Introduction: Ethnography, dwelling and home-making

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Depending on how you view it, home changes its meaning. It can be made of bricks and mortar, possessions, feelings, stories or habits. It can be a fixed point in space, around which the stories of our lives centre, or it can be the name given to a range of practices, taking place across space and time, which animate these tales. It may be an ideal or a reality, or even a state of being. It is entangled in kinship and in social reproduction, but it may also come to underwrite social transformations. It may evoke warm feelings of belonging, the claustrophobia of a prison or the terror of violence. At home, we might forge relations of generosity and care, but the home can also be a marker of status and hierarchy. Within the home we welcome guests, and extend to them the expanses of hospitality, yet the self-same walls which shelter the guest also mark out and exclude the stranger.

Today, these myriad meanings have all been well documented by social scientists, from anthropologists to sociologists, historians and psychologists. Frequently they do not reconcile easily with one another, and more frequently still, particular investigations will content themselves with focusing on one particular notion of home. And yet, strikingly, we still also hold onto the idea of the home as a particular entity – as something singular and worthy of particular attention. This is a conviction most of us – in Anglophone countries at least – hold in our everyday lives. This belief is reflected in pop-philosophy and folk wisdom – which declares that 'home is where the heart is', and that 'there is no place like home' – as much as in our everyday routines – where you can witness a physical transformation, an untensing of the shoulders, or a marked change in expression, as we step through the threshold to mark the end of a busy day. Many of us would struggle to imagine our lives without the ideal and the physical presence of home. Academics, too, remain attached to the idea of home – as evidenced by the determination to approach the home as a distinct field of study.

In fact, for anthropologists in particular, the animated pursuit of home as a distinct domain of study is the product of relatively recent efforts. Previously the study of home was very often contained within adjacent domains of inquiry, such as kinship (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995). In other words, even as a growing body of ethnographic work has revealed the fundamental diversity of what home might entail, anthropologists have moved towards considering home as something important, even singular, in its own right. This same tension between singular and plural understandings of home marks other disciplines as well (Mallett 2004). To approach home as an ethnographer, then, is to have to contend with both these perspectives: one reflected in the empirical record, stressing heterogeneity and one woven both into everyday understandings and into theoretical ambitions, stressing commonality across this heterogeneity.

How we imagine home also has profound implications for how we conduct ethnography. Whether or not we intend to focus on the home as an object of inquiry, ethnographic fieldwork inescapably requires us to make a home in our field. The activities carried out in our own homes – eating and sleeping, relaxing and organizing – are often deeply necessary to our survival or well-being, and so we must find a way to recreate or translate these activities in the field. These are frequently highly relational activities, meaning that the act of making a home in the field is always negotiated alongside others. Even when we are doing ethnography 'at home', the question remains of how our own practices of home and dwelling might relate to the lives of our interlocutors. Our existing understandings of home inevitably become a part of such dialogues.

This volume and its contributions grapple individually and collectively with how we might understand the meaning of home, as ethnographers and through ethnography. Although its focus leans towards anthropology, the contributors here come from a range of disciplinary perspectives, and our hope is that this volume has something to offer for all of those who do ethnography, regardless of their disciplinary home. For those newer to ethnography, we hope the contributions here will provide an interesting and exciting range of glimpses into how ethnography is done, and all it can reveal. For researchers who practice ethnography themselves, we hope that this collection will furnish you with a range of useful critical reflections on the scope and limits of ethnography, and on the role of ethnographers in producing knowledge. For all, we hope it will expand your understanding of what home is and can be. Together, in this volume, we have four intertwined ambitions.

Firstly, we hope to contribute further to diversifying the meanings of home, by revealing articulations of home which take shape in unexpected places, through

surprising practices or in the midst of complex negotiations. This volume approaches home not through ideal-typical dwellings, which sit at the heart of practices of social reproduction, but through some of its most marginal, creative, unstable or extreme articulations. Here, we look at homes built on the side of an active volcano, at practices of home-making when homeless on the street, while dealing with the ongoing vicissitudes of eviction, or when living as a multiply-displaced refugee. We think about the home not only as a site of belonging and comfort, but as a site where gendered hierarchies and violence are reproduced; where the lines between public and private are continually renegotiated rather than simply extended; and where dwelling is achieved through experimental practices, ranging from sex to ethnography itself.

In many instances, figures who dwell on the margins – from strangers, to refugees, to rough sleepers – are characterized as embodiments of unhomeliness. Their relevance to the study of home is often seen as a negative counter-image, which marks the limits of particular modalities of home, shoring up common ideals and practices, by providing an image of otherness against which they are constituted. This collection breaks with this characterization, revealing home and dwelling as something more diverse and creative, but also more fundamental to a wide range of human lives, marginal or not, than is often admitted.

Secondly, we aim to reflect on what it means to produce ethnographies of home, especially of homes that may seem unconventional. In particular, we are interested in questions around how the dwelling practices of ethnographers meet with those of our interlocutors, and of how the negotiations resulting from such meetings might play out. In doing so, we seek to join a growing conversation on what constitutes ethnographic method, and what constitutes ethnographic experience. Conventionally, ethnography is subject to a strange duality, where on the one hand, ethnographers are expected to immerse themselves in the flow of life in a given context (Geertz 1988). Yet, on the other hand, there are practices, such as sex, or subordination, which frequently seem off-limits to the ethnographer. There are also experiences, of hardship, hurt and fear, which jar with a romanticized vision of ethnographic immersion and which can risk being written out of the ethnographic record, when our disciplinary grammars do not easily allow them to be voiced (Pollard 2009; Clark and Grant 2015). This collection, then, aims to help expand these disciplinary grammars by reflecting on a diverse range of ethnographic practices which play with and challenge conventional approaches. In different ways, the chapters here approach the tension between heterogeneity and singularity, not only as a problem in

conceptualizing home, but as a fundamental dilemma, requiring ongoing attention, within practices of ethnography.

