

## **A sense of the Uncanny within domestic space.**

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### **Introduction**

The purpose of this discussion, as the title suggests, is to explore elements of domestic space that encourage a sense of repression, anxiety and fear (or the Uncanny). My interest and connection to domestic environments stems from the continual physical relocation throughout my childhood; these moves, from house to house, seemed, at the time, to project atmospheres ranging from solitary expanses to claustrophobic boxes. From these past experiences I have now become interested with the qualities of space that are essential to allow an individual to retreat from the external pressures of modern day life. The acceleration of processes as extreme as completing tasks in the office to cooking a meal at home has led to a sense of depersonalisation and anxiety that is often unrecognised.

Freud's concept of the Uncanny is at the core of the discussion through the bridging of ideas between the psychological and philosophical aspects of modern day living, and the ever increasing sense of unease within the home or, indeed, visiting an unknown space. This discussion is rooted within the notions of emotion and reaction; the way in which an individual perceives ones environment, a process of vague recognition as, on the one hand, a domestic space in purpose, on the other, a mirroring of a more unfamiliar 'other' space. I would like to define the terms 'stability' and 'instability', two terms I have adopted for the intention of the discussion. These terms are a way to cogently

define the relationship between the house and home, the aspects of the familiar and unfamiliar which are bound to the ideas of the Uncanny.

The definition of the stable and unstable relates to an individual's reaction and perception to the atmosphere that a space exudes; where the **unstable** represents the unbalanced and sterile characteristics of the house. In this context it refers to the feeling of permanence or stability that the space fails to deliver. Transitory or temporary space, such as rented accommodation, or more subtly, sudden changes through the removal or addition of objects to a room, express the feeling of uncertainty. A number of individuals that rent are continually looking for a space, which can provide a sense of permanence to 'root' an individual.

The **stable** denotes the idea of the permanent, balanced and welcoming nature of the home, where the inhabitant, in contrast feels 'rooted'. The home conveys a sense of duality through the fluctuation between the stable and unstable, where the ideas of the Uncanny pivot. The space, in which one is comfortable, can also simultaneously evoke the feelings of discomfort through the ideas of the familiar and unfamiliar (which will be elaborated a little later).

At this point I would like to clarify the context of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century housing within Western cultures (primarily Britain) in which this discussion is based. It is important to acknowledge the process through which a space is constructed: The architect, who through the planning and realisation of a given building, projects their understanding of modern day social structures in the way in which a space is enclosed and segregated for living in. The routine that a building inspires, through the way in which a space is encountered – through its hallways, walls and doors, and the functions that the space revolve around – eating, sleeping, washing, recreation... present ideas of a fixed mode of living, which in turn

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communicates a sense of restriction. There is an element of control that a space has on an individual, which the architect is responsible for.

Through this routine and mode of living I have come to liken the way of life to the elements of the theatre by using a metaphor of the *front stage* and *backstage* areas of the home respectively conveying a sense of the orderly and disorderly. It is my intention, from this perspective, to place the work of artists, writers and film directors within the context of this discussion.

Artists have the creative freedom to appropriate space in a bid to communicate a sense of control that is manifest within the architect's intentions and, consequently, the structure of the building. In succession this is implemented to convey a sense of the disorientated and dysfunctional individual. Through experiencing these artistic pieces we are able to question our own relationships to the surrounding space and individual environments.

## **Stability/Instability**

The artist Gregor Schneider constructs, alters and manipulates domestic space in an attempt to communicate the awkward, the sense of the Uncanny. The piece "Dead Haus U R" was an evolving project (between 1986 and 1995) of modification through the addition and removal of walls, doors and artificial windows to his family apartment located in Rheydt, Germany<sup>1</sup>. It was a piece that could be experienced by visitors (through personal invitation) walking through and entering into the different rooms of the house initially perceived

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<sup>1</sup> 'Dead Haus U R' was dismantled and transported for exhibition in the 2001 Venice Biennale, where the arrangement and mapping of the space was forced to be adapted to a given area. Since then the piece has continued to evolve through the spaces that have been provided at Art Galleries across the world. Most recently it has been presented at the "MOCA The Geffen Contemporary" in Los Angeles for example.

through elements which constitute a typically 'normal' domestic environment. During the development of the project, physical adjustments took place and the use of photography assisted the documentation of these alterations, experimenting and investigating the notion of repression within a spatial experience and how the sense of nostalgia somewhat augments the sense of the uncanny. The modifications to this domestic space and the history surrounding Schneider's family apartment<sup>2</sup> is manifest within the building and is traced by photographs and mementos encased within the rooms and buried within the walls. It is appropriate to place Schneider's work at the centre of the discussion, since the themes Schneider explores are at the core of my interest in domestic space. The notion of the "Uncanny" in the work reveals a fragile balance between the relationship of the inhabitant and the unstable and stable nature of the home that is vital to the discussions development. His works "Dead Haus U R" and "Die Familie Schneider" present ideas between the house and the home, and the sinister unwelcoming qualities that this tension can create. It is through Gaston Bachelard's exploration in his text, "The Poetics of Space" that aspects of Schneider's work can be utilised to extend discussion within a philosophical and psychological discourse.

The idea of the home as a balance between the stable and unstable is directly associated with Freud's notion of the Uncanny and a way of introducing the dynamism that exists between the boundaries of what is familiar [homely] and unfamiliar [unhomely]. On the periphery of this relationship, anxiety prevails between these elements and the apprehension of the physically<sup>3</sup> and psychologically repressed individual.

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<sup>2</sup> Schneider's father owned the lead works which is directly next to the apartment and previous generations of his family had worked there. After the apartment was declared too toxic to live in because of the proximity to the lead works, Schneider was permitted to commence his alterations.

<sup>3</sup>The mapping of an area, for example the placement of walls and doors within a space enforces a sense of restriction on the individual.

"The Uncanny" is a term derived from two German words; *Heimlich* and *Unheimlich* which results in "what is known and familiar [stable], yet unfamiliar [unstable]". A dynamic equilibrium exists between the home and the stable and the house where it is unstable. "Freud's intuition that from the homely house there is a single passage, where what is contained and safe is therefore secret, obscure, and inaccessible, dangerous and full of terrors...that *Heimlich* is a word, the meaning of which migrates toward ambivalence until it finally coincides with its opposite *Unheimlich*" (Vidler, 1992, p32). The quotation accentuates this sense of equilibrium and the nature of uncertainty between the two extremes of the Uncanny through the sense of 'migration' and 'ambivalence'.

