The Invisible Home

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My home, and the modern American home generally, is haunted by forces real but invisible in a myriad of ways. In this paper, I will analyze this constellation of home dynamics in their relation to *alienation*. I claim that our modern globalized postindustrial socioeconomic paradigm is host to a contemporary human condition predicated on alienation, which becomes embodied in the home as material culture. This alienation emerges (but does not appear) in myriad forms, many of which I will be examining as I survey the various rooms of my home, their functions, and their interplay with human condition under globalized industrialism. Broadly, the alienation of this epoch can be conceived as falling into two categories: alienation of social forms, and alienation of material processes. I will also be examining conceptions of home privacy alongside my exploration of alienation. These home dynamics, I contend, implicate the home in a problematic relationship with the outside world.

The home today, by merit of its alienation, is entrenched in exploitative labor practices, environmental destruction, and problematic social relations. Its production relies on global

is the social unit which traditionally occupies the private world of the home. It is the prevailing

American conception of family structure. In a nuclear family, two heterosexual parents and their

dependent (i.e. pre-college-aged) children live together in a single domicile, shared with no other

family members or families. This concept is also problematic, especially for its exclusion of non-

nuclear family and two worlds apart as a method of exploring traditional conceptions of home

and family in relation to alienation, privacy, and the problematic implication of the domestic

resident with the world.

This paper, in a broad sense, is simply a tour of my home. I will take the reader through

four rooms: the master bedroom, the upstairs bathroom, the kitchen, and the family room. In

each room, I will explore a series of objects and activities which embody the intellectual themes

explicated above. I examine objects as they embody culture, as the results of labor processes, and

as catalysts for social forms. I aim to locate the alienation, false privacy, environmental damage,

and labor exploitation of the global postindustrial human condition through this analysis, though

empowering, and de-alienating aspects which, while valid, are not my subject of exploration.

Pursuant to my analysis, I employ intellectual framework from a variety of thinkers. I

understand domestic objects here through a mix of postmodern, Marxist, ecological, and

historical thought. On the broadest level, I use Jean Baudrillard as a jumping-off point for

thinking about the human condition and the way in which objects embody greater cultural

narratives. As I engage alienation as a concept, I inevitably draw upon Marx, but I also employ

the writing of ecological agriculturalist Wendell Berry to entertain a more holistic view of the

concept. For historical conceptions of the home, I follow much of the thought laid out in

Stephanie Coontz work. Throughout th

for the paper. Following is a literature review:

System of Objects

In *the System of Objects,* Jean Baudrillard posits a pessimistic framework for

understanding home interiors. He assesses the metaphysical, arguing that architecture, interior

design, and furnishing, are not prescribed by functional demands, but in fact reflect the dominant

sociocultural attitudes of a given historical moment. He compares traditional furniture design,

which reflected patriarchal human relations, and owes its logic to the natural evolution of human

interaction, to modern design, which leaves traditional hierarchies and values behind; from a

flawed but grounded organization of life to a free but baseless one. Modern furniture is stripped-

down, not for appeal to functional purism, but to leave space for whatever meaning the user

would like to apply, which might otherwise be determined by ornamentation.

and specifically objects of

furniture   have a primordial function as vessels, a function that belongs to the register of the

imaginary . . . [Traditional furniture designs] are the reflection of a whole view of the world

transcendent correlations of substances; thus the house itself is the symbolic equivalent of the

human body, whose potent organic schema is later generalized into an ideal design for the

[3] Baudrillard is comparing an era in which cultural values, hierarchies, and consciousness grew organically out of Natural evolutionary conditions, manifesting in traditional interior design reflecting said consciousness and culture, to a modern era in which Nature has been left behind and interior design comes to reflect a kind of unhinged and reformulated consciousness.

