybczynski 178.

⁶² As Rybczynski notes, they “ceased to be a style altogether and became instead an American Suburban Vernacular.” Rybczynski, 178

century suburban iterations exemplified all the ideals of the Victorian home. It was a separate and private space, a space for women and children, a place of weekend leisure and the weekday commute to work. In sum, home constituted a safe and isolated “homely” sphere that in the face of social upheaval provided a stable and moral place for the family.

However, the separation of home and the public realm was often severely prohibitive; space was often delineated according to class, race and gender biases. Within the physically removed suburban home these relationships were most apparent. Often the planned suburban community was itself strictly controlled, barring admittance to lower classes, alternative lifestyles, visible minorities and non-Christian (specifically non-Protestant) families.⁶³ The home ideal, especially that of the suburban ideal, physically isolated the white, middle-class, heterosexual, nuclear family from the other groups that were becoming more visible within the urban environment. The spatial divisions instituted by the gated communities were echoed by the green-lawn boundaries drawn around each house. Suburban gardens, while reflecting a desire for a natural environment, reinforced the separation of the private home from the publicity of society.⁶⁴ Furthermore, these green moats reinforced the segregation of gendered spheres – the private feminine home as removed from the masculine public world. Home, in the “Victorian Cult of Domesticity,” was posed as the natural place for women and their children, a protected and nurturing environment.⁶⁵ Gendered divisions continued within the home as the library or study came to epitomize the male role, and the kitchen and nursery the female. Moreover,

⁶³ Marsh 511.

⁶⁴ Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home*, 29.

⁶⁵ Wright, *Building the Dream*, 107.

as Gwendolyn Wright comments: the Victorian home was separated into three kinds of space: “spaces for presenting the home ideal to guests and to the family, spaces for the production of domestic goods, and spaces for privacy ... This functional division was also a symbolic matter, reinforcing divisions by sex within a home, strengthening the division between work and leisure.”⁶⁶

The idealization of the suburban home as the dominant model was further influenced by the transition between 1890 and 1920 from Industrial Capitalism to Advanced (Monopoly) Capitalism.⁶⁷ The result of this shift was architecturally expressed by a reversal of “urban densities [that] ... de-emphasise[d] architectural and technological innovation.”⁶⁸ In a push towards ideas of free enterprise, individualism and family values, the suburban home became “the most visible symbol of having arrived at a fixed place in society.”⁶⁹ From the nineteenth into the twentieth century (suburban) home-ownership became a prime goal, a symbol of wholesome family life as well as *the* status symbol of the middle-class.

Part socially determined, the ideal was also frequently propagated by both advertisers and government agencies. In the face of labour disputes in the 1920's, The Industrial Housing Associates in the United States, a group of industrialists and businessmen interested in promoting labour relations and thereby furthering their profits, suggested that one way to counter unrest would be to emphasise home ownership for white males. Rather than strike, the homeowner would be too tied to a

⁶⁶ Wright, Moralism and the Model Home, 34.

⁶⁷ Hayden 22.

⁶⁸ Brackets my addition. Hayden 22.

⁶⁹ Jackson 50.

mortgage and family home to risk financial instability.⁷⁰ As Clifford Clark Jr. writes: "Business and political leaders were particularly anxious for citizens to own homes, based on the hope, as Friedrich Engels had feared, that mortgages would have the effect of "chaining the workers by this property to the factory in which they work."⁷¹ The culmination of public desires for retreat, middle-class desires for status, technological innovations that increased the ease of commuting, and business and government desires to promote economic stability in drastically changing times was reflected and invested in the suburban house that, by the 1920s, had become an exemplar of home.

Between the World Wars, despite social upheavals and economic distress, the suburban house as the paradigmatic North American home continued to flourish. Even during financial turmoil in the United States between 1928 and 1933, "aggressive sales campaigns, Federal Housing Administration mortgage programs ... and extensive advertising kept the vision of a home of one's own before the American people."⁷² Even so, after the market crash of 1929, housing underwent a crisis. In both Canada and the United States, trust companies and banks foreclosed on many mortgages as millions lost their jobs.⁷³ In an effort to sustain the housing market both the Canadian and American governments became more explicit in their support of suburban homelife. In the United States, the Hoover Commission Report on Home Building and Home Ownership from 1931 suggested decisive support of home ownership (specifically for men); this was seen as necessary to ensure an economic

⁷⁰ Hayden 284.

⁷¹ Clark Jr. 51.

⁷² Jackson 187.

⁷³ Ibid. 187.

market dependant upon the commerce generated by the housing industry.⁷⁴ The Hoover Commission conference, which would eventually lead to the construction of 50 million such houses,⁷⁵ made four recommendations: “1) the creation of long-term authorised mortgages; 2) the encouragement of low interest rates; 3) the institution of governmental aid to private efforts to house low-income families; and 4) the reduction of home construction costs.”⁷⁶ Similarly, in Canada, the Dominion Housing Act of 1935 introduced the idea of joint loans between the government and private lenders thereby increasing the number of people able to buy into the ideal of the suburban house.⁷⁷ Despite the fall out of the depression between the wars, the suburban house continued to be the most dominant *model home*.

Following World War II, the suburb continued to grow. In Canada, the influx of veterans after World War II increased the demand for housing beyond what the private sector could support. In 1946, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)⁷⁸ was created by the federal government to help deal with the high numbers.⁷⁹ Government sponsored mortgages in Canada, and North America, encouraged the growth of suburban sprawl.⁸⁰ Furthermore, advertising campaigns and various cold-war era propaganda campaigns encouraged the uniformity of the suburban *model home* in Canada.⁸¹ While government and business interests had

⁷⁴ The housing market supported construction, road construction, commuter transit, lumber, various home products, appliances, and automobile industries. Jackson 193.

⁷⁵ Hayden 8.

⁷⁶ Jackson 194.

⁷⁷ Mansur 1.

⁷⁸ Which later became the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation in 1976. “History of the CMHC,” 1.

⁷⁹ Ibid. 1.

⁸⁰ Hayden 23.

⁸¹ Valerie J. Korninek, Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Inc., 2000) 180.

guided the growth of suburban home ownership since the nineteenth century, it was in the post war era that this support became most blatant. As Wright notes, this was “the most pervasive evidence of state involvement in defining the ideology of home...the indirect endorsement of middle class suburbs through highway building, FHA guidelines, income tax deduction for residential mortgages and the like.”⁸² Supported by governments, corporations and media outlets the suburban house became the most recognisable *model home*. However, it should be noted that the lower standard of living in Canada in the post-war era left many Canadians ambivalent about the “idyllic” nature of suburban life.⁸³ According to the CMHC, the 1950’s was the housing industry’s Golden Age: “homes grew larger, acquired full height basements and bathrooms and kitchens grew to make space for the abundance of new appliances becoming all the rage.”⁸⁴ In 1954, The National Housing Act was passed in Canada permitting the introduction of CMHC Mortgage Loan Insurance, making suburban home purchases increasingly accessible to a wider base of consumers.⁸⁵ This move in particular encouraged the adoption of the suburban house as the most prevalent *model home* in Canada for many income brackets.

Since the 1960s, the suburban home came to be increasingly representative of the ideal despite socio-economic changes, such as the increasing incidence in Canada of women working outside the home.⁸⁶ The most prominent change in housing, however, was the increasingly variety of shapes and sizes reflecting homeowners’

⁸² Wright, *Building the Dream*, 222.

⁸³ Korninek 6.

⁸⁴ “History of CMHC” 1.

⁸⁵ However, Valerie Korninek notes that despite “government-secured mortgages from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation and grants to ex-servicemen, many working class and immigrant families could not afford to purchase new bungalows.” Korninek 5.

⁸⁶ Ibid. 6.

desire for greater autonomy and relative individualism. This move both increased sales and countered critiques that the suburban home was too formulaic. Along with varying house styles, the suburban home took on different sizes and shapes again permitting it to appeal to a larger income bracket. The energy crisis of the 1970s in Canada resulted in the construction of more efficient and affordable semi-detached homes and townhouses.⁸⁷ However, as Wright notes, in reference to the American market, the affordable housing solutions nonetheless contrasted with the ideal image of the home. Cluster and pre-fabricated houses were seen as less than desirable, in some cases they were even “posed as a threat to the post war suburban ideal.”⁸⁸ Affordability continued to be a watchword into the 1980s. High interest rates in Canada led to smaller lot sizes and denser developments as well as an increase in home renovations.⁸⁹ Despite economic challenges to the design of the suburban home, Clark Jr. notes that “middle-class Americans [and Canadians had] ... little inclination to abandon the dream of owning their own home.”⁹⁰ This is reflected by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s statistic that by the 1990’s, the “typical family home (was)...over 50% larger than in the 1940s.”⁹¹ With the help of government agencies such as the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, who

⁸⁷ It was also during this period that the CMHC became more involved in other housing solutions, including social housing programs and the creation of their first co-op-housing program in Willow Park, Winnipeg. “History of CMHC” 3.

⁸⁸ Wright, *Building the Dream*, 261.

⁸⁹ “History of CMHC,” 3. This is visible in home magazines of the period, specifically in *Select Homes* (which later became *Style at Home*), which in the late 1980s devoted a fair amount of space on how to renovate as opposed to buy and decorate. The influence of Canadian home magazines will be discussed in greater length in chapter three.

⁹⁰ Brackets my addition. Clark Jr. 239.

⁹¹ “History of CMHC” 3. This growth is certainly visible in new suburban developments, specifically those surrounding the Greater Toronto Area. Despite rising costs of electricity, the suburban home has grown to terrific proportions, often the scale of the house by far over powers the lot size. With the current interest and inflation of the housing market in Ontario this trend shows few signs of abating within the next year or two.

made possible direct lending CMHC mortgage loans and encouraged the chartered banks to join in the residential mortgage business,⁹² the suburban variant maintained its dominant status as the *model* most representative of home.

The home throughout its history has been represented by many, and at times drastically different, physical *models*. However, what remained less susceptible to stylistic whims have been the varying ideologies and meanings contained within the *model home*. This is not to say that the meanings of home have not changed, but rather that the ideological concepts connected with home are more resistant to change as they appear *obviously* connected with the idea. For example, while the suburban home remains popular, other housing forms proliferate, yet what remains stable is the ideal of a secluded and private home epitomized by the suburban iteration.

Chief among these connected ideologies is the notion that home in contrast to the house represents a place more than a space, and part of this assertion is the hierarchical opposition of home-house and place-space that is a frequent binary relation contained within the *model*. Whereas space consists of a broader field, place is tied to notions of being, repetition and subjectively invested location. While in space the individual is adrift, place marks familiarity, connection and stability. Richard Etlin describes the two fields, space and place, as: “the former designating...a neutral container for human activities, the latter signifying those physical domains which have been invested with significant meaning and identity.”⁹³ In territorializing home, according to Richard Etlin’s description, one would identify one’s own home as a “place.” Kimberly Dovey agrees with the assessment of home

⁹² Mansur 4.

⁹³ Richard A. Etlin, “Space, Stone and Spirit: The Meaning of Place,” The Eight Technologies of Otherness, ed. Sue Golding (London and New York: Routledge, 1997) 307.

as place, describing that home marks an emotional connection between a subject and the environment, an ordering of environmental experience.⁹⁴ While space becomes a place through investment and use, a house similarly becomes a home through memory, use and experience, thus the difference between house and home in this framework is not a semantic difference but one defined by experience.

A second defining ideology of home is the idea that it is by necessity a private place. The private, in opposition to the exposed realm of the public, is covert, hidden, and secure. A description of the home as private is quite typical in popular and critical discourse. For example, in Volume Two of The Practice of Everyday Life, the home is described as a place separate from other aspects of life, a private space that is necessary to the existence of the family microcosm.⁹⁵ While it is not necessarily true that existence of the family is dependent upon a condition of privacy, the connection between family, home and privacy have become increasingly intertwined since the eighteenth century. As described by Wright, the home, especially the suburban home, has long been viewed as a place of retreat: a retreat from the public, the urban, social unrest and ill health. It has been framed as a bastion of private family safety.⁹⁶ As Clark Jr. notes in his The American Family Home,

The preoccupation with controlling the environment and creating a protective family enclave in the home became even stronger in the twentieth century ...Bombarded incessantly by newspapers and television networks with reports of crime, rape and murder, suburban homeowners have tightened the locks on their doors ...and rejoiced that suburban life remains more peaceful than life in the city.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Kimberly Dovey, "Home and Homelessness," Home Environments, ed. Irwin Altman and Carol M. Werner (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1985) 34 – 35.

⁹⁵ Michel DeCerteau, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol, Living & Cooking, trans. Timothy J. Tomasik, Volume 2 The Practice of Everyday Life (1984; London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998) 147.

⁹⁶ Wright, Building the Dream, xvii.

⁹⁷ Clark Jr. 235.

The home has continually been posited as a place of safety and privacy in opposition to the overwhelming publicity of the social. It has continued to be framed in terms of that which it keeps out (or in and concealed). As it has developed, the home has come to be defined within a series of hierarchical oppositions such as family/other and private/public that have come to constitute its being.

Connected to the idea of the home as a private retreat is the idea that it is in a phenomenological sense a physical reflection of the individual being. This again returns the home to a subject of metaphysical weight, as it provides physical stability and place for being. In addition, home framed as a transcendent ideal confers upon the individual the guarantee of this enduring safety in being. According to Van DeWetering, home in the nineteenth century became a place for “a special kind of personal nurture, one that concentrated upon the self: self-discovery first, followed by self-acknowledgement, followed by self-realisation...home thus served the individual personality in its private development.”⁹⁸ As the home became increasingly secluded its privacy seemed to take on the personal space of the body, becoming linked to the subject as an extension of its being. This concept continues to be expressed in a contemporary culture that stresses individual expression through home design. Similarly, as the home-place extends the individual’s “place,” any affront on the place of home is metonymically linked with an affront on the individual.

Despite being connected to the individual homeowner in a general sense, home is more often than not figured as a feminine space. Home is the locus for the separate domestic labour of women. Traditionally, as championed by the nineteenth

⁹⁸ Van DeWetering 21.

century writer Catherine Beecher, home is the space of the home minister.⁹⁹ The household is ruled by the housewife, it is the space “for women’s self-sacrifice and domestic isolation.”¹⁰⁰ The spatial separation of the suburban home from the more public urban realm reflected the separation of the female domestic realm from the male labour related realm.¹⁰¹ While women were given control of the home-sphere, they were also to a large extent limited to it and as such there was little separation between work and home. However, while second wave feminism in the 1960s did succeed in reforms that greatly broadened women’s choice of career roles, by and large women continued to play a key role in the domestic upkeep of the home.¹⁰² This continued role is reflected in recent female writers and “domestic stars,” such as Martha Stewart and Lynette Jennings, who have promoted women’s right to choose the domestic home as “her” sphere. Moreover, as will be discussed in Chapter Three, contemporary Canadian images of the *model home* continue to give prominence to the home as a separate sphere defined largely by the presence of women and children.

One of the most prominent ideologies promoted in and through the *model home* is an ideology of consumption. Since the nineteenth century, consumption has been promoted as the method for attaining a house/home, individualising it, and making it one’s space through consumption. Consumption of the home has also

⁹⁹ Catherine Beecher, sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe, was well versed in the early feminist movement. However, while supporting the role of women, and their right to respect for their jobs, she did not support their right to vote or participate in the social – male – realm. Rather she proposed that the woman’s proper place was in the home. There she would act as home minister in charge of all affairs in that realm. Hayden 55 – 57.

¹⁰⁰ Hayden’s description of Catherine Beecher. Hayden 55.

¹⁰¹ Hayden 284. For many, home had been identified with an idea of origin and returning to, but, until the late 1960’s this was an aspect enjoyed primarily by men for whom the home was a space of leisure not of work.

¹⁰² My mother and indeed many mothers work 35 hours a week or more to return home to work for an additional three hours of cooking and cleaning. Weekends similarly offer little respite, as these are often set aside for additional domestic labours.

tended to replace an activist role in the external world. Through consumption of goods women confined to the home by their unrecognised labour were given an active role to fulfil as chief consumer and home decorator. Linked to the notion of control over the home environment, according to Hayden, women in the 1920s women were urged by advertising to play the role of “Mrs. Consumer” creating a home environment through consumption.¹⁰³ The ideals of domestic *female* consumption continued to be linked with an ideal image of home well into the late 1960 and 1970s. Consumption, and specifically female consumption, has its ideal representation in the home’s parlour or living-room. This most public space in the home was (and continues to be) that place where one performs one’s tastes and values through the consumable objects displayed. While it was originally conceived of as a display area for the family’s (specifically the woman’s) creations, by 1890 mass produced items became more economical, fashionable and available.¹⁰⁴ As a result there was a shift towards the display of items “purchased from a store or catalogue which captured the refinement and culture the home was supposed to encourage.”¹⁰⁵ Decorations and choices of consumer goods reflected not only the family’s taste and refinement, but were also thought to express the individuality of their home.¹⁰⁶ From the late nineteenth into the twentieth century the home increasingly became a space for display and consumption, fulfilling a necessary role as repository for the increasing availability of mass-produced consumer goods. Appliances, for example, were promoted by advertisers as “labour-saving” devices symbolic of women’s

¹⁰³ Hayden 284.

¹⁰⁴ Clark Jr. 131.

¹⁰⁵ Wright, Building the Dream, 110.

¹⁰⁶ Clark Jr. 131.

liberation. Home appliances were not only labour saving, but guaranteed, by their progressive obsolescence, the continual consumption of “home.” The suburban home, thus provided not only space, but also a workforce for the new industrial products.¹⁰⁷

Finally, throughout these various iterations, one often-repeated theme of the middle class *model home* has been a nostalgia for past iterations. This repeated nostalgia in various elements of representation, construction and decoration has promoted the idea of home as historically transcendent, universal and stable, despite the numerous changes it has undergone. Mass produced advertising and literature has perpetuated a nostalgic view evoking “popular images that (were) informal and comfortable, reminiscent of wealth, stability and tradition.”¹⁰⁸ Faced with an unstable present, society has looked back at an imaginary stable past. The repetition of nostalgic views of home through various popular sources has maintained the ideology that perpetuates home as transcendent.

Home, while appearing universal is historically and contextually determined. It depends upon the negotiations of opposites such as private/public and female/male, and moreover depends upon the vigilance of government agencies and public and private interests to keep its ideal alive in a current *model*. On the one hand home is existentially loaded, providing a sense of self, stability and safety that attempts to transcend its architectural iteration. On the other hand, the agency of such a metaphysically invested term is imbued with social, political and economic values that through their relation to such a powerful ideology become more real. The desire

¹⁰⁷ Hayden 275.

¹⁰⁸ Rybczynski 11. Similar conclusions are made by Clark Jr. xii – xv.

for home in some cases is so strong that often injustices in the name of home go unchallenged.¹⁰⁹ It is for this reason, that iterations of the ideal must constantly be interrogated.

¹⁰⁹ This idea is discussed at length in Price.

Chapter Three

The Model Home in Canadian Magazines

In this chapter, home as an ideological construct is encountered within the context of mass circulated magazines. Having exposed in the preceding chapters the boundaries and histories of the concept of home, this chapter begins to seek the visual iteration within contemporary Canadian culture. Drawing upon scholarship on popular culture, this chapter examines the paragon formed within the context of Canadian women's home magazines. Specifically focusing upon the magazines Style at Home, Canadian House & Home, City & Country Home and related periodicals, I examine the foundations and frameworks that perpetuate a national paradigm of home. In this pursuit, I seek not to reinforce a coherent ideology, but to suggest its indeterminacy. Following from Chapters One and Two, the concept of home is interrogated in the specific context of its representation. It is evaluated according to its mode of presentation, its significance, and its construction, so as to question the paradigm's assumption of univocality. Evaluated against past ideological constructions, such as the Victorian cult of domesticity, the contemporary paragon is exposed to the ruptures and inconsistencies concealed in its visual signification.

Reading Magazines

As noted in Chapter One, this chapter critically reviews Canadian magazines, drawing upon the methods used in communications studies, but focusing primarily upon the manner in which each magazine, in concert with its cover imagery, perpetuates a paradigm of "home." Not only is this undertaking heavily indebted to

the work of Valerie J. Korninek and Fraser Sutherland, but it attempts to situate the discussion of the magazine imagery both within a communications field, as well as within the broader concerns of this thesis - the dissemination of the ideology of home.

As such, I wish at the outset, briefly to place the following discussion within the context of cultural studies. My position is influenced by the work of many theorists who seek to unpack popular culture in a manner that takes into account the malleability of cultural messages.¹ I therefore view the magazine as presenting a highly engineered message that is nevertheless always mediated by the reader. This chapter “reads” magazines so as to draw out standards of the representation of “home” - not to reinforce that image, but to introduce the instability of the ideologies perpetuated within that paradigm. Meaning, I suggest, is in constant negotiation *in-between* a given text and its audience and within that text itself. Reflecting this notion, a given paradigm of home, such as the Victorian ideal, or the magazine image, is examined in terms of its appearance and its constant negotiation. While often conceived of as a coherent ideology, “home” is presented in this chapter as a construction with an emphasis on the discontinuities at work within that concept.

¹ As discussed in Chapter One, this approach is employed by writers such as: Valerie J. Korninek, Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Inc., 2000). Tania Modleski, Loving with a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women (Toronto: The Women’s Press, 1984). Cynthia Duquette Smith, “Discipline – It’s a ‘Good Thing’: Rhetorical Constitution and Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia,” Women’s Studies in Communication 23. 3 (Fall 2000): 337 – 366. Beth Dalia Snyder, “Confidence Women: Constructing Female Culture and Community in ‘Just Among Ourselves’ and the Ladies’ Home Journal,” American Transcendental Quarterly 12. 4 (December 1998): 311 – 325. and to a lesser degree, Jennifer Scanlon, Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies’ Home Journal, Gender and Promises of Consumer Culture (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

Foundations

As discussed in Chapters One and Two, “home,” while referring to a general etymological series of referents, is also singular in appearance and situation. However, when ideologically framed, “home” appears separate from context as a transcendent signifier. As suggested in Chapter Two, “home” has throughout its history been represented by many physical iterations. However, ideological frameworks work to contain this iterability and undecidability in an effort to present a naturalized and coherent paradigm.

This paradigm has generally been structured by a conceptual framing of historical transcendence that is accorded by a series of hierarchical oppositions such as: home-house, place-space, feminine-masculine and private-public. The home, in ideology, is defined by the first binary of each coupling in order to present a stable place for “being-in-the-world.” However, as discussed in Chapters One and Two, the *unheimlich*, the concealed other of the oppositions, is always connected, albeit concealed within, the framework. The paragon of home is thus introduced as undecidable – in constant negotiation between poles of meaning and context.

“Home,” in mass media continues, however, to be perpetuated as ideologically stable. Magazines, for instance, depict “home” as a nationally recognizable visual signifier. As discussed in Chapters One and Two, one of the ways that “home” has been perpetuated in cultural outlets as non-contingent has been through the repetition of past images of home, often ones reminiscent of the previously discussed Victorian suburban ideal, thereby suggesting a continuity of signification.