Third, we hope to keep a firm focus on questions of power and inequality in the production of home. To be sure, many ethnographers are deeply sensitive to such questions. Yet insofar as there has been a move towards reaching for a singular understanding of home within anthropology and within other social sciences, such a move can risk displacing such questions, or making them a secondary matter, when set against the fundamental question of the singular meaning of home. Home is not the same for everyone and, as recent, resurgent anxieties in the media around refugees or the street-homeless reveal, access to home is not a given. People are at times violently prevented from being at home; they are at other times kept from making a new home in a new, safer environment. Power imbalances can also shape the way homes are structured, or influence how much work has to be put into home-making.

Finally, drawing these first three goals together, this volume asks how reconsidering the meaning of home might also lead us to reconsider the *ethics* – not just the practices – of doing ethnography. This introduction traces a path towards such an ethical reconsideration, before unpacking some of its implications. We start, in the next section, by reviewing how home has been characterized in the ethnographic record. This review provides readers with an overview of the ethnographic work on home, with a focus on anthropology. It also allows us to situate our own argument.

Across these diverse characterizations of home we identify a key distinction as to whether home is understood as an alienated or unalienated domain. Unalienated characterizations of home, whether they see home as a particular space, a set of practices or a general ideal, think of home as a domain where the self is deeply immersed in the world. Within such conceptions, home environments, ideals or practices closely reflect one's own sense of who one is. Home is wherever, or however, we 'feel at home'. Alienated characterizations, on the other hand, emphasize the tensions which arise between one's experience of self, or of the world, and one's experience of 'home'. Such alienation might emerge from the forms of conflict, hierarchy or exclusion which are often entangled within articulations of home. Yet unequal or not, all homes need to be reproduced. Families move, walls crumble and children need feeding. These practices of remaking home do not always entail simply reproducing a template. Rather, they may enable people to take a reflexive, critical perspective on their experiences of home, and remake home in novel, creative ways, drawing on a degree of creative alienation to do so.

Building on this review, we argue in the third section that although ethnographers are clearly attentive to the multiple forms home may take, ethnographic *methodologies* largely end up reproducing a singular idea of home as an unalienated domain. Based on this, they have developed an emphasis on techniques of *dwelling* in ethnography, where ethnographers are encouraged to immerse themselves in particular settings, soaking up knowledge and experience like a sponge. We trace the limitations of this method, when it comes to dealing with the dilemmas, dangers and entanglements of fieldwork and argue that in addition to methods of *dwelling* ethnographers ought to also adopt methods of *home-making*, where they approach the field as a site of collaborative creativity. On its own, either method can produce problematic challenges. However, we argue that when deployed in dialogue with one another, they have the potential to enrich ethnographic practice.

What is home?

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The House: From reproduction to negotiation, conflict and creativity

When we think of home, it's likely that we imagine a particular building, in a particular place. In such visions, the materiality of the home plays a significant role in defining it. Perhaps we remember the odd colour of paint that we never got around to changing, the particular plush of the carpet, or the feeling of comfort when curling up on the worn couch. As Mallett (2004) argues, for many in the West, the idea of home is closely associated with that of the *house*, as a physical structure. As she notes, this association emerges from a broader ideological insistence that social reproduction and welfare are predominantly *private* affairs. In the 1990s, historians, architects and others began to trace how the two notions of house and home had become so closely linked, and what the implications of this linkage were (Bowlby et al. 1997; Dupuis and Thorns 1996; Madigan et al. 1990). Mallett traces how these critical investigations built on but also problematized earlier work which had focused on homes as material forms.

In anthropology, by contrast, for many generations there was little attention given to the house as a physical space, or indeed to homes at all. Early scholars such as Morgan (1981[1881]), writing on American aboriginal houses, or Malinowski, who defined the family as a group of kin tied to 'a definite physical space, a hearth and home' (quoted in Collier, Rosaldo and Yanagisako 1987),

saw the physicality of the house as secondary. As Carsten and Hugh-Jones (1995) argue: the house was mostly seen as a partial container for the sorts of social relations, such as kinship, which were the primary focus of anthropology. Two seminal works by Bourdieu (1992[1970]) and by Levi-Strauss (1983) both clearly reflect this approach, but also mark the beginning of a turn away from it towards considering the materiality of the house.

In Bourdieu's famous essay on the Kabyle house, he traces how the layout and design of the house reflect a broader social and cosmological order, where corresponding distinctions of light/dark, public/private and male/female structure a broad range of social practices, values and meanings. In Bourdieu's account, the physical organization of the Kabyle house not only reflected this structured world view, but was also responsible for reproducing it. This argument would find full expression in his later theory of habitus, which he came to characterize as 'a system of predispositions inculcated by the material circumstances of life and by family upbringing' (Bourdieu 1976: 118). Nonetheless, for Bourdieu, while the materiality of the house was clearly important, his focus was not on the home as an institution, but rather on the overarching system of social relations which both preceded, shaped and existed beyond the house.