Throughout the history of the "Uncanny", the house has remained embedded within the source of the explanation of what "commonly merges with what arouses fear in general" (Freud, 2003, p123). "The house [has] provided an especially favoured site for 'uncanny' disturbances: its apparent domesticity, its residue of family history and nostalgia, its role as the last and most intimate shelter of private comfort sharpened by the terror of invasion by alien spirits" (Vidler, 1992, p17). The ideas of 'family history', 'domesticity', 'nostalgia' and the 'intimate' and 'private' nature of the home gives rise to the notion of an enclosed system. For example, when visitors enter into Schneider's composition they encounter the notion of orientation and disorientation and the balance that exists between these two extremes. The concept that the "Uncanny would always be an area in which a person was unsure of his way around: the better orientated he was in the world around him, the less likely he would be to find the objects and occurrences in it uncanny" (Freud, 2003, p125). Both "Dead Haus U R" and "Die Familie Schneider" (which will be discussed in more depth later) can, in some ways, seem familiar to one's own residence in terms of function i.e. bedrooms, kitchen and bathroom; but the visitor encounters the simultaneity of

this notion due to the assumption that is made upon entering the houses. At first sight the subtle arrangement of space and its objects can be perceived as normal, yet the observation that this space is not ones own translates the experience through a sense of the awkward.

Extending this concept of the placement of objects (I refer in this instance to Schneider's application of walls, doors and windows, in a similar context to transportable items such as tables and chairs) and the subsequent reactions of the visitor. The "rooms [in "Dead Haus U R"] are in a state of transformation and exchange - much as living spaces also prove ephemeral and unstable" (Kittelmann, 2001, p21). The perception of the 'unstable' room comes to the fore as the changes from being "Once an ordinary home, the house has become a labyrinth: rooms, walls have been erected in front of walls, and doors and windows have been reconfigured. Even the air that circulates and the sunlight that seems to seep in from the outside are merely illusions created by ventilators and hidden lights" (Schimmel, 2003, p103). Embracing this sense of disorientation as a means to create the idea of the uncanny, numerous written articles and interviews have suggested that "visitors will sense subtle changes in their behaviour without being able to recognise the cause" (Puvogel, 2001, p124). The awareness that "Schneider is able to create atmospheres that arouse emotions as varied as dread, depression and disorientation, [are] all the more heightened because the spectator is often alone" (Ward, 2004, p104). The isolation and disorientation that the works exude, establish an underlying apprehension and "disturbing feeling that no two things can ever be the same" (Puvogel, 2001, p124-129). Personal experience in the encounter of Schneider's works is so central to this sensation of anxiety, that Schneider himself enforces solace, and is quoted as stating that "everyone [each person] must be alone in the house" (Schneider, 2004). By policing a solitary point of entry, one is forced

to become completely immersed in the surroundings, without the continual interruption of other guests.

Having altered two identical terraces and furnishing them in identical ways "Die Familie Schneider" especially plays on the idea of repetition and the sense of fear that arises when a familiar experience is forced to be relived. Permitted by oneself to explore the terraces, it becomes a spatial experience encompassing the idea of the familiar and unfamiliar. The house is dark and passing through the hallway, metallic sounds can be heard. Upon entering the kitchen door on the right one sees a lady washing up. The repetitive and monotonous nature of washing grimy plates in unison with the attention to detail through temperature and smells of the room enhances the experience of the removal of self<sup>4</sup> and the ever increasing sense of anxiety through the invasion of privacy that resounds upon entering the space. The continual reminders of another being that is not your 'self' through traces of smells correlates to the idea that "everyone can relate to the basic fear of feeling imprisoned within a small space" (Ward, 2004, p105). From this point, upon leaving the kitchen Schneider manipulates the relationship between the 'cellar' and 'attic' to the extreme, using darkness to embrace the notion of fear in the cellar and light to celebrate the idea of liberation in the attic. A sense of apprehension is experienced in the cellar through the sudden drop in temperature and the impenetrable darkness that is amplified further through the sinister suggestion of the association between the chair and noose by the entrance to the cellar and the rubbish bags that litter the left side of the space. Feeling that the worst is over, the climbing of the stairs feels somewhat uneasy yet cathartic, as the visitor ascends to the higher (and more rational areas) of the home.

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<sup>4</sup>through which I mean that one is aware that there is no personal attachment to the space through the absence of ownership of objects and their arrangement.

Approaching the second floor, the sound of running water penetrates the atmosphere and upon entering the bathroom one encounters a man who is in the shower, turned to the tiles masturbating. This dramatic confrontation in accord with the warm temperature of the space, acts as a pathway for Schneider to amplify this sense of unease and invasion. The encounter with the room directly next to the bathroom contrasts to the other rooms in the house. The visitor enters the bedroom where one senses the extreme heat and the thick piled carpet introducing a woman who is slumped in a corner with a rubbish bag over her head.<sup>5</sup> Feeling fearful of the direct reference to a sinister event that has been executed due to the limp position of the body, exploits the visitors' worst fears. The sense of light that seduced the visitor to climb the stairs has led one into a false sense of security. The trepidation of imprisonment that Schneider instils by "blurring the boundary between a living space which is the site of security, protection and comfort on the one hand, and on the other hand rendering ones habitation through destable, Gregor Schneider however, adds to the classic Freudian discussion the seminal relation which the material body has to the phenomenological space it inhabits" (Bronfen, 2001, p47). It is through the visitors' consciousness of oneself in space and the way in which one perceives reality and its atmosphere that apprehension and the Uncanny arises.

Having to experience this house alone is enough to trigger a sense of dread which the Uncanny encompasses; but in reliving this immediately after, only reinforces the notion of what is even more familiar appears to be unfamiliar. Having been forced into a certain mode of behaviour, by which I mean you are a passive spectator and compelled to enter into the next house, there is initial confusion of

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<sup>5</sup> There is an excellent article in the Observer (Tim Adams, Arts, 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2005, p5) that interviewed the actors that took part in 'Die Familie Schneider'. What is most interesting to read is how the actors began to perceive the personality of each visitor over time. Each individual reacted in a different way (some aggressive and timid), indicative of their personality through the exploration of the space.

the identical hallway which has the effect of magnifying one's previous anxiety. The visitor, unsure as to what lies behind the kitchen door, is naturally apprehensive and as the journey continues, the subsequent realisation that everything is the same is somehow disorientating. As if in a static film narrative, there is a sense of "going behind oneself" (Schneider, 2004) frozen in time, there is an assumption that these characters will be doing exactly the same things despite what time it is. Somehow the visitor becomes entrapped in this sense of repetition as the individual explores the second space with an enhanced sense of apprehension. It is through recalling the immediate (uneasy) past that a sense of the Uncanny prevails; you cannot be comfortable in such a familiar yet unfamiliar space.