Presenting the Ideology of Home

The magazines discussed within this chapter present an ideologically coded image of home. That image is intended to appeal to a national audience and as such the magazines present home in such a way that it appears natural, obvious and coherent. However, the paradigm cannot surpass its mode of presentation, it is necessarily mediated by its visual signification and context and as such it singularly iterable in each appearance. Furthermore, while appealing to a transcendent concept, each publication house presents a differing vision of home that reflects the content and ideals of that magazine.² While most of this chapter focuses upon a generic exemplar of home presented through national magazines, this generalisation is a construction

² For instance, the Maclean Hunter publications reviewed, Canadian Homes (1960 – 1962), Canadian Home Décor (1978 – 1980), Home Décor/Canada (1980 – 82) and City & Country Home (1982 – 1994) generally portray an upper middle class, larger and more opulent home. The home of these magazines includes Toronto condominiums, lavish foreign villas, large suburban estates, and expansive and decadent apartments. Furthermore, while promoting homelike activities, these tend to be centered upon fine dining and entertaining. Finally, the consumer items promoted as accessories to the Maclean Hunter standard are generally high-end products including antiques and fine art. The Southam, and later Telemedia, publications that formed the ancestry of the contemporary Style at Home (1997 -): Select Homes (1988 – 1989), Select Homes & Food (1989 – 1994) and Canadian Select Homes (1994 – 1997); offer a solidly middle-class home that is framed, by magazine articles, as the locus for female creativity: through cooking, gardening and housekeeping, as well as female consumption, and décor items. The home presented in the earlier incarnations is a broad image of home, which, while most often representing interiors of suburban homes did offer other choices. However, recent issues of Style at Home increasingly depict small, condo-like spaces, or more abstract depictions of the home interior, perhaps in an effort to keep up with the booming condo industry in Toronto (where the magazine is published). Moreover, the home represented is also stylistically unconventional, stressing modern, and contemporary design, in addition to more traditional styles. Furthermore, the later publication, Style at Home has shifted toward magalogue presentation. Magalogue is a term employed by Fraser Sutherland to describe a magazine that “promoted its consumer goods by means of a unifying editorial theme.” (Fraser Sutherland, The Monthly Epic: A History of Canadian Magazines 1789 – 1989 [Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1989] 258.) The final series of home magazines, published by a variety of companies developed from humble beginnings as a series of weak trade magazine promoting primarily the purchase of suburban detached housing. Moving House & Home (1979 – 1982), House & Home Magazine (1982), House & Home (1982 – 1984) and Canadian House & Home (1984 -), present a predominately traditional image of home. They depict a detached, or semi-detached home encased on all sides by the privacy of a suburban garden. Like Style at Home, Canadian House & Home (the most recent incarnation) presents a consumer-driven image of home, targeted primarily at a middle-class female readership.

that is inevitably differed and deferred in each re-presentation. Ideology, however, as discussed in Chapter One, has a way of naturalising such disruptions in order to perpetuate a consistent whole.

Magazine publication is a business. Therefore, the product is mediated by a concern for profitability. Profit is earned through subscriptions and most prominently through the sale of advertising space; as a result there is a constant balancing of appeal to audience/consumers and advertisers/clients. Often this balance is mutually dependant - if the audience likes the product more copies are sold, the larger circulation of the magazine the more clients will pay for advertising space. At times, this model comes under conflict, for instance when clients think that the articles are not projecting an “atmosphere” conducive to promoting their merchandise. Readers, however, still retain ultimate control. They can refuse to buy goods or boycott the magazine itself.

The importance of the reader in the survival of the magazine is reflected by the concern for “audience appeal” within the production process. For example, home magazines must present a standard that is consistent with audience expectations for that paradigm. This is one of the reasons that the Victorian conception of home as noted in Chapter Two, is still so resonant: the past image confers stability and veracity on the current iteration, thus furthering the believability of the model.

Home magazines function ideologically, while presenting “common sense,” useful information as truthful bias-free facts. The magazine presents this ideological belief structure to its potential audience in three primary ways: by constituting an audience as subject within a magazine-community; by functioning as a personal guide

for the audience; and by providing a space for personal participation or virtual participation in the presented ideological model.³ The publication's mode of presentation aims to form a bond between the magazine, accompanying ideology, and its intended audience. As Cynthia Duquette Smith outlines, rhetorical constitution is made possible by the magazine's ability to address itself to a specific audience, thereby constituting that viewer as subject to the ideology presented within.⁴ This relates back to Louis Althusser's description of ideology as that which makes subjects of individuals.⁵

The magazine constitutes the individual - as part of the magazine community, as part of the casual audience, as a subscriber, or as a participating member – as subject to the presented ideology. Home magazines provide content and images aimed at a specific audience who, by purchasing the magazine, is, to differing degrees (depending upon participation level), constituted as a subject of the represented home-lifestyle. Moreover, to further audience constitution, magazines often offer forums in which the audience member may participate in a personal relationship with the publication. In reading and, more directly, in writing letters to the editor, the audience member is able to picture herself as part of a community formed by the magazine.⁶ In contemporary Canadian home magazines, interactive forums⁷ elicit

³ This three pronged understanding of how an audience is constituted is partly derived from arguments presented in: Cynthia Duquette Smith, "Discipline – It's a 'Good Thing': Rhetorical Constitution and Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia," *Women's Studies in Communication*, 23, 3 (Fall 2000): 337 – 366.

⁴ Smith 241.

⁵ Louis Althusser, "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatus (Notes Towards An Investigation)," *Visual Culture: The Reader*, ed. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 1999) 320.

⁶ In comparing the letters column of the nineteenth century *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Chatelaine*, Valerie J. Korninek notes that the audience could interact with each other and the editorial staff forming an inter-magazine community through the letters page. Valerie J. Korninek, *Roughing it in the*

greater investment in the magazines (and their ideologies) from the reader by providing the sense of a living community. At the same time, however, these pages also provide an area for resistance and debate from within the common space of the magazine. In the end, the choice is up to the individual to determine their investment level.⁸ In deciding whether to fill the constituted position, the audience member chooses how invested they are in the paradigm offered.

A second way the magazine attempts to incorporate the audience into its logic is through the constitution of the audience as student to the periodical and/or dominant personality presented as instructor or guide. Home magazines, for instance, often provide especially knowledgeable and charismatic editors as domestic instructors. When the characters are absent, the magazine may function as a guide to that paradigm.⁹ In choosing to become a casual or frequent subscriber to a magazine one asserts to share interests, goals and perhaps values with it. This relationship resembles a teacher-student exchange suggesting that while the guide imparts knowledge, the subject will not necessarily follow that instruction to the letter. Smith sees this relationship as fostered by the magazine Martha Stewart Living: “[If] Martha Stewart is a ‘cultural teacher’ she may be teaching those who want to enter the leisure class as opposed to those who are already its established members ... serving as a role

Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc., 1999) 320.

⁷ Such as “Letters” (Canadian Home Décor), “Letters from Home” (Style at Home) and “RSVP” (Canadian House & Home).

⁸ As Smith describes, in choosing to identify the audience member chooses how that model influences their subjectivity - “faced with the messages of a given text, the audience member identifies with the characterised audience to a greater or lesser degree.” Smith 342.

⁹ Editors as key figures not only functioned as instructor/guides, but also as guides to the magazine, often through editorial columns such as “On the Home Front.” One good example of the elevation of editor to expert-teacher is found with Lynette Jennings’ popular growth from contributor to editor in Select Homes and Food in 1991, to TV guest star, to TV personality on the Home and Garden Network.

model.”¹⁰ In a similar manner, a home magazines’ audience, constituted as student is presented with an abstracted model, a culmination of visual, written and advertising content. This paradigm may not necessarily reflect their current situation, however, the audience may learn from, follow, emulate, envision or reject this given model.

When the audience member does not choose to participate fully as a student, the magazine offers participation at the virtual level. As Smith points out, the magazine permits one to “participate on a ‘virtual’ level simply by ... picking up a magazine ... [cultivating] audience members who value homemaking as a *voyeuristic* experience.”¹¹ The cover image offers the model as visually available. In addition, by bringing the magazine home, displaying it on the coffee table, or elsewhere, one incorporates the paradigm at the virtual level with one’s real dwelling.¹²

Photography as a medium permits greater investment in the virtual “world” it apparently provides. As discussed in Chapter One, photography is an excellent ideological medium as it seems to provide access to an unmediated “real.” Photography, employed in home magazines, encourages audience identification, on an ideological level, with the seeming real space depicted. In regard to the magazine’s covers, the dominant use of the medium increases what Sutherland has termed its “totemic significance.”¹³ Photography permits extended voyeuristic investment by the audience member within the space of the publication. In home magazines this virtual experience is furthered by the frequency of large, glossy and

¹⁰ Brackets my addition. Smith 347.

¹¹ Brackets my addition. Ibid. 354.

¹² As Sutherland notes, “one function of magazines had always been their totemic social significance: how they looked on the coffee table, how well they blended with the reader’s status.” Fraser Sutherland, The Monthly Epic: A History of the Canadian Magazine 1789 – 1989 (Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1989) 258.

¹³ Sutherland 258.

uninhabited rooms made available to the viewer by the cover. The lack of people in the photographic space opens the image of home to virtual inhabitation by the audience member. Similarly, the absence of pets and family photographs expedite virtual possession of the space by the audience. The home thus presented has no memory of previous occupants and is available outside a history. Moreover, in the few occurrences of people within home magazines, they are often not in control of the camera's gaze, appearing as objects rather than subjects.¹⁴ The instability and ephemeral nature of the figure's presence reinforces the viewer's entry into the picture, for their possession is not blocked by a gaze emanating from within the image itself, thus perpetuating the virtual involvement of the audience in the space of the magazine.¹⁵

Covering Home

The cover of the magazine performs an important function in regards to audience constitution – it is the initial space of communication between the periodical and its potential audience. As Valerie J. Korninek describes in her study of Chatelaine magazine,

The cover was the first impression Chatelaine made. As the largest advertisement for the magazine, the cover art is indicative of how Maclean Hunter positioned the periodical, and how the readers wrangled over the difference between the company's ideal reader (presumed by the cover) and their own sense of themselves as the 'representative' reader.¹⁶

¹⁴ Often the figures do not hold the camera's gaze, as they frequently appear blurred in motion, or with their backs to the camera. The figures are blurred in: October 2000 Canadian House & Home, Summer 2000 Canadian House & Home, June 2000 Canadian House & Home, November 1999 Canadian House & Home, September 2000 Style at Home and September 2002 Style at Home. Among those that have their full back to the camera are: Summer 2002 Canadian House & Home, February/March 1999 Canadian House & Home, and February/ March 1998.

¹⁵ The absence of people in each magazine and overall is noted in Appendix B, and pictured in Chart Five.

¹⁶ Korninek 106.

The image of home projected by the cover of home magazines, is at the point of contact, evaluated against the individuals pre-existing conception of home.

Presumably, if the image seems realistic to the viewer, they become invested in the paradigm and the ideology offered, albeit to differing degrees (as noted above). The cover is thus considered an important site of initial dissemination, as its purpose is to convincingly present to the potential audience a credible ideology.

The importance of the cover in audience constitution is discussed, in this chapter, through an analysis of the mode of presentation employed by the magazine. The subject of the periodical is inferred through various means. Via the prominent placement of the title in combination with the imagery, the cover at the outset divulges its content. Thus, in the magazines examined here, cover images of domestic interiors juxtaposed with titles such as Style at *Home* and Canadian House & *Home* signal that the content revolves around a concept of “home.” Furthermore, as discussed above, the use of photography ideologically positions “home” as real and voyeuristically available. Moreover, items within the photograph are employed as signifiers of a visual paragon. In order to elaborate upon the ideology perpetuated by the magazines I analyze the covers, as discussed in Chapter One, in terms of how depiction of location, style and various repeated elements present a specific paradigm. By considering the manner in which home is most frequently depicted I am able to trace the edges of the discursive formation in order to further analyze its component parts.

Domestic locations, as depicted by cover photographs, ideologically situate the visual paradigm of home. For instance, the representation in contemporary

magazines conforms to a spatial hierarchy Wright notes as having been prevalent in a Victorian conception of home. As in Chapter Two, Victorian domestic space was ordered according to three groups: spaces for presentation to family and guests, spaces for the production of domestic goods, and exclusively private spaces.¹⁷ Contemporary magazines perpetuate this spatial hierarchy, and at the same time perpetuate the social divisions it implies.

Those locations within the home that serve as presentation areas for family and guests, such as the living-room, dining room, patio, garden and passage ways, are most predominantly reproduced on contemporary magazine covers. These rooms are semi-private, meaning that while necessitating permission for entry, they function as social gathering spaces. They mediate between the private world of the family and the external social.

The living-room, as can be observed in Chart One of Appendix B, is the most prominently pictured room. This room functions as a space of leisure both for family and for guests. It is the room most accessible to the outside world, and traditionally the room in which the display of personal status is most prevalent. Its frequent representation reflects its condition as a mediatory area between the inside and outside existence of the home. The cover of City & Country Home magazine from 1983, figure one, displays elements commonly associated with illustrations of this room. The photograph opens onto a large, ornate and comfortable room, lit, apparently, with subdued ambient light from candles scattered throughout the space. Decorated in a traditional manner, the presence of antique furniture and ornate

¹⁷ Gwendolyn Wright, Moralism and the Model Home (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980) 34.

mouldings reinforce the timeless opulence of the space. The luxuriance of the particular room is further suggested by the décor and various fine art objects (such as the painting above the hearth). Furthermore, elements such as the sofa, the fireplace and the flowers suggest comfort, while the room as a space for entertainment is insinuated by the champagne bottle chilling on the coffee table. In its mediatory function the living-room not only entertains guests, but asserts the status and taste of the homeowners. This, and other such depictions of the living-room, reconfirm the home as a space not only for leisure, but as a reflection of one's social position and individual taste.

The patio, or veranda, while external to the home proper doubles as a second living-room (and dining room). Primarily depicted solely during the summer and spring months, home magazines picture the patio as a secondary site for entertaining guests and for private contemplation. Typical of the imagery used to represent such a locale is the May/June 1995 cover of Canadian Select Homes, figure two. The rustic patio encased on three sides by the greenery of hedges and vines, opens in the center to reveal an idyllic retreat. Two cozy wicker chairs stare at each other across a small café styled table on the top of which sits a variety of potted flowers. The right chair, on an angle to the viewer's gaze makes its seat available to us, encouraging a virtual fantasy of entertaining or relaxing within this serene environment. Like the living-room, the patio is a relatively accessible place, it is a space for leisurely interaction between the family and guests, and to some extents, although not as prominent in figure two, the display of status and taste. Furthermore, the patio suggests a

necessary relationship between the home and the cultivated garden area that surrounds it.¹⁸

Other mediatory spaces, such as the dining room or hallway are, as shown in Chart One, less visible than the living-room, but like the patio, function as semi-private leisure and presentation areas. For example, depictions of the dining room, such as the Fall/Winter 1978 issue of Canadian Home Décor, often focus more upon the table setting than the intended function of the space. Other representations of the semi-private areas of the home similarly concentrate upon style and decoration rather than function.

The kitchen, the second most represented room¹⁹ in contemporary magazines serves not only as a mediatory space for entertaining, but as the site of domestic production (and, frequently, consumption). In contemporary houses, the kitchen is no longer the isolated space it once was,²⁰ however, its representation continues to allude to its assumed gender in addition to the separation of domestic labour from broader economic concerns. The kitchen represents a semi-private locale (both for family and guests) with overtones of comfort, sustenance and bounty. The October 1992 cover of Canadian House & Home, figure three, is a fairly typical representation. The clean open kitchen gives prominence to food, such as the foreground bowls of apples; decoration, such as the shelved pots and vases in the background; and coziness,

¹⁸ This suggests a suburban or country home with large garden space that separates public and private property.

¹⁹ See Chart One.

²⁰ In the nineteenth century it was considered a private space within the home, a space mainly for women and children. As Wright describes, this shift in the publicity of the kitchen occurred as a result of industrialization and modernization. The kitchen, as the beneficiary of many home-centered scientific advances, became the central room to display such new technologies. In addition, as more consumer goods became available storage space in the kitchen shrank - no longer necessitating the large room at the rear of the house. Wright, Moralism and the Model Home, 239 – 245.

represented by the foreground candle and subdued colour palette of the photograph. The kitchen, thus represented, is a natural and ordered environment. Repetition of flowers, candle light and rustic décor all suggest the simplicity of the space. Moreover, the image suggests that the work associated with the kitchen is natural, enjoyable and easy. The effortlessness of the labour is most prominently suggested by the presence of modern appliances in the picture plane, visible above the surface of the rustic table top.

The moderate popularity of the kitchen-image on home magazines seems to be in deference to the publications target audience – women. However, the ideological role of its popular representation is more ambiguous. On the one hand, it seems to stylistically perpetuate an outdated stereotype of the gendered kitchen: an assumption that is furthered by cover images that frequently depict women as the primary occupants of the room.²¹ By appealing to a largely female audience through this locale, the magazine could be read as sustaining outdated gender roles within the domestic sphere. However, on the other hand, not to depict the space would be to ignore the many women who daily labour in the kitchen, thus maintaining the isolation of their labour. In this manner, the preponderance of kitchens somewhat disrupts the separation of domestic production from the rest of the home. Nevertheless, the ideological significance of the popular representation of the kitchen is finally negotiated by the viewer in her interpretation.

Domestic spaces whose functions are predominantly private are comparably rare cover locales. More private areas, such as the bedroom and bathroom, were depicted

²¹Of the eight covers that depicted women alone, three showed them in the context of the kitchen. These covers were: September 2000 *Style at Home*, February /March 1998 *Canadian House & Home* and Summer 2000 *Canadian House & Home*.

relatively few times (see Chart One). However, as noted in reference to the semi-private locales, representation concentrated upon style and comfort more than functionality. These images were overwhelmingly traditional and focused primarily on the decoration of these spaces. Moreover, that these private locales were depicted at all confirms that the ideal of the magazines is not just portrayal of a national “home,” but a nationally consumable paradigm.

As previously mentioned, and as discussed in Chapters One and Two, the visual communication of a transcendent ideal of home is often made coherent through reference to past iterations of the paradigm. It is therefore not surprising to find, as displayed in Chart Two, that the home depicted on the covers is most often styled in what is often considered a “traditional manner.” As Sarah A. Leavitt notes, “in domestic manuals, the past is always part of the decorating scheme. Even as domestic advisors tried to lure their readers into the future with new materials and new colours, they emphasized the debt of all Americans to their honorable past.”²² The reference to traditional décor in figures one and three is symptomatic of more than a postmodern pastiche enacted in design – the past reference confers stability and coherence upon a current ideology of home.

However, as Chart Three demonstrates, not all magazine depictions are stylistically comparable. Rather, the predominant styles differ according to the goals of the magazine,²³ the room represented,²⁴ and the year of production. The last, I believe, is especially influential, as periods of economic depression or political strife

²² Sarah A. Leavitt, “It was Always a Good Thing: Historical Precedents for Martha Stewart,” *American Studies* 42. 2 (Summer 2001): 129.

²³ Briefly discussed in more detail in Appendix A.

²⁴ The living-room may be more experimental whereas the dining room often tends toward tradition.

often signal a move to a conservative and traditional depiction of home. Smith notes in her study of Martha Stewart Living, that during the first Gulf War, Stewart urged women to take up more supportive and traditional roles.²⁵ Similarly, the style of décor and representation of the home changes as Canadian society and the housing market suffers recessions and booms.²⁶ Style thus positions the home according to a general paradigm, but also emphasizes the representation's necessary iterability.

Repeated elements, which I maintain, are symbolically and culturally loaded signifiers, recur throughout the presented images of home. These elements, represented in Chart Four, recur in conjunction with locale and style in the photographic tableaux as visual representations of "home." Accessories, such as the three most depicted – flowers, windows and potted plants, are of course common components of many households. It is as a result of their quotidian appearance that they seem to be "naturally" linked with home. However, while appearing everyday, such items also function as signifiers for this paragon. In this manner, a vase of flowers, as visible in figures one and three, seems innocuous, but has symbolic overtones.

That elements employed in the depiction of "home" could have symbolic significance dates back to nineteenth century American home design according to Clifford Clark Jr. and Gwendolyn Wright. Clark Jr. writes: from the positioning of "home" in plan books, and home manuals, "it is evident that their basic aim was to

²⁵ Smith 356.

²⁶ For example, during a growth period in the 1960s the home in Canadian Homes was excessively modern, reflecting the optimism of the period. During the recession of the late 1980s and early nineties the home of Select Homes & Food and Canadian Select Homes was largely traditional. And in a post-millennium boom market the home of Style at Home shows more modern and experimental tendencies.

give domestic architecture a symbolic and moral meaning.”²⁷ Therefore the image of home and components used in that representation, become signifiers for the emotional and often moralist concepts that are tied to a paradigm of home. In contemporary representations, seemingly everyday items such as candles, art, windows, fireplaces and potted plants symbolically function within the photographic tableaux to present a highly constructed ideology of home.²⁸

Deconstructing the Visual Paradigm

Magazines attempt to present a coherent model of home. This idealized and transcendent signifier is given presence over one tied to the iterability of communication. Having examined above some of the ways an ideology of home is framed within the photographic cover, I now propose to analyze in more detail the forces of signification at play within the presented paradigm. As noted earlier, I do not intend to perpetuate the ideology, nor to destroy it, but rather to suggest the *undecidability* of its univocality. In many ways this amounts to a *deconstruction* of the magazine image of home. For Jacques Derrida, *deconstruction* seeks in-between texts the site of negotiation within a constructed field. According to Barbara Johnson,

²⁷Clifford Edward Clark Jr., The American Family Home, 1800 – 1960 (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986) 238.

²⁸ Interestingly many of the elements repeated in contemporary magazine depictions of home are common to Dutch seventeenth century genre paintings. Art historians such as Eddy DeJogh, noted, in reference to Dutch painting, the prevalence of everyday objects that bespeak the morality of home. While in recent years the dependence upon this form of interpretation has been critiqued within art history circles, I believe that the idea that elements such as fireplaces and flowers can have significance aside from their base appearance has trickled down into common visual signification. Elements in Dutch interiors such as Jan Steen’s 1661 Easy Come, Easy Go or still life works such as Clara Peeters Still Life with Gold Goblet and Collectibles (1612) tend to recur in contemporary magazine photographic tableaux. These elements include ornate fireplaces, art pieces, windows with garden views, dishware, food, drink, flowers, vases and ornate dishes. It is interesting to consider that elements first used to represent the paragon of home in the seventeenth century continue to be employed in contemporary images.