In this paper, I apply a similar technique, and examine what might be called a I embrace the claim that domestic which manifest it, but my focus is on home design and consciousness in relation to global industrial development. I read the modern condition as developing similarly to the trajectory which Baudrillard identifies: the home today embodies a disconnected worldview, one which gradually materialized away from a vision

Capital[4]

In my investigation of home design, I explore the way in which home life is *alienated*, using the term, in part, in the classic Marxist sense. For Marx, a key critique of capitalism is the way in which it implicates the worker in partial decontextualized production methods, separating them from the conceptualization and finalization of production, and denying them of their *Gattungswesen* (species essence). Marx contends that humans possess the exceptional ability and inclination to realize their ideas as objects in the world, but doing that involves conceptualizing, initiating, and seeing a project through. Under capitalist production methods, workers are only involved with a small, repetitive, and mechanistic slice or production, denying them the ability to

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[3] Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects* (New York: Verso, 1968), 27-28.
[4] Karl Marx, *Das Kapital* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1915 [1867])

Native American, Colonial, Jeffersonian, and Antebellum homes, and shows how, despite

disparate societal structures, homes throughout the majority of American history were

understood to be extensions of public space; neighbors, community leaders, and strangers were

expected to both enter the space of the home uninvited and to impose unsolicited advice

regarding the management of home life. But during this period, there was significant diversity

and individualization of home life: family forms, hierarchies, languages, home designs, and other

variables were open to individual home determination. After the end of the Civil War, the view

of the home as castle increasingly took hold, but individual determination (i.e. sovereignty) of

home life waned. The nuclear family increasingly became the only model for family, sexual

norms were universalized, disagreements became legislatively mediated (whereas something like

debt to a neighbor used to be settled between said neighbors, it would now be in the domain of

the court), gender norms ossified, and the home generally gravitated towards a single state-

condoned-and-enforced model of life. Outside power and ideological values were increasingly

lodged in the home, but family members saw their life as increasingly sovereign and private.[6]

   The development of privacy was, counterintuitively, driven by the injection of outside

power into the shaping of home life. Previous, less impactful, intervention had appeared in the

form of other community members, people who could be, and whose influence could be, directly

considered, felt, and experienced. As outside intervention into home life centralized into

ideological and legal forms, it became more abstract, since the forces shaping the intervention in

home life were not directly experienced. This abstract intervention replaced the local

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[6] In *"Postmodern" Home Life*, Tim Putnam outlines a very similar progression, but instead of the injection of centralized power into the home accompanying the shift towards the conceptualization of home as private, he identifies the development of privacy/sovereignty as including an expansion of the home's implication in outside material activities, such as gas, electric, and water utilities. I will be drawing from Putnam and Coontz in tandem in my paper.

intervention, alienating the resident from the forces which were shaping their home life. This

logically rigorous, the work exists in conceptual space abstracted to the point of guaranteed

uncertainty. The only empirical tests available for these disciplines is logical coherence with, or

superiority over, other related philosophical texts, and internal

this *feel*

normal constant diligence for attribution and m

and experiences of marginalized people in this thesis, so I will need to be faithful to their reality

and avoid tokenization or otherwise problematic incorporation of their experiences. Overall

though, si

research, I think the risk of unethical activity is limited.

I hope that combining close reading with material histories, I can push the intellectual

content of my work closer to the realm of the concrete. I hope to achieve this in other ways, such

as the inclusion of empirical behavioral psychology research in some sections regarding family

behavior, but overall my goal is to drive my work closer to the realm of the concrete and

empirical by incorporating that kind of work.

Preface: Entry Hallway

Nested in the middle of the sunshine-yellow front façade, the front door of my home has

come to delineate the space of my upbringing. Outside is the world, where I am at risk, where I

am under scrutiny, where I am never good enough. Inside is familiar, welcome, safe. My house

is a mix between colonial and contemporary style. It is a bit

original foundation was built over 100 years ago by the McKinstrys, but portions have been

added in various iterations by various homeowners since then.

When you step through the front door, you are confronted with a Victorian hallway: directly in front of you is a staircase, with a parallel hallway to the right leading into the living room. What lies inside is not self-contained. The home as object relies on a global production network of labor and transportation to come into being; the home as social structure is informed

As I argue that alienation is vital to the problems it enshrouds, awareness of connection might go a long way on its own. This paper is intended as a step in that direction.

Our first stop is up the stairs and to the left. Welcome to the master bedroom.

