

5. Intimate Marxist Space: The Dialectic House

A Dialectic and Literary Essay on the Idea of Intimate Space

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Abstract:

The bonds exerted upon the angel of history have, in modern culture, been latched down by the unassuming disinterest in revolt exhibited by the poor. It's as if only the few are haunted by a specter, outside of our windows at night, consistently showing us the knife that we will inevitably use to slit our own wrists. Yet, the poor want freedom, but of what use, and at what cost? Obviously they do not feel the drive enough to move from their palatable couches, whose cushions support the weight of their minds. We want more culture! More freedom! More television! What were really given are more shackles.

Keywords:

The idea of space; House; Dialectics; Theodor Adorno; Gaston Bachelard

Introduction:

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Introduction

Many philosophers, poets, and intellectuals throughout the entirety of recorded human existence have explored the idea of space. The conception of space has always been intertwined in the dimension between human beings and our existence on earth. In an existence that is always intertwined between our subjectivity and history, space then becomes a dialectical tool used by every human. Space is defined by our experience in the world, which is further defined by our interaction in and with a given culture. In modern capitalist culture (specifically in the United States) the infrastructure of capitalistic economics is blended with the ideologies of the superstructure and the state apparatus. These structures from the bottom up, attempt to define the human being by distinct power relationships and ideologies that subdue and coerce individuals to reinforce the current cultural dynamic of capitalistic thinking (and its reproduction). These cultural and ideological practices are more pervasive in the twenty-first century than they ever have been. They produce a plethora of images and mythologies that attempt to bombard the individual with pro-capitalistic agendas. These systems of power-encouragement have even invaded dwelling¹, which once used to be a safeguard against cultural immersion and coercion. In Gaston Bachelard's book on the seriousness of intimacy in space and the concept of the importance of the poetic imagination, *The Poetics of Space*², he explores the idea of intimate space. In far-capitalism this exploration of intimate space becomes more important now than ever. Intimate space encourages our interaction with our own subjectivity and allows a dialectic subjective being to grasp the importance of thinking *other* and removing oneself from the unfreedoms present in the given capitalist pro-bourgeois power structure. The idea of an intimate dialectic house is a call for a house that encourages the reflexive subjective structure to engage with architecture (and/or nature) in order to individually become subsumed in revolutionary poetics against the pervasiveness of the current capitalistic cultural schematic and also presents the individual with an opportunity for dialectic, revolutionary reverie.

¹ For the purpose of this exploratory essay: the house is acknowledged as a standard format for the ideological goal of bourgeois living, which in turn influences classes and reproduces the given hierarchical structures of dwelling (the dialectical house is a metaphor, which attempts at a critique of dwelling more generally).

² Bachelard, Gaston, and M. Jolas. *The Poetics Of Space*. Boston: Beacon Pr, 1994.



The prodigious living room and the affectionate dining room

The image of the modern living room is one of boisterous poise. It comes equipped with a brand new flat-screen television (wall mounted, of course!), two nice leather reclining couches with memory foam (molded to the contours of your ass, so you never have to leave!), a Blu-ray dvd player with high-definition capabilities (reality has never been clearer!), and two massive stacks of tv on dvd (so you can clear your mind!). The living room is designed to be massive; it invades the person and bombards him with cultural tools designed to keep our minds at bay and our pockets empty. The modern construction of the living room is set up in a dynamic designed to impose ideology in every corner and crevice, it is as capitalist and bourgeois as the highest skyscrapers in New York City. Much like a skyscraper, the living room is designed to create a sense of grandeur when confronted with the ideas it inevitably attempts to push into our consciousness. It is the space of hope for a different life, but ultimately when stripped down to its bareness is the space of alienation in the modern house. The living room chains us to our unfreedom and creates a space bombarded by the use of unreflective practices that attempt to dominate and consume the individual in his consumerism. Bachelard remarks:

“The isolated house furnishes him with strong images, that is, with counsels of resistance. And so, faced with the bestial hostility of the storm and the hurricane, the house’s virtues of protection and resistance are transposed into human virtues. The house acquires the physical and moral energy of a human body.”³