### **The centrality of the home**

Returning to the ideas introduced through the unstable and stable nature of a domestic environment, Gaston Bachelard's comments in "The Poetics of Space" covers the most fundamental aspects of the modern day home. It is through the exploration of living spaces and how "the house constitutes a body of images that give mankind proofs or illusions of stability" (Bachelard, 1994, p17). The notion of illusion, bound to ideas of deception and the masking of reality, makes for a weak foundation to support falsities of the house. This idea of illusion suggests that the house, through a series of images or objects can allude to a stable home. The quotation suggests that the house instigates a relationship between the true stability of the home and its inhabitant's perception of that stability. It is at this point that the balance between the stable and unstable and consequently the relationship of when the house becomes home, comes into question. Walter Benjamin's proposal that "the private individual, who is in the office has to deal with reality, needs the domestic interior to sustain his illusions" (Benjamin, 1999,

p8) is an indication that the home becomes a space for the freedom of thinking, where the mind can wander freely without the pressures of the working environment. This illustrates a relationship between the notions of the inside and outside. On the one hand, work being an outside or remote environment provides a limited scope (in terms of codes of behaviour), whilst on the other, the inside of the home, in contrast guarantees a sense of freedom. For the purpose of this discussion however, the idea that housing itself is enforcing a restricted and mirrored experience will be developed.

By continuing with the definition of the

**"House:** [As] a structure serving as a dwelling for one or more persons, especially for a family"<sup>6</sup>,

it illustrates the exclusion of emotion or attachment to a space. In this sense it is nothing more than a representation of the unvalued and sterile, enhancing the sense of instability and by extending the idea that the house is used for existing in, it remains a mere commodity and material structure.

The description of the,

**"Home** [however, is] an environment offering security and happiness and b) a valued place regarded as a refuge or place of origin."<sup>7</sup>

Described as offering stability to the individual, on the understanding that a 'refuge' is a protected space in which to find shelter; the perception of a 'valued place' is directly related to the emotional and personal attachment that the subject has with a particular space and from where the saying 'one feels at home' originates. Extending what Bachelard suggests as the definition of the home, clearly defines the difference between these two spaces. In isolation, a structure

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<sup>6</sup> [Online] <http://www.yourdictionary.com/ahd/h/h0296300.html> [accessed 7 January 2005]

<sup>7</sup> [Online] <http://www.yourdictionary.com/ahd/h/h0296300.html> [accessed 7 January 2005]

is bereft and void of personal attachment. There is no suggestion that all houses become valued as a home or make for a happy environment. The 'house' migrates towards a 'home' when it becomes lived in, a space worthy of offering the security and 'happiness' that is desired by the inhabitant or inhabitants. The home provides a back drop for images of stability, offering the householder an opportunity to inject personality into the surroundings; as Benjamin wrote: "The interior is not just the universe but also the *étui* of the private individual. To dwell means to leave traces...the traces of the most ordinary objects of use are imprinted. In just the same way the traces of the inhabitant are imprinted on the interior" (Benjamin, 1999, p9). The concept of an imprint, one that evolves through recording the inhabitants' experience is a suggestion that there is a sense of presence (of history) in a space. The walls of a room become a blank surface, one for projection of one's identity which provides an opportunity to create one's own ideal environment. In this sense, Vidler illustrates how the "nature of space [acts] as a projection of the subject thus as a harbinger and repository of all neuroses and phobias of that subject" (Vidler, 2000, preface) and by the removal of one's 'self' from the space that housed your identity, elements from your history can be perceived by successive occupants.

I made a brief introduction through the idea of the cellar and the attic within Schneider's "Die Familie Schneider" to the notion of 'rational' and 'irrational' spaces. Bachelard through this concept also enables a metaphor to exist between the relationship between space and the body and mind. The home just as the body,

"1) ...is imagined as a vertical being. It rises upward. It differentiates itself in terms of verticality. It is one of the appeals to our consciousness of verticality.

2) A house is imagined as a concentrated being. It appeals to our consciousness of centrality." (Bachelard, 1994, p17)

This suggestion of verticality enhances the sense of centrality which the home inspires. The idea of 'rational space' existing on higher levels of the building in alignment with the spatial arrangement of the body instigates the idea of a spatial hierarchy. The home allows aspirations to develop, as the notion of 'verticality' allows you to travel up through the hierarchy of the house (an idea that will be discussed later). Within this space, 'the house as a concentrated being' supports the notion of (centrality and) our universe, where we locate ourselves.

The classification of 'stability' through the idea that a home can become a place to form and reflect one's identity and Bachelard's suggestion that the "house is our corner of the world...it is our first universe..." (Bachelard 1994, p4) emphasises the importance of one's own territory. (Schneider's actions within "Dead Haus U R" where he experimented with impenetrable spaces, embodied this sense of centrality; he almost literally buried himself within the structure). However, it is important to state that this relationship between the house and home and the extremes of stability are in a state of flux. A space which is representative of what the home embodies, can alter due to a slight change or arrangement of the environment to become its antithesis; the house. Within the context of modern day Western cultures, what we refer to as our first home becomes our first known spatial experience and continues throughout our lives as a memory of, or a space that one revolves around, that we consequently compare subsequent homes to. It is important to state that Bachelard does not make a distinction between the **house** and **home** however, for the purpose of this discussion I would like to maintain a clear distinction between the two. His positive analysis of the house is aligned with the ideas of the home (that I have adopted); "the house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind...past, present and future give the house different dynamisms, which often interfere, at times opposing, at others, stimulating one another" (Bachelard, 1994, p6). The proposal of dynamism exemplifying the equilibrium that existing

between the house and home and the idea of the Uncanny and the way it locates itself between the extremes of the familiar, describe this ever evolving relationship between the inhabitant and their dwelling place.

