Abstracts for the Symposium "Mobilizing Home(s)"
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Organizers: Dorothee Birke (AIAS) and Stella Butter (University of Koblenz-Landau)

Julia Leyda (NTNU Trondheim)
Negative Mobility and Domicide in 21st-Century US Cinema
This talk considers films that portray negative mobility and domicide as they figure the housing crisis and recession on the one hand, and climate change on the other. My conception of home as a material, relational, and affective space draws on the contributions of feminist geographers Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling, themselves building on the work of Doreen Massey. Home under threat in these films figures as nexus of contemporary crises—eviction, climate change—in 21st-century US cultural production. Negative mobility marks certain historical moments in which archetypal American mobilities — upward and outward, in socioeconomic and geographic terms—give way to a dominant image of downward, aimless mobility in the context of impoverishment and homelessness. The trope of domicide — "the intentional destruction of home"—provides a theoretical lens with which to examine the upheavals and growing inequalities in the contemporary US. These two concepts enable me to theorize the renewed significance of home and mobility in contemporary culture with the advent of the twin crises of the housing crash and climate change. Both topics in my current research engage with this conference's theme; the two also intersect in some provocative ways: they play out across "homes" located at multiple scales, from the individual and family to the national and beyond, bringing similar kinds of challenges to representation. Cinema is a prime location for articulating the kinds of affective scenarios that can make such complex issues graspable, interweaving emotional and visceral engagement with more considered intellectual responses and (sometimes) aesthetic pleasures. The talk will make reference to films such as *Wendy and Lucy* (Reichardt 2007), *Take Shelter* (Nichols 2011), *99 Homes* (Bahrani 2014), *Interstellar* (Nolan 2014), *Mad Max: Fury Road* (Miller 2015), and *Hell or High Water* (McKenzie 2016).

Marlene Marcussen (Syddansk Universitet Odense)
A New Materialist Reading of Home
Often home is defined by its relation to the people living there, not primarily to its objects. So what does New Materialism, with its attempt to take the material object out of its role as "the eternal sidekick of the subject" (Boscagli 2014), have to say to the concept of home? This is the question that I will try to answer in this paper.
A New Materialistic reading of home turns the attention towards the material setting of a home. Towards what the French writer Georges Perec has termed "the infra-ordinary", that is, all the things that surround us, but which we in our everyday lives do not pay special attention to. Indeed the works of Georges Perec seem to be a good match in order to analyze the concept of home from a New Materialist framework. He has in a number of essays and especially in his novel *Les Choses* made what the New Materialist Boscagli terms "a sincere speculation on the new meaning of objects for the individual" (Boscagli 2014). Set in the 1960s as consumer society was beginning to become a mass phenomenon, the novel portraits how the two main protagonists Sylvie and Jerome are trying to construct a home. Drawing on the style from advertisements, lifestyle-magazines and the

descriptive language of the *Nouveau Roman*, the novel offers an exploration and presentation of what home materially means in the advent of consumer society.

Jon Hegglund (Washington State University)
A Home for the Anthropocene: Planetary Time and Domestic Space in Richard McGuire's *Here*
My paper reads Richard McGuire's 2014 graphic novel *Here* to explore how domesticity might be reimagined in the era of the Anthropocene. McGuire's novel uses the pictorial and narrative resources of its medium to render the familiar, familial, human-centered time scales of domesticity in an entirely uncanny light. The novel, which presents the same physical space on every page, altered only by its chronological time, invites its readers to reimagine the concept of "home" as a fleeting, anthropocentric production whose connection to "place" is entirely contingent and arbitrary. I put McGuire's work in the context of theories of the Anthropocene and narratological approaches to temporality to understand the ways in which narratives that marginalize individual human identities can draw upon the reader's existing cognitive frames to generate two simultaneous, but incompatible, temporalities: that of a *heimlich*, familiar domesticity (as expressed in works such as Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*) and of a deep-historical, planetary approach to the Anthropocene expressed by theorists such as Bruno Latour and Clare Colebrook.