By contrast, Levi-Strauss presents a distinctive theory of the house, but focuses less on the materiality of it. Levi-Strauss develops his concept of the 'house society' as a way of thinking through kinship theory – and social relationships more generally – differently. He formulates an expansive definition of the house 'as a corporate body holding an estate made up of both material and immaterial wealth, which perpetuates itself through the transmission of its name, its goods and its titles down a real or imaginary line' (1983: 174). In what Levi-Strauss calls house-based societies, including Native American (Yurok, Kwakiutl) and medieval European societies, groups are formed and perpetuated by enfolding ideas of descent, residence, property ownership and alliances within the institution of the house – as both an idea and as a material building. Commenting on such (typically noble) family houses he writes: 'The whole function of [them] … implies a fusion of categories which are elsewhere held to be in correlation with and opposition to each other but are henceforth treated as inter-changeable: descent can substitute for affinity, and affinity for descent' (Levi-Strauss 1983: 187). This approach continued to see houses as 'containers'. However, in contrast to earlier approaches, *the act of containment itself* was highlighted as playing a critical role in sustaining the social processes it encompassed. This same focus on containment is taken up in this volume by

Sascha Roth, as lying at the heart of distinct but sometimes contending notions of familial and personal privacy in Azerbaijan.

Following on from these works, a number of others took up the idea of the home as an important social institution, enacted in a specific place and taking on a specific material form. Extending Levi-Strauss's own focus on marriage, Maurice Bloch (1993; 1995) traces how making a house and making a marriage are closely linked among the Zafimaniry in Madagascar. As the house becomes stronger – 'grows bones' – and into a hardwood construction over time, the relationship between the married couple becomes stronger. No longer separating out broader social processes and the home itself, Bloch instead argues that the house and the marriage are interdependent. Roth, again in his contribution here, notes a similar understanding of homes, in part, *as* marriages in Azerbaijan and in Turkic languages more generally.

Similarly, Stephen Gudeman (Gudeman and Hann 2015) has highlighted the role played by houses in producing a distinctive mode of economic organization, in his concept of the 'house economy'. Starting with his early work on Colombia, Gudeman argues, 'Material practices are organised through the house' (Gudeman and Rivera 1990: 2). While 'both the house and the corporation are means for accomplishing material tasks' the house economy is distinct in that it is 'smaller, is locally based and wholly or partly produces its own means of maintenance' (Gudeman and Rivera 1990: 10). This organization enables the house to pursue distinctive goals as well as distinctive modalities of mutuality and self-interest, in distinction from, but in dialogue with, those of the market. As such, Gudeman and his collaborators describe the house as the basic unit of economic life connected to others through bonds of exchange – while striving to be self-sufficient – and embedded in communities. Again, the role of the house itself in mediating these relations is key. Outside of capitalist modernity, Hart et al. (2010: 4) argue, 'For millennia, economy was conceived of in domestic terms as "household management"' – and understandings of work, labour and their productive potentials were often grounded in the home.

Carsten and Hugh-Jones (1995) build explicitly on Levi-Strauss's emphasis on the house's ability to draw different forms of relation together. They widen Levi-Strauss's scope of inquiry, and detach it from the specific typology of house (or non-house) societies, in order to interrogate in more general terms what sorts of relations come together within a house, and how we might understand houses holistically. In response, they argue that houses are created at the intersection of economic practices, kinship, reproduction and sustenance, political organization and symbolic categorization, and the body and physical infrastructure – and

that houses work to mediate between each of these. As such, they conclude that 'the house [i]s a crucial practical and conceptual unit in the … organisation of widely different societies' (1995:5).

Alongside this move to understand how houses mediate relations, two other important perspectives emerged, with each of the three both drawing on and feeding into the others. The first of these was a turn towards paying closer attention towards the materiality of the house, which helped reveal the home as a site of creativity. The second focused on domestic labour and the role of women, and revealed the home as a site of contestation.

An early call to attend more seriously to the physicality of the home comes from Humphrey (1988), who notes that in those instances where homes are present in anthropological accounts they 'tend to be thought of as "case" of symbolism or cosmology rather than a subject in their own right' (1988: 16). Whether prescient, or trend-setting, Humphrey's brief intervention came around the start of a swell of attention given to home as a material form. Another seminal article by Miller (1998) challenged the idea of homes as simply an expression of a given cultural form, tracing instead how residents on a North London council estate decorated and renovated their council flats in ways which both reflected their class position and yet inflected this with a personal sense of identity and belonging. Focusing not on homes themselves, but on the possessions and practices of consumption that concentrate within their walls, Miller has continued to examine the importance of materiality for developing a sense of home (2009; 2001; 1998). He has come to argue that consumption is often an important act of social reproduction, care and self-shaping – all at once. As a result, the objects in one's home are simultaneously involved in ascribing the self into broader society, developing relationships of care, and inscribing a personal sense of biography, with the home itself serving as a focal point of each practice. Together, home, the possessions which fill it, and the memories which attach to both work to shore up our sense of identity and belonging against the tribulations we might face in the outside world (Miller 2001). The physical permanence of material objects, and their peculiar mode of assembly within the home, serve as durable sources of security (Petridou 2001). As such, for Miller (2009; 2001; 1998) and others (see also Gregson 2007; Dittmar 1992; Daniels and Andrews 2010; Cieraad 2006) home-making is directly linked to material practices such as shopping, arranging furniture in the rooms or narrating stories and memories of different objects.