Using the modern day 'High-Rise' to bring ideas of repression to the fore, the living space inhibits and relates to this notion of verticality. The example of the 1970s high-rise, 'Trellick Tower'<sup>8</sup> in London is an example of social housing with utopian ideas many based around Le Corbusier's idea of Unité d'Habitation in Marseille. The building in Marseille is "...structurally...simple: a rectilinear ferro-concrete grid, into which are slotted precast individual apartment units, like 'bottles into a wine rack' as the architect, [Le Corbusier] put it" (Matthews, 2004). The architect Erno Goldfinger (Trellick Tower) became concerned with the idea of inexpensive construction and a building which would provide inhabitants with the services they may require "containing shops, nurseries, community centres and doctors surgeries"<sup>9</sup>. However, this "Brutalist" style of architecture focussing on the "celebration of concrete" (Wikipedia, 2005) is described as being "aggressively uncommunicative about how it should be negotiated by its visitor; the entrance for instance is rarely exhibited in an obvious way" (Wikipedia, 2005). The high-rises were implemented because of the demand for low-cost housing following the post war depression but "in practice however, the buildings lacked many of the community-serving features of Corbusier's vision, and instead developed into claustrophobic, crime ridden tenements" (Wikipedia, 2005). Incidents occurred such as "women [being] raped in elevators, [and] children [were] attacked by heroin addicts in the basement."<sup>10</sup> To place in context, London today is faced with a dilemma of demand for new housing expected to provide "400,000 new households by 2016" (Burdett, 2004) which has placed

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<sup>8</sup> Trellick Tower is on Golbourne Road in London, nearest tube Westbourne Park  
<sup>9</sup>[Online] <http://www.portowebbo.com/nottinghilltv/trellick.htm> [accessed 2 February 2005]

<sup>10</sup>[Online] [http://www.open2.net/modernity/3\\_14.htm](http://www.open2.net/modernity/3_14.htm) [accessed 2 February 2005]

pressure to maintain a 'world class city' status. The reputation of high-rises, despite improvements such as the implementation of security systems in Trellick Tower<sup>11</sup> has cultivated "the cautious attitude to tall buildings due to haphazard development and negative attitudes prompted by the dismal high rises of the 1960s" (Burdett, 2004).

The structure and the multiplicity of the high-rise apartments inhibit the exploration of the notion of verticality and the ideas of rational and irrational spaces; the home (within this type of building) has become a static experience of a single plane. The high-rise removes the ability to explore the cellar, the attic and the stairs (all present within a traditional home). The implementation of lifts in the high-rise "do[es] away with the heroism of stair climbing so that there is no longer any virtue in living up near the sky". The accelerated suggestion to the romance which once existed in climbing a stairway has become automated, mechanised and sterile. The lift, in it's ascent of the building cuts through layers and invades the inhabitant's planes of experience (ones territory). The resident is inhibited and therefore repressed from exploring these different planes within the high-rise. The repression of the notion of verticality encourages a sense of hierarchy within the building. Those residents with numbers of individuals above them feel somewhat invaded by the continual infiltration of outside interruptions (for instance noise in the form of conversation, television and so on) and directly influences how the inhabitant reacts to the structural environment its structure and routine.

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<sup>11</sup> In adding security such as CCTV, Foucault's ideas of the Panoptic prison (Foucault, Michel, 1926-1984 Discipline and punish : the birth of the prison / translated from the French . - Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1979. p195- 228) are worth investigating. This is a point I would like to have extended but have little space to do so. The idea of surveillance where one can see and therefore prevent members of the institution disobeying social rules is also a key theme in George Orwell's - 1984 - (Plume Books; Centennial edition, 2003)

The concept of multiplicity through high-rise living and the idea of "precast individual apartment units" where "from the street to the roof, the rooms pile up one on top of each other...Home has become mere horizontality. The different rooms that compose living quarters jammed into one floor all lack one of the fundamental principles for distinguishing and classifying the values of intimacy" (Bachelard, 1994, p27). The principles for 'distinguishing and classifying the values of intimacy' were previously differentiated between the idea of floors which were either social or private spaces. The high rise opposes this separation of levels and the sense of rooms being piled on top of each other equates to people occupying and encroaching on each others space, the inhabitant is now surrounded on all sides by neighbours. The description of how "Paul Claudel summed a feeling in characterizing his Parisian apartment as a mere number, 'a kind of geometrical place, a conventional hole, between its four walls'" emphasises the idea that living space has become a repressive atmosphere. The idea that even a detached house is no longer rooted, "fixed with asphalt on the ground so as not to be dug into the earth" augments this sense that the "house was no longer a home" (Vidler, 1992, p66). Changing methods of construction forming 'cell like' accommodation and the implications of modern day technology has amplified the pressures of work and affected the way in which we live. The home functions through routine principally as a place to return to for sleep. Materials such as asphalt as the quotation describes, surrounds the foundations of a building. This acceleration of the construction process has, as a result, influenced the idea of the weak foundation and therefore the sense of instability by "...even a detached house is no longer rooted..." Accommodation which appears accurately constructed yet does not consist of strong roots (a foundation in the metaphorical sense) through the design and material construction, undermines the stable environment that a home should provide. The base of the building is dependent on how it braces elements such as the surrounding fabric. Asphalt is an impermeable material used to fill space promptly but is not a

foundation in itself and the increase in the application of this product has augmented the sense of the artificial environment and as a result the 'illusions of stability'.

In union with the idea of multiplicity, the high rise and other building developments are constructed in identical, methodical ways. The idea of similar spaces "pile[d] up, one on top of each other" is a symbol of each space mirroring the next, and since ones identity is no longer housed comfortably within these spaces, each inhabitant experiences a collectively (within the same building) repressed environment. The idea that high rise apartments provide universal space encompasses the thought that these buildings are constructed to function in such a way as to breed a sense of solitude. "Bachelard was clear in his rejection of urban contemporaneity: "I do not dream in Paris, in this geometric cube, in this cement cell, in this room with iron shutters [that are] so hostile..."" (Vidler, 1992, p65), and "dwelling, in the proper sense is now impossible...Functional modern habitations [are] manufactured by experts for Philistines...devoid of all relation to the occupant: in them even the nostalgia for independent existence, defunct in any case, is sent packing" (Vidler, 1992, p65). The inability to exist freely in space, one that rejects and limits the inhabitant has enforced the idea that "...space that is lived under the conditions of depersonalisation and assumed absorption" (Vidler, 1992, p147) has resulted in the repressed, paranoid, insecure and anxious individual. The idea that "space itself might be psychologically determined and thereby to be read as a symptom" (Vidler, 1992, p147) has become a real manifestation of the Uncanny, whereby the perception of space rather than its contents dominates.