The Master Bedroom

Besides the bathrooms, this is the only door in the house that locks. Inside is a rather large room, with a soft king-sized bed taking up the central floor space, a dresser on each side, a full-length mirror on the wall across from the bed, a scale on the floor next to the mirror, two closets (one on each side of the wall behind the bed), and a wooden panel resting on a

In the master bedroom, I explore the alienation of the home as it relates to intimacy, privacy, and sovereignty. The most salient object of this room is, of course, the bed, which I analyze as the site of sleep and sex; both of these are considered to be among the most private and sovereign activities of home life, however they are actually informed by forces in the outside world which are obscured by the alienation of modernity.

The bed is a minimalist half-tester bed.[7] The tester, or four-poster canopy bed, has its roots in early medieval Noble domestic culture. Joseph and Francis Gies, in their book *Life in a Medieval Castle*

end of the hall, beyond the dais, from which the sleeping quarters were typically only separated

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[7]A bed with a large, glorified headboard. A full tester bed is one with four large posts sticking up at each of its corners. These posts are connected at the top by a wooden frame (a 'canopy') from which curtains are hung. These curtains can be either tied to the posts, opening the bed up, or released, becoming walls of fabric surrounding the bed and dividing it from the rest of the room.

by only a curtain or

and use of contraception, and limit abortion rights. The intervention of the outside world in the bed reflects the attitudes of the outside world; we practice sex as a repressed, sexist, and confused activity because our culture carries those traits. The most intimate part of the bedroom is also one of the most active sites of outside influence.

Though sleep and sex appear to us as sovereign and private, they in fact embody and are heavily informed by cultural expectations. We *experience* these activities as private and sovereign though. This disconnect is constituted by the alienation between our behavior and our schedule, we are never confronted with the capitalist motivations behind the structure of the workday, or the historical reality that things were not always this way. In the case of sex, people are alienated from dominion over their own lives by oppressive power structures and are either forced into social roles or forced to enact their innate interiority as an act of rebellion.

The privacy and sovereignty of the bedroom is in large part unsubstantiated myth. Humans have adjusted our natural sleep rhythms to align with capitalism, and the sexism, heteronormativity, and repressiveness of American culture emerges in our most intimate moments. What happens in the bedroom does not stay there.

The Bathroom

Exiting the master bedroom, taking a right, at the end of the hallway, is the upstairs bathroom. The bathroom is the site of medical practices of the home. It is where we go to take care of our bodies and their needs. Medical privacy and physical sovereignty are deep-set American cultural values, and on the surface, they manifest in the bathroom. In reality though, the business of the bathroom does not stay in the bathroom.

The logic of the bathroom as medical space owes its beginnings to sense of community-based responsibility, and its design resembles this ethic, but its reality contradicts that sense. In the bathroom, humans interface with water, the global implication of which does not confront us. Pharmaceutical use is also housed in the bathroom, invisibly implicating people in an institution with deep ties to exploitation. Something is rotten here.

are probably the only locks which are actually used. The functions most characteristic of bathrooms, namely defecation and urination, are even more taboo in the realm of public discourse than sex. The cultural aversion to acknowledging the reality of the bathroom is evident in its name, for the space is rarely referred to without euphemism: Bathroom, washroom, and water closet are all common, while toiletroom is nowhere to be seen. For Americans, what happens in the bathroom stays in the bathroom.

The architecture of the bathroom implies a responsibility of the bathroom user towards their community: for the sake of public health, certain bodily and medical activities need to be kept as far from the places where they could cause harm (like the kitchen) as possible. Cloistering bathrooms off from other living spaces makes superficial sense to this end, but the modern reality of the American bathroom does not fit well in this sense of public responsibility: the reality of bathroom objects and activities implicate the bathroom-goer in a system of processes which extend far beyond the locked door of the bathroom, often with harmful results.

The segmenting off of bathroom spaces from the rest of shared life began with early hygiene norms. Early medicinal traditions, before the discovery of microscopic life, considered diseases to be malignant spiritual possessions. Curative medical practices were discovered through trial and error, but the causation behind them was not clear to the practitioners: they saw

the success of medicine as a spiritual triumph. For example, the traditional Jewish laws of

Kashrut prescribe that an animal must be free of disease, and it must have its throat cut in such a

way that the (unclean) blood could be fully drained. These practices are still used in many non-

Kosher farms and abattoirs because they minimize the risk of the meat being infected by harmful

microbial life.