... the word 'deconstruction' is closely related not to the word 'destruction' but to the word 'analysis,' which etymologically means 'to undo' – a virtual synonym for 'to de-construct.' The deconstruction of a text does not proceed by random doubt or generalized skepticism, but by careful teasing out of warring forces of signification *within the text itself*.²⁹

As such, I work from within the ideology of home as it is made present, in order to elaborate upon the undecidable negotiation of signifiers within that paradigm.

The hierarchical opposites through which the ideology of home is advanced are in many ways derivative of those common in a Victorian construction of home. The contemporary paragon limits "home" to stereotypes and assumptions based on gender, race, sexuality, class, economic, political and spatial relations. In contemporary magazines "home" is visually communicated to the audience as a transcendent and ahistorical signifier positioned by a series of hierarchical oppositions. However, as will be discussed below, these hierarchies are highly constructed. Despite the seeming opposition of the poles, the binaries that frame home are undecidably part of the same economy. Through a review of some of the primary hierarchies that pose "home" as a transcendent paradigm, I will discuss how the undecidability of the binary oppositions works to reveal the play of signification "home" is subject to in its rendition.

Towards this end, I employ two terms, discussed at length in Chapter One, *model home* and *unheimlich*, that refer to the construction of "home" and to the undecidability of the full presence of this sign. As discussed earlier, *model home* refers in an abstract sense to the imaginary paradigm, to its mode of presentation and the ideology connected to it. However, the term also refers to the singularity and iterability of the image as it is differed and deferred in visual communication. For

²⁹ Barbara Johnson, "Translator's Introduction," *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (1972; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981) xiv.

example, while magazines paradigmatically represent home, the cover images are singular in presentation – inherently connected to the context in which they appear. The term *unheimlich* signifies a similar undecidability of meaning. *Unheimlich* refers to the negotiation between those elements that frame the ideology of home as present, and the concealed relational binaries that question the stability and coherence of a univocal image of home. For instance, rather than home being conceptually framed as a private space in opposition to the public, when the undecidability between the poles is made apparent this suggests that the ideology of home is exposed to its *unheimlich*.

Model home and *unheimlich* form two parts of the analysis of “home” – each in its way suggesting the inconsistency of a totalizing paradigm. Using these two terms I work from within the ideology, emphasizing the fluidity of signification already within. In the discussion that ensues below, I elaborate on the inconsistencies, disruptions, and assumptions that always differ and defer the coherency of a conceptually present home.

The ideology of home, as represented on magazine covers, is built upon nostalgic citations of past depictions of the paragon. The importance of these past references, such as to candles, fireplaces, and other classic décor items, is that the real or imagined past lends credibility to the contemporary paradigm.³⁰ This use of the past in images of home I see as commensurate with what Michel DeCerteau describes as the practice of citation. According to DeCerteau,

³⁰ This reference to the past was a repeated theme in home design. In the nineteenth century, popular styles of homes such as the Queen Anne, Cape Cod, and Colonial Revival suggested symbolic transcendence by making reference to past ‘happier’ times. Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) 51.

Citation thus appears to be the ultimate weapon for making people believe. Because it plays on what the other is assumed to believe, it is the means by which the 'real' is instituted. To cite the other on their behalf is hence to make credible the simulacra produced in a particular place ... to cite is thus to give reality to the simulacrum produced by a power, by making people believe that others believe in it, but without producing any believable object.³¹

The past elements are cited free from their negative aspects, and indeed free from all context. For example, the fireplace, evident in figure one, is framed as a tame, warm space – the heart of home - not as a potential fire hazard. The reproduction of nostalgic elements, such as the fireplace, is ambiguous. While signifying a “golden past” their contemporary interpretation as safe, clean and primarily decorative, relocates the paradigm to the undecidable realm of the *model home*. While referencing a past image of home, this ideal is not fully accessible, rather the contemporary image is necessarily an iteration, repeatable but other. For example, the fireplace, while referencing past fireplaces, is a contemporary version, it is decorative rather than a necessity. In this manner, the goals of nostalgic representation can never be fully realized as the image can only communicate a different and singular *model home*.

The quality of home is ephemeral. What visually stimulates the feeling of homeliness is difficult to describe. However, magazines through various visual tropes, associated with nostalgic depictions, attempt to make present the fleeting sensation of the *heimlich*. *Heimlich*, or homely, in reference to the space of home describes familiarity, kindness, intimacy, and simplicity.³² These qualities are ideally expressed in images (such as those seen in figures two and three) that invoke the

³¹ I do realize the irony in citing this passage to defend my discussion. Michel DeCerteau, The Practice of Everyday Life, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1984) 188 – 189.

³² J. A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, eds., The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd Ed. Vol. IV (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 329.

innocent naivete of home. Not only does the style and location insinuate such emotions, but so does the prevalence of elements such as flowers, cornucopias of fruit and vegetables, fireplaces and candles. However, while these symbolic elements litter the space they often serve another *unheimlich* function. The decorative elements, in the context of the magazine are also reminders of the consumer culture that renders the nostalgic simplicity of these elements as other - as consumer fetishes.

Magazines repeat natural elements in their photographic tableaux: in the guise of outdoor locations, the prevalence of windows, use of natural fiber in furnishings, and the presence of elements such as flowers and potted plants. These invocations are intended to support a conception of home as a “natural” space in opposition to the impersonal and technocratic social environment. This reference to the natural implies not only a connection to the world of living things, but also suggests the innate character of home as a locus of being. This hierarchical opposition between nature and technology was quite effective in defining a Victorian concept of home, in many respects the model for contemporary magazines’ ideal home. The Victorian suburban home especially, was praised for its garden and the preponderance of windows that permitted natural light and scenery entrance into the residence.³³ In contemporary magazines, the home is similarly depicted as engulfed within a pastoral setting. While not explicitly, the suggestion is made that the contemporary paradigm of home exists within a suburban-like natural buffer zone. As Chart Four shows, windows are a frequently-repeated photographic element. These windows perform

³³As Wright notes, “the fashionable Victorian home opened wide to the out-of-doors. Designs emphasized openness between interior and exterior, between the built environment and the nature. Houses usually had large bay windows, with wide panes of glass to let in sunlight and fresh air, while offering residents a pleasant view.” Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home*, 29.

the same function, as their counterparts did in past depictions – they open the home to the natural world.³⁴ Similarly, other elements such as flowers and plants suggest that the home is both close to nature and is itself a natural occurrence.

However, while such elements attempt metaphorically to position “home” as one’s “natural” place in the world, their mediation by humanity in their representation destabilizes this conception. In each repetition (such as the window or the flower), the natural element is contained and mediated within the home space. Despite the desire to position home within nature, technology is a necessary component. For it is through technological advancements that the home is situated within the environment without being subject to the whims of nature. Within the home, nature occurs not as a wild element but a cultivated and contained symbol of man’s dominance over the natural. Representations of home thus show a nature bound by man, for the concealed *unheimlich* other of technology protects the home from the potential threat of uncontrolled nature.

Home, the sign, is defined in part through reference to its private demarcation.³⁵ Visually the signifier is communicated by reference to its privacy and seclusion in opposition to the public and social world.³⁶ In contemporary magazines the privacy of the home, in all its physical iterations, is of prime concern.³⁷ Home is visually depicted as a secluded space that contains few liminal areas that mediate between social and private leisure. This negotiation is most strikingly visible in figure four,

³⁴ In 72% of the covers that show windows they let either natural light into the home or views of natural imagery without suggesting that the home is adjacent to any other man-made structure.

³⁵ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. IV, 322 – 326.

³⁶ As discussed earlier and in Chapter Two, historically the separation of home and state has defined the term.

³⁷ It is of such a concern that the exceedingly private spaces of the home are rarely displayed upon magazine covers.

the March 1984 cover of City & Country Home. The photograph, shot from within, depicts the separation of public and private space, alluded to by the pair of glass-paneled doors that mediate the entrance way. The external public is visible in the interior only as fragmented reflections caught in the glass of the doors – it is not fully exposed. Similarly, the interior space of the home is hidden from the gaze of the public world. The home as self-contained is also perpetuated in cover images by the function of the window. While windows are visible in over forty-five percent of the covers, ninety-one percent of these give no indication that a world exists outside the confines of the home and its surrounding garden. Similarly within photographs of the exterior, only three percent depict the home in the context of a neighborhood. In this manner home is presented as a separate space.

However, within this visual construction, the *unheimlich* lingers, suggesting the undecidable negotiation of the private and public realms. Decoration and display, that figure so prominently within the magazines, suggest that the economy of the home is always tied to the public world. Similarly, the private home as a status symbol reflects the repercussions of social obligations and desires. Moreover, the home as a suburban home, condominium or other single-family dwelling is always tied to both Western cultural traditions and, by ownership, to the economic world it separates itself from. In its iteration home is always negotiated between the private and public. The privacy of home is not “natural,” but is something that is ideologically and physically maintained.

As alluded to in the previous discussion of nature and privacy, the home, despite conceptual framing to the contrary, is a highly controlled environment. The assumed

privacy of the home, for example, necessitates conditions for and control over entrance. The tight control of this privacy is reflected in the dual doors of figure four - the dual entrance way not only mediates space, but it keeps the public out and the family in. Aspects of cultural and social control enter the home in many forms, including through popular media and the emphasis of status and style. Home experts daily invade the imaginary space of home attempting to exert their influence on a range of home practices including décor and domestic life. While mediated by audience reception, style and fashion influence the perception and construction of home.³⁸ Finally, those natural elements represented, which position home as innate, also speak of the control of its environment. The garden that frames the home, as well as the potted plants, vases of flowers, fireplaces and candles all serve as reminders of the struggle within home to domesticate and control the potentially chaotic forces of nature.³⁹

While one of the dominant mythos of Canada is its multicultural heritage,⁴⁰ national Canadian home magazines perpetuate the racial construction and segregation that defined, for example, the Victorian suburban home. The depiction of the home as a predominantly “white” place is not overtly visible in magazines, partly because so few covers show people. However, of the twenty-eight percent of covers that did show people, and the thirty-one covers that depicted humans in the environment of

³⁸ This is reflected in magazine covers that stress home design through subtitles visible in covers such as figures two and three.

³⁹ This is once again reflective of nineteenth century home symbolism. As Wright notes, “window conservatories of potted plants were found in many home. Just as the house now opened more to the outdoors through windows and bays and porches, women in particular were eager to bring nature into the home and cultivate it ... underlying even this fashionable display was the desire to control the world ... to allay fears of death and decay by domesticating and preserving the smallest twigs and flowers.” Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home*, 29.

⁴⁰ The relatively recent concept of multicultural heritage supplants the outdated notion of of bi-culturalism.

the home,⁴¹ only three covers represented a visible minority. As shown in Chart Five, this amounts to only ten percent of the total representation of occupants.⁴² Despite attempting to portray a national paragon of home, the people positioned as occupants reflect only part of the Canadian public. Moreover, while visible minorities do not appear as homeowners their cultural artifacts are often depicted as part of the décor. Equal representation is thus sublimated by consumption of culture.

The representation of class is not necessarily exclusive to all the magazines reviewed in this chapter. As Appendix A shows, each publication promotes a slightly different *model home*. However, home magazines, while attempting to appeal to many class groups have generally represented “homes” accessible to middle and upper class families.⁴³ Especially in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, magazines have largely focused not only on selling themselves, but on selling the value of consumption. This ideology is reflected in the focus upon décor and product placement. Home, conflated with individual place, as discussed in Chapter Two, becomes the site of subjective expression made possible through consumer status items. The items that litter one’s home, especially in those spaces accessible to guests (such as the living-room) reflect not only the personality and taste of the home-owner

⁴¹ While thirty-seven covers actually showed people, 12% of these covers were a series of portraits of designers reviewed in Canadian House & Home’s special semi-annual feature issue “The Designer Panel.”

⁴² Such covers are limited to fairly recent issues: April 1996 Canadian House & Home, December 2000/January 2001 Canadian House & Home, and December 2002/January 2003 Canadian House & Home. Part of the reason that all three representation are found on Canadian House & Home is that this magazine most frequently presented people on the cover. It should be noted, however, that the investigation of multi-culturalism was admittedly limited only to cover images, more equal representation may have been found within the magazines themselves.

⁴³ While reflecting a predominantly middle and upper middle class home, the magazines still appeal, albeit to a lesser extent, to a lower class as audience member constituted by virtual participation through the purchase of the magazine.

but perhaps more importantly their class.⁴⁴ However, the magazine as model, invites participation in non-class specific consumption – promoting instead the broad ideals of consumerism. While made available to all classes the home depicted in all of the magazines is one that is redolent of the disposable income and consumption-based leisure associated with the ever-expanding ideology of the middle classes.

Home magazines generally are created to attract a largely female audience.⁴⁵ Advertising is designed to appeal to all areas of female desires. Similarly, one expects that the home depicted on the cover is portrayed in such a manner as to reflect the experiences of its target middle-class female audience. However, the messages contained by such mass publications are not simple, for as discussed earlier in the chapter, the magazine mediates between the desires of advertisers and the audience. As such, it is difficult to place “women’s magazines” – they seem to both project a message and reflect the desires and experiences of their audience. This mediation is especially difficult to discuss in the context of reading the covers along gender lines.

Home in contemporary magazines is depicted as a separate feminine sphere. The emphasis on femininity in opposition to masculinity is reminiscent of the Victorian “Cult of Domesticity” discussed in Chapter Two. Style and presentation of the home as *heimlich*, nurturing, safe, secluded and womb-like (especially evident in figure two) reflects the feminine positioning of the contemporary paradigm. The repetition

⁴⁴ In home magazines with the broadest class appeal, such as Select Homes and House & Home, articles and imagery trumpet a budget-restricted approach to décor that focuses on hand-made items. More middle to upper-middle class magazines such as Style at Home and Canadian House & Home focuses on mass-produced goods, providing examples of both high priced decorative items as well as more affordable ones. The middle ranges of decoration are visible in figures two and three, which display a variety of mass-produced consumables. Higher-class magazines, such as City & Country Home, however encourage decoration of the home through rarefied objects, such as the antiques in figures one and four.

⁴⁵ With a few exceptions noted in Appendix A.

of natural elements within the photographic tableaux can also be read as further situating the home as a feminine sphere. Flowers, plants, and other natural components play a symbolic role, reiterating outdated Victorian domestic values that associate women with the delicacy of the flower.⁴⁶ Such elements, which as Chart Four shows, are central to the representation, of home, associate home not only with the delicacy of “femininity” but motherly roles such as nurture and sustenance.

Furthermore, the frequent depiction of women and children on the covers reflects the gendering of home, a reiteration of Victorian domestic values. Reflecting a gender bias and family focus, the magazines favour, in descending order, the representation of nuclear families, heterosexual couples, children, single women, and a very small margin of single men.⁴⁷ By and large the appearance of people within the space of home is dominated by women and children. Thus the contemporary Canadian home continues to be overwhelmingly represented as a space for women and children, and men only as occasional partners in the domestic sphere. Women, whether physically presented, or insinuated by symbolic substitutes, appear to permeate the secluded space of home.

The continued tendency to depict the home in terms of a female sphere in opposition to the masculine (public) sphere reinforces a post-feminist view of home that pictures the domestic as women’s preferred role (often in addition to full-time

⁴⁶ In nineteenth century home manuals, flowers and plants etc. were connected to ideas of nurturing, mothering and femininity. As noted by Davidoff and Hall in their discussion of nineteenth century family life, “within garden imagery women were increasingly associated with flowers, their brilliant coloring, fragility, fragrance and existence for decorative purposes only.” Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780 – 1850*, rev. ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) 374.

⁴⁷ The exact breakdown is as follows: 30% couples and families, 26% children, 21% women and 2% single men. This, and the racial breakdown of representations, is recorded in Appendix B and represented in Chart Five.

employment). However, while it does to some extent reinforce stereotypes, the contemporary model is also depicted as a space for the multitasking homemaker and female professional. Since the 1960s and Betty Freidan's celebrated critique of women's magazines, there has been, on the part of critics, a wary eye cast upon the genre of women's magazines. Yet, all too often, as Tania Modleski notes, the demonising of these cultural products has been at the expense of the value they may contain.⁴⁸

However, in many cases the contemporary mass-circulated magazines, especially those produced since 1980, have tended to reinforce values which had been harshly critiqued by feminists in the 1960s and 1970s. Smith has described this retrenchment as symptomatic of a post-feminist malaise. In her article on Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia (MSLO) she notes that the magazine reinforces apathy toward the strident edge of second wave feminism. The magazine's

... rhetorics which foreground issues of 'choice'; and personal expression, imply the end of the feminist movement and promote the values of 'choosing' largely stereotypical gender roles ... MSLO taps into existing post feminist sentiments to cultivate and define its audience. Centrally involving the belief that equality between the sexes has been achieved, post-feminism posits 'traditional' gender roles as lifestyle 'choices' for modern women. MSLO's products invite the reader/viewer to participate in the simultaneous transformation of her home and her identity by 'choosing' the home.⁴⁹

This malaise is also symptomatic of Canadian home magazines as they reflect the indeterminacy of the roles the magazines urge women to play - such as designer, professional, mother and homemaker. However, I would add that this malaise is not, in my view, limited to women. Rather, it moves across the sexes, as both come to terms with their roles in the early years of the twenty-first century. While to some

⁴⁸ Tania Modleski, *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women* (Toronto: The Woman's Press, 1984) 25 – 113.

⁴⁹ Smith 339.

extends re-inscribing stereotypical female roles, the magazines do offer a community of women, they do publicise female roles and often offer access to creative solutions to common problems as well as a space for female imagination and resistance to the stereotypical choices offered. After all, the readers finally negotiate the meaning of a given text.

While the magazines can offer a space of resistance for their readership, they often try to guide interpretation of their messages by providing an outlet for escapist fantasies. In such a manner, rather than promoting a critical reading of their visual text, magazines, in deference to their business goals, promote the offered paragon as a naturalised space of retreat. One of the primary functions magazines serve is to fulfill the readers' desire for fantasy. In home magazines diversion is framed by the photograph as a "window" through which one can flee into a space of peace, security and family togetherness. The voyeuristic experience, discussed earlier in terms of audience participation, is one way that Smith describes the ability of magazines to provide an escapist environment. The environment presented within Martha Stewart Living provides, according to Smith, a space for "a subject who values escape into an imaginary and soothing home world."⁵⁰ As discussed in relation to the magazine covers themselves, the home is generally pictured as a secluded and separate space. Moreover, the dominance of the traditional-style and of traditional elements locates the home as enduring and ahistorical - a private apart from the social realm. Magazines, by providing a stable and transcendent view of home, offer a space of retreat from the turbulent "real" world.

⁵⁰Ibid. 355.

Consumption, as depicted within the magazine, offers a practical object for escapist desires. In magazines, home as an environment for potential retreat is paired with the ideology of consumption. The paradigm often features the house made home through proper decoration (art pieces etc.) in addition to positioning the home as a secluded private space constructed through consumption. Consumption thus becomes a mode of escape. In contemporary “women’s magazines” the message of consumerism is inserted throughout.⁵¹ The glossy product-filled photographs that dominate contemporary commercial periodicals reveal a fantasy world made full via consumption.

The conflation of photographic advertising and photographic content reinforces consumer ideology.⁵² Intertextual play around photographic images in magazines causes a slippage between content and advertising that has become increasingly common since the 1980s. As Sutherland notes, “never before had the line between selling and information been fudgier, especially in the form of ‘advertorials’ in which advertising and editorial content were virtually indistinguishable ...[and] the ‘magalogue,’ which promoted its consumer goods by means of a unifying editorial theme.”⁵³ Within the magazines, articles mix with “service articles” and “guides” chiefly devoted to the review and sale of consumer

⁵¹ Even as Doris Anderson in the 1950s and 1960s tried to insert more feminist content into *Chatelaine* I would assume that this often worked to the advantage of advertisers who, by allying themselves with desire for empowerment, offered consumption as empowerment. (This is my assumption based on the description of Anderson’s career given in Korninek’s *Roughing it in the Suburbs*).

⁵² As I write I am reminded of the scene in John Carpenter’s *They Live* when Roddy Piper, who plays the out of work character Nada, with the aid of his special sunglasses finally sees the messages contained within the pages of magazines – “CONSUME.” *They Live!* dir. John Carpenter, perf. Roddy Piper, Keith David, Meg Foster, (MCA/Universal) 1988.

⁵³ Brackets my addition. Fraser Sutherland, *The Monthly Epic: A History of Canadian Magazines 1789 – 1989* (Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1989) 258.

goods.⁵⁴ Service departments are frequent components of Canadian home magazines under titles such as “Market Place” (Select Homes & Food), “Storewatch” (Canadian House & Home) and “Shopping” (Home Décor / Canada).⁵⁵ In addition, many home magazines contain “guides” in the later half of the magazine. These “guides,” such as Style at Home’s “Where to Find It,” provide detailed information on the products displayed in photographs throughout the magazine.⁵⁶ Reflecting Sutherland’s comments, contemporary home magazines resemble trade shows, with a subscription serving as an admission fee for the privilege of spending *more* money.⁵⁷

In comparison to the 1960s, contemporary activism presented in magazines is often filtered into “consumer choice activism.” Contemporary women’s magazines attempt to sell an ideology of consumption and escape over societal engagement. Smith, in her study of MSLO, explains that “Stewart and her ‘Omnimedia’ empire contribute to a societal focus on growth and improvement of *individuals* to the frequent exclusion of collective efforts for social change.”⁵⁸ Similarly, home magazines focus the energy for change upon home improvement, decoration, and home defence.⁵⁹ The paragon of home, by representing a place of stability, ideally reflects this retreat to the place of the individual. While offering escape from external crisis, advertisements within the magazine at times offer the possibility of activism *at*

⁵⁴ Appendix A provides more information on content and articles specific to each magazine.

⁵⁵ Some magazines often have more such departments under many different titles. The May 2004 issue of Style at Home, for instance, contains nine such articles including: “Home & Style,” “*Winning Welcomes,” “Style for Less,” “Shopping Etc.,” “High/Low,” “*Off The Wall,” “Home Library,” “Market Place,” and “Window Shopping” (* marks feature articles as opposed to departments).

⁵⁶ Information such as who makes it, where to buy it and how much it costs.

⁵⁷ Sutherland 258. However, while many magazines do focus on the importance of the consuming home, there is equal focus on the creativity of the audience member as they decorate their home.

⁵⁸ Smith 339.

⁵⁹ Meaning both defences of the house and of the home country.

home though consumer goods meant to reflect one's political and social concerns. As Stuart Ewan describes,

Within advertising, the social realm of resistance is reinterpreted, at times colonised, for corporate benefit. Ads mirror the widespread judgement that mass-produced goods are junky and unhealthy. Products are advertised as if they contain this anticorporate disposition – praised for their organic naturalness and their timeless quality. Modes of anticorporate resistance and sentiment reappear in the ads themselves, miraculously encased within the universal terms of the market.⁶⁰

So, rather than publicly protest animal rights, one buys Body Shop goods, or rather than objecting publicly to the use of pesticides on produce, one buys organic goods. Consumables “signed” as other by advertising metaphorically substitute an active position on the part of the consumer. The ahistorical paradigm of contemporary magazines shifts current history and domestic problems outside the realm of the home, as social engagement is repositioned as a consumer logo.