The perception of space becoming mere 'cement cells' is highlighted in the growing tension of J. G. Ballard's "High Rise". Isolation is portrayed objectively through the character (Wilder) who begins to research the high rise in an attempt

to produce a documentary condemning the design of the modern day high-rise, "...[it] would look at the psychology of living in a community of two thousand people boxed up in the sky" and "all the evidence accumulated over several decades cast a critical light on the high-rise as a viable social structure, but cost effectiveness in the area of public housing and high profitability in the private sector kept pushing these vertical townships into the sky against the real needs of their occupants." Wilder's research and realisation that the imposing nature and the implications of people living on top of each other (both the physicality and the metaphorical relationship to the occupation of an individual's aspiration for space) leads to where "Wilder was convinced that the high-rise apartment was an insufficiently flexible shell to provide the kind of house which encouraged activities as distinct from somewhere to eat and sleep." Ballard juxtaposes Wilder's investigation of the uncompromising nature of space to the way in which another character (Laing) begins to act and embody the evidence that Wilder uncovers. As the book progresses the reader begins to see Laing's initial intention of "[coming] to the high-rise to get away from all relationships" (Ballard, 2000, p13) become realised. As elements within the high-rise deteriorate "[Laing] made less and less effort to leave the building" (Ballard, 2000, p9). The results of Wilder's research are confirmed through Laing and the other residents of the high-rise. Ballard uses the narrative in the form of the third person to suggest that Laing is aware that "the high rise was a huge machine designed to serve, not the collective body of tenants, but the individual resident in isolation" (Ballard, 2000, p10) yet even his awareness of the situation is not enough to deter the sense of seclusion and competitive nature of the high-rise. The reactions of the individuals living in the confined building contradict the intentions of the architects, mirroring in some way the problems that Goldfinger experienced through the construction of Trellick Tower.

Ballard uses Laing's character to illustrate the increasing sense of tension and emerging instability which results as small changes transpire, adding to the deteriorating infrastructure of the building, "the tampering with the electricity system had affected the air conditioning. Dust was spurting from the vents in the walls" (Ballard, 2000, p20) depicts the growing frustration of the residents and the declining environment of the structure.<sup>12</sup> The emphasis on the increasing number of incidents illustrates how the overall chaos is catalysed; beginning with "a number of absurd but unpleasant altercations [that] broke out in the darkness between those who wanted to descend to their apartments on the lower levels and the residents from the upper floors who insisted on escaping upwards into the cooler heights of the building" (Ballard, 2000, p20). In this way, tensions escalate as the enclosed space of apartments begins to become areas where no boundary is recognised. The reader learns that the inhabitants begin to form small factions between floors; "for the first time, people were leaving their front doors ajar and moving continually in and out of each others apartments" (Ballard, 2000, p30).

Tensions that exist within the horizontality of apartment buildings are delineated by; "desires to move upwards and outwards, to develop and prosper; another [purpose] is to restrain and repress that desire...these contradictory trajectories through which power is exercised in the model housing schemes result in an internal tension, equal and opposing forces are locked in stasis" (Keohane, 1998, p12). The aspiration to expand in all directions relates to the paradox which exists within the boundaries of the building, the need to be unrestricted, which as Freud suggests results in "a core of discontentment [that] lies at the heart of civilised society" (Keohane, 1998, p12). The problems within the "High-Rise" are

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<sup>12</sup> To follow the process of invasion the film "Woman of the Dunes" directed by Hiroshi Teshigahara contains a similar dialogue through the continual invasion of the private space of the home by the sand of the desert. The people of the village face a fruitless task each day to remove the sand. If this activity is not done daily the inhabitants risk being trapped.

accentuated by the severity of the antagonistic atmosphere that develops within a seemingly "homogenous collection of high-income professional people [that] had split into three distinct and hostile camps" (Ballard, 2000, p53) that had "already divided itself into the three classical social groups, its lower, middle and upper classes" (Ballard, 2000, p53). As the hierarchy (directly proportional to profession, wealth and material belongings) becomes acknowledged, the notion of aspiration to ascend to a higher social group becomes a perpetual frustration of those in the lower levels of the building. Ballard implies that, to the residents on the lower floors, it is inconceivable and therefore demoralising (after visiting higher levels) to permanently reach the heights of the building. For that reason the tensions are described through events which take place around the middle levels. Ballard delineates that the building is in a state of change as a result the inhabitants forming alliances with neighbours of the same floor/level or ilk. Verging on complete chaos the 'lower' residents begin to invade apartments on the higher floors, in an attempt to alter the hierarchy in the building. It is through the utilisation of the lift that the hierarchy becomes mechanised through the accelerated movement which the elevator inspires, enabling rapid transition between higher and lower social classes.

The idea of an intended demographic for housing is illustrated by a quotation describing the high rise inhabitants as a 'homogenous collection of high income professionals.' This illustrates how the high-rise proposes that inhabitants should embrace a similar mode of living; however, as Ballard and the reality of Trelick Tower suggests, increases the sense of discord within the building and becomes nothing but an agenda in the architect's preconceived mapping of routine. The limited experience of the high-rise in Britain is exemplified through the echoes of behaviour by residents. The quotation "everyone in the high-rise, Laing reflected, watched television with the sound turned down. The same images glowed through his neighbours doorways..." indicates the apartments within the high-rise

were similar in purpose to that of his neighbour.<sup>13</sup> How is it possible for an architect to provide for the individual, in buildings which are constructed for so many? The suggestion of a process of distillation in which a method or model is defined, becomes representative of the buildings intended demographic. It is through this approach that the individual is ignored and denied a choice; in effect repression of the (potential) occupant emerges.