Here, Bachelard, referring to the idea of space as poetry in reverie of reflection, insulation, and daydream, speaks of the house as breathing, *living* entity, which acquires the physical and moral energy of the human body. Therefore, the house, in Bachelard’s view is a means of resistance against the outside world for the benefit of reverie and therefore for reflection in an individual. However, it seems Bachelard has isolated the *idea* of a house as that which is not penetrated by the current reality and modes of production. As is seen in the modern living room, with its brand name appliances and pervasive advertising schemes. Capitalisms constant cultural bombardment creates in the modern living room a window for the storm

³ Ibid. pg. 46



to enter. One slightly opened portal to the world of capitalistic images lets in the howling gusts of wind, so even after the alienation of the modern work day, the modern worker may come home and again be allowed to watch program's that reinforce the current reproduction of the modes of production and submit himself, *willingly* to the cultural consumption culture. The clouds never depart, the thunder never stops roaring, it is as if in the living room all hope of reverie is flushed down the Disney trademarked toilet. Daydreaming is invaded by a sense of the grotesque immersion into capitalistic reverie, where even your dreams need to be paused in order to allow space for the marketing team. The living room is a sensory overload of capitalistic images. Bachelard's idea of the house is far removed from the current modern living room. The idea of shelter, reverie, memory, and daydream cannot manifest themselves in the living room. These forces are murdered by the cultural instruction of consumerism and bourgeois ideology. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer predicted and examined this alienation of our lived space in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*⁴ (and Adorno further elaborated on these themes in his work, *Negative Dialectics*⁵):

"Nothing is allowed to stay as it was, everything must be endlessly in motion. For only the universal victory the rhythm of mechanical production and reproduction promises that nothing will change, that nothing unsuitable will emerge. ...It is as if some omnipresent agency had reviewed the material and issued an authoritative catalog tersely listing the products available. The ideal forms are inscribed in cultural heavens where they were already numbered by Plato - indeed, were only numbers, incapable of increase or change."⁶

The culture industry attempts to mechanically reproduce apathetic, non-changing individualities and its key goal is the reproduction of ideological state apparatuses⁷ therefore reinforcing the current modes of production and bourgeois culture. The 'omnipresent agency' is the very force of the ideological state apparatus, which invisibly selects and picks its material that should be present in the perfect modern living room. This use of ideological consumerism and the images that bombard and shape our reality in the

⁴ Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic Of Enlightenment, Philosophical Fragments*. Stanford Univ Pr, 2004. Print.

⁵ Adorno, Theodor W. *Negative Dialectics*. Routledge. 1973.

⁶ Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic Of Enlightenment, Philosophical Fragments*. Stanford Univ Pr, 2004. Print. Pgs. 106-107

⁷ Althusser, Louis. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971. Print.

living room are exactly what is at stake in capitalistic culture. It sacrifices the hopes of living *other* and the entertainment industry dictates the daydream and invades reverie by insisting on its own devices and unreflective thinking to reproduce itself in the individual:

“At the same time, however, mechanization has such power over leisure and its happiness, determines so thoroughly the fabrication of entertainment commodities, that the off-duty worker can experience nothing but after-images of the work process itself”⁸

Therefore, the culture industry rears its ugly head into the living room and keeps the off-duty worker from reflecting actively, poetically, and in reverie as Bachelard *insists* is crucial for redefining our idea of space and intimacy. In order to do this, he remarks, “...We open the world, as it were, by transcending the world seen as it is, or as it was, before we started dreaming.”⁹ In the modern living room, we are no longer able to even attempt to dream if this dream is not somehow a continuation of the anti-freedom practices of the bourgeois culture industry. Bachelard wants the house and intimate space to give way to the imagination and allow us, in reverie, to think *other* than the current affairs or the modes of production that every human being is tied to in a given culture. Bachelard reinforced the idea of a dialectically in-tune space and the ability of a person to retreat from the cultural world, reflect, re-reflect, and take action against these subduing practices. The modern living room only allows an individual to become swept up, yet again, in the reinforcement of the current modes of production. The living room drains our spirits, reinforces banal reason to continue working the following day, and ultimately pervades and perverts the hope of real revolutionary intimacy.