More than any other message, consumerism clearly dominates all aspects of the contemporary paradigm of home. The consumption of home is proposed as a reflection of one's status as a “good” citizen, woman, worker, or family member. All things attached to the ideology of home seem accessible through consumption. However, the stress on consumption portrayed in magazine covers is, in comparison to the previously discussed elements, also an *unheimlich* reminder of the contingency of home. The concept of “planned obsolescence,”⁶¹ the aim of many home appliances and other home products, guarantees that the ideal in its repetition is a *model home* differed from the desired ideology of “home.” Furthermore, the focus on the consumption of home reinforces the link between the supposed privacy of the

⁶⁰ Stuart Ewan, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976) 218.

⁶¹ Usually used to describe home appliances, such as fridges, that are designed to work for only a limited time, or to go out of style quickly, thus necessitating perpetual consumption of a similar product.

space and its necessary function in the public market economy. Despite representation, the paradigm of home is nothing more than a contingent *model home*, an ideological construct endlessly negotiated by the play of the *unheimlich* within its framework.

Das Unheimlich

While magazine covers attempt to ideologically frame a concept of home, the paradigm is never fully contained, rather it is endlessly open to undecidability. The model presented, as discussed in terms of each magazine, is itself *iterable* – repeatable but different – in each publication. Thus, while the *model* is often framed as ahistorical, its iterability foregrounds its contextual dependence. Moreover, the *model* is open to this play of context within each magazine cover itself. Each presentation differs as to its interaction with other components of the magazine. In addition, the context of the model changes according to where that magazine is displayed, either in one's home or in a newspaper shop. Furthermore, the elements used to frame the *model* allude, by their presence, to absent and contingent other relations.⁶² As Modleski notes in reference to critiques of female popular culture, "it is crucial ... to let their very omissions and distortions speak, informing us of the contradictions they are meant to conceal and, equally importantly, of the fears that lie behind them."⁶³ Finally the *model* outside of its own presentation is incomplete without an audience that reacts, in numerous ways, to its intended meaning. This space between signifier and its final meaning is immense. When concerned with the

⁶² The elements alluding to seclusion also allude to the *desire* for privacy.

⁶³ Modleski 113.

ideology of home that is presented through a visual paradigm the gap in rhetorical constitution increases the likelihood of the appearance of previously concealed *unheimlich* elements within the *model home*.

Canadian contemporary magazines present on their covers a particular paradigm, which constitutes not only a national Canadian image of home, but also one that is commensurate with the goals of the magazine itself. This home is depicted as an ahistorical, secluded, homely, natural and feminized place. A place made individual through proper consumption and decoration. The standard presented as the national home however, presents itself as a specifically white, heterosexual, middle-class, nuclear family home. In many ways it reiterates the same ideals prevalent in Victorian styled domesticity. Symbolic elements common to past representations of home are employed not only to ideologically depict the home as natural, but also to show the stability and transcendent nature of its being. However, while the magazine employs various methods to convey a home, such as the use of photograph as well as the rhetorical constitution of an audience, the affects of the paradigm are finally indeterminate. Home, in its ideological constraint, reveals itself to the undecidability of its construct. By framing what it is, the *model home*, as inevitably singular in representation, draws attention to what it is not and what it tries to conceal. In close examination of the ideology presented by the magazines, the *model home* signals the *unheimlich* play within that presumed stable and coherent sign.

Chapter Four

Lynne Cohen and the Consumer Home

Home is presented as a culturally and ideologically contained locale in Lynne Cohen's domestic photographs. As the previous chapters have suggested, while it seems natural, the concept of home is mediated by the specific context within which it visually recurs. In Chapter Three, home was analyzed as it appeared and was perpetuated in contemporary mass circulated magazines, paying particular attention to how it was made to appear coherent through a series of hierarchical oppositions, most dominantly, private opposed to public space. Lynne Cohen's domestic photographs expose similar negotiations of forces of signification within the visual communication of home by referring to its ideological construction. Within Cohen's domestic photographs, home is denaturalized as it is revisited within residential, commercial and educative (typological) spaces. In these guises home appears as a pedagogical model, a deceptively private space negotiated by public hierarchical and normalizing values. Cohen's images critique the ideological and conformist narratives that undercut contemporary culture, specifically, in the case of the images discussed here, the culture of home. In comparison to a general ideology of home, I concentrate on three hierarchical pairs, common to popular paradigmatic presentations of home, which are negotiated within Cohen's work. These pairs, the natural and the constructed, individualism-conformism, and domestic economy-commercial economy; are presented and deconstructed within the framework of Cohen's domestic spaces. By exploiting the supposed veracity of the medium of photography, Cohen makes present each pole of the corresponding pair, challenging the univocality of the

formation of the paradigm of home. Through the introduction of the *unheimlich*¹ converse the binary pair that frames home is not dissolved but rather situated in a space of undecidability, thus frustrating the coherency of the model.

In the previous two chapters, the ideology of home was discussed in terms of its discursive formation as well as how that formation was perpetuated within specific contexts. I discussed the manner in which the ideology of home was constructed as univocal, as well as how forces within that framework returned to “home” elements of contingency and disruption. Towards the end of each of the preceding chapters, “home” was discussed as a term perpetuated through a series of hierarchical oppositions negotiated within and without the ideology. This chapter, and the one that follows, discuss how the ideology of home is critically analyzed in the work of contemporary artists. While not referring directly magazine imagery, these chapters investigate how home is critiqued in a manner reminiscent of the challenges to the ideology leveled in the previous chapters.

Lynne Cohen’s work is highly critical of cultural assumptions and the spatial structures that perpetuate them. This chapter follows the dissemination of home in Lynne Cohen’s photographs, paying specific attention to Cohen’s critique of the ideology and its popular repetition. Cohen has long been interested in the didacticism of popular culture reflected in our private worlds. As Georges Bogardi comments, “Cohen’s priorities are not formal but sociological and psychological. Her pictures

¹ As discussed in Chapter One, the *unheimlich* implies the undecidable negotiations between binary oppositions that construct as present the ideology of home.

are social studies, meditations on how we organize our private nests and how others design for us the public spaces in which we conduct our lives.”²

Denaturalizing Place – A Brief Background on the Work of Lynne Cohen

Lynne Cohen was born in Racine, Wisconsin in 1944, however, she has lived and worked in Canada since 1973.³ Her varied education is reflected in the scientific precisionism and keen knowledge of contemporary art practices evident in her work. In 1962, Cohen began studying science at the University of Wisconsin. Diverging from her scientific education in 1964, she spent a year at the Slade School of Fine Art, in London, England, primarily studying printmaking and sculpture.⁴ Cohen’s artistic interests soon expanded to include the medium of photography, through which she won a prize at a 1996 exhibition at the University of Wisconsin. In 1967 Cohen graduated with a Bachelor of Science and continued her artistic education by pursuing a graduate degree in art at Eastern Michigan University. Two years later, Cohen graduated with a Masters of Art degree, and was by this time frequently exhibiting her work in a variety of group exhibitions. Shortly after graduation, Cohen moved to Ottawa, where, from 1973 to 1975 she taught photography at Algonquin College. It was also in 1973 that she had her first solo show at the artist-run centre A Space, in Toronto. A year later, Cohen began work as a part time professor of Visual Arts at

² Georges Bogardi, “No Man’s Land,” *Canadian Art* 19. 3 (Fall 2002): 86.

³ The following information concerning Lynne Cohen’s biography is drawn from her recent chronology provided in the artist’s file at the National Gallery of Canada library archives. “Lynne Cohen Chronology,” 2000, Lynne Cohen Artist’s File, National Gallery of Canada, Library and Archives, Ottawa, Canada.

⁴ Noted in: Ann Thomas, *Environments Here and Now: Three Contemporary Photographers – Lynne Cohen, Robert Del Tredici, Karen Smiley* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1985) 12. “Lynne Cohen – Women Artists in Canada – Celebrating Women’s Achievements,” *National Library of Canada*, 24 October 2003 <<http://www.nlc.bnc.ca/women/h12-507-e.html>>. 1.

the University of Ottawa where she remains on faculty. Through teaching and frequent exhibitions, Lynne Cohen has developed an international reputation as a photo-based artist.

Many prominent curators and critics have written on Lynne Cohen's work since the 1970s, reflecting the strong international interest in her strange depictions of the private spaces society takes for granted. Some of the more influential work has been written by Ann Thomas, William A. Ewing and Johanne Lamoureux who have commented on the tendency of Cohen's work to reveal the way that those private spaces we take for granted shape how we function within them.⁵ Her stage-set like rooms reflect the environmental, cultural and psychological systems that dominate the quotidian spaces we inhabit.⁶ However, the everyday appears unfamiliar and disjointed within her work. Innocuous environments, such as the home, are rendered threatening and cold.

Domestic Encounters: Reading Lynne Cohen Against the Ideology of Home

Cohen's interest in the negotiation of public and private values is evident in student work that was influenced by mail-order publications such as the Sears catalogue. Using printmaking techniques, Cohen would trace the interiors depicted and incorporate their imagery into her prints.⁷ In reference to her fascination with the

⁵ William Ewing, "Lynne Cohen: Room Readings," *Aperture* 106 (Spring 1987): 24. Joanne Lamoureux, "Lynne Cohen's Photographs: Stages without Wings," *Lynne Cohen*, ed. Loretta Yarlow (North York: The Art Gallery of York University, 1992) 3. Ann Thomas, "Appropriating the Everyday," *No Man's Land: The Photography of Lynne Cohen* ed. Ann Thomas (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001) 16. Ann Thomas, "Lynne Cohen: Matters of Fact," *Matters of Fact* ed. Carol Lowrey (New York: 49th Parallel Center for Contemporary Canadian Art, 1986) 3.

⁶ Thomas, "Appropriating the Everyday," 13.

⁷ Ann Thomas, *Environments Here and Now: Three Contemporary Photographers – Lynne Cohen, Robert Del Tredici, Karen Smiley* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1985) 12.

imagery in do-it-yourself books and catalogues, Cohen has remarked, “as banal as they were, as ordinary as things looked in these catalogues, they were unbelievable ... people’s living environments were installations, looked like ready-mades, looked like they couldn’t be true.”⁸

Reflecting her early impressions of these magazines, Cohen’s later work references the construction of quotidian space perpetuated by popular media outlets in her photographs’ stage-like appearance. Moreover, while resembling conceptual abstractions of popular media, Cohen employs photography (a medium associated with mass media) as part of her critique. In this way, photography serves not only as a platform for Cohen’s work, but also refers to the visually propagated culture disrupted within.

For Cohen, the camera provides a method of illustrating social relations that appear to be free of the artist’s personal expression; she strategically exploits the supposed indexicality of the medium. As Cohen describes in a 1992 interview, her desire to employ photography came from a wish to depict an environment innocuously. For Cohen, the camera “recorded elements that were already out there just waiting to be ‘framed’ ... photography represented a way of not backing down in front of reality, of not closing a door on society. It served to avoid the traditional isolation of the artist alone in the studio.”⁹ The use of photography, as a medium that frames and constructs an ideological “real,” permits Cohen to speak from within that ideology about its construction.

⁸ Lynne Cohen, qtd. in: Thomas, “Appropriating the Everyday,” 12.

⁹ Lynne Cohen, interview with Ramon Tio Bellido, “Interview with Lynne Cohen,” Lynne Cohen: Lost and Found (Paris: Canadian Embassy, International Cultural Mediations, 1992) 92.

The manner in which Cohen exploits the photographic apparatus further reinforces her examination of the ideologies that frame human interaction within private realms. Cohen uses large format 5 x 7 and 8 x 10-inch cameras to open the seemingly innocuous space of the private to extreme (and extremely public) scrutiny.¹⁰ The majority of her earlier images are shot in black and white, often at low-speed, and often with a high contrast film that results in a stark clarity of image with little grain distortion.¹¹ Her use of camera and film, and her frequent practice of contact printing, results in a final image that is extremely clear with grain so fine as to be almost invisible. Moreover, her use of higher f-stops results in a clear focus on all elements in the photograph and an overall clarity and flattening of space. This clarity, Ewing suggests, results in “details such as light switches and sockets which are normally considered insignificant ... given the same weight as culturally revered objects.”¹² Furthermore, the straightforward angle of Cohen’s depictions reinforce the ideological naturalism of her imagery. As David Byrne notes in Occupied Territory, “Cohen’s photos are taken from the same dumb angle. It’s the kind of angle that makes us look at the space of the room that’s being photographed and the arrangement of objects in the room rather than the subjective viewpoint of the picture taker – recalling the very beginnings of photography when it was a simple recording

¹⁰ As a result, many of the work prints are of similar locations from different angles. In addition the cumbersome equipment forces much planning and care in framing a specific view.

¹¹ Film types she tended to prefer until the late 1970s were Kodak and often Kodak safety film, as well as 100 – 200 ASA Agfa films. This is based on observations made during my time sorting through her work prints and negatives at the National Gallery of Canada.

¹² Ewing, “Lynne Cohen: Room Readings,” 24.

device.”¹³ However, her work does not aspire to a documentary role; rather it reinforces minimalist typologies of space.¹⁴

Denaturalizing Home: Approaching an Ideological Critique

The hidden negotiation of ideological apparatuses within quotidian space has been an enduring theme in Cohen’s work. Through the medium of photography, Cohen exposes the cultural mechanisms and assumptions that naturalize spaces such as the home. While, as noted in Chapter Three, “home” is often presented as a natural and individualized domestic haven separate from the hectic public world, Cohen’s work can be read as a challenge to the absolute veracity of these conceptual frameworks.

Cohen presents the ideology of home as a construction mediated by its repetition in residential, commercial and pedagogical spaces. Moreover, in each environment the paradigm is exposed to the concealed binary oppositions through which it is popularly perpetuated. By revealing the negotiation between frameworks that form a model, Cohen’s work can be read as a critique of the popular ideology of home.

The visual paradigm of home, as discussed in Chapter Three, is conceived of as a natural environment – both enduring and one with nature. Frequently, this visual conception is suggested through the incorporation of natural elements, such as flowers, within depictions of home. In Cohen’s domestic environments, “natural” elements are evident, however the clarity of her photographs reveal the extent to

¹³ David Byrne, “Forward,” Lynne Cohen: Occupied Territory (New York: Aperture Publications, 1987) 14.

¹⁴ Cohen in an interview in No Man’s Land stated that she had no wish to capture essence or make historical records. Lynne Cohen, interview with William A. Ewing, Lori Pauli, and Ann Thomas, “Camouflage: An Interview with Lynne Cohen,” No Man’s Land: The Photography of Lynne Cohen, ed. Ann Thomas (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001) 25. The simplistic titles of her work reflect this goal, relegating specific space into coded typologies of space.

which nature is simulated and tamed by technological means. Furthermore, Cohen's photographs suggest that the home itself is not self-evident, but rather a highly constructed and controlled environment.

Home, as a visual paradigm is promoted as the ideal place for individual expression. Popular media, as noted in Chapter Three, promotes home as a site of consumption through which one can actuate one's self-hood. However, within Cohen's photographs, the individual home is revealed as mediated by conformist messages and the controlling influences of normalizing judgement. Individualization becomes conflated with subjugation to cultural values that attempt to limit the appearance of individualism within the home.

Home is represented as a separated environment in popular media. The paradigm is dominated by a conceptual separation between the domestic and commercial economy. Cohen's work, however, reveals the intertwining of these economies. Consumer culture not only pervades the home environment, but often provides an exemplar to be espoused within the private reality. The denaturalized standard of home appears in Cohen's work as a pedagogical model for the cultural positioning of the space.

In the following analysis of some of Cohen's domestic environments, the home as it is iterated in residential, commercial and educative spaces is critiqued from within the medium that is most frequently used to promote it. Cohen's photographs challenge dominant ideology by revealing the negotiation of external concerns within a natural, individual and domestic home. Finally, Cohen's photographic

displacements of home serve to destabilize the exclusivity of the binary opposition of the private and public world.

Residential Space

From the late 1960s until the late 1970s residential space, in the form of the domestic interior was a frequent subject of Lynne Cohen's work. Like the previously discussed magazine covers, Cohen most often chose to depict the residential interior through its most dominant room – the living-room.¹⁵ As noted in Chapter Three, the living-room mediates between guests and the family, providing a semi-private space for both leisure and display. Cohen's living-rooms reflect the dual functions of the room and its importance as a private space for public display.

Living Room (1972), figure five,¹⁶ is a symmetrically composed image of a traditional and excessively decorated living-room. It appears almost too clean and tidy to be lived in. The focus of the image is a stark couch that leans against a patterned wall. The image is balanced by a symmetrical display of wall-hung porcelain plates, matching lamps, end tables and overstuffed throw cushions on each corner of the couch. In the centre of the couch sits a porcelain cat and turtle. The foreground of the image is occupied by a dark coffee table, on top of which lies a china tea set and bowl of gleaming wax fruit. The polished symmetry of the objects in the image offers a disconcerting view of a family living-room, a feeling that is accented by the absence of living inhabitants. However, the even lighting and

¹⁵ Going through the early work prints and negatives at the national Gallery of Canada, I found more images of living-rooms than any other spaces.

¹⁶ Also known as Living Room, Racine, Wisconsin and the Phillips' living-room. All those given in the body of the text as the primary titles are those provided by the artist as of May 2004.

straightforward framing of the space forces a constant negotiation between the seemingly everyday depiction and the uncanny appearance of the room.

Living Room (1973), figure six,¹⁷ is similarly disconcerting and cold, although not as carefully balanced as Living Room (1972). The focus in this image is the asymmetrical faux stone fireplace, a-top which various decorative items are evident. To the left of the fireplace an empty armchair rests, seemingly reclining to get a clear look at the viewer. Visible to the right is the corner of full-length curtains that block the view of the outside. The living-room walls are blank except for two flea-market quality paintings, one landscape directly above the fireplace and one image of a bull fighter above the chair. The room, like Living Room (1972), blocks the entrance of the viewer into the space by its shallow depth of field.

In both living-rooms nature is co-opted and controlled by consumable simulations. In Living Room (1972), for example, where one would expect to find the beloved family pet curled up on the couch, a porcelain cat and turtle sit frozen. Similarly, whereas the images in Chapter Three lead one to expect a home full of flowers, plants, vegetables and open windows, these elements are substituted in Cohen's living-rooms by wax fruit, plastic plants, and closed curtains. Indeed, in Living Room (1973), the view of the natural world offered by the window is replaced by two painted replicas of the outside. The natural, which in Chapter Three was seen to perpetuate the ideology of home, is replaced in Cohen's images – tamed in simulated repetition as plastic, plywood, simulated stone, vinyl, naugahyde, Formica

¹⁷ Also known as Living Room, Ypsilanti, Michigan.

and nylon replicas.¹⁸ The simulation of nature asserts the extent to which the home is domesticated and controlled. As Ann Thomas describes, “nature as motif is encountered in Cohen’s photographs of hotel, office, and apartment lobbies and other interiors. Wilderness is reduced to a benign element of décor.”¹⁹ The natural and naturalism are replaced in Cohen’s residential spaces by man-made materials and ideological construction.

Individualism as reflected in the residential home is dislocated in Cohen’s living-rooms, signaling the constant negotiation between individual desires and social conformity. As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, home manuals have long stressed the importance of the home as a space to present one’s individual taste. However, this expression often conforms to codes of style and is often confined to the boundaries of available consumer products.²⁰ This is symptomatic of the negotiation of broad cultural values and individual expression that is reflected in Cohen’s seemingly bizarre living-rooms. These strange rooms reflect Cohen’s stated aim “to question from an art historical standpoint, the various interactions which exist between private taste and broad aesthetic values.”²¹

Individualism is thus negotiated by a system of social codes and is highly structured by a form of normalizing judgement, the effects of which are evident in public reactions to Cohen’s domestic interiors. Many critics and commentators who have written on Cohen’s early work have described the depictions as examples of

¹⁸ Thomas, “Appropriating the Everyday,” 10. The falseness of the objects is made clear through immaculate large format photography.

¹⁹ Thomas, “Lynne Cohen: Matters of Fact,” 2.

²⁰ Also noted in Chapter Three, the quality of one’s décor was also a way to reflect one’s social status and class.

²¹ Lynne Cohen, interview with Ramon Tio Bellido, 94.

kitsch.²² These descriptions highlight the extent to which a normalizing gaze is internalized. According to Michel Foucault, the power of normalizing judgement “imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps,” the norm evaluates and hierarchizes differences.²³ The internalization of a norm that is evident in reactions to Cohen’s domestic interiors reflects the insubstantial mechanisms of control exerted over the so-called private home. Cohen’s camera reinforces this idea as it acts as an unblinking observer, a reflection of the dissemination of Foucault’s discipline in contemporary culture. The living-room images thus oppose individualism and conformism not to replace or overturn the hierarchy, but to reveal the negotiation between culture and the individual within the home. As Ewing notes, “she directs our awareness toward these cultural and psychological assumptions ... They show us how to dress, move and interact – that is, how to function as types rather than individuals. Cohen mocks our society of sham individualism.”²⁴ Individualism is shown to be undecidably negotiated by an internalized cultural norm.

The home is ideologically posed as a separate sphere, and as such, also as a separate domestic economy. This conception is challenged within Cohen’s residential photographs by reference to the consumer culture that pervades the space. The frontality and clarity of the living-rooms not only denaturalize the rooms, but suggest that the décor is of equal importance to the functionality of the space. The

²² Many have commented on the ‘kitsch’ element in Cohen’s work. Régis Durand, “Lynne Cohen ou l’Effet de Coupe,” *ArtPress* 145 (March 1990): 46. Ewing, “Lynne Cohen: Room Readings,” 24. Jacqueline Fry, “Lynne Cohen: Un Théâtre d’Objets de Plus en Plus Inquisiteurs,” *Parachute* 33 (Dec/Jan/Feb 1983 – 1984): 6. Lamoureux I. Sol Littman, “This Woman Really Knows Her ‘Kitsch,’” *Toronto Star* 31 December 1978.

²³ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 2nd Ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995) 184.

²⁴ Ewing 24.

rooms do not reflect the visual paradigm one expects from living-room representations – no roaring fire or soft couches – rather the home becomes a container filled with random decorative items. The rooms appear less natural and more like parodic consumer installations. As Cohen maintains in reference to one of her living-rooms: “Like many of my other pictures, this one is about symmetry and boundaries, about the absurd, about the uncanny way rooms looks like installations.”²⁵ The focus is not a specific place, but the negotiation within that space between private desires and public standards. The rooms are overpowered by those knick knacks that Cohen refers to as “symptom and symbol of the age in which we live.”²⁶

Commercial Space

In the latter half of the 1970s, Cohen became more interested in semi-private commercial spaces, such as hair salons, dance studios and consumer showrooms. Within the boundaries of the showrooms of construction companies or home appliance dealerships Cohen is able to dislocate the paradigmatical image of home from the residential environment. Within the retail arena Cohen references our private domestic space through the commercial sets that re-present, publicly, an ideology of home (décor).