Andrew Liston (University of Jena)
The Concept of Home in Ecocriticism
Home is one of the key concepts for the ecocritic. This claim may seem odd to people outside of the ecocritical discourse: when we think of ecocriticism (if we think of it at all), we think of it as dealing with texts about nature, ecological crisis and man's impact on the natural world. We traditionally see nature as an Other, a binary opposite to human culture and civilisation. "Home", on the other hand, is commonly conceived of as being at the heart of what is human: "the scene of domestic life; the residence of one's family" says the Chambers Dictionary. As such, the term "home" is not readily associated with nature, nature being normally outwith the home. Nonetheless, no ecocritical piece of research will be considered up to scratch without a decent dose of home.
There are two salient reasons for this apparent contradiction. The first is a question of basic etymology. The term "ecology" was coined in the 19th century by the Jena biologist Ernst Haeckel, combining the ancient Greek terms "oikos" and "logos". "Logos" means word or more generally discourse and has even been simply called language; "oikos" means home. This etymology has led a number of ecocritics to flag up works of literature that are written in a language of the home. This leads onto the second main reason for "home" being a popular term, and that is Martin Heidegger's philosophy. While Heidegger's politics have perhaps understandably made him unpopular in many circles, ecocritics have latched onto his attempts to dissolve the Cartesian dichotomy of subject and object, of observer and observed. Central to Heidegger's critique of Cartesian dualism at the heart of the enlightenment and the Western world's rationalist world view is the notion of "dwelling". Heidegger is notoriously difficult to paraphrase effectively, however, contained within the notion of dwelling is the reassessment of one's being as defined by one's environment: we cannot exist without our surroundings. It is this tenet of his thought that has encouraged ecocritics to see in his work a possible solution to the exploitative character of humankind's relationship to the natural world.

This paper seeks to draw together the uses of the term "home" in ecocritical discourse in an attempt to provide a synthesis of the concept. In the process, a small number of recent novels which have an ecological agenda will be analysed in the light of the theoretical discussion of our key word.

Stela Dujakovic (University of Paderborn)
"The Room I Could Die In"- Deconstructing Home in Fictions of Aging
The twentieth century development of nursing and retirement facilities produced new literary representations of aging which shed light on highly charged notions of home. Contemporary aging narratives as well as Aging Studies frequently draw on concepts of deindividuation in institutionalized environments that are manufactured for the aged. This criticism fosters, simultaneously, a romantic idea of family care in private and familiar surroundings which are expected to sustain a form of self-recognition by providing home or identity-related symbols for immobile bodies afflicted by increasing mental and physical limitations.
My paper argues that contemporary literature looks beyond these concepts. While retirement homes have become central settings in fictional portrayals of old age, Colum McCann's "Thirteen Ways of Looking" and Paul Harding's *Tinkers*, both twenty-first century texts, offer more nuanced and thus complex insights into the private, self-made homes of two aging/dying protagonists. Instead of finding the ease and comfort of their own homes surrounded by familiar faces and items, they both seem to become victims of the domiciles or, here, the rooms they inhabit in old age. Drawing on the difficulties of identity formation as discussed within Aging Studies and the value of private homes, my paper will illustrate how recent aging narratives help to dismantle both the well-wrought fictions of material homes as ageless safe havens and the idealized narratives of living, aging, and dying "at home".

Mirjam Frotscher (University of Dresden):
'… a coming home to my body'—Defying Illusions of 'Home' in US American Narratives of Transgender Embodiment
This paper suggests that fictional narratives featuring trans protagonists critically engage in deconstructing two distinct notions of 'home' and the ideological value they have within gender identity formation. Employing a diachronic perspective, I map how trans narratives spanning two decades—from Leslie Feinberg's *Stone Butch Blues* (1993) to Sybil Lamb's *I've Got A Time Bomb* (2014)—have persistently questioned the positively connotated space of the family home. Either by casting the family home unanimously as an antagonistic force or by disregarding its value for the characters' development in its entirety. 'Home' has become uncoupled from any notion of fixedness or any claims of providing security and safety, not only when home denotes the supposedly nurturing familial space but also when viewing 'home' as the phenomena of 'being at home' in ones' own body. Contrary to assumptions based on autobiographical trans narratives, fictional trans narratives rarely suggest that aligning embodiment and corporeality results in the home-coming to a permanent place on the gender spectrum, as alleged by Prosser (1998) among others. Rather these narratives highlight the crucial mobility and the very temporary status of all forms of gender

identity. In many regards, narratives featuring trans characters counter the ideologies that view the familial home space or the notion of being at home in ones' own body as crucial for the individual, especially in cases when the body itself signifies some form of displacement. The narratives thereby cast these ideologies as illusory and undesirable, thus rendering any kind of home-making practices futile.