Others too have traced the ways in which the materiality of the house, and the objects which circulate within it, not only reproduce and extend relations

of care and kin, but work to inscribe households within wider society. In the introduction to their volume *House Life* Birdwell-Pheasant and Lawrence-Zúñiga (1999: 3) call for greater attention to the materiality of lived relations, arguing,

> Both households and families use houses more than as settings for activities of production and distribution or as consumer goods. They are also mechanisms of communication, which channel and regulate social interaction among family members and between separate households. … The house defines a place that belongs to a particular set of people and also defines, through co-residence and shared usage, the set of people that belong to a particular place.

Carsten, too, has helped deepen an understanding of the materiality of kinship. In her study of Malay domestic life (Carsten 1997), she identifies the hearth as the centre of the house: it is the place where the family meets, where food is prepared, and where kinship is made through the transformation and sharing of substances. She argues: 'Hearths are obvious sources of physical sustenance, but they are also often the symbolic focus of the house, loaded with the imagery of the commensal unity of close kin. Houses are material shelters as well as ritual centres' (Carsten 2003: 55). By sharing food, kinship – for the Malay expressed in terms of being siblings – is forged or reinforced. Here, the physical and symbolic dimensions are not easily separated. Rather, as other authors have also argued, it is the physical enactment of kin relations, and their direct involvement in sustaining life through forms of care and nourishment, which gives them weight and reality, and invests them with memory and feeling (see Martens and Scott 2006; Pina-Cabral 1986). In conjunction with this focus on materiality, attention has also been placed on the home as a site of labour, and often of contestation. This turn has its roots in feminist debates over the status of domestic labour.

In 1966 Juliet Mitchell published an influential pamphlet tracing the tensions between socialist organizing, which focused on women's role in economic organizing, and feminist organizing, which turned to women's legal and social status. In response she argued there was a need to see these forms of marginality as closely connected (Mitchell 1984). In 1969, Margaret Benson, then an academic chemist, first made the now-familiar argument that housework was a form of labour, essential to making waged labour possible, which was unrecognized as such and thus went unrewarded. Following shortly after, Lise Vogel (1973) shifted the stress in Mitchell's and Benson's arguments. She acknowledged that such an arrangement permitted the exploitation and inferior

social status of women, but also argued that because women were producing use values for consumption by themselves and their immediate relations, that housework remained a form of relatively unalienated labour. These early debates helped inform an understanding of home as both a site of exploitation and contestation, but also of belonging and social reproduction. So, for example, in her ethnography of a high-rise apartment in Karachi, Laura Ring (2006) traces how the inter-ethnic peace which prevails in the building, despite ongoing civil strife, is the product of the relentless work of women's domestic labours. In their everyday interactions, women work to build bonds between households and to managing both men's emotions and the local consequences of national events and narratives. Ironically, the success of these efforts can lead to the outcomes of these labours – friendship, care and peace – seem to some (including, initially, the ethnographer herself) as if they were simply a natural state, rather than a product of hard work.

Feminist depictions of domestic labour as alienated and/or appropriated value, draw on older Marxist ideas, whose wider applicability beyond Western industrial nations has generated significant debate within anthropology. In a famous critique, Marilyn Strathern (1988) argues that such characterizations of feminine labour are grounded in particularly Western notions of personhood and of self-ownership. In Melanesia, the labour women do in 'looking after' men, or in raising pigs that men take for ceremonial exchange is not alienated from their sense of self. Rather, bearing a relational notion of selfhood, Melanesian men, women and even pigs are all understood as 'made up' of other relations. The products of women's labour, including other bodies themselves (men, pigs) thus remain fundamentally associated with women themselves. Crucially, Strathern argues that in this context exploitation is still possible but that it occurs not through the alienation of labour – which is an inconceivable notion in a world of relationally constituted selves – but in instances where men engage in exchanges that run contrary to the sorts of relations women themselves work to cultivate. Strathern's work allows us to reimagine alienation beyond the narrower terms of the Marxist tradition, by recasting it as a matter of whether and how particular understandings of selfhood are reinforced or eroded within particular contexts and moments.

Careful attention to these tensions between exploitation and belonging, and between transformation and social reproduction, emerges in Lila Abu-Lughod's account of the lives of Awlad 'Ali Bedouin women (1990; 2016[1986]). Abu-Lughod traces how ostensibly oppressive norms of public male honour and private female modesty are creatively leveraged by women, who exert control

over the domestic sphere in order to subvert male authority, practice their own forms of virtue, and cultivate forms of intimacy with other women that elide the public/private divide. These practices can often be deployed to creatively navigate constraining circumstances. For example, traditional practices of marriage involve elder relatives selecting a woman's betrothed, with little input from the bride herself, and with less regard given to the groom's finances, given that kin are anyway expected to provide additional economic support to the couple. However, chafing at the obligations this practice produces, and enchanted with the idea of a spouse with an independent income and access to alluring consumer goods, women resist such practices by asserting their own desirability. Through buying lingerie or make-up, they position themselves as desirable in a way that asserts a role for desire – both theirs and that of their husbands – in determining marriages. While such acts may involve resistance, they never break free from being implicated in power. In this case, the power of kin is diminished in part by granting a larger role to men and to consumer goods in shaping marriage. Such moves do not escape power but rather involve *negotiating* shifting power relations located within changing historical conditions. In this volume Susannah Crockford provides a similarly sensitive exploration of such tensions between belonging and exploitation, as they are mediated by the traditionally gendered ideals of home that survivalists in Arizona carry with them into their lives off-grid. Alongside Abu-Lughod, Crockford does not frame such ideals as teleologically exploitative, but presents them as a fraught field of power that all those in the field, including the ethnographer herself, strive to both negotiate and inhabit.