Model Living Room (1976), figure seven, contrasts Cohen’s earlier domestic interiors. Furniture, pillows and decorations are absent; instead the living-room appears mostly empty, occupied by two Plexiglas silhouettes, one picture, one lamp

²⁵ Lynne Cohen, interview with William A. Ewing, Lori Pauli, and Ann Thomas, 25 – 26.

²⁶ Lynne Cohen, qtd. in Nancy Baele, “Photographer’s Fun with the Banal,” The Ottawa Citizen 2 November 1984: D3.

and one plastic fern. In contrast to the previous images in which the plane of the photograph ran parallel to the rear wall of the room, this image is much more diagonal as the camera focuses on the centered corner of the room. The room/set is thus divided into two nearly symmetrical trapezoidal halves by the line drawn by the corner. On the left, a silhouette (a darkened Plexiglas cutout) of a man sits reading the newspaper with legs crossed on an absent couch. Above the silhouette hangs a framed mirror that reflects a diagonal image of three framed black and white images of gnarled tree branches. Opposite the man, to the right of the corner, a second silhouette, this time female – made evident by the breasts, heels, and the skirt – sits on an invisible chair calmly reading a small book. The flatness of the two Plexiglas figures seems to reflect the flatness of the picture plane as it exposes the mostly bald space of the room.

More evidently a free standing stage set within a larger display environment, Showroom (1977), figure eight,²⁷ depicts a pool dealership display. Like Model Living Room, the image is divided by the corner of the room – this prominent corner suggests the construction of the set as the corner marks the meeting of a photo-mural of a backyard garden and the shallow false face of a pool house. The set, bounded by the photo-mural to the left and the pool house to the right consists of a concrete patio decorated on the right with a plastic shell-shaped chair and a flotation device, and to the left by a potted plastic plant. The image foreground is occupied by the curvilinear shape of an empty pool. While appearing, at a quick glance, like a photograph of a quiet pool patio, this illusion is interrupted by the emptiness of the pool, the heating vent that cuts through the photo-mural behind the plant, the line above the house as it

²⁷ Also known as Indoor Display – Swimming Pool Dealership (Ottawa).

meets the showroom wall and the reflection in the pool house window of an adjacent display area.²⁸ Like Model Living Room, Showroom clearly displaces a naturalized photograph of a paradigm of home, depicting in its place the home as a flimsy model.

The simulation of nature, discussed in relation to Cohen's earlier work, is even more evident in the retail stage sets; moreover, the home is differed from its naturalized representation through reference to its controlled depiction in commercial sites. In both Model Living Room and Showroom plastic plants, fauna much better adapted to life under florescent lights, serve as surrogates for real plant life. In Showroom natural icons, such as the shell, are reproduced as consumable patio sets – only distant relatives of their natural counterparts. Yet, the most striking domination over the natural environment is signaled by the photo-mural in Showroom - a picturesque view that guarantees the maintenance of good poolside weather. In many ways this is an exaggeration of the ideology of the suburban home which, as discussed in Chapter Two and Three, reflected man's domination and control – through suburban planning – over the potential danger of the forces of nature. The natural environment, the desired backdrop to the home is replaced in Showroom by a simulated forest and lake (the pool). Control over nature is similarly suggested in Model Living Room by the reflection in the left hand mirror of framed and contained nature, represented by the photographs of tree branches. The emphasis on the staged appearance of the domestic space reinforces Cohen's assertion: "my photographs from the beginning have been about various sorts of deception."²⁹

²⁸ The reflection shows a pool slide and the edge of another pool set. This second set is actually part of the work prints given to the National Gallery of Canada by the artist in 2003. The second image from the pool dealership, while similarly interesting in its falsity has not been evidently published.

²⁹ Lynne Cohen, interview with William A. Ewing, Lori Pauli, and Ann Thomas, 23.

Naturalism, as perpetuated by popular paradigms of home, is made obsolete by the controlled illusionism made possible through contemporary commercial technologies. Deceptive environments in these images reinforce the constant negotiation between the assumed link between the domestic, naturalized ideology and the cultural construction of home.

The consumer model of home further reinforces the negotiation of individual desires by normative judgement. Home, and its inhabitants are reduced in Model Living Room and Showroom to standards against which their performance can be judged. For example, within Model Living Room, the human element is reduced to stereotypical Plexiglas silhouettes. In shape and form they are no longer individuals but rather models that conform in style and material to the consumer space that surrounds them. The figures are idealized as the perfect consumer occupants – they are blank templates, obedient and conforming to the codes of culture and consumption. Furthermore, in figures seven and eight, the sparsely decorated domestic spaces provide ideal environments for the cut-out figures. The interiors represent homogenized spaces to be made individual through the proper application of popularly propagated codes of décor. Model Living Room and Showroom eerily present an overly normalized space. This dehumanized environment seems to reflect what Stuart Ewan describes as symptomatic of capitalistic systems. Ewan notes, “beyond selling goods, American industry was developing and selling a version of current history which extricated the most dangerous element – people – from its process.”³⁰ Cohen’s representations of the domestic within the confines of retail

³⁰ Stuart Ewan, Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976) 108.

display areas reconfirm the controls of consumerism exerted over, and to some extent internalized, within our supposedly most private environment.

The retail space depicted reflects the extent to which the domestic sphere is culturally positioned as a site of consumption. Domestic economy and commercial economy are inexorably linked within the home. While elements of representation common to popular depictions of home, such as discussed in Chapter Three, appear both in Showroom and Model Living Room, these domestic representations function as commercial sales pitches. For instance, the eeriness of the empty room in Model Living Room is achieved in part from audience expectation for a living-room to be, as depicted in home magazines, full of decoration and display items. Within Cohen's depictions, as David Mellor comments, "the idea of 'home' is reintroduced, a shrine in commercial territory, but now under ironic erasure."³¹ The home, ideologically positioned, as noted in Chapter Two and Three, as outside the concerns of the commercial world, is in Cohen's work situated as the dominant site of consumption.

Educative Space

In the mid 1980s the image of the domestic interior in Lynne Cohen's work was further dislocated from the space of home to the classroom environment. Within this arena the home appears less as a naturalized concept and evermore as a cultural construction. Domestic spaces, such as the kitchen and the bedroom, are exposed to pedagogical instruction. Home is dislocated from the residential arena and repositioned as a didactic formulation.

³¹ David Mellor, "Welcome to Limbo," Lynne Cohen: Occupied Territory (New York: Aperture Publications, 1987) 18.

The kitchen, which, as was discussed in Chapter Three, was a domestic space used in popular media as representative of the (private) domestic labour of women, is exposed in Cohen's institutional photograph as an object of (public) scrutiny.

Observation Room (1984), figure nine,³² for example depicts a typical university classroom, or perhaps a home economics laboratory. The room is subdivided into two sections by a line visible on the back wall. This division presumably signals the presence of a pocket door available for the partitioning of the room. As a whole the classroom is a disconcerting environment. The camera through which the image is presented seems to float above the space silently observing. Opposite the viewer's point of view, above a corner entranceway to the left, a small surveillance camera keeps watch over the room. Darkened two-way mirrored windows that surround the room emphasize the omnipresence of surveillance. Within the room itself are scattered kitchen appliances and table tops. The main area of activity is not fully visible to the viewer as the multitude of appliances, with their backs to our gaze, block our inquiring view. However, what can be derived from the image is that the room seems to function as some sort of test kitchen – a didactic model of domestic production.

While Classroom in a Police College (1985), figure ten,³³ does not elicit the feelings of paranoia incited by Observation Room, it does insinuate the role of pedagogy in both these images. Like Observation Room the camera floats above the main action of the room. The foreground is composed of open floor space – the floor marking suggests a gymnasium. The room appears to be a typical classroom – white

³² Also known as Classroom and Observation Room, University of Waterloo.

³³ Also known as Classroom and Classroom, Police College, Toronto.

foam panel ceiling, florescent lighting, beige cinder block walls, large blackboard (visible only on the left of the image) and an institutional clock above the blackboard. However, within this familiar educative space, a small display area, visible to the right, contains a mock bedroom. Enclosed on three sides by dark cubicle walls, the bedroom set approximates the style typical of popular images – containing a bed, bedside table, alarm clock, pillows, blanket, and woven rug. The bedroom area, in the context of the larger classroom is disconcerting and out of place. Like Observation Room, the function of the space is a mystery, although the situation of the bedroom within the classroom seems to suggest an imminent lesson in bedroom etiquette.

In these institutional images, Cohen stresses the tension between the naturalized image of home and its didactic construction and control. Elements, such as blankets, rugs, and curtains, that are reminiscent of popular representations of home, contrast such instruments of instruction as two-way mirrors, plastic sheeting on the floor, removable walls, blackboards, and large institutional clocks. The play between these inconsistent aspects serves to unsettle the naturalism of the ideology of home. Situated within the educative environment, the kitchen in Observation Room and the bedroom in Classroom in a Police College, reflect the extent to which the ideological naturalism of home is taught. Within the educative realm, as Foucault comments, one finds “the acquisition of knowledge by the very practice of the pedagogical activity and a reciprocal, heirarchized observation,” and a system of surveillance “defined and regulated ... inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching ... as a mechanism that

is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency.”³⁴ Not only is home culturally and pedagogically taught, but this model is perpetuated through systems of surveillance and normalizing judgement that evaluate and maintain the ideology. The role of instruction and surveillance in the perpetuation of a naturalized ideology of home is especially evident in Observation Room and Classroom in a Police College where those *heimlich* elements common to popular representations of the paradigm are reinforced as necessary components of “home.”

The control exerted by the educative environment is reinforced by the absence of subjects within the space of home. The individual is replaced instead by the cold eyes of the surveillance equipment in Observation Room, and by the suggestion of viewer observation in both images. The insistent presence of surveillance within these images suggests the extent to which the individual is controlled by the discipline of panopticonic observation. According to Foucault, “the major effect of the Panopticon [is] to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power.”³⁵ Like the function of the Panopticon, whose disciplinary gaze seems constant by internalization within the subject, the lessons of conformity taught by pedagogical models are maintained through the internalization of these paradigms. Within the pedagogical environment the individual is subsumed by the normative gaze internal and external to the image. Moreover, the individuality of the home environment is overshadowed by the conformity of the didactic paragon. The way to individuality, privacy and domesticity is, in Observation Room and Classroom in a Police College part of a system of social control. Furthermore, as the

³⁴ Foucault 176.

³⁵ Brackets my addition. Ibid. 201.

latter image suggests, cultural boundaries are enforced in these environments. The samples of home found within figures nine and ten can be read as broad critiques by Cohen not only of the hierarchy of education, but also as an indictment of social forces that restrain and control individuals interactions with their environment.

In reference to the commercialization of home, the representation of the domestic ideal within educative space reflects the extent to which the ideal separation of the domestic economy from the commercial economy is culturally taught. Commercial media outlets, such as the magazines discussed in Chapter Three, perpetuate through pedagogical means, a standard of home that conforms to the logic of consumerism. Home, as such, is thus not a wholly natural phenomenon, but is born from an undecidable negotiation between private desires and social construction. Classroom in a Police College and Observation Room depict the influence of didactic models within the space of home. While Cohen references the broad impact of cultural pedagogy within the home, I suggest that commercial paradigms go a long way to support such social instruction. An instance of this influence can be seen in Observation Room where the primary occupants are those most commercially viable consumer products – domestic appliances. The primacy of commercialism in the home is reflected in Cohen's educative spaces by the emphasis on the domestic space as a didactic model.

Private/Public Space

In each of the three preceding sections, I have discussed Lynne Cohen's various domestic photographs in terms of how they reveal the mediation of hierarchical

oppositions that frame the ideology of home. Behind each of these thematic negotiations, Cohen has introduced the undecidability of home regarding its supposed exteriority to the public or social realm. In each domestic interior home is represented as being incontrovertibly connected to cultural expectations, didactic paradigms and commercial models that perpetuate the ideology of home. Cohen's images therefore subtly return to the visual paradigm of home the *unheimlich* elements that are concealed in its popular re-presentation.³⁶

Unheimlich, as discussed in Chapter One, refers to the undecidability between hierarchical poles that frame a conceptual model. Within the ideology of home, *unheimlich* refers to the presencing of the concealed opposites of a binary pair. By their appearance, *unheimlich* relations destabilize the univocality and coherency of an ideological construction. In Cohen's photographs the *unheimlich* is made present as part of the economy of home. As such, home is shown to be negotiated between the natural and the constructed, individuality and conformity and between domesticity and consumption.

Connected to the destabilizing of a coherent formation of home, Cohen's photographs insinuate the extent to which various mechanisms of control are employed to maintain a consistent paradigm. Through normative judgement, hierarchical observation and pedagogical suggestion, the ideal of home is contained within its ideological framework. As Bogardi writes, Cohen's images

... are meditations on how culture shapes space and hence our lives, on the different systems of control exerted in our society. These covert forces are made manifest in the locations she chose to photograph: the tyranny of fashion over taste (living rooms, offices, lobbies); of time

³⁶ The concealed opposition of a binary pair when revealed destabilizes absolute separation between the hierarchical oppositions that presence a specific idea of home. The term is discussed at length in Chapter One.

over vitality (spas); the past over the future (classrooms); scientific knowledge over other kinds of wisdom (laboratories); matter over spirit (military installations).³⁷

Throughout Cohen's work, her surreal interior images bespeak the influence of social and cultural formations on private subjectivity and perception. They reveal both the symptoms of control and resistance.³⁸

Echoing throughout her domestic interiors are the repercussions of consumer culture upon the supposedly private space of home. The influence of consumer culture on the design and illustration of the paradigm, as seen in Chapter Three, is reflected in Cohen's images where the myth of the individual is subsumed in corporate ideology, as activism is replaced by consumer activism. The home, Cohen's images insinuate, is a space that constantly negotiates between domestic and capitalist economies. For David Mellor, Cohen "presents a comedy of commodification in which the stylized 'functionalism' of her witlessly optimistic rooms betrays their planned origins in the rationalization of society. Instrumental reason, the imperatives of productivity, and the calculus of capital are the main forces at play."³⁹ The domestic and consumer worlds are interdependent entities – undecidably between inside and outside interests.

By making present the influence of mechanisms of control and the logic of consumption in the domestic sphere, Cohen's various photographs challenge the clear separation of private and public space within the home. In residential, commercial

³⁷ Bogardi 87.

³⁸ For example, while her spa images echo the control of a lab environment, Cohen seems to relish the aspects of the spa that disrupt the control. For instance, when mould or mildew creeps into the pristine environments (as described in: Thomas, "Appropriating the Everyday," 19), or when the relaxing environment of the spa more closely resembles a death chamber.

³⁹ Mellor 20.

and educative environments the home is depicted as both a space and conception formed by private and public concerns.

Sights of Resistance

Cohen's images do not only reveal the *unheimlich* concealed within a popularly cited paradigm of home, but her photographs also depict sites of resistance to a consumerist model of home. Her images present one with varying layers of instability and confusion. Private and public spaces that one might take for granted are denaturalized in photographs that reveal the *unheimlich* constructions that shape spatial relations. Cohen disrupts the deceptive naturalism of ideologically contained spaces, such as the home. Her images not only focus on the mechanisms of control within the domestic spaces, but also on the moments when these systems are exceeded. For example, the idiosyncratic decorations in Living Room (1972) and Living Room (1973) signal the persistence of individualized expression in the face of normalizing judgement. Similarly, the edges of the stage-sets in Model Living Room, Showroom and Classroom in a Police College bespeak the non-inherent control of consumer and pedagogical models. As noted in Chapter Three, the individual retains the power to determine their investment in a paradigm, a suggestion reinforced by the incompleteness of Cohen's domestic sets. Cohen's domestic images function as models of resistance, critiquing the paradigm of home by re-presenting it as fallible and spurious.

Lynne Cohen, in a variety of images, critiques a paradigm that foregrounds home as an inherent, natural and an individual domestic space. By displaying

domestic signifiers in residential, commercial and educative spaces, Cohen critiques the hierarchical oppositions that presence the ideology of home. This critique denaturalizes the space of home revealing the *unheimlich* elements concealed within the paradigm. Focusing on mechanisms of control and the influence of commercialism on the private space, Cohen re-presents home as a possible site of resistance to ideological constructions.

Chapter Five

Susan McEachern and the Domestic Home

Home as a secluded space for female domestic labour is exposed in Susan McEachern's series On Living at Home. Like the work of Lynne Cohen, discussed in the preceding chapter, McEachern's photo-based images denaturalize the ideology of home by revealing the interaction between public values and assumptions and the private domestic sphere. In McEachern's work, home is politicized as a site of gender and economic inequality. Influenced by the discourse of second-wave feminism, she critiques not only spatial, but also sexual divisions within and without the space. Cohen, as discussed in Chapter Four, differentiates her photographs of home from popular media through the use of large format black and white images that "flatten" the space, making it appear unfamiliar. McEachern, in contrast, incorporates the style and media employed in a popular contemporary visual paradigm of home, such as that noted in Chapter Three. Her use of colour photography, integrated text and similar visual codes not only refers to mass circulated imagery, but it disrupts their presentation of a univocal paragon thus permitting her work to speak from within.¹ Through the juxtaposition of a variety of images within the four parts of the series in addition to subversive textual elements, McEachern's home frustrates the coherent paradigm perpetuated in popular culture.

This chapter reads McEachern's four part photographic series On Living at Home (1989) as a critical analysis of the ideology of the domestic home. In this

¹ Susan McEachern's use of colour photography as an artistically viable medium was relatively new in Canada. In Banff, photographers and artists were pushing to have the process recognized by art institutions. Her use of colour and integrated text was further influenced by her work in the design department at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Her familiarity with commercial approaches to visual communication is especially evident in not only On Living at Home, but also in The Creation of Desire and Backyard Community.

“reading” I follow five themes common to McEachern’s work and this thesis’s analysis of “home”: domestic narratives, domestic isolation, domestic production and domestic consumption. Similar to the previous chapter on Lynne Cohen, the images discussed are addressed in terms of their challenge to the ideological binary of private and public. In addition, as in the preceding chapters, the *unheimlich* elements that disrupt ideological coherency are revealed as constantly negotiated within the paradigm of home.²

Groundwork: A Brief Introduction to Susan McEachern

Susan McEachern has been an exhibiting artist in Canada and the United States since 1977.³ She was born in Wausau, Wisconsin, in 1951, but has lived and worked in Canada since 1975. The pursuit of education has fueled McEachern’s artistic development. In 1969 McEachern attended Hamline University in St. Paul Minnesota, earning an honors B.A. in Theatre Arts in 1973. She continued her studies, earning a Minnesota teacher certificate in speech and theatre in 1975. After graduation McEachern moved to Alberta to pursue a senior diploma in visual communication and photography at the Banff Centre School of Fine Arts, which she completed in 1977. In that same year she worked as a photographic departmental assistant at The Banff Centre, a technical assistant at The Walter J. Phillips Gallery (Banff, Alberta), and later that year began work at the Nova Scotia College of Art and

² As discussed in Chapter One, *unheimlich* refers to the undecidability between hierarchical oppositions that attempt to present a univocal and coherent ideology of home.

³ The bibliographic data given below is culled from a recent CV of the artist. “Susan McEachern: Artist’s Curriculum Vitae,” 1994, Susan McEachern Artist’s File, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Library and Archives, Ottawa, Canada. 1 – 7.

Design (NSCAD) as a part-time faculty member in the Visual Arts department.⁴ In 1979 McEachern became Associate Professor in Photography at NSCAD. In the 1980s, following an expansive and heavily researched photographic series, The Family in the Context of Childrearing, McEachern once again returned to school. McEachern completed a Masters of Sociology in Education, specializing in Feminist Studies and Gender Relations at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) in Toronto in 1988. Throughout her career, Susan McEachern has combined sociological research with photography to explore the influence of cultural material upon our conceptions of gender, space and social relations.

Throughout Susan McEachern's work, three general concerns emerge: the importance of feminist discourse and the dictum "the personal is political,"⁵ the negotiation of cultural mythologies and private relationships, and the mediation of systems of knowledge. Influenced by her interest in gender relations, much of her earlier work focuses on the "domestic space... and the representation of women's experience in popular culture."⁶ Through the use of photography she strives to interrogate "domestic relations in a historical context that considers the method by which cultural practices are adopted."⁷ While in recent years, McEachern's work has expanded to the investigation of cultural practices across gender lines, her commitment to the goals of feminism remains strong, even in this era of so-called

⁴ This is the same institution where she continues to teach.

⁵ Susan McEachern, "Feminism, Family and Photography," Canadian Women's Studies 11. 1 (Spring 1990): 15.

⁶ Susan McEachern, "Artist's Statement," Halifax-Auckland Exchange (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Eye Level Gallery, 1986).

⁷ Ibid.

post-feminist apathy.⁸ McEachern, in such series as The Hope Chest (1986), The Family in the Context of Childrearing (1985), On Living at Home (1987), The Creation of Desire (1990), Questions of Nature (1994), and Backyard Community (2001), challenges the validity of naturalized and univocal ideological constructs.

Themes, such as those discussed above are reflected in McEachern's ambitious 1989 series, On Living at Home. This series consists of four parts: Agoraphobia, Domestic Immersion, Media Consumption, and The World Outside. Each of the four sections explores the cultural forces internal and external to the home that perpetuate a univocal ideology of domesticity.

The first section of the series, Agoraphobia, examines the psychological repercussions of the physical and sexual divisions of space within the home. Agoraphobia consists of eight, 16 x 20-inch colour prints and four 20 x 16-inch prints. This section mixes different depictions of the home, including interior spaces and copy-photographs of fairytale illustrations that stage the mythologizing of domestic isolation. Within this section, the images of the interior, which are overlaid with texts examining the psychological implications of space, are juxtaposed with fairy tale illustrations in an analysis of the domestic "problem with no name."⁹

⁸ Cynthia Duquette Smith in her article provides a succinct description of post-feminist malaise. As Smith suggests, within post-feminism there is an assumption that women have become equal members of society, and that the goals of the feminist movement have been fully achieved. In this environment of political ambivalence the need for collective action no longer seems relevant. As such, attention to group action and individual responsibility is substituted by a consumer culture that encourages "personal lifestyle solutions" that absolve "both societal institutions and men of responsibility for women's oppression." Cynthia Duquette Smith, "Discipline – It's a 'Good Thing': Rhetorical Constitution and Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia," Women's Studies in Communication 23. 3 (Fall 2000): 352 – 353.

⁹ Betty Freidan, "Excerpts from 'The Problem that has No Name,'" Gender Space Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction, ed. Jane Rendall, Barbara Penner and Iain Borden (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) 33.