Through this trial-and-error logic, which prescribed effective public hygiene norms albeit

married to arbitrary spiritual beliefs, space-segmentation resembling bathrooms developed. From

[dated term his]. The man who had a discharge from the urethra had to take his place outside the

camp. All his possessions were considered unclean, and he himself remained impure for seven

to the

[17] In what may have been a confusion stemming from the

seven days. The woman in

labour was unclean from the moment her pains began, and remained unclean for forty days after

[18] A diagnosis of uncleanliness

in this case caries a prescription of quarantine. The blatant sexism of these practices

empirically to curtail harmful spread through the community.

The bathroom follows this logic: human waste can cause fatal disease if not disposed of

properly, so we isolate that activity to a portion of the house away from the rest. Other hygiene

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[17] Henry Sigerist, "The Philosophy of Hygiene," *Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine* 1 (1933): 325.
[18] Sigerist, "The Philosophy of Hygiene," 325.

and medical practices are similarly quarantined: our bathing, tooth-brushing, and home wound-treatment are all relegated to the bathroom to deter contamination with other spaces.

Part of the original logic surrounding hygiene, however, has been lost with time. With the trial-and-error quarantine system, the health of the community was placed first. Moving someone sick away from the population will not necessarily help them: it is a move to prevent further spread. Some pragmatism of this approach survives in the modern bathroom: but the overarching philosophy does not: early medicinal practices involved consideration that problems should be solved in a way that held community health and longevity as the highest priority. In the modern quarantine of hygienic practices to the bathroom, this ethic has been lost: the needs of the individual and of the nuclear family have been prioritized over any greater sense of community.

One of the most prominent fleeting features of the bathroom is its water. Within the economy of household needs, including keeping family members safe from infection, our water use practices make sense: we generally draw our water from municipal systems which are functionally unlimited, and we use it to keep ourselves clean and free from disease. Since this system fits so well into our economy of household priorities, and since our implication with water systems is neither within our realm of responsibility or our purview of understanding, we accept our implication in these systems as a good thing.

We use water for many things within the bathroom; bathing, showering, using the toilet,

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supplies water for the communities surrounding my house, but most of its water is actually diverted south, as it constitutes one of the main sources of potable water for New York City.

The Ashokan reservoir has a checkered history reminiscent of many large-scale infrastructural projects. It was constructed between 1907 and 1915, has a surface area of approximately 8,300 acres, and holds about 122.9 billion gallons of water. For a reservoir of this

mine). Hundley Jr. argues that Californian water usage began, under Indigenous control, as a

thoughtful relationship between human and water. This care was driven by a sense of collective

responsibility; these cultures emphasized community-focused decision making as well as a

mutualistic understanding of their interaction with nature, manifesting in careful water use.

Colonial communities,[23] while they did not emphasize reciprocity in their relationship with

to maximize our success, that we are not accountable for each other, and that ensuing tragedy-of-the commons issues are deterministic consequences of our necessary quasi-religious adherence to the invisible hand[24]. Many economists begin with the assumption that all people act to maximize their self-interested gain, but, as histories of many communities have shown, this is not always the case. The tragic world embodied in the modern home is not the only possible world: it is a reflection of the toxicity we have built in our global interaction as alienated humans. Turning on the tap is not an innocent act.[25]

It is a failure of capitalistic specialized growth that this contradiction emerges. We employ a method of quarantine originated for the public good in such a way that exploits our natural and social environment. Early practitioners of these quarantining practices did not have to worry about externalities of a globalized supply chain because they did not have one; their community was in front of them, the effects of their actions were perceptible, and it was therefore immanently possible for them to hold themselves accountable for their actions. We construct our bathrooms with this same ideal in mind, but when our engagement with water begins in the tap and ends at the drain, the mechanism of quarantine can work against itself and become a site of public harm. Moving through the upstairs bathroom, many of the objects hold this quality.

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[24] Most capitalism apologists do not kn

A mirrored medicine cabinet sits mounted to the wall above the sink. The contents of the upstairs cabinet subsume the contents of the downstairs cabinet: it has band-aids, cotton swabs, and hydrogen-peroxide, but it also includes laxatives, acne removal creams, and prescription medication. It is a markedly more intimate cabinet, its contents directly implicated in the private medical life of the home residents.