The dining room is a space in the house that allows for the congregation of the members of a family to examine and reexamine their situations after the alienation of the workday or the resulting reinforcement of cultural education in the school day. I step into the dining room embrace the wooden table or the orifice of dim-lit lighting. As I crawl gently through the room I cannot help but notice the soft glow of the candles on the table and the chandelier above creating an orange permeation of warmth. It is as if, in the midst of the room, there lays a warming fire burning with the wood long forgotten of a family now present. The space drifts in and out of memory and the future. It is a long-winded journey of times of growth. I was once small and feeble sitting here examining my utensils for the very

⁸ Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic Of Enlightenment, Philosophical Fragments*. Stanford Univ Pr, 2004. Print. Pg. 109.

⁹ Bachelard, Gaston, and M. Jolas. *The Poetics Of Space*. Boston: Beacon Pr, 1994. Pg. 184



first time. I am now moved by the long journey I have made since my first visit to this room. It is a hearth of family memories and family disjunctions. In this room are the specters of a thousand pleasant and horrible ghosts, all of whom invite me to sit down for this current meal, regard the elaborate dishware or trinkets from around the world, and to remember and re-remember the moments that divide and make up my life. I redistribute these moments and recall the very first time I felt constrained: I had felt the life being sucked out of me. However, it was in these moments when I really was given hope. This hope is not long forgotten and neither is the dining room where these dreams were manufactured.

The dining room is intimate as much as it is affectionate. Typically a dining room remains relatively safe from the culture industries persistent growl. It creates a sense of a family and the growth and change of this family through time. In this way it invites us to dream and to remember our memories of past and carve the way for new ones to emerge and flourish. Bachelard remarks:

“...Memory and imagination remain associated, each one working for their mutual deepening. In the order of values, they both constitute a community of memory and image. Thus the house is not experienced from day to day only, on the thread of a narrative, or in the telling of our own story. Through dreams, the various dwelling-places in our lives co-penetrate and retain the treasures of former days.”¹⁰

In this description of the impact of memory on imagination, Bachelard gives us a clear view of the way that a truly imaginative house is devised as to cater our conception of memory and to allow these memories in reverie to affect us in a profound way and to exercise their reflexive practices in us. However, in a society defined by the spectacular and in an imaged based consumption culture, what are we to do with these almost sacred spaces of intellectual reverie? The answer lies in preserving those intimate parts of our house in which the culture industry cannot manifest itself (much like the idea of the Japanese *tokinoma*: a niche where the past is honored). The dining room exemplifies these cultural dynamics and creates a space highly motivated by the presence of memories. Society attempts to reinforce the current modes of production so that in future generations the power dynamic of the bourgeois and the rich will remain stagnant and future generations of proletariat workers will have the *appearance* of bourgeois luxury rather than actual

¹⁰ Ibid. pg. 5



freedom from the infrastructure of the economy and its superstructure of ideological state apparatuses. Therefore:

“They are assured that they do not need to be in any way other than they are and that they can succeed just as well without having to perform tasks of which they know themselves incapable. But at the same time they are given the hint that effort would not help them in any case, because even bourgeois success no longer has any connection to the calculable effect of their own work.”¹¹

Culture pervades every step the proletariat takes in his life. This is therefore why the political importance of Bachelard’s intimate space and incorporating space as a poetry inherent in the concept of reverie becomes more important for a person, now, in the twenty-first century. The dining room encourages this engagement with inner reflection and the way in which a person can inhabit a space and be completely engaged with the poetry of its motion. Memories accumulate in the specific dwelling and thus, the idea of a home can transcend the current reality and allow us to think *other*. The affectionate dining room holds a key for the movement away from the pervasion of the current image and image-obsessed culture and instead presents an individual with poetry, emotion, and a dialectic of exchange and reflection that they may absorb into their subjectivity. The revolutionary component of the poetics of space is that it can separate us from our alienation and consequently grant us, for a moment, a freedom from the infrastructure and an instance of the ability to therefore live as a dialectical subjective being.