The recognition of a process of concentration observing key elements for a design essential for living spaces are discussed in the text "Species of Spaces" by Georges Perec. Perec uses the idea of the studio flat, "a pseudo-modular" space to articulate his understanding of domestic spaces and their function. He forms his discussion on the notion that;

- "1. Every apartment consists of a variable but finite number of rooms
2. Each room has a particular function." (Perec, 1997, p28)

In such a restricted area, where a living room becomes a living space that must also make provision for areas to sleep, wash and cook, illustrate how the main aspects of life have been reduced into four elements which architects, within all types of housing, consider. The way in which space functions and is constructed provides a dialogue within the space that can be read. For example;

"A bedroom is a room in which there is a bed, a dining room is a room in which there is a table and chairs...a sitting room is a room in which there are armchairs and a couch; a kitchen is a room in which there is a cooker and a water inlet; a bathroom is a room in which there is a water inlet

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<sup>13</sup> A small scene in Jaque Tati's "Playtime" exemplifies this notion of mirrored space. It is a film which encourages a sense of disorientation and isolation through the narrative of an individual's experience of the monotony in the city. The scene in which the viewer sees four identical glass panelled apartments, demonstrates that at this precise moment in time, all the inhabitant's actions are parallel to that of their neighbours. The inhabitants are gathered around their own individual television, but their actions suggest that each group is watching the same programme.

above a bathtub; when there is only a shower, it is known as a shower room." (Perec, 1997, p27)

The decision to place water points and electrical sockets in specific locations restricts the way a space can be appropriated; a bathroom for example relies on a water point to be able function. This in turn, limits the dialogue a room can possess.

The dialogue that a room possesses relates to the division of time, "the activities of the day correspond to slices of time, and [for] each slice of time there corresponds one room in the apartment" (Perec, 1997, p28). The simple instructions advocated through the "...ideal dividing up of today's apartments functionality functions in accordance with a procedure that is unequivocal, sequential and nycthemeral" (Perec, 1997, p28); illustrates that space is constructed with the consideration to the twenty four hour day. This is an undemanding, methodical system that does not allow for misrepresentation. It is through the conception of the architect that the inhabitant's lives conform at some stage to these four areas. It is important to recognise that the architect projects their understanding of society and this process of division into a building. The architect Erno Goldfinger (Trellick Tower) states: "whenever space is enclosed a spatial sensation will automatically result for persons who happen to be within it...it is the artist who comprehends the social requirements of his time and is able to integrate the technical potentialities in order to shape the spaces of the future" (Glynn, 2003). The idea of a 'spatial sensation' suggests a reaction from the inhabitant in response to the spaces that have been constructed. The admission that it is the "artist who comprehends the social requirements of his time" illustrates the implementation of a system which stereotypes individuals. This ultimately becomes a vague generalisation allowing little compromise beyond a predetermined framework.

Emphasising the concept that space is deliberately constructed (in terms of planning) to evoke an atmosphere or provide for a particular function, illustrates the idea that the architect's perceptions are manifest within the spatial experience (through ambience) and of the actual space itself. Through constructing a building, it is the architect's intention to enclose an area; this restricts movement and limits the inhabitant to certain methods of use (for example one can only pass in and out of rooms by using a door or hallway). It is therefore true to state (as Perec suggests) that the residents exist within an inflexible finite space. The tension which exists between the architect's agenda and the inhabitant's actions, have created a slowly evolving relationship where "man has conceived history of his development as a slow process of estrangement during which the original sense of unity and confidence gradually disappears" (Vidler, 2000, p45). The idea of declining assurance correlates to the increased development of the City fabric in Western cultural society and the subsequent alienation of dwellers. There are many writings (within Vidler's, *Warped Space* and *The Architectural Uncanny*) that allude to this suggestion of rupture through the intensifying sense of claustrophobia which is an inherent feature of restricted space. The escalating speed at which our lives are expected to function, has led to the presumption that home will always be home. This supposition defines the increasing sense of anxiety and estrangement which is now an intrinsic part of spatial experience.

## **Enclosing space**

At the crux of constructing a building, is the notion that "to enclose a space is the object of building, when we build we do not but detach a convenient quantity of space, seclude it and protect it, and all architecture springs from that necessity" (Vidler, 2000, p5). A paradox exists between the requirements to 'seclude' and 'protect' a space for the privacy of the inhabitant and where this area becomes too confined, resulting in the increasing sense of claustrophobia (as Schneider

himself articulates within "Dead Haus U R"). Having discussed the implications of high-rise development and the tensions that have arisen in the past, I would like to return to the tensions of space; the feeling of confinement as a result of isolating space. By enclosing a given area, a void is constructed and the building becomes a shell which houses emptiness and consequently emphasises the disturbing nature of space. The suggestion that "space is not a pre existing void, endowed with formal properties alone" (Lefebvre, 1991, p170) is indicative of the way formal elements such as line and composition are implemented to evoke an atmosphere of absence in an attempt to negate spatial restrictions. It is the notion of intuition through the sense of atmosphere and the context under which the building is constructed which allows the apprehension of the void to be perceived. In sensing the bareness and absence from space, the idea of "fear [that] was evoked by the void" (Vidler, 2000, p31) is allowed to dominate. The concept of paranoia and the Uncanny within the vacant structure of the home are of particular interest in the development of the idea of repression. Benjamin's belief that "space had been destroyed by time...suspended between a past of walls and doors and a future of voids" (Vidler, 2000, p78) is a suggestion that stasis exists in the representation of a given room, the feeling that space has been somehow destroyed by time, illustrates how it is sandwiched between the past and future and is somehow locked in the present; a present which is a cavity of unfilled information (or an un-savoured snack). The absence of walls and doors suggests that the idea of security, which initially compelled society to construct spaces for living in, has been removed; one is now locked within a 'void' or vacuum.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Daniel Libeskind's architecture despite being public spaces consider the idea of the void and the emptiness it creates. The Jewish Museum in Berlin and the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester, create the feeling of claustrophobia, nostalgia and longing. I would recommend the texts Daniel Libeskind-Radix Matrix, Prestel Verlag, Munich, 1997- p131 and A passage through silence and light, Daniel Libeskind Jewish Museum extension to the Berlin Museum, photos by H el ene Binet, Black Dog Publishing Limited – Text Roul Bunschoten, 1997 p3 to explore ideas of the void.