American culture tells us our medical life is sovereign and private business. Regarding medical treatment in hospitals and clinics, the laws are complex, but in general medical records are considered highly private, and cannot be legal

informed consent.[26] Informally, it is considered rude to ask a stranger about the intimate details

something that only concerns the individual, and which may be painful or embarrassing for them to share, so they are afforded complete ownership over it and are not expected to consider anyone else in their medical experience.

The idea that our medical lives begin and end with ourselves is false and predicated on alienation. Medication, the contents of the upstairs bathroom cabinet, owes its existence to a vast global supply chain of research, design, and production. Specific research and design happen as the result of specific cultural priorities occurring in the context of social and material conditions. With medicine, the things keeping you healthy might have very well ruined the lives of others.

For example, the pharmaceutical company *Pfitzer*[27] (most well-known for *Viagra)* is

We have also learned about hypothermia from horror.[30] It is well known that the Nazis performed horrific torturous medical experiments on some of their concentration camp prisoners. What is perhaps more obscure is that some of the ensuing research data has integrated into the body of mainstream Western medic

their engagement in the public world (of the two-worlds apart dichotomy) is limited compared to

the rest of the family. In *'The More We are Together' Domestic Space, Gender, and Privacy,*

house to themselves for long stretches of the day. This is of course a by-product of the fact that

[31] While men and children were away at work and

school, women in this study would fill the time with reading, T.V., visits with frien a by

spent at home is the release from the tension of public life; for the housewife, the family

experience *is* tension. The expectations on her labor are so high, the housewife might forget

household and the desire to pursue and preserve individual autonomy. This is particularly

problematic for women who still take on the major responsibility for maintaining the home at

both a practical and an emotional level and are often encouraged to subsume their own interests

to the point where they cannot or do not distinguish between their own interests and those of the

[33] In the shared experience of home life, the housewife is a ghost. She is not invited

to the recreation shared by the rest of the family, because that experience requires upkeep which

she must sacrifice her participation to provide. Thus, the housewife neither has her cake nor gets

to eat it; she is alienated from public life by her disinvitation to join it, and she is alienated from

private life by her relegation to subservient laborer within it. This is an instance where the

alienation of the home is gendered: the other members of the family, while they might have

unique nuances to their experiences, are not experiencing the detriments of alienation in the same

way. The kitchen embodies the alienation

production forces necessary to kitchen cultivation reveal dark disconnection.

The kitchen, in addition to its role as the site of alienated domestic labor, also serves to

alienate the resident from their problematic implication in environmental crises and human

exploitation. Through the modern separation between traditionally-linked activities of food

production and food consumption, the production practices which have drifted away from the

home have turned to exploitation.

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[33] Madigan and Munroe,

The modern kitchen is a nexus of food consumption. Not food cultivation, not involved food preparation, just cooking and eating. The ingredients which might eventually converge into a dish in the kitchen likely come from a global supply chain. Take toast: in order to make it, you need two things: a bread slice and a toaster. Assuming the most industrialized (i.e. most common) versions of these processes, the slice of bread comes from a factory-bakery, which sources its electricity and heat from national grids, its water from municipal systems, and its grain from a network of monocultured industrial farms. Those farms, in turn, employ migrant labor, use heavy machinery which comes with its own globalized supply chain, purchase their seed from a centralized agriculture company (likely Monsanto), and receive much of their funding from subsidies which spreads the cost of grain production out across the nation. The energy which the grain stores originates in the sun. The toaster was made in an industrial factory, tapped into power grids and municipal water supplies in *its* respective community, with a company of local factory workers as well as a wider network of management and potentially a global network of shareholders. The factory assembles the toaster from metals, likely sourced from China, Japan, or India[34], which had to be extracted from the earth using labor forces, machinery, and processes which *themselves* have global supply chains, and that metal was likely transported and processed a

places of instruction and amusement. People were born in these houses and lived and worked and

[35] It was not that earlier homes *included* agricultural and vocational elements, it is

that food production and work were an integral part of *what home was*. This facilitated a deep

integration and interconnection of life, an empowerment that the individual could understand and

determine their own life: an unalienated home.[36]

has been to a considerable extent the movement of the center of consciousness away from home .