The stupendous basement and the comfy attic

The basement is a dreary and desolate place. It metaphorically speaks to our imagination and psyche as that place in which the repressed and hidden drives take over and remain unexpressed and desolate. The basement reminds us of our constant struggle in life and the depression inherent in every individual who remains unfree. It isolates and permeates our soul, which leaves it blackened like a piece of charcoal that will never ignite again. In the isolation of the basement we succumb to our unfreedom, we flourish in these aspects of our soul that drown us in the symptoms of our forsaken cultural sickness. Its walls are dark and damp. Its eyes pierce through to the bowels of our consistent struggle. In

¹¹ Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic Of Enlightenment, Philosophical Fragments*. Stanford Univ Pr, 2004. Print. Pg. 117



the basement we are reminded of the darkness of our days, of the murder of peoples, of the abyss of the modern Mephistopheles. Like Faust we have sold our soul to this abyss through culture. The devil reigns supreme in the culture industry. It is for his sake that we sacrifice our children and our futures. The culture of poverty remains, in the clutch of our being, a force that will forever ravage and destroy. It is in this desolate dreariness that the culture industry thrives, it submits us to its wrath by scorning our dreams and sending us to the recesses of what could be. In the basement we are no longer given hope, no longer do we strive for the attainment of the rapture of revolution and revolutionary consciousness against the structural powers of the bourgeois image culture. It deprives us of our image and in turn we scream, but no one can hear through those concrete walls, no one will hear our rigorous clamor. It is here that we shall burn in the unfree hell culture has made for us. It is here that we learn to suffer.

The basement is an image of isolated reverie. It is the image of a darkened daydream that permits no one to live freely but only succumb to the struggles of proletariat life. The house was supposed to, "...Maintain him through the storms of the heavens and through those of life. It is body and soul."¹² However, this reach to the heavens is blocked by cement and concrete. The storm of the heavens is never reached, instead only the fiery abyss of hell can reach through the basement and remind us that we, like the basement, remain empty. The house is supposed to cater to our intimate reverie and, "...to de-socialize our important memories, and to attain to the plane of the daydreams that we used to have in the places identified with our solitude."¹³ However, the attainment of memories removed directly from the culture industries grip are forever lost in the basement. In the basement we are only left with the barren solitude of our unfreedom. The powers that control our destiny in the pro-bourgeois capitalist culture lock us in the basement. The basement acts as a symbol of this isolation from our memories and only serves to remind us that at the end of that nine to five work day, we remain utterly helpless to change our situation by revolution. The inevitable social revolution Marx and many others once suggested has built a house where in the darkest crevices we still remain, ultimately, *unfree*. The basement showers us in a darkened form of the daydream: the nightmare. It is the nightmare of a life unfulfilled. The dreams that we once had as children for the good life, are locked away in this area of being that is emblematic of the basement. It is descent into the true infrastructure of a society that will not allow this infrastructure to change with the dialectics of history. The basement, like Adorno, reminds us:

¹² Bachelard, Gaston, and M. Jolas. *The Poetics Of Space*. Boston: Beacon Pr, 1994. Pg. 7

¹³ *Ibid.* Pg. 9



“That life goes on at all, that the system, even in its most recent phase, reproduces the lives of those who constitute it instead of doing way with them straight away, is even credited to the system as its meaning and value. The ability to keep going at all becomes the justification for the blind continuation of the system, indeed, for its immutability.”¹⁴

The basement, therefore, has the function of only exposing us to our cultural inability to change and think other. It is the depression of the young proletariat in his ability to influence the world of culture. The reproduction of culture remains its ability to keep constructing houses whose initial intent is only to continue the invasion on culture so as to reproduce the means of production. It levels us as consumers and creates in us the need to continue living in this dank, dark mockery of an existence. Bachelard remarks, “In the cellar, darkness prevails both day and night, and even when we are carrying a lighted candle, we see shadows dancing on the dark walls.”¹⁵ The basement signifies darkness and only darkness shall have the last word in our altered state of melancholic mind. In the basement we find full well that the poetics of living can become a nightmare of the very poetry of life itself. We are discredited, we are chained, and more than that the key to our shackles has remained in the belly of the beast: this is the beast of stupendous basement, in all its culture and luxury.