The idea that as space is constructed, the void or cavity cannot be avoided, leads to the belief that essentially each space mirrors another. The idea of homogenous spaces (by this I mean a space which has common relating factors to other spaces within an isolated building or development) is one which echoes space. This proposal that "...all rooms are alike, more or less...they're never anything more than a sort of cube, or lets say rectangular paralleled pipe. They always have at the very least one door and also quite often a window...in sum a room is a fairly malleable space" (Perec, 1997, p28), illustrates the idea that, despite this space being flexible in terms of adornment, there is no way that a room can depart from a standard box-like structure (even housing within a Lighthouse for example has ceilings, walls and floors). The idea of this similar space, that every space is familiar yet unfamiliar, is now recognised by the individual: Upon entering a space the visitor orientates oneself through the ideas and processes of function, being introduced to the sitting room, for example, the individual extracts symbols such as a couch to aid the sense of familiarity and the comfortable (introduced within the idea of the dialogue). Although the sitting room is constructed with similar symbols (due to function of the space) one can sense at that moment that it is also unfamiliar, unrecognised and awkward. The recognition of function allows the individual to associate and disassociate with a space that has never been seen before. It is through this that buildings breed a sense of autonomy and routine which offers a universal (similar) experience: Extending this idea, I mean that the intuition and experience of space is homogenous, an individual's home is similar to that of his neighbours. This experience is more pronounced if the homes have been designed by the same architect. Space is utilised in a similar way due to the like-mapping of the given area and the projections of the same architect who will invariably appropriate their personal desires into the design of the given space.

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Architecture (and architects) "ha[ve] always been concerned with the problem of the creation of order; with structuring that which is to occupy the central arena of interest in the theatre of reality...representative of the world; and that others, especially those which contain an element of fantasy, a different kind of reasoning, or seem irreverent to the given system of production are unacceptable and unnatural" (Libeskind, 1997, p152). The notion of 'order' and the ideas of routine and autonomy which the quotation inspires, illustrate the fundamentally restrictive elements of space. During the processing of individual aspirations, needs are distilled into concentrate which is representative of the whole. Vital elements are provided for, without considering the needs of the individual and anything which functions outside of the stereotypical system is considered 'irreverent', 'unacceptable and unnatural'. The individual is generally (through inexperience) unable to properly assess the ramifications of the spatial planning which has been implemented until they have assumed occupancy and indeed it may be months, or even years, before the limitations and restrictions are fully realised. The arrangement of space may only become an issue when family circumstances change through say the addition of a new born or a young adult leaving home. It is at this point that the idea of tensions between the inhabitant and the boundaries of the buildings arise through the restriction of permitted modifications that can be made to the building. The quotation also introduces the idea of the 'theatre of reality' and the staging of domestic life; notions which were introduced earlier through Bachelard's suggestions that the home can be seen to provide "proofs or illusions of stability".

## **Home as a stage**

At this point, I would like to emphasise that it is through the idea of the stage that I am investigating the duality of the home, which can represent both the

stable and unstable. The sociological term 'Dramaturgy', is the study of "social interaction as theatre in which actors play roles before audiences"<sup>15</sup>. It has been implemented by Erving Goffman to investigate the concept of the front stage and backstage characteristics of domestic life. The notion that life revolves around a presentation of roles that the inhabitant assumes, is representative of the front stage where, "in the dramaturgical approach, [is] the place where roles are performed before an audience". The front stage of the home is therefore an area which is concerned with the idea of interaction: "Interaction is viewed as a "performance," shaped by environment and audience, constructed to provide others with "impressions" that are consonant with the desired goals of the actor" (Barnhart, 1994). This manipulation of appearance through the metaphor of the theatre is adopted by individuals in a pseudo public role who wish to present an ideal, and 'construct' or adopt a way in which to communicate, "...the front establishes proper "setting," "appearance," and "manner" for the social role assumed by the actor". The front stage is therefore demonstrative of a role that is a constructed performance adopted by the individual. The display before an audience (within the house) as a result, embodies the ideas of illusion that relate to the sense of the artificial and the false.

In contrast to the idea of the front stage, the backstage is concerned "in the dramaturgical approach, [with] the place where players are freed from the requirements of a particular role." Therefore within the backstage areas of domestic life, "...while the "official stance" of the team [or individual] is visible in their front stage presentation, in the backstage, "the impression fostered by the presentation is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course, "indicating a more "truthful" type of performance. In the backstage, the conflict and difference inherent to familiarity is more fully explored, often evolving into a secondary type of presentation, contingent upon the absence of the responsibilities of the team

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<sup>15</sup> [Online] <http://sociology.dictionarypage.co.uk/> [accessed 12 March 2005]

presentation" (Barnhart, 1994). The notion of the backstage is the space in which an individual can react freely without the pressures of the assumed role. As the statement communicates, the backstage is concerned with the disorderly idea of the truth which exemplifies the idea of the house. This confirms the theory of the duality of the home, where the relationship between the backstage and front stage areas of domestic life, oscillate between the public presentation of the stable and the hidden unstable.

The notion of 'presentation and manner' and the idea that the individual conforms to the control of the front stage and the hidden backstage areas, translate to the role that the sitting room plays within a domestic space. The original name for the sitting room is "parlour (from parler Fr.) [which] signifies the institutionalisation of communication as the centre of the reproduction [or development] of normal family life...the parlour was also the reception room, where visitors were admitted; this room was 'spick and span', a front stage room a 'good' room, where the orderly life of a good family was showcased and displayed" (Keohane, 1998, p10).

The living room is described as a space which is open to visitors yet inadvertently restricts access to the more intimate spaces of the home. It also functions as a space to permit "the institutionalisation of communication" where conversation between the inhabitants and visitors is socially accepted. The use of the living room is described as a space which facilitates discussions that are however, "full of content [but] empty [of] formal exchange" (Keohane, 1998, p16). The sitting room in function is a space that is publicly open for the purposes of communication, yet simultaneously, closed off from the backstage (both literally and metaphorically). There is a boundary within the front stage which enforces a public display of communication, through the idealised presentation of the truth. Beyond this border lies the 'actual' but restricted true nature of the individual, to

which the average visitor is denied access (this would typically include the bedroom and study)<sup>16</sup>. This way of habitual communication signifies to visitors that they “abode to [a] way of life”, and that “the sitting room embodies the idea of exchange and that our lives are an admission to this.”” The idea that a code of conduct governs the way in which a visitor is invited and accepted into a space, remains on a superficial and detached level. As the quotation suggests the idea that the inhabitant conforms or ‘abode[s]’ to a way of life illustrates the way in which the “living room is a box in the theatre of the world” (Benjamin, 1999, p9). This ‘box’ exemplifies the sense of a stadium, where the objects in the sitting room are mementos which are permitted to be seen and contemporaneously desired to be seen (messages and symbols to present the image of a functional family) and where the tension between these two roles are manifest.