In Part Two: Domestic Immersion, McEachern investigates constructions and implications of the ideal. This section consists of twelve images with accompanying text from varying commentators, advocates and critics of the domestic home. Much like the photographs in Part One, McEachern employs the ambiguity of colour photography, its common appearance in a variety of popular applications, with added textual components to provide a multi-vocal analysis of domestic space. The texts used can be divided into three sections: images one to four contain quotes drawn from the nineteenth century writer Catherine Beecher, texts in images five to eight are more ambiguous in their reference to the domestic ideal, and the written components in images nine to twelve are critical of domestic situations. Through interrelating and contrasting text and images, McEachern appraises the domestic situation with regards to the sexual division of labour within the domestic space. However, while drawing attention to the apparent inconsistencies, contradictions and biased assumptions within the domestic ideal, she judiciously leaves the final evaluation of said ideal to the viewer. Instead of providing a coherent paradigm to replace an outdated one, McEachern opens the field of “home” to diverse viewpoints.

Concentrating upon a popular theme in her other work, Media Consumption, the third section in the series, introduces the variable influence of popular media in the domestic sphere. This questions both the rhetorical power of the media, as well as the naturalism of “home.” Part Three intermixes large 16 x 20 inch colour photographs of the interior (in a style similar to the previous sections) with smaller 5 x 7 inch images from a variety of media sources (including newspapers, television, films and magazines). In this format McEachern frames the media influences, drawing

attention to them, rather than allowing them to slip uncritically into the space of home.

Part Four: The World Outside destabilizes the economic and cultural autonomy supposed by the ideological construction of home. In a style similar to the previous sections, McEachern introduces into commercial-looking images a variety of subversive texts that speak to the relationship between public economies and domestic production and consumption. This section consists of five colour photographs: five colour 16 x 20-inch and one silver gelatin print, that reflect McEachern's stated belief that "the division between public and private is largely fraudulent and that the individual life reflects the values and misfortunes of the culture."¹⁰

Approaching Ideological Constructs

As discussed in Chapter One, ideology is experienced as "natural" and "real." It provides a sense of coherence, a structure that interpolates the individual as a subject within a stable framework. This relationship between the subject, ideology and the object of ideology is ambiguous in that one cannot necessarily challenge it without realizing that one is already involved within its conceptualization. In regards to home, to discuss the place one admits that one is already subject to it. However, one can analyze its structure and seek the pattern of its dissemination in the singularity of its occurrence. This reading from within its space is the manner in which "home" is

¹⁰ McEachern, "Feminism, Family, Photography," 15.

presented in McEachern's work. Through juxtaposing various images and texts that stage "home," McEachern both critiques and opens-up the ideology.

The medium of photography is a key platform for McEachern's work. She uses it not in a purely documentary manner, but self-reflexively. Through various cues, she signals the medium's indeterminacy and ambiguity as well as its role in cultural meaning formation. Her use of photography references its complicity in popular culture as both a documentary and sales device, drawing attention to the medium's use in the creation of ideological mythologies. As Joan Borsa comments, "[McEachern] exposes photography as one of the key mechanisms of representation within [twentieth] century popular culture and fine art traditions. But then she proceeds to rework these traditions using the camera as a political lens rather than as a bearer of truth, her individual images are interconnected fragments of a larger context."¹¹ McEachern's frequent use of colour photography with integrated text suggests the multiple uses of photography in commercial applications. She depicts interiors, for example, in a manner similar to those used in home décor magazines.¹² Yet, while mimicking the use of photography in popular culture, McEachern also uses it to reflect the ways in which the medium permits and reinforces cultural paradigms. At the same time, McEachern's introduction of disparate elements, such as the integrated text, destabilizes these paradigms revealing the contingencies concealed within their presented mythos.

Within her work, McEachern exploits the multi-vocality made possible via the introduction, within the framework of the photograph, of a variety of contrasting

¹¹ Joan Borsa, "Will Her Desires, Her Aesthetics Be Different From Ours," The Creation of Desire (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Eye Level Gallery, 1988) 48 – 49.

¹² McEachern's images, however, are considerably darker and more ambiguous in content.

texts. Her use of multiple narratives, often including her own, encourages different readings of a given work. Moreover, the multiple images within a series and the differing viewpoints provided therein, promote a field of intertextuality within the completed piece. While she places her work within an artistic discourse, McEachern attempts to speak from within everyday experience to a broader context of social conventions.¹³ In this manner, work such as On Living at Home, displays the ideology of home as dispersed and disseminated within culture.

The importance of feminist discourse in Susan McEachern's work is evident both in her presentation of spaces associated with female experiences and a methodological approach that reflects her interest in the field of gender relations. In this manner, she brings to the historically male realm of art, images of the other female experience in a way that purports neither to exclude the male (as they too are part of the culture she discusses) nor to speak for all women. Her investment in the idea that "the personal is political" is reflected in On Living at Home in the focus on the ideological separation of female labour and experiences within the home from broader social discourses. As McEachern comments, "gender and domestic labour have been the most constant... issues in the work."¹⁴

¹³ In her essay "Feminism, Family and Photography," McEachern expands upon both her experience as an artist and educator in addition to her experience as a mother in order to question the structures of family and home from within their field of influence. McEachern, "Feminism, Family and Photography," 15.

¹⁴ Ibid. 15.

Domestic Narratives

One of the more prominent themes in McEachern's work is the influence of "stories we are told"¹⁵ - the fantasies that shape the subject's self-conception within culture and society. The theme pervades much of her work and is prominently addressed in her series Questions of Nature and The Creation of Desire. In On Living at Home it appears as a "testing" of the mythologizing of home and domesticity in contrast to the lived experiences of women within a domestic environment. In popular narratives, ranging from the magazine to the children's storybook, McEachern explores the perpetuation of a paradigm of home that defines female roles as traditionally domestic and passive.

Fairytales, McEachern suggests, often support traditional female domestic roles. In On Living at Home: Part One, these innocuous mythologies are contrasted with extremes of domestic identification such as the condition of agoraphobia, in order to elucidate upon the hidden messages of such bedside fables. An illustration from Snow White, figure eleven, is displayed in position three, in On Living at Home: Part One. The image shows Snow White, seated within the house of the seven dwarves, crying as three of the dwarf-men comfort her. The accompanying text, situated below the image, reads:

"Snow white" stayed with her new friends and was very happy. She grew to love them all for although they were rough they were always kind ... Snow White's days were busy, keeping the cottage bright and neat, cooking for the little men and washing their colourful clothes – seven of everything and fourteen tiny stockings! – and her beauty and gaiety filled their lives with joy!¹⁶

¹⁵ Also the title of The Creation of Desire: Part Two.

¹⁶ Quoted in: Susan McEachern, On Living at Home: Part One: Agoraphobia: Position Three, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Canada.

The upbeat tone of the text contrasts the image of the forlorn Snow White. It suggests that despite her personal life, she should take comfort in the idealized domestic role she fulfills – how can her trepidation compare with the joy she brings others? McEachern’s juxtaposition of this image with the dark, claustrophobic interiors displayed throughout Part One suggests a metaphorical connection between over-identification with domestic roles and the fairy-tales told to children. In the context of Agoraphobia, Snow White advocates immersion, to the point of disappearance, within the secluded role of the housewife. The ideal female role is constructed as one in which the desires of the woman are absent, or sublimated in the completion of domestic duties.¹⁷

Perpetuating a similar mythology, the role of Catherine Beecher, nineteenth century abolitionist and domestic economist, is analyzed in On Living at Home: Part Two. Presented within inserted text in images in Part Two, through quotes from The American Woman’s Home,¹⁸ Beecher poses an ambiguous model within McEachern’s feminist discourse. On the one hand Beecher is considered a feminist for elevating the role of women and their domestic labour, but, on the other hand, her staunch advocacy for the continued separation of the domestic environment and the sexual division of labour marks her as conservative within our terms today.¹⁹ Beecher, unlike the “Material Feminists” of the same period, did not challenge the

¹⁷ The conclusion of Snow White reconfirms this idea when she is saved by a prince’s kiss and ‘rescued’ into another situation of domestic service.

¹⁸ This was co-written with her sister Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1869, following the success of her first book Treatise on Domestic Economy in 1841. Dolores Hayden, The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods and Cities (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1981) 55.

¹⁹ Ibid. 240.

sexual division of labour and space.²⁰ Instead she envisioned the domestic sphere as women's place of power in opposition to the male public realm. In accepting this "prized" role, women, she thought, "should not compete with men in any way, nor should they vote" instead she proposed they accept their role as "'home minister' and as skilled professional."²¹ However, while honoring domestic work, she maintained its position, hidden from public sight.

McEachern addresses this schism in the first series of images in Part Two. The image in position three, figure thirteen, shows a rail-back chair set against a stairway piled high with freshly ironed clothes. On top of the pile sits embedded text drawn from Beecher. "The family state, then, is the aptest illustration of the heavenly kingdom, and in it woman is its chief minister. Her great mission is self-denial, training its members to "self-sacrificing" labours for the ignorant and weak: if not for her own children, then for the neglected children of her Father in heaven."²² McEachern eerily repeats this theme of self-sacrifice within the photograph. The repetition of "bars" both in the chair and the stair rail behind, echo the martyred labour of women, of "home ministers." The image reflects the ambiguity of Catherine Beecher's brand of feminism. The contrast between image and text suggest that to speak about the labour of women, to make it metaphorically visible, is not enough. Virtual appearance maintains the spatial and sexual division and their psychological and economic repercussions within the home. However, while

²⁰ The Material Feminists are discussed in Chapter Two, and in more length in Dolores Hayden, The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods and Cities (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1981).

²¹ Hayden 56.

²² Quoted from: Susan McEachern, On Living at Home: Part Two: Domestic Immersion: Position Three, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Canada.

McEachern does not suggest concrete solutions to the problems, she does challenge the narratives that perpetuate conceptions of domestic duty.

In Part Three, the domestic roles perpetuated in the fairy tales of Part One and the home advice in Part Two, are complicated as McEachern introduces the importance of female imagination in the navigation of popular mythologies.

Reflecting upon the ambiguous function of mass media in her work, McEachern has written:

I do not mean to claim, by the work ...that we absorb so many messages from popular culture that we therefore becomes numb to our own goals and interests. I believe on the other hand, that there are many messages within popular culture that would support the roles we enter into. The forces which form our gender identity and our sexuality are too diffuse to pinpoint and organize around any one institution, such as family, school, or the cultural industries, but I do believe that the way these forces work in combination is very significant.²³

As discussed in Chapter Three, magazines and other cultural outlets do not force identification with their ideology, rather they suggest roles that women can choose to play.

Section three of On Living at Home, entitled Media Consumption, juxtaposes images of the home interior with smaller black and white photographs that depict a variety of media platforms that enter the home. One such grouping, that centers around an image of a bedroom, suggests the role of female imagination in negotiating the positions offered by popular culture. The three media outlets depicted, a television screen, a romance novel and a glossy magazine advertisement, promote a passive female role in romantic engagements. Within the magazine advertisement, the actress Jane Seymour is quoted, "If you want romance to come on strong, you

²³Susan McEachern, "The Creation of Desire: Introduction," The Creation of Desire (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Eye Level Gallery, 1992) 26.

have to come on soft.”²⁴ The embracing couples depicted on the television screen, and on the romance novel echo the benefits of this passive approach.²⁵ However, McEachern, reflecting her above statement regarding the indeterminate effect of popular media, challenges the imposition of such messages upon a supposedly passive subject. In the photograph of the bedroom McEachern inserts text that frustrates the cause and effect logic in the interpretation of popular culture. Excerpted from Tania Modleski’s Loving with a Vengeance, the text reads:

It is an important part of my project to show the so-called masochism pervading these texts is a ‘cover’ for anxieties, desires and wishes which if openly expressed would challenge the psychological and social order of things. For that reason, of course, they must be kept hidden; the texts, after arousing them, must in Jameson’s formula, work to neutralize them.²⁶

The presence of this quote disrupts the images that surround the large colour photograph. It suggests that interpretation of cultural messages is not simplistic, but is finally negotiated by the reader. Stories, Part Three suggests, are not read entirely in isolation. Despite initial surface meaning they can provide an avenue for agency through imagination and the ability to re-read and re-interpret media constructions.²⁷ The ideology of home is thereby open to negotiation from within its formation.

²⁴Quoted from: Susan McEachern, On Living at Home: Part Three: Media Consumption: Position Three and Three A, Joan Borsa, Making Space: Suzanne Lacy, Susan McEachern, Frances Robson, Honor Kever Rogers (North Vancouver: Presentation House Gallery, 1988) 15.

²⁵ The idea is reiterated on the cover of the romance novel in the text that reads: “she raised her lips to his, knowing she was treasured, protected, safe in a circle of love where they made their own rules.” Qtd. from: Susan McEachern, On Living at Home: Part Three: Media Consumption: Position Three and Three A, Borsa, Making Space, 15.

²⁶ Quoted from: Susan McEachern, On Living at Home: Part Three: Media Consumption: Position Three and Three A, Borsa, Making Space, 15.

²⁷ The negotiation of female inner and outer space is further addressed in Susan McEachern’s series The Creation of Desire.

Domestic Isolation

As discussed in the preceding chapters, “home” has been ideologically positioned as a secluded space isolated from the external world. Often framed as the private family environment, home has been historically constructed as a sanctuary in opposition to the larger “threat” of the (masculine) social and public realms. In On Living at Home, McEachern critiques the sexual and psychological divisions this conceptual separation perpetuates.

Home as feminine in opposition to a masculine space is critiqued throughout On Living at Home, as McEachern denaturalizes gender and spatial divisions. The second Beecher text in figure thirteen, one that appears below the chair, situates the traditional gender boundaries within the space of home. The text reads:

To man is appointed the out-door labor – to till the earth, dig the mines, toil in the foundaries, traverse the oceans, transport merchandise, labor in manufactories, construct home, conduct civil, municipal and state affairs, and all the heavy work, which, most of the day, excludes him from the comforts of home. But the greatest stimulus to all these toils, implanted in the heart of every true man is the desire for a home of his own, and the hopes of paternity.²⁸

Within the above text, women’s domestic labour remains the negative, hidden supplement to men’s work. The positioning of female labour and space as the hidden other reflects Luce Irigaray’s description of female culture in relation to male. For Irigaray, the feminine remains a “lack,” an empty space, in patriarchal imaginings.²⁹ It is therefore no wonder that a space identified with the female, as the home has been, is also identified with the concealed and the private. Moreover, while for the man the home is a place of comfort to return to, for the woman it remains the site of

²⁸ Quoted in: Susan McEachern, On Living at Home: Part Two: Domestic Immersion: Position Three, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Canada.

²⁹ Luce Irigaray, “This Sex Which is Not One,” Gender Space Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction, ed. Jane Rendall, Barbara Penner, and Iain Borden (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) 60 – 61.

self-sacrificing labour, as noted in the previous section. Despite challenges to the segregation of the home from writers such as Betty Friedan, who attempted to shed light upon the “problem that had no name,” the image of the separate sphere as a feminine space has endured.³⁰

While in the previous section I discussed how mass circulated narratives influence the formation of home, McEachern also notes the extent to which the ideology of home is internalized in the desires and fears of the subject. In Part One: Agoraphobia, internalized investment in the standard of the isolated home is analyzed through the juxtaposition of images and text that compare female experiences of the privacy of home to the condition of agoraphobia (fear of public spaces). More than a commercial tagline, the wish to individualize the home, McEachern suggests, evolves from the desire, discussed in Chapters One and Two, to construct a stable place in the world. Decoration is thus ideologically conceived as part of a “nesting instinct” that guarantees the coherence of “being in the world.” Into an image from Part One, position two, that mimics magazine décor guides, McEachern inserts a quote that disrupts the simplicity of the presumed individuality of the private home. The text reads:

In choosing, decorating and living in a home, it becomes the object of countless ‘narcissistic’ choices that endows it with the potential to be experienced as an extension of the self or self object, one that calms and reassures. The need to find security in ‘staying home’ is distinct and not merely reactive to the fear of going out.³¹

The compulsion that was discussed in Chapters Three and Four as the need to individualize the home becomes in McEachern’s series an over-identification with the

³⁰ Friedan 33.

³¹ Quoted in: Susan McEachern, On Living at Home: Part One: Agoraphobia: Position Two, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Canada.

paradigm of home as a safe and private space. Furthermore, the contrast between text and image suggests that the subject, through playing to their fears, perpetuates a limiting ideology of home.

Desire and fear on the part of the subject solidify their investment in the paradigm of the private home. Domestic separation appears ideologically natural. In On Living at Home: Part Two this assumption is analyzed in terms of its construction. The image in position ten, figure twelve, seems to reinforce the isolation pictured in Part One. The photograph shows a view through French door panes to a closed front door. The world outside is blocked first by the bars of the French door, then by the front door with its covered window. Interior, female, space appears forever separated from the exterior male world. While this image seems to reinforce spatial and sexual division the text that runs across one of the horizontal bars suggests the construction of the division. “The division between the sexes is emphasized with the personal investment in domestic space.”³² This suggests that while separation exists it is maintained as natural through subjective investment in the ideology that perpetuates it. While the lines of the door-frames reinforce the feelings of entrapment, that doors can be opened suggests that spatial and sexual division are not inherent.

Domestic isolation is not a spatial fact. While it may be reinforced in popular visual paradigms, as discussed in Chapter Three, as the previous section notes – the viewer mediates the message. However, the natural appearance of the separation of home is often maintained by the subject’s desires, fears and internalized assumptions regarding space and gender roles. In On Living at Home, McEachern, by exposing

³² Quoted in: Susan McEachern, On Living at Home: Part Two: Domestic Immersion: Position Ten, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Canada.

the mechanisms that situate the presumption of domestic separation through multiple images and contrasting narratives, suggests that through an awareness of ideological formations one can begin to effect change in the domestic sphere. Furthermore, McEachern suggests that the home is not necessarily the isolated private sphere it is purported to be.

Domestic Production

The domestic sphere is undeniably part of the public world and economy. As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, while seemingly hidden it is incontrovertibly tied to the social and economic forces of the world it retreats from. However, perhaps influenced by gender stereotypes or ideological spatial divisions, domestic production remains, to a large part, conceptually segregated from the market economy. In On Living at Home: Part Two, McEachern critiques the isolation of domestic production from public sight. This analysis reflects similar challenges posed by the feminist-Marxist writer Eli Zaretsky. As Zaretsky describes, “the organization of production in capitalist society is predicated upon the existence of a certain form of family life. The wage labour system (socialized production under capitalism) is sustained by the socially necessary but private labour of housewives and mothers.”³³

Private domestic labour, reinforced as a natural pursuit by popular media, including fairytales and home manuals, and perpetuated by personal investment in a seemingly natural ideology, is critiqued in Part Two by image-text combinations that suggest the ramifications of the full investment in a gender-biased paradigm of

³³ Eli Zaretsky, Capitalism, The Family & Personal Life (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1976) 24 – 25.

domesticity. The photograph in position seven, figure fourteen, is a close-up image of a hamper full of socks. A textual insert, almost hidden, runs in a diagonal line up the hamper's left side. It reads: "The self-sacrifice involved in the responsibilities of caring for others causes disintegration of the self when the boundaries between you and those others can no longer be clearly defined."³⁴ The text alludes to the complete erasure of the individual, who in Snow White-like devotion to the care of socks has transcended the need for representation. Reflecting the erasure of the individual, the only sign of the work is the product, the person is noticeably absent.³⁵ The disappearance of the labourer suggests the extent to which domestic work is taken for granted. While McEachern does not attempt to provide a solution to the question of domestic labour, she denaturalizes it returning to domestic economy the contradictions that the "Material Feminists" in the nineteenth century had been faced with.³⁶

Not only does McEachern allude to the isolation of domestic labour, but also to its de-valuation. Part Two, position eight, figure fifteen, depicts the imaginary replacement of difficult labour within the home by labour-saving devices. The image focuses on a kitchen corner, showing the edge of a toaster oven and most prominently displaying a shining clean blender. In many ways the photograph resembles similar appliance advertisements commonly littered throughout the pages of women's magazines. This illusion, however, is disrupted by text that re-presents the

³⁴ Quoted in: Susan McEachern, On Living at Home: Part Two: Domestic Immersion: Position Seven, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Canada.

³⁵ In many of the magazine covers discussed in Chapter Three one was privy to a pristinely kept home, but in comparison to McEachern's work in Part Two, the absence of the laborer that maintained that space seems disconcerting.

³⁶ The "Material Feminists" are briefly noted in Chapter Two, but more fully discussed in Dolores Hayden, The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighbourhoods and Cities (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1981).

ramifications of the symbolic role of labour-saving devices. The text reads: “The availability of more and more appliances for the home creates higher standards for the domestic worker while suggesting that menial work is no longer done by people but by machines.”³⁷ While appliances may aid in the completion of domestic duties, they in no way replace them, rather they seem to obfuscate the reality of the production. Moreover, domestic appliances more than easing production promote greater consumption of the home.

Domestic Consumption

Consumption, as discussed in Chapters Three and Four, is one of the prime motivations behind a contemporary visual paradigm of home. As noted in Chapter Two, the private homestead in the nineteenth century was a financial yoke intended to stabilize labour unrest, as well as provide space for the display and use of newly available mass-produced consumer goods. However, the ideological framing of home has maintained it as a space external to the concerns of economics and commercialism, home is positioned as a natural and secluded place, an individual retreat. McEachern in Part Two, Three and Four suggests that the home is necessarily connected to the “external” public economy.

Commercial products meant for home consumption often take the form of decorative items or home appliances. As noted above, these devices do not often ease domestic labour, but instead increase domestic consumption. Despite being conceptually separate from the public world, domestic consumption not only has

³⁷ Quoted in: Susan McEachern, On Living at Home: Part Two: Domestic Immersion: Position Eight, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Canada.

ramifications within the home, as discussed above, but is also incontrovertibly tied to the systems of the world economy. Consumption within the home effects and has consequences within the global market.

The external relevance of the domestic economy is strongly portrayed in an image from Part Four that focuses, as figure fifteen did, on a seemingly innocuous appliance – in this case, a coffeepot. The coffeepot dominates the picture plane surrounded on all sides by gleaming surfaces. Ambiguous in location, without more visual data one could imagine that the tableau depicts either a home or a more industrial environment. The image illustrates a seemingly private and everyday experience – the brewing of coffee, however texts inserted to the left and below the carafe break this illusion. In the left hand text, a quote from John W. Warnock's The Politics of Hunger reads:

The green revolution in agriculture had its initial success in Mexico in the 1960s. Following the orthodox economic development strategy, the government favoured incentives to commercial operators, free play of the market, and production of the world market. However, in the 1970s per capita production of food began to decline. Production shifted away from staples of the Mexican diet – corn and beans. While Mexico increased production of bananas, coffee, tomatoes, strawberries, meat and cocoa for export, it became more and more dependent on the staple cereal imports. A large trade deficit emerged.³⁸

The smaller text, positioned below the coffeepot repeats a similar sentiment in an extract from René Dumont and Nicholas Cohen's The Growth of Hunger. From below the coffeepot the warning emerges: "Any type of production which intentionally is not for its own consumption allows many types of exploitation."³⁹ Into the quotidian domestic sphere McEachern introduces reminders of the concealed

³⁸ Quoted in: Susan McEachern, On Living at Home: Part Four: The World Outside, Optica Gallery, The Zone of Conventional Practice and Other Real Stories (Montreal, Quebec: Optica Gallery, 1989) 172.