The attic, located in the heavens of the dialectic house includes within it the idea of utopia. The heavens open up and all is filled with its light. It is in this way that the attic provides a poetic space for intense and intimate reverie. It is the intimate object that gives all those who enter the hope of being beyond the current state of things. Where the basement makes us feel dry and empty, the attic causes us to feel full and hopeful. The attic is the key to transcendence in dialectic subjectivity. It fills us up with the hope of thinking *other* and in its turn allows us to play the game of resistance in which we can deny the current cultural schematic and the modes of production and instead live and relive our reflexivity. It is the place where most memories are stored. Boxes and boxes of old objects remind us of our childhood and engage with the daydream of renewing these memories and activating them for different purposes, again to strive for something better, something more lit, a future with the hope for the possibility of freedom for all. It is in the attic that we can actively engage with our being-in-the world. This place of retreat is first and foremost a

¹⁴ Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic Of Enlightenment, Philosophical Fragments*. Stanford Univ Pr, 2004. Print. Pg. 119

¹⁵ Bachelard, Gaston, and M. Jolas. *The Poetics Of Space*. Boston: Beacon Pr, 1994. Pg. 19



place of regretful hope. It is the utopia we have been aiming for, where the past suffering of the peoples of this earth are redeemed and reexamined negatively identify where humanity went wrong. The proletariat attic is most importantly immense. It is immense in the sense that it allows a person to pursuit his dreams. It renders what goes on in the rest of the house and remains, as it were, intertwined with the time of the past. But also, the future is that of the attic with its safe-guarded memories and images, it presents to us the idea that all of those suffering moments and all of those happy moments would have been enjoyed more under the guise of freedom. The attic gives us aim and purpose, "...We always go up the attic stairs, which are steeper and more primitive. For they bear the mark of ascension to a more tranquil solitude."¹⁶

Adorno remarks:

"Formal freedom is guaranteed for everyone. No one has to answer officially for what he or she thinks. However, all find themselves enclosed from early on within a system of churches, clubs, professional associations, and other relationships which amount to the most sensitive instrument of social control."¹⁷

Escaping from all of these systems of alluding freedom and relationships which amount to social control, the attic is truly a place of dialectic reverie. It is built on the foundation of the entire house that represents history in all its facets and is placed a top the house in the hope for a future. It reminds us that all of these memories must lead to something and this concept of utopia is first and foremost that thing that should be attained in the hope for a more free society and subjectivity. The attic gives us all this through daydream and reverie. We forget the nightmare of the basement and all of our unfreedoms and instead remove and contemplate the dialectical nature of our subjectivity. This contemplation and dialectic reverie displaces us from our situation and allows us to float in the clouds of the utopia that we can hope for. This small amount of hope is concentrated in our memories, in the storage boxes we encounter in the attic, and in our intent for a better life for the future of our children and ourselves. Therefore, the attic possesses this revealing poetic function in the house and this part falls under Bachelard's conception of what the house should do, "The great function of poetry is to give us back the situations of our dreams. The house we were

¹⁶ Ibid. Pg. 26

¹⁷ Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic Of Enlightenment, Philosophical Fragments.* Stanford Univ Pr, 2004. Print. Pg. 120



born in is more than an embodiment of home, it is also an embodiment of dreams.”¹⁸ It is in the attic that we experience this sense of poetry in the home. The attic gives us back our dreams in the form of a utopia vision that unites us to our current reality and is hopeful for the future of our depressive state. It ignites our dreams aflame and encourages us to move on towards the future with hope and affection. The attic stretches our imaginations and gives us comfy hope for the future attainment of a more perfect society. Even when confronted with the boxes of past memories, where our limitations and problems are located, we can learn from these mistakes through reverie. In this contemplation, the future is open to a dream-like possibility defined by our history and given new meaning in an opened void.

The imposing office and the mellow bedroom

The concept of a home office is at first strikingly common. When further examined it becomes clear that the idea of a ‘home’ office is as institutionalized and culture-driven as an idea can be. The invasion of the office setting into the home was destined to appear in a far capitalistic society. It permeates the essence of the dwelling and in turn causes it to become an extension of our own alienation, yet within the place that we make memories and engage in intimate reverie. It is this contradictory idea of the home office that institutionalizes the home. It makes the culture industry’s power stretch out and reach into our dwelling lives, in a very similar way that the living room does. However, this home office is of course to be put to practical use. It extends the workday indefinitely and allows an individual, to even further alienate himself in the own comfort of their home. It is an ideology that extends from the office and places itself into the place where we are supposedly ‘free’ from work. It is a bourgeois tool invented to subdue the wish for freedom even from the workplace. In this sense it also functions as a tool to further blend the power structures within the given society. The office more or less becomes an ideological state apparatus on the same level as the church or education. What is even more perverted about the home office is its non-engagement with intimate space and the capacity it has to blur the dimensions between what is private and public or office space.