Monika Shafi (University of Delaware)
The House as Postnational Space: Lessons from Jenny Erpenbeck's novel *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen*
Jenny Erpenbeck (born in 1967) is one of Germany's foremost authors and highly acclaimed for her nuanced explorations of identity, memories, and belonging. Houses often play a key role in grounding personal and national histories, and her most recent novel, *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen* (2015, Go, Went, Gone) is a particularly intriguing example of this nexus. It articulates, as I will argue, the vision of a postnational society to be enacted through a house.

The text tells the story of Richard, a recently retired professor of Classics, who befriends a group of men from different African countries. After horrific voyages across the Mediterranean Sea and Italy, each of them had ended up in Berlin, first at the camp on the *Oranienplatz*, later in a refugee shelter. When the men are threatened with losing their current accommodation, Richard brings a dozen of them to his house and has it officially recognized as a refugee shelter.

The novel critiques German and European refugee regulations and the concept of the nation state and queries migration's social, economic, and political causes in their indelible link to globalization. Most importantly, it offers an alternative, postnational model of inclusion and community, which is linked to Richard's house. The transformation of his house from a private residence to a communal dwelling corresponds to Richard's own transformation for both house and owner have morphed from the private and parochial to the communal and cosmopolitan. The house has become a transnational space in which Richard and the men practice a pragmatic, tolerant cosmopolitanism that leading migration theorists have proposed as blueprints for a progressive idea of Europe.

Wibke Schniedermann (University of Giessen)/Sarah Wolff (FU Berlin)
Immobile Bodies, Mobile Homes
Richard Sennett contends that "the ability to move anywhere, to move without obstruction" has become the dominant expression of freedom in Western countries (310). Since "mobility, and control over mobility, both reflects and reinforces power" (Massey 251), those who are immobile become socially confined. At the same time, mobility can turn into a burden and an indicator of social decline for those who are forced into a vagrant life, such as the growing number of homeless persons in the urban centers of the Western world. The graphic narratives *Pitch Black: Don't Be Skerd* (2008) and *Somewhere Nowhere: Lives Without Homes* (2012) question the equation of mobility with personal autonomy and renegotiate notions of home as either material place, affective space, or product of human(izing) practice.

This paper addresses the question of how these graphic literary representations of restricted mobility in urban space shape conceptions of (social) place, "identity," and home. Practices of exclusion, for instance shelters as a form of institutional exclusion, "loca[te] the homeless within definable and controllable borders" (Wright 216) and consequentially restrict their mobility. The extent to which a body can freely move through space or is limited in its mobility intersects with

visual markers of race, class, gender and bodily impairment. This becomes important in the context of the genre of the graphic narrative, which visualizes the body within space. As edited and co-authored publications, both case studies also exemplify the contested agency of the represented homeless persons in the process of literary production and on the literary market.

Sarah Butler (Open University, UK)
On Being Moved: Fragility, Loss and Disruption in Novelistic Representations of Home
This poetic and theoretical exploration of a novel-in-progress speaks to three novelistic home-spaces (all located in Elephant and Castle, South London): the first destroyed by bombs in World War Two; the second demolished in 2014 as part of a regeneration scheme; the third, the protagonists' current home (their ability to remain there increasingly under threat as they age).
I consider the concept of fragility at a range of scales: the body; the material structure of the home; the forging of self-identity in relation to home; and the threat of domicide (Porteous and Smith, 2001) or home-loss for the less powerful in our society – and discuss narrative and representational strategies to reveal the relationship between the macro political and economic forces affecting London's housing policy, and the intimate lived experience of those whose relationship with home is rendered fragile through the threat, and reality, of domicide.
I foreground the novel as a representational space with a unique potential to fuse these multi-scalar experiences and conceptions of home, and suggest that the form affords new insights into how we might connect and understand 'home' and fragility through emotional engagement with readers – a different kind of movement and (productive) disruption.

Sihem Arfaoui Abidi (Jendouba University)
'When Home Is Not Home Anymore:' Mobilized Home and Ideology in Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, and *Things I've Been Silent About, Memories*
Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003)*,* and *Things I've Been Silent About, Memories* (2008) provide us with controversial, yet complimentary negotiations about home and homemaking in interconnection with ideology and mobility. In the considered trilogy, home is not just ideologically mobilized, but also becomes physically loaded with forced geographical mobility. With Azar Nafisi, home is ideologically mobilized, particularly, in times of war and political oppression, to the extent that home, citizenship and total surrender to the system become intrinsically related. On the one hand, home is the usual home only for those Iranians who comply with the system. On the other hand, home is also physically loaded when it becomes connected with the memoirist's forced mobility. Here, home no longer looms as an immune space securing peace, safety, and stability which obliges the characters to look for elsewhere than Iran as a refuge. Nafisi sums it up in a very provocative image where being home is likened to "having sex with a man you loathe." In this second model, leaving home is inseparable from homesickness, for as Nafisi puts it in the epilogue, "I left Iran, but Iran did not leave me." As such, adapting oneself to a new home remains stained by the anger, resentment, and homesickness to the lost home.