Extending the idea of superficial social appearances and the notion of mirrored space, Hideo Nakata’s “Dark Water” introduces the notion of the perception of an individual’s spatial environment which is also adulterated by the past (outside of the space). The film, set in 2002 is a narrative of the relationship between mother (Yoshimi) and daughter (Ikuko) in the midst of an aggressive divorce and custody battle. In order for Yoshimi to maintain custody of Ikuko she must, in the front stage, present herself to both her lawyers and her ex-husband, as a balanced and ordered woman who is capable of taking care of her daughter. It is argued by her husband that Yoshimi is mentally unstable and incompetent of such a task. In this way the notion of the front stage and backstage is exploited, through the contrast of Yoshimi’s public appearance and the desperation portrayed in her private space.

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<sup>16</sup> Pasolini’s “Theorem” is a film which investigates the notion of the dysfunctional family in terms of maintaining public appearances and the contrasting areas between the social and intimate spaces of the home. The daughter’s bedroom in particular, mirrors the sterility of the home and parallels her mental deterioration.

During the settlement process, Yoshimi must find a suitable space to move into with Ikuko. The viewer witnesses the decisions that Yoshimi is forced to make, where she decides upon a run-down and almost derelict building. The importance of setting is enhanced by the ideas that "Bachelard reveals time after time that setting is more than scene in works of art, that it is often the armature around which the work revolves"<sup>17</sup>. From the outset, the narrative is firmly placed within the location of the apartment building and becomes representative of similar spatial environments which all the occupants of the building share. The identical nature of each space is emphasised through the illustration of six identical floors which are all degenerate in nature. The sense of depersonalisation, created through the sterile environment of the apartment and its building, is employed by Nakata to convey the idea of the unstable (backstage, although truthful) and stable (front stage where it is deceptive) nature of the house and home. The atmosphere of the apartment is connected to the characters' state of mind and where the tension ruptures (through the experience of the mother and daughter) the narrative dislocates. Through the consequent meeting with her lawyers, the viewer witnesses Yoshimi's public display of both the front stage and backstage characteristics of her personality and this blurring of boundaries increases the fragility of her case.

Leading up to this tension, Nakata employs the metaphor of a leak in the apartment to foreshadow the increasing invasion of a girl (Mitsuko) who drowned in the water tank of the building two years before. As the story progresses Yoshimi becomes convinced that she is being haunted by Mitsuko, through the continual reappearance of her red bag in different locations after being repeatedly discarded. The viewer and characters are simultaneously introduced to the damp brown patch on the ceiling when they move into the apartment, just after the first encounter with Mitsuko. As the spirit becomes increasingly present and

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<sup>17</sup> Stilgoe, John: *Poetics of Space*, 1994 , preface, p10

aggressive the leak in the bedroom becomes concurrently worse and the viewer witnesses the amplification of the sense of claustrophobia and the tension between Yoshimi's tormented reactions. The detrimental affect to Ikuko's health, through the developing relationship that she has with Mitsuko, detaches her from reality. The scene in which the viewer sees Ikuko become very ill at her nursery, foreshadows the rupture in the narrative as she is prevented from leaving the apartment building for several weeks. On one such afternoon, Nakata places Ikuko asleep on the bed with Yoshimi. At this point the leaking water becomes stronger and more evident which forces Yoshimi to wake. Instantaneously Yoshimi realises that Ikuko is missing and the leak has worsened. In looking for Ikuko she approaches the apartment from which the water is emanating. In this apartment she finds Ikuko and the camera pans across the identical space which is completely destroyed by damp and mould. It is crucial to the narrative that this space is an exact replica (structurally) of the space below as it foreshadows the perpetual entrapment of Yoshimi and further inhabitants. She ultimately sacrifices herself to perpetuate the inevitable.

The identical nature of the space amplifies the notion of history repeating itself and that somehow, Ikuko's fate has been decided. However, Yoshimi actively refuses to accept this sense of reoccurrence and, aware of her daughter's danger, she is particularly sensitive to the presence of the spirit. The use of flash-backs in the narrative help the viewer to comprehend and follow the developing plot, and Yoshimi's discovery of the water tank is shared. The film ends in Yoshimi's sacrifice of her life to Mitsuko in an attempt to protect Ikuko. The viewer sees Ikuko return to the building which is now (ten years later) completely derelict. On her return, she sees Yoshimi and learns that her mother was protecting her all along. It is important in terms of Bachelard's ideas that in the absence of setting, this narrative would be stifled in communicating the true relationship between

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Yoshimi and her lawyers (front stage) and her relationship with Ikuko and Mitsuko (backstage).

## **Conclusion**

To conclude this exploration, I would like to return to, and in doing so emphasise, the quotation that "the house constitutes a body of images that give mankind proofs or illusions of stability" (Bachelard, 1994, p17). This belief, throughout the discussion, has reinforced what I have illustrated as, in fact, a concurrent duality of the home; an ability to be both stable and unstable, and where it can present the front stage and at the same time conceal the backstage truths of the individual and their respective environment.

The implementation of a social code, whereby the visitor accepts this mode of behaviour and restricted invitation, is integral to the design and enclosing nature of a space. The segregated areas provide a space for the presentation of these roles to the audience and simultaneously enforce a mode of living. One must orientate themselves within a space through the understanding of dialogue and symbols and the division of space and its arrangement. Multiple spaces designed by the same architect, will undoubtedly relate and mirror other spaces by virtue of projecting the same concept of living. In this repetitive sequence of use and application, the idea of mirrored space has influenced the feeling of the Uncanny, where one can associate and disassociate with a space instantaneously, and as a result the feeling of apprehension arises.

I feel it is important to refer to my initial definition of both the house and home. It was important to make the distinction between the house (which exists as a structural commodity) and the home (which has traditionally enabled an emotional attachment). I have found the opposing nature of the home

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interesting, which on the one hand symbolises truth and stability, and the other represents deception and instability. While this suggests ongoing conflict which by definition could be construed as negative, the whole illusion serves to bind society together in such a way as to provide cohesion, comfort, stability and protection, over a vast range. This range extending to all Western cultures and an infinite number of personal emotions would be almost impossible to serve in any other way. Any other mechanism would struggle to reach such extremes.