³⁹ Quoted in: Susan McEachern, On Living at Home: Part Four: The World Outside, Optica Gallery, The Zone of Conventional Practice and Other Real Stories (Montreal, Quebec: Optica Gallery, 1989) 172.

economic relationships that influence all manner of production and consumption within the home. While ideologically positioned as separate, the home is never entirely isolated from the economic and political relations that support its maintenance.

Private-Public

As noted throughout the preceding chapters, the opposition of the private and public has been a key spatial hierarchy in the framing of home. From the Victorian space of domestic retreat to contemporary magazine images and recent theory,⁴⁰ home continues to be ideologically framed as a definitively private place.

In McEachern's series On Living at Home, she explores the legitimacy of this conception. Throughout the series, examining the ramifications of narrative construction, isolation, production and consumption, McEachern destabilizes absolute coherency of a univocal account of the domestic sphere through the introduction of *unheimlich* disruptions within its ideological formation. These *unheimlich* relations, as discussed in Chapter One, are those concealed oppositions and heterogeneous concepts that interrupt a consistent and unified presence of the ideology of home. For example, McEachern returns to the paradigm of home its *unheimlich* connection to the ideological assumptions that perpetuate its being. Ideals, such as separation, upon which the paragon is founded, are returned in On Living at Home as their others – isolation becomes agoraphobia. McEachern employs *unheimlich*, concealed systems

⁴⁰ Such as Kimberly Dovey, who situates home according to a series of hierarchical oppositions including: self-other, private-public, inside-outside, and order-chaos. Kimberly Dovey, "Home and Homelessness," Home Environments, ed. Irwin Altman and Carol M. Werner (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1985) 45.

of construction, such as the influence of popular narratives, gender and spatial assumptions, and presumptions of economic independence, to challenge the naturalized formation of home. Furthermore, like Lynne Cohen, as discussed in Chapter Four, McEachern re-presents relations that were concealed in the paradigm in order to suggest the constant internal and external negotiation of the ideology of home.

Sights of Resistance

On Living at Home does not seek to dismantle the idea of home. Rather, Susan McEachern's multi-leveled approach – her combination of a variety of contrasting text and images – destabilizes the coherency of a univocal formation. Home as a natural and uncomplicated site is problematized by the gender, political and economic forces that negotiate its being.

Home is not critically dismissed, rather through its revealed indeterminacy of ideological containment the domestic sphere becomes the site of potential resistance to the gender and market inequality that McEachern insinuates is connected to the sphere. In this manner, On Living at Home reconfirms the feminist dictum, “the personal is political.” It suggests that wide-spread gender and labour reform can only be fully achieved in the public realm if it is also activated within the private at the same time. However, McEachern's series does not provide any easy solutions, neither does it assert a renewed univocality; rather On Living at Home speaks from within a space of critical dispersion. Moreover, McEachern's series, through

presenting diverse viewpoints and critiques leaves the ideology of home open to *active* viewer interpretation.⁴¹

In On Living at Home Susan McEachern destabilizes a simplistic conception of what it means *to be at home*. The ideology of home is traced through popular narrative constructions, colour photographs reminiscent of both personal and commercial work, as well as through a variety of texts drawn from contrasting writers and theorists. A univocal paradigm is thus dispersed across a wide field of visual and textual interruptions within the four parts of the series. This multi-valent presentation includes the viewer as subjective interpreter. In this manner the work emphasizes the possibility of active viewer interpretation. Furthermore, McEachern through the presencing of concealed *unheimlich* elements within the ideology of home critiques the space as limiting gender and labour reforms. In contrast to popular paradigmatic interpretations that position home as a private (feminine) in opposition to a public (masculine) space, McEachern situates the home as between binaries – as a necessary site for the discussion of gender and economic divisions that are often overlooked. On Living at Home reconfirms the dictum “the personal is political” by declaring the home a potential site of resistance and critique.

⁴¹ On this note I feel I should assert the fact that this reading of the many narratives that run through On Living at Home is my own and necessarily influenced by my search for the dissemination of the paradigm – other interpretation of “home” in the work are always available.

Conclusion

Home in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

This thesis has traced the dissemination of the concept of home in contemporary visual culture. Drawing on critical theory, communications studies, and architecture, I have addressed home as an ideological construct presented in popular culture and in the artistic production of Lynne Cohen and Susan McEachern. This endeavor has constituted an interdisciplinary deconstruction of the visual paradigm – analyzing its construction, perpetuation and the conflicting forces of its signification. Home, while appearing present, coherent and transcendent, is, in its (visual) form, undecidably negotiated by internal conceptual framing and mediated by its external audience, culture and singular context. However, as insinuated especially within McEachern's work, the concept of home is not one that should necessarily be abandoned. Home can be for some a legitimate space for personal freedom and fulfillment. However, the desire for home, as it explored in each section of this thesis, is co-opted by social and market forces that attempt to ideologically constrain the meaning of home.

Throughout this thesis, home has been approached from a critical space of dispersion. The interdisciplinary method used did not permit the inquiry to dwell, or *be at home*, in one particular field, rather through the discourses of critical theory, architecture, communications and art history the ideology of home was exposed to its inconsistent and *unheimlich* incoherencies – situating it on undecidable ground. Through terms such as *unheimlich* (referring to the concealed negotiation between opposing poles of conceptuality) and *model home* (referring to the singularity of a

visual signifier within the instance of its occurrence), the paradigm of home was destabilized.

Drawing upon the writing of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault as a method of encountering ideology as defined by Louis Althusser, I focused on the conceptual framing of “home” that imposed presence and coherency. From the dispersed field of interdisciplinarity I read the signifier “home” in terms of its heterogeneity and intertextuality regarding communication. In this manner, the approach taken by this thesis reflects a similar desire for the critique, through dislocation and dissemination, of naturalized ideologies in Susan McEachern and Lynne Cohen’s work.

In an interdisciplinary analysis, each chapter has focused upon the conceptual importance of challenging the hierarchical oppositions that frame the ideology of home – most specifically challenging the exclusivity of private and public space. Within theoretical, historical and photographic contexts, I noted how the ideology was maintained according to a series of binary pairs, such as place-space, individual-social, feminine-masculine, consumption-production, domestic-commercial, naturalism-control and leisure-labour. In each chapter I reviewed a selection of the more prominent pairs, and through analysis, discussed how home was thus conceptually positioned. Furthermore, through the introduction of the concept *unheimlich*, the concealed pair of a hierarchical opposition, I challenged the certitude

of the hierarchical order by suggesting the undecidable intermixing of conceptual poles within the singular iteration, or *model home*.¹

Each of the five chapters adopted an interdisciplinary position to deconstruct – to make present the inconsistent signification within – the ideology of home in singular contexts. In so doing, each traced the boundaries of the formation, noting the function of hierarchical oppositions in this framework, in order to provide a temporary locus from which to suggest the instability of the ideology. While Chapters One and Two provided a general historical and theoretical framework, Chapters Three to Five encountered the paradigm as iterated within the context of its visual (photographic) communication.

Chapter One, “Negotiating the Construction of Home: Methodological Approaches,” provided the theoretical foundations upon which the endeavor proceeded. Within this chapter key concepts such as ideology, home, the role of photography, *unheimlich* and *model home* were fully discussed. Moreover, the chapter established the interdisciplinary approaches to the artists and magazines that were taken.

“Placing Home,” Chapter Two, mapped a development of home in language, thought and architecture. However, while posing coherent concepts of home, the chapter strove to identify the economic and political forces that perpetuated an ideology of home. Towards this end, home was discussed in terms of the relationship between the development of the suburban iteration in the nineteenth century and the social and economic powers that promoted its ideological perpetuation. While not

¹ For example, in Chapter Three and Four, I noted that home is presented as a “natural” place, however, through discussing the *unheimlich* of “control,” I revealed the extent to which the naturalism of home is mediated to an undecidable degree, by mechanisms of social and physical control.

dealing specifically with contemporary manifestations, Chapter Two suggested the importance of ideology in the conceptualization and maintenance of a transcendent idea of “home.”

Marking a transitional point in the thesis, Chapter Three, “The Model Home in Canadian Magazines,” analyzed in depth the cover images of Canadian home magazines, such as Style at Home, Canadian House & Home and City & Country Home, over the past thirty years in order to trace the dominant visual standard and deconstruct its presence. In this manner, the chapter discussed the paradigm in general terms, but also in the specificity of its occurrence – mode of presentation, significance and construction. Furthermore, it introduced the importance of the magazine as an ideological platform that exploits the supposed veracity of photography, but this chapter also suggested the extent to which the audience negotiated this paradigm.

“Lynne Cohen and the Consumer Home,” Chapter Four, discussed how the artist’s residential, commercial and educative photographic environments displaced and denaturalized an ideology of home. Drawing upon the writing of Michel Foucault, I noted how Cohen presents a paradigm of home that appears highly controlled by disciplinary mechanisms such as: hierarchical observation, pedagogical suggestion and normalizing judgement. Cohen’s photographs destabilize the hierarchical binaries of naturalism-control, individualism-conformism and domestic-commercial economies. Moreover, they disrupt an ideology of home defined by the opposition of private and public space dislocating the formation to an *unheimlich* in-

between. While revealing the home as mediated by public forces of social and consumer control, Cohen's environments resist the ideological containment of home.

The photographic series On Living at Home, by Canadian artist-photographer Susan McEachern, is reviewed in Chapter Five. This chapter, "Susan McEachern and the Domestic Home," discussed the series in terms of how it provided a visual site of resistance to an ideology of home. McEachern's ambitious On Living at Home challenges the paradigm of home and its relationship to domestic narratives, domestic isolation, domestic production and domestic consumption. Like Lynne Cohen, McEachern exploits the presumed veracity of the photograph in a self-reflexive reference to its role in cultural meaning formation. On Living at Home, reflecting the feminist dictum "the personal is political," politicizes the space of home repositioning it as undecidably both public and private. McEachern frustrates conclusions regarding the ideology of home, she questions through the multi-vocality of the series, the coherency and naturalism of the home by revealing the concealed political, economic, gender and spatial assumptions perpetuated by the paradigm.

This thesis, reflecting upon the practice of the artists discussed, suggests that any concept supposed as natural, innate or transcendent should necessarily be analyzed in detail in order to reveal the assumptions and stereotypes that it perpetuates. Moreover, this critical practice should seek not to replace an ideology, but understand its dissemination within disperse contextual appearances. In an interdisciplinary exploration of the ideology of home in three photographic contexts I sought the negotiation of the ideology in the singularity of its communicated presence. Throughout this practice, aspects that ideologically contain or control were

discussed chiefly in terms of how consumerism and gender roles were influenced by the media frameworks that perpetuate a contemporary paradigm of home. However, while discussing mechanisms of control, it was also suggested that the audience, or subject, can mediate their investment within the ideology through the awareness of its mechanisms. In such a manner, Lynne Cohen and Susan McEachern's work, while critical of the formation, position the home as a site of potential resistance. In reading ideological models one must remain aware of their undecidability and iterability, one must let the concealed appear and never under-estimate the value of reception and interpretation. Moreover, one should retain a critical vigilance regarding ideological formations – constantly questioning their naturalized assumptions, in this manner the analysis of the ideology of home should never come to a conclusion.

Appendix A

A Brief Review of Canadian Home Magazines

This appendix while separate from Chapter Three augments the discussion therein of the singularity of the paradigm presented by each publication. In this endeavor, I have grouped the magazines according to lineage, Group A therefore records the details of City & Country Home and its antecedents, Group B, Style at Home and related predecessors, and Group C, Canadian House & Home and its forebears. Each of the three franchises is discussed in terms of how publication changes influenced the model of home presented within, thus providing a more specific context to each of the eleven magazines discussed in Chapter Three.

Group A – Canadian Home and Gardens to City & Country Home

While the history of Canadian Homes and Gardens was outside the date range of this thesis, it is useful to briefly discuss its history in relation to its more closely examined inheritor Canadian Homes. In 1924 Canadian Homes and Gardens was founded by Senator Rupert Davies, owner of Kingston's British Whig newspaper. It was "a magazine that aimed higher on the social scale and tried to cut across gender," distribution was "limited to 5, 000 paid-up subscribers in advance, sample copies and a newspaper and direct mail campaign aiming for 'an exclusive clientele.'"¹ In 1925 J.B. Maclean purchased Canadian Homes and Gardens, and continued to aim the magazine at the upper echelons of society.² The magazine was highly nationalistic,

¹ Fraser Sutherland, The Monthly Epic: A History of Canadian Magazines 1789 – 1989 (Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1989) 157.

² This upper scale audience continued to be the focus in Maclean Hunter's later home magazine City & Country Home

meant to inspire an idea of a Canadian rather than American home.³ While the post-war era saw the end of many home magazines, Canadian Homes and Gardens was initially successful, incorporating in 1960 the magazine Your Home and Garden and changing its title to the shorter Canadian Homes.⁴

It was this brief incarnation as Canadian Homes that was examined in more detail within the confines of Chapter Three. Of the eight issues examined, the magazine presented a predominantly city-suburban and ultra modern paradigm. Most often, it depicted white upper-middle-class families on the covers enjoying their large open homes and the leisure time that their societal position afforded them, this feeling was mirrored by content that combined upper-middle-class ideals with nationalistic overtones and nostalgia for the past.⁵ Unlike other home magazines, Canadian Homes did not focus on a female readership, rather it was aimed at a family audience, this positioning was most obvious in its subtitle “The Home Magazine of Family Living.” Articles were written equally for men by men as well as for women by women. However, many of these articles tended to reinforce stereotypical gender roles. The magazine featured articles that were varied, linking the image of home to the leisure time that it afforded.⁶ As a whole, the magazine contained articles devoted to “homelike” activities, such as: gardening, cooking, drinks, entertaining, and home improvement. The “Service Center” closed the magazine; this grab-bag section was devoted not only to product reviews, but also to correspondence and some news featurettes. In 1962 Maclean Hunter sold the magazine to Southam Press. Once sold,

³ Sutherland 157.

⁴ Which was by this time published by Maclean-Hunter Publications

⁵ Sentimental nostalgia was spread thick in the many editorial sections such as: “Inside our House,” “The House I Remember,” “Watching,” “Lois Wilson Here,” “Time Was,” “Home Sweet Home,” and “Time Off.”

⁶ This was suggested in articles on travel, cottages, leisure activities, sports and boating.

Canadian Homes became Canadian Home Magazine, a newspaper supplement that would run until October 1965.

Emerging out of the industry boom in the late 1970s, Maclean-Hunter Publications released Canadian Home Décor in the fall of 1978. The magazine was published by Ralph Zambonelli, and edited by David Piper until the spring issue of 1980 when Barbara Jean Neal took over as editor. Regular departments offered home magazine staples such as: “Editorial,” “Shopping,” and “Letters.” Like the previous Maclean publications, this magazine continued to pander to a middle and upper middle-class audience, and as such often focused on expensive urban and suburban living. However, Canadian Home Décor, perhaps as a result of the late 1970s housing market, did offer a broader range of housing solutions than previous Maclean publications.⁷ The content consisted of primarily design and decorating ideas, with some renovation guides; many of these articles focused on new ideas in design, and articles on specific designers. Featured articles, like Canadian Homes, continued to cover the various realms of home leisure, such as travel, cooking, family life and entertaining. Like many magazines coming out of the late 1970s, Canadian Home Décor focused on consumption; featuring articles on entertainment products, gadgets for the home and antiques.

In the winter of 1980, James M. Shepard replaced Ralph Zambonelli as publisher, and Canadian Home Décor became Home Décor/ Canada. Without change to editor, Barbara Jean Neal remained, there was little observable change in the publications

⁷ Including a real estate guide, and articles on town house and apartment living.

written content.⁸ However, the magazine did begin to focus on higher priced accommodations. Home reviews included the discussion of prominent and large historical houses, while home improvement articles focused not only on remodelling but also on home expansion. The paragon presented was one that espoused the ideology of the rising upper-middle “yuppie” classes. Proposed home activities reflected this focus, with articles on fine entertaining, wine tasting parties (featured in April/May 1982), Japanese flower arranging (October 1981), and other high-end crafts and activities. The addition of feature articles, such as “Collections” and “Prints,” that were devoted to the acquisition of fine art items, as well as gallery and museum reviews, similarly appealed to an audience with a larger income. The home presented in the magazine was certainly one linked to the upper-class Canadian culture that was beginning to gather around urban centers such as Toronto. This specialised appeal was to become even more apparent when the subscription list for Home Décor/ Canada was transferred to the new Maclean Hunter publication City & Country Home in the fall of 1982.

In 1982 City & Country Home, “Southern Ontario Living” as it was subtitled, debuted under a new publisher, Bruce L. Drane. From 1982 to 1986 Barbara Jean Neal continued as editor, leaving in September of 1986 to be replaced by Anita Draycott, first as managing editor, then as editor in August of 1987. While the magazine did drop its subtitle, it remained only ostensibly a national magazine - focussing more often than not on southern Ontario and as such the periodical was

⁸ In content, Home Décor / Canada was for the most part a continuation of Home Décor Canada. Departments remained more or less stable including: “Editorial,” “Ask an Expert,” “Shopping,” and “Typefaces.” “Typefaces” was an interesting addition that introduced different people involved in the publication of the magazine; this acted much like the magazines correspondence sections, ingratiating the audience member into the magazine family.

reviewed only until its December 1987 issue. The paradigm presented was predominantly upper-middle-class. The covers depicted either richer or older areas of Toronto,⁹ or large exotic homes.¹⁰ Articles similarly, made little attempt to appeal to a broad national audience. City & Country Home in total ran from 1982 – 1994, but in February/March 1993 became a magazine supplement to Chatelaine magazine.

Group B – Select Homes to Style at Home

In the spring of 1987 Southam Communications launched Select Homes, a split-run national home magazine. Select Homes, “Canada’s Home Improvement Magazine,” was headed by G. Wallace Wood as publisher, and in its initial year had a variety of editors until in 1987 Glenn Rogers was appointed.¹¹ Content-wise the magazine lived up to its subtitle, focusing on house plans, and detailed renovations.¹² In comparison to Maclean Hunter publications, Select Homes appealed to a broad national audience, providing solutions for varying income brackets. Departments such as “Buyers Guide,” “Do-It-Yourself,” “Home Finances,” and articles on renovation and homeowner guides attempted to provide a vision of home as something both accessible and affordable. However, the home that was presented was predominantly a suburban detached house. While most often appealing to a female audience, the magazine offered D-I-Y projects geared at a secondary male audience. The magazine featured typical home articles on design, style, gardening,

⁹ Such as the November 1987 special “Rosedale Then and Now.”

¹⁰ Such as can be seen in the November 1986 “Barbados Special,” the March 1985 “Bermuda Special,” and the special feature in October 1987 on “The McMurty Residence, London UK.”

¹¹ From April to October 1987, Michael McVean was editor, replaced in October 1987 by Jim Adair. In May/June of 1987 Glenn Rogers was appointed as editorial director, later to be listed as editor, and Dianne McDougall as managing director.

¹² This could perhaps be a result of the predominant male editorial team who may have created a magazine aimed equally at a male and female audience.

family, food and wine. Departments, as discussed in Chapter Three, like other similar magazines constituted the audience largely through “community” and virtual involvement.¹³ Catering to its title, the magazine often reviewed “select homes” in articles on “dream house” renovations and decorations, as well as favourite countrywide and province-specific homes.¹⁴ Select Homes was aimed at a middle-class family in which both members worked full time.¹⁵ More than anything else the magazine focused on the design and renovation of the home – the act of making the home one’s own.

In 1989 Select Homes, Select Homes (Vancouver), and Canadian Living’s Food Magazine merged to form a new magazine, Select Homes & Food - “Canada’s Magazine for Better Living at Home.” The magazine was now published in Toronto by Telemedia Publications under a new group publisher David Titcombe. While Glenn Rogers was replaced in May 1990 by Dianne McDougall-Tierney as editor, little changed at the magazine. Select Homes & Food continued to be published as a split-run, and the content reflected a fairly direct merger of a home and a cooking magazine.¹⁶

In February 1991, the magazine changed direction. It dropped its subtitle, no longer “Canada’s Magazine for Better Living at Home,” and became a more fully

¹³ This was promoted in departments such as: “Letters,” “Homeowner Q and A” and “Back Porch” to consumer focused segments such as “Home Designs,” “MarketPlace,” “Showcase,” “Buyers Guide” and “Sources.”

¹⁴ Aiming certain show homes at a specific province was made easier by split run publication that focused one province at a time.

¹⁵ This was insinuated in magazine articles that assumed both sexes only had weekends to tackle home projects.

¹⁶ Departments reflected the merger between the two magazines as the sections were split into home and food areas. Sections such as “Letters,” “Editorial,” “Reader’s Guide,” and “Q & A” remained common while the rest of the departments were split between ‘Home’ (“DIY,” “Homeplans,” and “Finances”) and ‘Food’ (“Recipe Exchange,” “Cooking Lesson,” and “Menus”). The feature articles similarly were split between home and food features.

integrated magazine. Lynette Jennings took over as editor, while Diane McDougall-Tierney advanced to the position of managing editor. Many departments remained similar, including familiar elements such as: do-it-yourself projects, editorials, letters, Q & A, and shopping advice (“Market Place,” “Selections,”). Additions included: “Postcard,”¹⁷ “New Food,” and “Shortcuts.” The change also signalled a shift in focus from renovation to decoration; although renovation remained important, feature articles favoured design.¹⁸ One major change to the magazine came later in 1991 with the addition of the supplement, “Lynette Jennings’ Workbook.” The workbook promoted Jennings as a “home expert.”¹⁹ While Jennings provided balanced home advice on both decorating and home finances her persona seemed to exceed the confines of the publication. The paradigm presented, while more focused on decoration, was not too different from that presented in Select Homes.

In October of 1994, while remaining with Telemedia²⁰ the magazine underwent major editorial change. David Titcombe was replaced by Maureen Cavan as publisher, Diane McDougall-Tierney was replaced by Gail Johnston Habs as managing editor, and Lynette Jennings was replaced by Barbara L. Dixon as editor. Under its new title, Canadian Select Homes continued in the same vein as it had in the early Jennings years. Repeated departments and features tended to be home-centred, including articles on decorating, crafts, buying and what to buy, reflecting a

¹⁷ A feature that discussed travel within and without Canada – but to less exotic and expensive locals as were discussed in magazines such as City & Country Home.

¹⁸ Features included articles on subjects such as: flower arranging, DIY, building advice, food, budget building, and finance.