. . [The modern home] has set itself increasingly aside from production and preparation and

This fracturing of function and consciousness from home prefigures the environmental

crises that agriculture is currently harboring, as well as the egregious human rights conditions

found in many global food production supply chains. Traditional home-inclusionary agriculture

paradigms were conducive to ecologically healthy practices, whereas contemporary agro-

industrialized practices, embodying an al

They were farmed by families who lived not only upon them, but within and *from* them. These

families grew gardens. They produced their own meat, milk, and eggs. The farms were highly

diversified. The main money crop was tobacco. But the farmers also grew corn, wheat, barley,

oats, hay, and sorghum. Cattle, hogs, and sheep were all characteristically raised on the same

farm

compared to the fundamentals of progressive sustainable agriculture: these traditional

homesteading methods embody contemporary sustainable values.

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[35] Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 57.

[36] While I find Berry's claims regarding food and work compelling, I think he pastoralizes preindustrial home life; traditional family gender dynamics are fraught with problematic alienating characteristics.

one synonym among many used by agriculturalists hoping to heal the

earth; people who farm tend to be individualist and make up their own terms. Ecological,

regenerative, organic, biodynamic, permaculture, and natural agriculture all fall under this

umbrella, with permaculture and natural agriculture being the older and broader terms. In David

Permaculture: Principles and Pathways Beyond Sustainability, he outlines the

core tenants of positive-impact-   and Store Energy,

Obtain a Yield . . .Integrate Rather Than Segregate, Use Small and Slow Solutions, [and] Use

[37]

all these values. Traditional homestead agriculture was already sustainable, without intending to

be; earth-healthy agriculture, Berry argues, is the natural outgrowth of unalienated home

systems.

as an environmentally destructive force, Berry argues, is driven by the alienation of home and

environment

specialist logic which brings about the alienation of the kitchen. Consider a staple of the

American morning: Coffee. Coffee, the addiction of American productive life, which allows so

many people to thrive and be their best self, has ties to dark labor practices. Most coffee is grown

by small, family farmers in the developing world, which on the face sounds good, until you learn

[41] meaning that no matter how diverse and home-grown the farmers are, the

market for raw beans is oligopolistic, leaving the farmers without choice in people to sell to. In

this non-

the resident in global environmental and labor exploitation, and the social alienation of the

housewife (as prescribed by the capitalism-condoned nuclear family structure) subordinates her

Conspicuously Young (1988) David Foster Wallace explains the immanence of this innovation

curiosity turned great seduction. For us, their children, TV is as much a part of reality as Toyotas

and gridlock. We quite literally c   [49]

Survey data supports this. Americans, on average across demographics, watched 2.84 hours

of television per day in 2018, making it their most time-intensive leisure activity.[50] This trend

has been on the rise: The 2018 report is up by .22 hours (13.2 minutes) since 2007.[51] Television,

the injection of a whole network of media informed by the tastes and demands of the American

public, has become a core element of American domestic sociality: a defining feature of the life

of the living room. The integration of media into sociality did not end there. In the twenty first

century, the proliferation of personal computers, mobile phones, and globalized internet access

pervaded American life and social interaction. Platforms life Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube

(i.e. social media) are the core facilitators of this trend. A 2015 study by Pew research center

corroborates this, finding the 65% of American adults, and 75% of all American internet users

participate in social media use. In my home family room, it is not uncommon to see the entire

family seated in couches and chairs, immersed in their digital life, not talking to each other,

while the TV plays. Digital media has become a central part of the experience of the home and

the family room, and its effects have contributed to a widespread social alienation in American

Culture.