Lives within the home can be constrained by multiple, intersecting forms of power, from gendered hierarchies, to the biopolitical power of the state. Even under what may seem like desperate or desolate circumstances, however, home can provide a site of creative response (as well as a repository for hopes and dreams – see later discussion). This is illustrated in Clara Han's (2012) striking ethnography of slum households in Santiago, Chile, where she traces home as a site of 'active awaiting'. Living in a present where the possibilities for life are tightly constrained by debt, gang violence and the punitive force of the state, Han nonetheless traces how small interventions in the home – the pawning of a beloved music player, or the sheltering of a relative away from an abusive partner – create small spaces in which new, perhaps unknown possibilities might take root and grow. In this volume, by examining the story of one London resident after her eviction, the chapter by Farhan Samanani continues this exploration of how the possibilities for inhabiting both the present and future are so often tied

up with the materiality of home, including everyday possessions such as mirrors and slow cookers.

Collectively, these developments in the anthropological understanding of home might be read in terms of a shift from seeing home as a locus of social reproduction to seeing home as a site of contestation and creativity. In Bourdieu and Levi-Strauss, home is understood in the first instance as a space where the existing social order is perpetuated. From this perspective there is a close fit between the material environment of the home, and the subjectivity of those who live in it – with each reproducing the other. In contrast, while later work has retained an interest in social reproduction, it has highlighted the home as a site of labour, creative practice, contestation and transformation. Here, the home does not simply reproduce subjects. Rather, the home is a site where multiple forms of power and complex biographical experiences collect. Within such spaces, individuals do not merely come to embody their home environment, but rather work to negotiate such environments in reflexive, creative ways. Borrowing the language of debates on domestic labour, traced briefly earlier, we might recognize the first of these perspectives, which emphasizes social reproduction, as framing the home as a relatively unalienated space, in that it stresses the close correspondence between home environments and subjectivity. By contrast, we might recognize the latter perspective as seeing the home also as the site of various forms of alienation, be these conflictual or creative.

Time and practice: Memories, imagination and the ideal home

If the depictions above can be seen as engaging with the *material* form of the house in various ways, a further set of perspectives engage with *representations and practices* of home. In terms of representations, the home is treated not simply as a symbol, but as a *space of imagination.* As Carsten and Hugh-Jones implicitly argue in their introduction, the home is anchored in past memory, while also being constantly remade in the present: it is firstly a 'social group … ritual construct which is related to ancestors, embodied in names, heirlooms and titles' and secondly an 'ordinary group of people concerned with their day-to-day affairs, sharing consumption and living in the shared space of a domestic dwelling' (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 45). Caroline Humphrey (2005), in her analysis of Soviet shared houses and apartment blocks, takes us one step further, into the imagination and hence the future. In the city of Magnitogorsk, where workers' dwellings were often built around a central, public living space, workers

would frequently adapt the space according to their routines and imaginations, rather than necessarily following Soviet ideals: 'Comforts of everyday domestic practices (*byt*) gradually invaded the austere spaces of even the exemplary Soviet Nakomfin apartment house' (2005: 40). The infrastructure and built environment interacted with the 'imaginative and projective inner feelings of the people' (2005) – together they were 'mutually constitutive of fantasy' (2005: 43), for instance in carving out private spaces where quiet conversations could take place. And, as Martin Fuller reveals in this volume, such practices of inhabitation which open up future imaginaries can take place even before a physical home exists – as he explores in his ethnography of a community-designed housing block in contemporary Berlin.

As an imaginative space, homes are never static – they are often grounded in memories and the past and are often – inspired by imaginations, dreams and ideals – taken into the present and the future. The home stretches out across time. In their review of the literature on homelessness and home, Kellett and Moore (2003) position it as in-between personal and collective-cultural memory and desire: 'Certain aspects of home seemingly shape and motivate homeless people's experience and behaviour … and the desire for [it] acts as a powerful personal and cultural objective' (2003: 8, 124). Likewise, for people in situations of displacement, Brun and Fabos (2015) argue that 'understandings of home are often based on the past: people long for the home they lost' (2015: 7). Doná (2015: 69) describes this nostalgia as the 'memories of, longing for, and imaginations of homes that are idealised', anchored in a specific collection of sanitized past experiences. Home might therefore also be understood as a place that carries what Kenyon (1999) calls a right to return, as a place of origin (Birdwell-Pheasant and Lawrence-Zúñiga 1999), or as a place we depart from and have a desire to return to (Hobsbawm 1991). At the same time, these memories and ideals are inescapably shaped in ongoing dialogue with certain sets of norms and practices associated with the 'ideal' home, as imagined within particular ideologies (Mallett 2004). In many cases, different ideals of home, unfolding across different temporalities, can compete with each other with the same physical and social spaces. For instance, the chapter by Adam Bobbette explores tensions between extractivist logics, and ones grounded in local cosmology and a less linear conception of time and presence, which contend to shape the home-making practices of those living on the side of an active volcano in Indonesia. Meanwhile the chapter by Faten Khazaei zeroes in on a particular movement of home-unmaking: looking at how police responses to domestic violence cases in Switzerland can work not only to interrupt the quick temporalities of violence,

but also rhythms forms of family care and stability around which victims of domestic violence might hope to rebuild.