The house is said to be a source of protection and isolation from the world’s terrifying forces. Bachelard remarks:

¹⁸ Bachelard, Gaston, and M. Jolas. *The Poetics Of Space*. Boston: Beacon Pr, 1994. Pg. 15



“The isolated house furnishes him with strong images, that is, with counsels of resistance. And so, faced with the bestial hostility of the storm and the hurricane, the house’s virtues of protection and resistance are transposed into human virtues. The house acquires the physical and moral energy of a human body.”¹⁹

But this supposed shelter, in the home office, becomes invaded by thoughts and processes of the culture industry, so much so, that it is pervasive and does not encourage the resistance the house is supposed to cater to in its construction. The home office acquires the physical and moral energy of a salesman or the stay-at-home-boss that you cannot escape. It becomes a place of entanglement and confusion for the modern home dweller and does not allow for the isolated picture of a home that Bachelard calls forth to bring comfort, resistance, and reverie. The home office actually supplies reason with contradiction in a belief that completely contradicts the ideas of comfort, resistance, and conceptual reverie. The home office shuts an individual up in all the loss of his anti-capitalistic hope for change in the economic modes of production of the infrastructure. It is alienation in the home, *par excellence*. “Existence in late capitalism is a permanent rite of initiation. Everyone must show that they identify wholeheartedly with the power which beats them.”²⁰ The home office only confirms the identification of a person with the powers that ‘beat them.’ It is the identification to capitalistic culture that allows one to build a home office in the first place. When constructing a new house in the suburbs of the great country of the United States, an architect may be astounded to realize that the person they are employed to build the house for calls specifically for a home office. This absurd idea has embedded itself into our culture like a leech. The idea of the public office extending its special attributes beyond that sector, to the protection of our own homes, is as pervasive as any agent of capitalistic propaganda. It is, in itself, a complete contradiction and a sign of the far-capitalistic era that has become completely ingrained in our minds, that it is as *if it were* of no significance that we extend an institution that oppresses our freedom into our homes. The home office is anti-reverie and pro-alienation. It disengages and disenchants our memories. It subdues, slays, and reminds us of the overwhelming constitution of our unfreedom. The office is the invasive instrument of our own security.

The bedroom (without a television or computer) is a place of serenity and sincerity. Its layers are that of a thousand soft cushions that swallow up your insecurities, make you

¹⁹ Ibid. Pg. 46

²⁰ Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic Of Enlightenment, Philosophical Fragments*. Stanford Univ Pr, 2004. Print. Pg. 124



again whole, and appreciate the world for what it is: sometimes a wonderful ensemble of the orchestra of being. Although dialectically intertwined into this world, the bedroom is where we forget all of our insecurities and lay dormant in the passive experience of a time forgotten. It is where our most pleasurable moments coincide with our most anxious secrets. It is a retreat from the world and a retreat from a consciousness that cannot be invaded by the immensity of a given culture. The bedroom is designed for pleasure and it also succumbs to the designation of an almost sacred space, filled with longing memories, the repressed, and times forgotten. It is the dwelling place of the unconscious, of all of our drives. It caters to our hopes and pleasures reignited in the hours of our sleep. It speaks to the dialectical conscious like a long forgotten mother and blesses us with its ability to heal the wounds of the past. We reinvent ourselves in the bedroom. We bless each and every moment with the hope of the ability to achieve our dreams. Even though some of these memories available to our reverie become painful to relive, we relive them all the same, hoping to find the mistakes of the past and reexamine our lives heading towards the multitude of possibility that is the future. The bedroom is the intense location of unconscious and conscious reverie. Through the hours, half-asleep, we engage with the inner workings of our own dialectic and in turn recapitulate our day and rediscover ourselves in the moments we once thought were lost. It rectifies any atrocities that may have occurred during the day and erases and discloses these very disturbances in a completely new way. Like the chalkboard the bedroom gives us the availability to write, erase, and rewrite our own feelings, emotions, and positions in life. It is the dialectic of *true* enlightenment embodied in the discovery of our own individual myths and the reexamination of the parts of our being which make up our unfreedoms. It allows one to develop a sense of where to go, given their unfreedom and to soar into the heavens of the angel of history in order to recreate this angel and send her to the depths of the deep blue ocean: all personified in the waves of our satin sheets. The bedroom is the *poetics* of our intimate space, it is the scribe of the lines of our mind.