While the digitization of social life is sometimes packaged as a move towards a more

veryone), it has actually

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[49] David Foster Wallace, *Fictional Figures and the Conspicuously Young* (1989)*: 3.*
[50] "How Do We Spend Our Time? Evidence from the American Time Use Suvey," *Bureau of Labor Statistics,* 2012.
[51] "How Do We Spend Our Time? Evidence from the American Time Use Suvey," *Bureau of Labor Statistics,* 2008.

precipitated widespread alienation. Digital media aggregates communication into a one-sided

centralized affair and gamifies social interaction, resulting in a hyperreal network of social

relations which, while they may resemble widespread connectedness, isolate and alienate people

from each other. In *The Humanization of Media,* theorist Robert Picard details how digital media

successful career might be predicated on media representations of successful people. One might

assume that the logic on which people base their notions of success remains intact, as those

media representations must be based in an actual experience in success, but they are not; under

hyperreality, those representations were fabricated off expectations of what the media providers

assumed audiences wanted success to look like.

Republic of Congo, a nation struggling with political unrest and Ebola, and in which an

unregulated mining industry thrives. Much   *does* in fact end up in

how our affective state is influenced by the interplay between orientation, objects, and family.

before, being confronted with negative affect because of sexism, but, now, the feminist kill-joy is making them uncomfortable. She must be the problem.

Even benign personal moral choices, without any imposition on those around us, can elicit unhappy affects from those in our shared horizon. In their journal article *Do-Gooder Derogation: Disparaging Morally Motivated Minorities to Defuse Anticipated Reproach,* Social

unimposing decisions can be interpreted with anticipated moral reproach by those around them. Minson and Monin offer the example of a vegetarian, undertaking empirical psychological

pretentious, [61] and other deriding adjectives. This can come across as confounding: why would a vitriolic cultural bias spring up against a completely personal ethical choice? Monin and Minson also measured self-reported anticipated moral reproach (i.e. how much judgement meat eaters expected from vegetarians) and drew correlation between that anticipation and the intensity of the derogation. The results suggest that when people encounter vegetarians, regardless of the moral reproach) from the non-meat eaters, and resort to derogation as a defensive tactic. The crucial detail is that it is not judgement that elicits the derogation: it is the fear of judgement.[62] There are two potential explanations for this: On one hand, meat-eaters might fear judgement because they suspect vegetarians of being generally judgmental people. On the other hand, perhaps some meat eaters fear judgement because they know vegetarians are people who have asked themselves difficult ethical questions, and come

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[61] Julia A. Minson and Benoit Monin, "Do-Gooder Derogation: Disparaging Morally Motivated Minorities to Diffuse Anticipated Reproach," *Social Psychology and Personality Science* 3 (2011): 200-207.
[62] Most vegetarians are probably not moving through the world in a state of universal spite.

out on the other side with an answer different to their own. Maybe, if the meat-eater were to

honestly ask themselves the same questions, they would come to the same conclusion. So, when

the meat-eater encounters the vegetarian, that is an affront to their identity, not necessarily

because the vegetarian is actually judgmental, but because their very existence suggests a

possibility that the meat-

We experience the family room as a fun, relaxing place, but maybe we should not: the production practices it embodies are alienating us, and the act of uncritically enjoying the family room is keeping problems from being solved. The prohibition of progress

in its skyscrapers and airports and underground transportation, I will find this haunting.

and exploitation of the home is embedded in the modern human condition.

The unstoppable progression of Neoliberal policies has affected the human condition globally. The production of life, once an affair that literally took place within the home, has become dependent on a hyper-specialized global infrastructure. We cannot use objects without enlisting labor from developing countries. We cannot relate socially without overarching cultural intervention. The alienation of modern life, as precipitated by the separation of people, objects, and processes by Neoliberal policies, has obscured the effects of our actions from vision. The more interdependent and exploitative our relationship with the world becomes, the more difficult it becomes to understand and act upon. We are not as atomized as we are made to feel.

Its tempting to avert my eyes. The more I see, the less I can accept my place in the world. Many people look to institutions like charities for easy relief, but that only exacerbates the problem; donating to an organization while changing nothing about your relationship with the

symptoms. I try to live holistically. I try to be present in my sociality. I try to buy fair-trade products. I try to know where my food comes from. I par
holistically marry personal experience and sentiment to abstract theory in this paper. I have hope; personally, I think I can carve out a place in the world if I find some like-minded people, and globally I think leftist sociopolitical and economic change could improve things. I even think many of the objects mentioned in this paper, like social media, have the capacity to serve as conduits for the change we need. But right now, to me, things look bad. And unless people fundamentally rethink their implication in the world, its not getting better any time soon.