If imaginaries of home span across time, then this leads us to an understanding of homes as dynamic, rather than as stable entities. Home is understood as a process. This idea is already present in Carsten and Hugh-Jones (1995: 37) who state: 'Houses are far from being merely static material structures. They have animate qualities; they are endowed with spirits or souls, and are imaged in terms of the human body.' Brun and Fabos (2015: 12) position the idea of home-as-process at the centre of their categorization. They describe it as a set of everyday practices, while 'such practices involve both material and imaginative notions of home and may be improvements or even investments to temporary dwellings; they include the daily routines that people undertake ... and the social connections people make'. In a classic formulation of this idea, Douglas (1991) advances a minimal definition of the home, as the act of bringing a particular space under control. For her, a home is first and foremost a localized activity of ordering and control in the present, produced through the accumulation of meaningful objects and the enacting of familiar routines in a certain space (see also Easthope 2004: 135; O'Mahony 2013). Nikita Simpson's chapter in this volume also focuses on the dimensions of time and the process of home-making for her Indian informants as well as herself as a researcher. Reflecting particularly on how many of her female informants developed from strangers to confidants by regularly visiting Simpson's house-turned-sanctuary, she paints the process of doing fieldwork as one of developing intimacy together – or of home-making.

Botticello (2007) takes the idea further away from a fixed dwelling towards a 'site of practices where comfort, familiarity, and intimate sociality occur' (2007: 19; see also Capo 2015). This is very much the understanding of home taken up by Gagne, here, for example, as he examines the interstitial home-making practices of gay men in Beirut, situated in the small spaces beyond the family home and state control, and in the quick and intermittent rhythms of hook-ups, which nonetheless contribute to a more enduring, if fragile, sense of home. Home-as-process hence does not have to concern a fixed structure, but a set of practices and routines; it is a 'highly complex system of ordered relations with place, an order that orientates us in space, in time, and in society' (Dovey 1985: 39).

From the idea of a home in the continuous making, comes the possibility of imagining a *better* home – often as a continually receding horizon, towards which action is oriented. There is always room for improvement in home-making:

architecturally the house or hut could be bigger, it could be in a more secure neighbourhood; socially homes can be more inviting, more open to visitors and guests (Derrida 2005) or on the contrary more secure, more exclusive, as in the case of gated communities (Low 2004; Pow and Kong 2007). Alongside Gagne, Ott and Samanani, the chapter by Johannes Lenhard confronts this entanglement of home and hope. On the one hand, participating in the production of care and hope, though activities such as volunteering, allows Lenhard to make a home with his roughsleeping participants in Paris. On the other hand, the aspirations of his interlocutors for a better future throw up a range of difficult dilemmas for Lenhard, particularly in cases where people themselves may not fully know what future they desire.

Mallett (2004) connects the temporal and processual characterization of home explicitly. She positions home as always in-between the real – in everyday home-making or practices – and the ideal and imaginative. Following Jackson (Jackson 2005[1995]) she (2004: 80) claims that home relates to 'the activity performed by, with or in a person's things and places. Home is lived in the tension between the given and the chosen, then and now'. Coming from a phenomenological position, Mallett argues that 'people spend their lives in search of home, at the gap between the natural home and the particular ideal home where they would be fully fulfilled' (2004).

In the literature on migrants, refugees and mobile home-making, this double character of the home as spanning time and as being dynamic and processual has been widely explored. In their literature review of work on migration and home, Ralph and Staeheli position home for migrants explicitly in between several poles: 'Mobility and stasis, displacement and placement, as well as roots and routes go into the making of home' (2010: 3). Home is about relationships as well as location; it is connected to people as well as objects and includes both lived and ideal aspects for most migrants. In all these dimensions, they depict home as fundamentally processual, arguing that it 'emerges out of the regular reiteration of social processes and sets of relationships to both humans and non-humans' (2010: 4, 5) usually between the past, present and future. As Ralph and Staeheli conclude, 'Contemporary migrants continuously negotiate identities between "old" and "new" worlds, forging novel configurations of identification with home in both places' (2010: 7). In Wagner's contribution to this volume, mobility as a practice of home-making among Syrian refugees she experienced in Jordan figures prominently, also as a way of surviving. Her informants struggled to survive both in camps and in Jordan environments

as guests, workers but also because of kind-ties while also developing ties of attachment and belonging. She shows how (temporary) home is in a setting where survival is at stake and also very much depends on relationships and dynamic re-negotiations of identities.