Sarah Heinz (University of Vienna):
The Immobilized Family: Home and Homeland in the Nigerian Novel
The family home, its practices and relations have often been seen as a microcosm in which larger issues of a nation are acted out. The postcolonial novel has specifically dealt with this mapping of home and homeland. More often than not, traditionally positive evaluations of home and homeland are reversed here. Instead of seeing the home as a positive space of safety and comfort in which national values are preserved and handed down to the next generation, home is a space of violence. In such a home, issues of the postcolonial nation's history are acted out, linking "home and homeland in cruelties perpetrated in the name of protecting settled spaces and national values" (Strehle 2008, 3).

In my paper, I discuss two Nigerian novels and their presentation of family life: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) and Chigozie Obioma's *The Fishermen* (2015). Both texts, I argue, deal with the historical burden of colonial violence and internalised racism by presenting conflicted father figures. These patriarchs attempt to preserve the space of the home by immobilizing their family through normative values, constant surveillance and constraints on personal freedom. *Purple Hibiscus* shows how this attempt ends in self-hatred and domestic violence, *The Fishermen* shows how the home falls apart and ends in tragedy as soon as the patriarch is absent. Mobility in the sense of the freedom to develop is here denied to the individual, a denial which is a harsh comment on the state of the nation in the postcolonial context.

Laura Bieger (University of Freiburg)
Public Exposure: Home-Making In & Beyond Modern Literature
My lecture takes a media historical view on the conference theme. In drawing on both my earlier work on *Belonging and Narrative* and on my current work on the reading public, I want to unfold the following claims: that home-making, as a spatio-material practice, is a thoroughly mediated affair; that whatever the medial and material resources on which this practice draws, narrative be will a prominent feature putting them to use; and that the novel, because of its endlessly malleable and searching form, has had an immense impact on generating and shaping the narratives that we employ to the end of making a/it home in modern times.

Concretely, I argue that to the degree that being at home has become more and more uncertain and mobilized in modern life, modalities of belonging have shifted—away from beloved and presumably stable dwelling places and social bonds; away from laboring the same soil over generations; away from secure and stable possessions like, and from struggles over ownership and dispossession; and toward the worlds of letters and the imagination that brings "the place called home" to life.

I further argue that the novel's rise to become the first modern mass medium was fueled by its distinct capacities to grapple with matters of belonging in an increasingly mobile and uncertain age. And because the novel exists in print (and because being printed involves being public), it publicly exposes the private needs of which it tends to speak. Enabled by the diverse print cultures of its time, the novel revamped literature's public commitments, and in doing so, it played a powerful role in erecting the distinctions between the public and the private that both mark and organize modern life.

Yet by publicly exposing presumably private needs, the novel also undermined distinctions between the public and the private while turning the material object of the book into a viable dwelling place.

This basic home-making pattern persists until today, taking on ever-new narrative forms while shape-shifting its material base in and though different media (film, television, the internet). And if digital home-making practices have recently leveled many of our familiar public-private-divisions by amplifying both imitate zeal and public exposure, they testify to an on-going, and perhaps even enhanced need to making a/it home in and through narrative art.

Barbara Maly-Bowie (University of Vienna):
Home is where Netflix is. The US streaming provider Netflix between 'mobile privatisation' and 'private mobilisation'
When Raymond Williams analyses television as a cultural form in 1974 and embeds it in a structure of feeling he calls mobile pri vatisation, he is describing the contradictory tendency of an urban-industrial society that allows more and more mobility but at the same time celebrates the family home as stable set space. Looking at the streaming service Netflix, in particular at its promotional material e.g on Instagram, I will continue his line of argument, but will, furthermore, render my diagnostic critique along the lines of private mobilisation: With TV going online and Netflix' overall affordances of personalised, on-demand programming and mobile consumption via many portable devices, the private sphere also needs to be seen as a mediated and mobile arena of subjectivation. The idea of a flexible, active, cosmopolitan and therefore highly mobile subject is an underlying assumption I wish to further scrutinize: as a commodified subject that favours, but is also exhausted by, neoliberal dynamics set in a digital context on the one hand, and as a seemingly (un)bound modern subject, that is, however, seeking confinement and re-basing via media(usage) on the other. Therefore, an idea of 'home' as articulated via Netflix in terms of what Williams would call practical consciousness and signifying practices (1977), negotiates dominant, emergent and residual meanings within a larger discursive formation set at the conjuncture of mediality and mobility.