¹⁹ In many ways, Jennings, like Martha Stewart, provided an ideal homemaker image that referred back to domestic values of the past while retaining the freedom of choice in roles that is symptomatic of a post-feminist view. However, unlike the American diva of Stewart, Jennings, continued to espouse a more balanced budget of decorating, stressing the idea of decorating under financial restrictions.

²⁰ By this time Telemedia Communications instead of Publications.

growing link between the creation home and consumer items. In addition, the magazine, like its previous incarnations, presented a showcase of well-made homes, or model homes, reflecting a Canadian ideal of “home.” Departments increased their focus on home consumption; mainstays such as “From the Editor,” “In the Kitchen,” “Letters” and “DIY” were joined by departments such as: “Selections,” “Design Lesson,” “What’s New,” “Window Shopping,” “Talking Style,” “Back to Basics,” “Shopping Guide,” “Home Library” and “Order by Mail.”²¹ In comparison to earlier publications this home magazine tended to focus more on the departments²² than on features.²³ Featured articles included home magazine mainstays (such as cooking, gardening, and décor projects) as well as reviews of well-designed homes.²⁴ In addition, the magazine reinforced its commitment to its audience through design contests open to readers.²⁵ Furthering the consumer focus, blatant adverts were supplemented with a consumer agenda within the articles and departments of the magazine itself.²⁶ The paragon increasingly came to be represented as a place to be decorated according to the season’s fashions, and filled with disposable mass-produced consumer items.²⁷

In 1997 the Select Homes franchise once again changed its image, becoming Style at Home, “Canada’s Decorating Magazine.” The focus of the magazine was

²¹ Of the thirteen often-repeated departments, six, nearly half of them, were concerned solely with consumer products, while the others tended to promote the use of certain items in decoration and use.

²² Which generally provided shopping guides and keys to consumer culture.

²³ Which tended to be more pared down in Canadian Select Home.

²⁴ Reinforcing increased attention on sales, the items that decorated the homes were listed at the end of the magazine along with where to find them.

²⁵ The prizes for winning included an article on one’s home as well as gifts of consumer items featured within the magazine.

²⁶ Direct advertising was replaced by sponsorship and featured products. It was also less about selling a specific product than selling the ideal of consumption.

²⁷ Oddly this designing was meant to “individualise the home,” but this was achieved often through mass produced items available to all.

explicitly consumer design. No longer was the Canadian home something to be built and worked on by hand, no longer a place of individual effort per se, instead the act of “making oneself at home” was increasingly linked with notions of decorating and consuming the home. Style at Home was a fully national magazine – posing a national idea of home.²⁸ In the change from Canadian Select Homes to Style at Home Maureen Cavan was replaced by Kerry Mitchell as publisher, Laurie Grassi took over as managing editor and Gail Johnston Habs (previously managing editor) became editor. Much like Canadian Select Homes, the content of the magazine was increasingly focused on consumer goods. More commercialism was injected into the departments²⁹ and features reflected a greater focus on style and decorating. Do-it-yourself and craft projects were often replaced by “magalogue” presentation of consumer items. Magalogue, a term employed by Fraser Sutherland, describes a magazine that “promoted its consumer goods by means of a unifying editorial theme.”³⁰ Furthermore, decoration was often proposed as a pursuit achieved through the aid of professionals, such as interior designers, rather than an expression of individual creativity.³¹ The magazine, while offering the mainstays of home magazines represented an increasingly consumer driven and upper-middle-class vision of home.³²

²⁸ The magazine continued to be published by Telemedia Communications until September 2000 when it was transferred to Transcontinental Publications in Toronto.

²⁹ Departmental column included: “Home & Style,” “So Simple,” “Shopping Etc.,” “High/Low,” “Before and After,” “Inside Design,” “Stylish Stuff,” “The Top Ten,” “Where to Find it,” “Trends,” and “Style at Home.com.” (This last column largely discussed the website for the magazine. The website itself devotes more space to advertising links than actual content).

³⁰ Sutherland 258.

³¹ Interior designers while offering the desire for professionally designed home also fulfilled the role of design instructors within.

³² The paradigm in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century in Style at Home, reflected an idea that the home was an extension of the consumer-subject inexorably tied to the whims of fashion, style and design.

Group C – Moving House & Home to Canadian House & Home

Beginning in June 1979, Moving House & Home, primarily a trade publication, was mailed weekly to, as the subtitle described it, “People on the Move.” Published in Toronto by Moving House & Home Inc., G. Randall Munger was both president and publisher and Kathleen Corwley was editor of the flimsy magazine. Unlike other reviewed magazines, Moving House & Home did not provide original content in each publication, rather the same articles were recycled over a series of months.³³

Moreover, the articles were often flimsy fronts for the magazine’s financial supporters. There was some content, but much of it was aimed at encouraging the housing market through frequent selling, buying and moving between suburban homes.³⁴ While some average home fare was inserted into each issue, these articles were often outnumbered by commercial fronts.³⁵ The magazine may have been helpful to those who were moving, but overall it provided little content. The paradigm it presented was one that mixed elements of consumption and more traditional home subjects such as family and domestic guides, with the overwhelming promotion of the suburban home.³⁶

³³ For example Vol. 1 was reissued in July, August and Sept 1979, and October 1979 issue was repeated in November and December of the same year.

³⁴ Moving articles included: “The 10 Most Common Mistakes in Moving,” “Crack Ups and How to Prevent Them,” “Teenage Trauma,” “Look Back and Laugh,” “101 Things to Think About,” “How to Choose a Moving Company” and “A Quick Guide to Selling Extra Furniture.” Other articles such as: “What a Real Estate Agent Can Do For You,” “Home Finance,” “Insurance – Change Your Policy” and “Mortgage Advice” discussed the subject of buying a suburban home.

³⁵ These articles included: “Gardening Tips,” “Home Furnishing,” “China and Crystal Tableware,” “Home Improvements and Window Dressing,” “A Primer on Paint,” “Decorating House & Home” and “Hang the Walls.”

³⁶ One of its frequent advertising clients was the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

In the fall of 1982, Moving House & Home was reinvented by Telemar publishing in Toronto. G. Randall Munger remained president of the publishing house with Michael S. Ocarina as editor and Ralph Zambonelli³⁷ as publisher. House & Home Magazine was first issued in the fall of 1982 as the magazine “For People Improving their Home.” Unfortunately only one issue was published under this title, and it continued in much the same vein as Moving House & Home.³⁸

In the winter of 1982 the magazine was once again retooled and released as House & Home, “A Catalogue of Ideas for the New Home Owner.” The editorial team remained the same as House & Home Magazine, and for the first two issues the content continued to be repetitive. Only in the last issue did the magazine begin to become more expansive, focusing on reviews of locations and specific homes. Articles included: “Home Furnishings,” “Winning Walls,” “Moving,” “Mortgages,” “Letters,” “Home Features” (house listings), “Homes of Distinction” (house listing), and “In Town Living.” Despite some expansion the magazine continued to function by and large as a trade magazine likely distributed by real estate and moving companies.

In February of 1984, Telemar Publications released a magazine more fitting to the conception of a “home magazine.” This new publication was Canadian House & Home, subtitled, “Ideas for the Home Buyer.” While on the surface, it differed little from its forebearers, with G. Randall Munger as president and publisher, its content changed quite a bit after Michael S. Ocarina was replaced by Michael Perron as editor in 1984. In June of that year the subtitle of the magazine

³⁷ Who had been the publisher of Canadian Home Décor until 1980.

³⁸ Right down to the same recycled articles.

changed to “The Look and How to Achieve it,” moving the magazine more into the realms of décor. The magazine largely carried on from House & Home, with design information (columns like “Ask a Designer”), many house reviews and news on products as well as house listings.

In December of 1984 Elaine Sills replaced Michael Perron as editor of Canadian House & Home. A year later in December of 1985 G. Randall Munger climbed the ranks to become chairman, while Jeremy Arnold took over his place as publisher and president. More editorial unrest continued in 1986 when in June, Jeremy Arnold was bumped down to vice-president while Lynda Colville-Reeves took over as president. With Elaine Sills as editor, the magazine became more interactive with more advice columns and a balance of style, design, renovation and building articles.³⁹ The content was primarily design and renovation, with some gardening and advice. Sills also ushered in an annual design contest.⁴⁰

By November of 1986, Canadian House & Home had undergone a facelift, adding a new subtitle, “The Magazine of Fine Living.” Arnold was replaced by Colville-Reeves as president and publisher of the new publishing company, Canadian Home Publishing Incorporated. Changes continued when in April/May of 1987 Jane Dupéré took over as editor. Content, however, remained stable. The magazine included audience services,⁴¹ shopping advice,⁴² design guides, renovation DIY projects, and articles on gardening, entertaining and food. New additions included

³⁹ Some interesting features included: “Collectibles,” “Choosing New Roots,” “The Key to Condos,” “Ask an Architect” and “Ask a Designer.”

⁴⁰ Similar to the one that was popular in Canadian Select Homes from 1994 to 1997.

⁴¹ “RSVP” and “Ask a Designer.”

⁴² “Best Bets,” “House and Home Directory,” Rave Reviews” and “Shopping by Mail.”

interviews with designers, articles on fine arts and crafts and reviews of specific homes.

In June of 1990 Katherine Vansittart became editor of Canadian House & Home, a role that she held until the end of the 1992 run. Features did not change too much, although there were some changes in the departments and an increasing focus on consumerism.⁴³

In February of 1993 Katherine Vansittart was replaced by Cobi Ladner as editor⁴⁴ and the magazine, Canadian House & Home again changed its subtitle to read “Canada’s Magazine of Home and Style.”⁴⁵ While the size of the magazine grew from 1993 to 2003, there was little increase in content, rather, the growth in size was largely due to the growth of advertising inserts. As far as content, with Ladner as editor, the magazine provided a good balance between design and renovation; there was also more discussion of different housing styles (including cottages). The magazine departments remained similar, with reader segments, consumer reviews, and some DIY guides. Like the previous editor, Ladner continued to include departments on fine arts and crafts as well as financial advice. One interesting addition was the department “Notes From Home,” that consisted of various Canadian celebrities reminiscing about home. Feature articles continued in the same vein as

⁴³ Additions to Departments included: “Upfront” (shopping), “Connoisseur” (shopping), “Storewatch” (shopping), “Book Reviews” (shopping for home decorating books), and “At Home” (editorial). As can be observed from the above list, there was more emphasis on shopping in the departments. Also during this time, in December 1991, Lynda Colville-Reeves dropped the Colville to become Lynda Reeves.

⁴⁴ Other staff changes came in September 1997, when Jennifer McLean took over as publisher and director of sales. In February 1999 Lynda Reeves returned to the position of publisher. Two years later, Lynda Reeves was listed as publisher as well as president of Canadian Home Publishers. In May 2000, Cobi Ladner became vice-president in addition to editor.

⁴⁵ The subtitle perhaps reflects the popularity of the Lynette Jennings incarnation of Select Homes & Food.

previously, focusing on renovation, design, food and entertaining, weekend workshops, designer homes, gardening, and travel. The magazine, like Style at Home, frequently discussed the work of specific Canadian interior designers. The paradigm presented was fairly similar, although perhaps broader than that of its competitor Style at Home: home, these magazines seemed to suggest, was created through decoration, domestic activities, and domestic consumption.

On a whole the eleven magazines shared certain commonalities in organization and focus according to time period, one example being the shift from 1980 to mid 1990s from building and renovating the home to decorating and consuming the home. In addition, this latter period also saw fewer articles on home and family or gender stereotypes, and more concentration on the woman as professional outside the home and décor professional inside the home. Despite general similarities arising out of the influence of the Canadian magazine market, each of the three franchises tended to focus on a slightly different interpretation of home. Moreover, this paradigm was further mediated by the vision of the editor and publication team. While appealing to a fictitious national paragon, the history of each magazine itself gives insight into the iterability of the *models* presented.

Appendix B

Statistical Review of Canadian Home Magazines

As mentioned in Chapter One, the Canadian home magazines are analyzed on a nominal scale¹ to determine how they promote the emergence of the ideology of home, visually represented through the *model home*. This ideology is explored in terms of how it is manifested in three groups of relations within the cover images: “room type,” “room style,” and “recurrent elements.” This appendix outlines the five major graphs that express the numerical data concerning these groups. It is upon this data that many observations in Chapter Three are made. In Charts One to Five, the occurrence frequency of elements explored in the three primary groupings is displayed in a manner that aspires to visually present the general Canadian *model home*. It is also the purpose of this appendix to briefly review the variables applied to the assembled visual data.

In Chapter Three, the magazine covers are discussed in terms of how they present home, and what ideology that paradigm is incumbent upon. Following observations made in Chapter Two regarding the historical positioning of home, Chapter Three questions to what extent the binary of private-public, and other such oppositions, remain of prime concern in the contemporary construction of “home.”

The private-public binary, for example, while tackled most prominently in the latter half of Chapter Three, is first broached in the discussion of what room, presented on the cover, most represents the space of home. Chart One, “The

¹ Nominal scale, defined by Richard C. Sprinthal, “is created by assigning observations into various independent categories and then counting the frequency of occurrence within those categories.” Richard C. Sprinthal, Basic Statistical Analysis, 4th Ed. (Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, 1994) 15.

Generalized Mean Frequency of Room Type,” visually displays in pie chart format the recurrence of each “room type.” The percentages are based on observations of covers from all concerned magazines organized by a nominal scale according to their mean occurrence. Each category is determined by observation and understanding of what was signified by each room.² The room types, as listed in Chart One, were: living-room, dining room, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, patio (backyard garden), hallway, front yard,³ office or library, open concept⁴ and other.⁵ The information supplied in Chart One is employed in Chapter Three in order to determine the relevancy, for example, of the frequent repetition of the living-room and the kitchen in the presentation of an ideologically coded image of home.

The second categorical group, “style,” as graphed in Charts Two and Three is used as a qualifier in Chapter Three to further discuss the modes in which “home” is represented. Nostalgia, as briefly discussed in Chapter One, has since the nineteenth century determined, to a large extent, the look of “home.” The discussion of “style” in Chapter Three returns to nostalgia as an important aspect of the *model home*. Stylistic presentation of the home is there discussed in terms of how it reflects upon the visual positioning of home. Style, for example, leads to questions such as: does nostalgia continue to play a dominant role in the representation of home, is the space pictured as a progressive, unchanging or regressive environment? The statistical data presented in Charts Two and Three is employed to help expand upon these, and similar lines of questioning. Like the previous chart, these graph the gathered

² For example, a kitchen was often signified by a stove and or fridge, and a living room by a couch and television.

³ View of exterior front of house.

⁴ View of multiple rooms equally represented.

⁵ Other describing an indeterminate room, close-up view or abstract design.

observations in the form of mean percentages on a nominal scale. The stylistic grouping employed in each graph is based upon my subjective observation of cultural determinants.⁶ Room style is sectioned into eight somewhat overlapping regions: “rustic-country,”⁷ “modern,”⁸ “exotic,”⁹ “funky,”¹⁰ “opulent” or “1980s,”¹¹ “traditional” or “classical,”¹² “modern-traditional” or “classical-modern”¹³ and “contemporary.”¹⁴ Each cover is evaluated according to what style it most resembles. In the case of Chart Two, a generalized scale is created across magazines to enable me to discuss, in Chapter Three, a generalized representation of home. Chart Three however, graphs the results as confined to the field of each separate publication. Chart Three is discussed in Chapter Three in reference to the *iterability* of the *model* between magazines.¹⁵

Lastly the covers are evaluated according to recurrent elements. Unlike previous categories that evaluated rooms according to either/or qualifications (either living

⁶ These include not only definitions of style picked up in the course of an education in fine arts, but also derived from years spent watching “design-orientated” television shows, and looking over my mother’s “women’s magazines.”

⁷ This was applied to rooms that used rough-hewn materials and basic old-fashioned styled accessories. A room was thus labeled was often reminiscent of the housing styles of John Ruskin or William Morris.

⁸ This described rooms decorated in a 1920 – 1960 version of modernism. In look, they approximated International Modernism, the lines were clean and little to no decoration was apparent. In addition, what I defined as within the realms of the “modern” was the exaggerated use of industrial materials.

⁹ This referred to largely non-western designs ranging from Asiatic to African styles.

¹⁰ Signifying eclectic combinations of various western and non-western elements with a multitude of bright colours.

¹¹ Described rooms that reflected the exaggeration of design popular in the late 1970s to early 1990s. Rooms decorated this way often tended to use gold, mirrors and frilly flowered fabrics to create a general large-scale expensive look.

¹² This was one of the broadest terms used. Generally I used it to refer to rooms that were decorated in pre-twentieth century styles such as: classical Greek, eighteenth century French, early Victorian and Colonial. Often rooms thus described contained antiques or contemporary reproductions.

¹³ These terms would be applied to room that mixed elements of traditional and modern décor. For example, a dining room decorated with traditional furnishing and accessories, but with and a modern dining table.

¹⁴ This was the most difficult to identify as it so often consisted of a pastiche of past designs.

¹⁵ For instance, the paradigm is generally represented in a traditional manner through styles that refer to the past, however, the 1960s magazine *Canadian Homes* depicted a progressive vision of home through the predominant depiction of a “modern” styled home.

room or kitchen), the various elements listed in Chart Four often occur in combination, making their mean frequency somewhat less impressive. These elements (flowers, fruit, potted plants, fireplace, candles, art pieces, drinks, plates, miscellaneous food, baking, vegetables, garden accessories, windows, pets, and people) are selected as categories due to their noticeable recurrence in phase one¹⁶ of my examination of the magazines covers.¹⁷ Among the general elements three, windows, pets and people, are further divided into subcategories. Categorical subdivisions of elements such as windows into groupings according to the function of the window,¹⁸ provide more insight into the relationships constructed within the presented paradigm. An example of the usefulness of the subgroups is visible in Chart Five, “Mean Frequency of Persons.” This chart shows the breakdown of the depictions of people on magazine covers. As can be observed, aside from the “Designer Panels,”¹⁹ the occurrence of people is confined to a hierarchy of sex and race, reflecting a particularly biased *model home*.

The charts and statistics discussed in this appendix provide the data upon which the in-depth analysis of the *model home* in Chapter Three is grounded. This, in combination with the brief history of each magazine (Appendix A) situates the general trends discussed and interrogated in Chapter Three. Furthermore, those

¹⁶ As explained in Chapter One.

¹⁷ While I attempted to be objective, drawing elements from comments made during earlier analysis, when I decided upon which elements specifically to record I was undoubtedly influenced by my own upbringing and understanding of cultural signifiers, in addition to my research into home up to that point.

¹⁸ In Chart Four, the occurrence of windows is broken down into subcategories according to function: i) the window was covered by blinds or curtains; ii) only light was visible through the window, it was blocked by light; iii) only the garden or tree line was visible; or iv) one could see the neighborhood through the window. The result of this further study was: in forty-three percent of the windows only light was visible, in twenty-nine percent one could see the garden outside, in nineteen percent the window was covered and in only nine percent could one see the neighborhood in which the home was situated.

¹⁹ A popularly recurring cover of Canadian House & Home.

various elements found to be most representative of the *model home*, tend to reappear as visual themes discussed in the context of the artists' work in Chapters Four and Five.

Figure One

Cover, City & Country Home. Vol. 2 No. 4. Winter 1983/84.
Published by Maclean Hunter, Toronto.

National Archives / National Library of Canada
E002505601

Figure Two

Cover, Canadian Select Homes. May/June 1995.
Published by Telemedia Publications, Toronto.

National Archives / National Library of Canada
E002505598

Figure Three

Cover, Canadian House & Home. Vol. 14. No. 6. October 1992.
Published by Canadian Home Publishers, Toronto.

Reproduced with permission of Canadian Home Publishers
National Archives / National Library of Canada
E002505600

Figure Four

Cover, *City & Country Home*. Vol. 3. No. 1. March 1984.
Published by Maclean Hunter, Toronto.

National Archives / National Library of Canada
E002505594

Figure Five

Lynne Cohen. Living Room. 1972.

11.8 x 16.6 cm

gelatin silver print

Reproduced by permission of the artist

Reproduced from the collection of the National Gallery of Canada.

Figure Six

Lynne Cohen. Living Room. 1973.

19.2 x 24.5 cm

gelatin silver print

Reproduced by permission of the artist

Reproduced from the collection of the National Gallery of Canada. Gift of Evelyn Coutellier, Brussels, 1988.

Figure Seven

Lynne Cohen. Model Living Room. 1976.
19.1 x 24.4 cm
gelatin silver print

Reproduced by permission of the artist
Reproduced from the collection of the National Gallery of Canada.

Figure Eight

Lynne Cohen. Work print of Showroom. 1977.

20.3 x 25.4cm

gelatin silver print

Reproduced by permission of the artist

Reproduced from the collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Library and Archives.

Figure Nine

Lynne Cohen. Observation Room. 1984.
50.6 x 60.6 cm
gelatin silver print

Reproduced by permission of the artist
Reproduced from the collection of the National Gallery of Canada.

Figure Ten

Lynne Cohen. Classroom in a Police College. 1985.

50.7 x 60.5 cm

gelatin silver print

Reproduced by permission of the artist

Reproduced from the collection of the National Gallery of Canada.

Figure Eleven

Susan McEachern. On Living at Home: Part One: Agoraphobia, position three. 1987.

Ektacolor print
50.7 x 40.6 cm

Reproduced by permission of the artist
Reproduced from the collection of the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography.

Figure Twelve

Susan McEachern. On Living at Home: Part Two: Domestic Immersion, position ten. 1987.

Ektacolor print

38.8 x 49.3 cm

Reproduced by permission of the artist

Reproduced from the collection of the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography.

Figure Thirteen

Susan McEachern. On Living at Home: Part Two: Domestic Immersion, position three. 1987.

Ektacolor print

38.3 x 48.5 cm

Reproduced by permission of the artist

Reproduced from the collection of the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography.

Figure Fourteen

Susan McEachern. On Living at Home: Part Two: Domestic Immersion, position seven. 1987.

Ektacolor print

38.7 x 49.0 cm

Reproduced by permission of the artist

Reproduced from the collection of the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography.

Figure Fifteen

Susan McEachern. On Living at Home: Part Two: Domestic Immersion, position eight. 1987.

Ektacolor print

38.8 x 49.3 cm

Reproduced by permission of the artist

Reproduced from the collection of the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography.

Chart One : The Generalized Mean Frequency of Room Type

Chart Two: Generalized Mean
Frequency of Room Style

■ Rustic/Country
□ Modern
■ Traditional/Classic
■ Contemporary

■ Modern/Classic mix
□ Exotic
□ Opulent/1980s
□ Funky

Chart Three: The Mean Frequency of Room Style Per
Magazine

■ Rustic/Country
□ Exotic
■ Contemporary

■ Modern/Classic mix
■ Traditional/Classic
□ Modern
□ Opulent/1980s
□ Funky

Chart Four: Comparative Generalized Mean Frequency of Recurrent Elements

Chart Five - Mean Frequency of Persons

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