In her recent study of refugees in Georgia, for instance, Brun (2015) finds that returning home is important for her informants, having escaped from the Georgian war in the late 1990s. Home is to do first of all with an 'absence' of those 'social relations and practices possible to enact in the familiar home environment' (2015: 7); it is related to a feeling of nostalgia for the home of the past: 'People long for the home they lost' (2015). Talking about the longings of refugees, Brun and Fabos (2015) argue that 'understandings of home are often based on the past: people long for the home they lost', and the broader familiarity this evoked, whether that of a particular neighbourhood, or nation. Often, this longing for a past home is related to a homeland, to the 'geopolitics of nation' as Brun and Fabos (2015) describe what they call an (all-capital) 'HOME', particularly referring to the memories of people in situations of protracted displacement. In this sense, coming home or the 'myth of return' are quintessential parts of how many migrants understand home (see Christou 2002; Duyvendak 2011; Lindley 2010).

At the same time, practices of mobility themselves may come to constitute home. Nowicka (2007) in her work on UN staff members deals with the idea of how home can come about in a world of constant mobility. She understands home as an open space with 'permeable borders include[ing] elements of [its] environment' (2007: 73), a shifting, territorial 'set of relationships to both people and things' 'bind[ing] times past and present' in recurring routines and connection-making (2007: 83). As Rapport and Dawson (1998) conclude in their important early overview of the field of home and movement: 'For a world of travellers and journeymen, home comes to be found far more usually in a routine set of practices, in a repetition of habitual social interactions, in the ritual or a regularly used personal name' (27). In this volume, Melissa Wrapp's chapter on the politics of housing in Cape Town, movement is also at the core. By telling the story of one of her interlocutor's struggle to return to his family house, Wrapp, however, foregrounds questions of the power to move: who is allowed to move? Who stays put? What persists within the movement of home?

Meanwhile, Ahmed (1999) identifies home for Asian migrant women in Britain as something located largely in the future. Against a difficult and sometimes unhomely experience of the present, home is located within one's

hopes, and is made in an imagined place where one has not yet arrived (c.f. E. Bloch 1995). For many refugees in particular, in fact, both a home in the sense of a house or a secure place to be is in fact first a dream: many of the contemporary refugees escaped from their supposed homes into the unknown, coming to dream up new homes (or remember idealized old homes) in the future (Jansen and Löfving 2011; Doná 2015). In a similar sense, many homeless people continuously 'struggle along' in the present longing for a better home in the future, a place to sleep and a way to have meaningful relationships as well as objects (Hecht 1998; Desjarlais 1997). Jansen's (2009) claims that, rather than seeing home as a 'remembered site of belonging', it should be seen 'prospectively as a socially constituted object of longing' (57; see also Jansen and Löfving 2011).

Across these engagements with home as an ideal, as something articulated and changing throughout time, and as brought into being through practice, we can once again trace a similar tension between unalienated and alienated characterizations of home. On the one hand, when explored in terms of familiar routines, closely held ideals, or a site of comfort or intimacy, home emerges as a domain where subjects' sense of who they are is bolstered and reproduced. Here, home is the space, the practice, or the imagined idyll where alienation might be undone. On the other hand, however, home may be a site of displacement, a place where one is made to feel out of place, an ideal that has not yet arrived, or something which is subject to continual improvement. In these conceptions, home is characterized by a *distance* between subjects' sense of selfhood, and their experience of home, however articulated. It is a domain that may be complicit in reproducing a sense of alienation, experienced as exclusion, dislocation, instability, or simply a desire for something other than what is given. In many cases, alienation and its escape may be present in the same account. For instance for the migrant women whose lives Ahmed (1999) traces, both try to make home in the everyday – even as their everyday experiences are often characterized by a sense of unhomeliness – and yet see in the future the promise of an ideal, unalienated home. In this volume, the contribution by Ott about *TeePee-Land*, a squatted encampment in the middle of Berlin, similarly has this tension between present/future and unalienated/alienated at the core. Ott focuses on the potential for constant creativity and renewal which the squat offers to its inhabitants; home here can be constantly remade according to the collective desires. At the same time, however, this creativity is not really a choice but a necessity – the sense of home would break down without it. Even when both alienation and its opposite are present, they continue to remain in tension, negotiated across

space and time, through contending imaginaries, or through differently oriented practices.

Ethnography: From dwelling to home-making

In the preceding section, we traced a tension between characterizations of home as an alienated domain on the one hand, and as an unalienated domain on the other. The literature on home is vast and diverse, and this tension by no means exhaustively characterizes what scholars have said about home. And yet we find that whether explicitly or implicitly, most writing on home has something to say about the relationship between home and alienation.

In this section, then, we turn to what this tension between home as unalienated/alienated might imply for ethnographic practice and method. What we suggest is that these two conceptions of home as unalienated/alienated map onto two models for doing ethnography, one characterized by *immersion,* which might be thought of as *dwelling*, and the other by *active interventions* in the field, which may be thought of as *home-making*. In contrast to ethnographic dwelling, ethnographic home-making involves being an active participant in our interlocutors' efforts to reproduce the ever-changing social world which makes up our ethnographic field.

Ethnographers frequently speak of fieldwork as an intimate practice. If this predominant account is to be believed, these intimacies begin developing, bit by bit, starting from the moment the fieldworker steps off the boat or into the tower block, or arrives at the end of the long, dusty trail. These stories present an ethnographic meet-cute, where despite the hurdles thrown up by differences in power, positionality and perspective, through persistent presence, the ethnographer eventually gains access to intimate understandings – to the up-close 'stuff' of life in a particular place, or for a particular group, that remains inaccessible, invisible or unspeakable to the world at large. And, in turn, the model for doing ethnography so as to gain access to such intimate understandings has been one which relies on immersion. In this model, as much as possible, the role of the ethnographer is not to intervene within the field, but simply to immerse themselves within, soaking up knowledge and experience, while trying to live as closely as one can to one's interlocutors. Our argument here is that this model of ethnography as immersive dwelling, is reliant on the related idea that home is an unalienated space. As such, there is much it occludes.