Julia Faisst (University of Eichstaett-Ingolstadt)
Forced Dislocation and the Iconography of the Housing Crisis
Since the subprime mortgage crisis that caused the inflated housing bubble to burst in 2007, spatialized segregation in the U.S. no longer primarily happens to the urban poor. The latest housing crisis demonstrates how the meaning of home has transformed from asset to liability also for the working and middle classes. Through the changed notion of home and acts of dispossession, it captures "what has been lost and what is to be gained in the navigation of class" (*The Syntax of Class* 12). Over the past few years, a great variety of photographs have powerfully captured such real estate inequality—and rendered poverty a relative, mobile, and cross-class term.
This paper critically investigates the aesthetics and politics surrounding the forced dislocations and subsequent mobilizations of both working and middle class residents no longer able to afford rent or mortgage payments. Examples of such foreclosure photography include John Moore's World Press Photo award-winning series *Evicted*, Brian Shumway's stylized images of home interiors in the aftermath of evictions, Bruce Gilden's series of California middle-class subdivisions in arrested development, and Lauren Greenfield's architectural juxtapositions of the American Dream and its nightmares, which attest to the fact that forced dislocation can happen to anyone.
All chosen photographs are timely inquiries into the nature of precarious livelihoods and the spatial cost of capitalism. Thus, I read them as sharp critiques of a corporatized American dream of

belonging, as well as attempts at locating spatial justice in the search for a renewed sense of home. Moore's images, for instance, were taken during the fraught moments of foreclosure of suburban Colorado families and show the clearing of their houses and possessions onto public sidewalks, while Gilden's and Shumway's black-and-white images of foreclosed (upper) middle class homes are marked by a sense of crime—insofar as the photographs are reminiscent of the crime scenes in a film noir.

Throughout the paper, residential and public space as a particular kind of architectural constellation—namely one of actual, anticipated, or feared poverty—is read as not simply built but socially constructed, politicized, and mutable. In line with the spatial turn, I consider the iconography of built environments as contingent manifestations of a number of ideological forces, including capitalist development, racism, and gender dynamics. As "site[s] of powerful forces of social, political, and aesthetical change" and "record[s] of assertion and displacement, of authority and the subversion of authority, in short, of the symbolic investment of cultural meaning in space and of the contestation of public space," they are changeable (*Public Space* 10)—even if they force their inhabitants to negotiate and adapt to new, formerly unimaginable ways of life, and exacerbate a corporate culture in which the business of eviction has become a highly lucrative one for property owners and national (re)moval companies such as (the actually existing) *Kick 'em Out Quick* alike.

Dorothee Schneider (University of Kiel):
'No Sanctuary': Post-9/11 home spaces in AMC's *The Walking Dead*
After the 9/11 attacks, American homes became sites of a domestic ideology that constructed the home as a safe haven of nuclear family togetherness, threatened from the outside. Similarly, the US as the American homeland seemed to be in danger of invasion from the outside and inside (through sleeper cells); a threat that had to be repelled through measures of exclusion and purification, accompanied by a rhetoric of innocence and a reactivation of Western mythology. A close reading of the post-apocalyptic horror series *The Walking Dead* (2009-) will suggest how representations of the post-9/11 American home as both a place of safety and a place under threat of invasion perpetuate and criticize ideologies, such as domesticity and the exclusion of "others". The series narrates the repeated making, maintenance and ultimate loss of secure home spaces, which function as sites of negotiation of different forms of governance, mirroring post-9/11 political discourse. At the same time, some of the homes shown in the series are related to historical acts of violence committed against minorities. This is often achieved through the series' links to Western mythology, showing how histories of suppression are excluded from a seemingly coherent narrative of the American homeland. This close reading of *The Walking Dead* illustrates how post-9/11 ideologies of home and homeland and the accompanying discourses of domesticity become implicitly inscribed in American popular culture.