Bachelard states:

“One might say that immensity is a philosophical category of daydream. Daydream undoubtedly feeds on all kinds of sights, but through a sort of natural inclination it contemplates grandeur. And this contemplation produced an attitude that is so special, an



inner state that is so unlike any other, that the daydream transports the dreamer outside the immediate world to a world that bears the mark of infinity.”²¹

Immensity is located in the warmth of our memories and the pillows splayed out upon the sheets of our bed. In the bedroom we are exposed to immensity in all its might. Lying in bed becomes an active participation in the daydream, which transports us away from the outside world and provides a shelter from the capitalistic tendencies in a given culture. It bears the mark of infinity and the bed represents our entire unconscious and conscious desires to be *other* than we are when we awaken from our intimate reverie. The bedroom, as Bachelard suggests, caters to an attitude of contemplation in and outside the world. It is a sacred space of deep intuition and development. It is where we reflect our dreams and project them into the play that is reverie.

The immensity that is within us is felt in the sanctuary that is the bedroom. It gives a meaning to the world. We are, at moments, allowed to escape from our alienation and contemplate this unfree existence we have been given. Culture may be able to take away our practical dreams through the sure facticity of our given situation. However, it can never take away our ability to redirect and to dream these dreams of a better life and a better person. We contemplate infinity and for a moment grasp our own personal conception of heaven and the enduring ability of the human spirit to miraculously triumph, in moments, against the heavy burden of our own creation: culture. Culture and freedom, according to Adorno is only an illusion of one dimensionality, “But freedom to choose an ideology, which always reflects economic coercion, everywhere proves to be freedom to be the same.”²² However, in the bedroom, caught in our daydream and reverie, we no longer choose an ideology, we choose something not as economically determined: we choose the dream, the *otherness* of this dream under the condition it provides us with some sort of hope of escape from the capitalist system and bourgeois ideology. The powers that attempt to hold us down can never take away the dream from the proletariat. It can never rid his hopefulness for a future of a better society. After the exhaustion of unfreedom, the bedroom relieves the worries of the day so we may wake and reawaken our consciousness in the dialectic of society. It is through the mellow bedroom that our means of escape is given to our dialectic consciousness; the dream world has never been as crisp and clear as our waking ambitions and desires.

²¹ Bachelard, Gaston, and M. Jolas. *The Poetics Of Space*. Boston: Beacon Pr, 1994. Pg. 183

²² Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic Of Enlightenment, Philosophical Fragments*. Stanford Univ Pr, 2004. Print. Pg. 136



The dialectic house

“Indeed, everything comes alive when contradictions accumulate.”²³ Bachelard’s intuition of the dialectic included in this sentence remains true during the examination of the dialectic house. The house in its different rooms, whether it be the dialectic between the living room and the dining room or the basement and attic, comes alive in the very structure of its invasiveness and comfort. The fact remains that in the modern house, living is constituted by contradiction, by dialectics. The culture industry manifests itself in certain spaces of our house that are supposed to be a safeguard from the culture that permeates its existence. It comes to follow that the modern house is now filled with spaces that are at once intimate and invading. History has changed the dwelling; the treasured huts of the past have given rise to a modern house of contradictory nature. This dialectic is inherent in any dwelling; it consumes, breaks, and recapitulates the process of reproducing the culture industry. However, it is also intimate and cozy. Like everything in the modern era, the house is now a place of not only resort and comfort but also of alienation and resistance. In certain nooks and corners of the house, we can find room for resistance in relation to the culture industry and its alienating powers. However, we also find in these spaces the alienating forces and power structures that the house was originally designed to evade. In this contradictory construct we are left with a choice, give way to our unfreedoms of subjectivity or become immersed in the intimate poetics of spatial constructs. Only in these special pockets of resistance can we recapitulate our experience of the world and guide ourselves to true moments of dialectic freedom. In the dialectic house we are left to soar through the utopia-dream of a better life or fall deeply into the hellish fires and the melancholic depression of institutional culture.

²³ Bachelard, Gaston, and M. Jolas. *The Poetics Of Space*. Boston: Beacon Pr, 1994. Pg. 39



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