To be sure, there is a sizeable body of work which has pushed ethnographers towards a more reflexive, critical practice. And yet, this work has largely left this ideal of immersive fieldwork untouched. This seems to be the case for

two reasons. Firstly, the critique of positionality and power in ethnographic practice, and the model of reflexivity which has developed out of it, has largely been focused on ethnographic texts (and writing), rather than on the practice of fieldwork. Secondly, and relatedly, while this critique has led many ethnographers to abandon ideals of *objective* understandings, they have come to valorize *mess* instead. Across this shift, immersion has persisted as a favoured technique; where it was once used to access an objective perspective, it is now deployed to come-up-close to the messiness of 'real' life.

In anthropology, the set of critical interventions which prompted a turn towards reflexivity have collectively been termed the 'writing culture' or 'reflexive' turn – the former after the landmark volume of the same name (Clifford and Marcus 2010[1986]). This critique took as its starting point Geertz's 1993[1973]) call for an interpretative approach to culture, which approached culture as a collectively written, rewritten and interpreted text, rather than a static arrangement of meaning. The move made by writing culture theorists was to take ethnography itself as a text, and to scrutinize the conditions and tropes involved in its production and reading.

On the one hand, they scrutinized the literary tropes of ethnographic writing, unpacking how such work claimed a supposedly objective perspective. Among such tropes were the use of narrative frames which stuck the subjects of ethnographic knowledge in a frozen past, the use of analytical abstraction to tidy, and thus claim authority over, messy realities, the repositioning of knowledge gained through particular conversations with particular interlocutors into a generalized, third-person-plural voice, and the erasure of the (often troublesome, inevitably subjective) presence of the ethnographer themselves. Regarding this last point, in considering the presence of the ethnographer particular emphasis was put on the fact that ethnographic knowledge is *inescapably mediated* by the ethnographer's particular presence: their gender, class, pre-existing knowledge, analytical interests, personal commitments, and so on (Clifford 1983; Clifford and Marcus 2010; Denzin 1997; Fabian 1983; Geertz 1988). On the other hand, many of these same works were concerned with how ethnographic writing might engage productively with the messy surplus of life: the excess of historical interconnections, varied perspectives and shifting subjectivities that resisted neat containment within singular, authoritative texts. Broadly, these latter approaches came to be thought of as poetic approaches to ethnography.

The strategies proposed for contending with the limitations of ethnographic perspective and the messiness of life, however, have been overwhelmingly focused on the ethnographic text. This is evident in the literary-theory origins of

the reflexive turn, in some of its key metaphors ('writing culture', 'poetics') and in the very model of reflexivity it sets out: In different ways, both Marcus (2002) and Salzman (2002) make this argument (see also Handelman 1994). Marcus argues that the ethnographic response to social complexity and to the inescapable problem of ethnographic positionality has been to produce 'messy baroque' texts that evoke a sense of surplus, uncontainable by the text or analytical frame itself. However, he argues that the development of these textual strategies has *not* been accompanied by the 'sorting out relations of complicity as an equally baroque imaginary for … the complexity of the fieldwork process itself'. Critical of this textual approach to self-awareness, Salzman suggests that the postmodern genre conventions they go on position the author's own subjectivity as the only source of knowledge. If distanced objectivity is no longer a viable ideal, and if all accounts are contingent on perspective, then it becomes impossible to challenge the ethnographer's subjective account of what they felt. If taken as a primarily textual practice, reflexivity solipsistically positions the ethnographer's subjective experience as the ultimate origin of all knowledge within ethnographic accounts.

Meanwhile, feminist critiques have contrasted this textual model of reflexivity to longer-established feminist approaches to epistemology. While feminist approaches share a commitment to principles of equality and collaboration, which often ground knowledge in shared experience and practice, the postmodern literary approach abstracts away 'dissolv[ing] feeling and commitment into irony' – that is into detached, suspicious reflection (Mascia-Lees et al. 1989: 14). Some works seem to embrace this suspicion. Thus, Borneman and Hammoudi (2009) document an increasing tendency for anthropologists and other ethnographers to favour deep-dives into historical and cultural archives over fieldwork itself. While motivated by a more complex set of considerations – including a desire to confront the historical roots of power and to engage with existing documentary practices – this turn to the archive has provided refuge for those distrustful of intersubjective and embodied encounters as a source of ethnographic knowledge.

Others, however, have taken pains to offset the impression of ironic distance by re-enchanting the ethnographic encounter itself, through renewing tropes of ethnographic immediacy and immersion. For example, Johannes Fabian has famously argued that ethnography produces its 'object' through the production of accounts where the entangled co-presence of the field is reified into a static, mono-vocal and abstracted account, set in another time and place from that of the writer and implied audience (1983). In later work, he concludes that this problem stems not from the act of representation itself but from 'a tension between re-presentation and presence' (1990: 755) where representation works

to produce distance, and where empirical accounts privilege the abstracted distance of representation to the immediate vicissitudes of experience. Against this, he argues for a mode of ethnographic writing that works 'to revendicate the primacy of experience as something that requires presence (as sharing of time and place)' (1990).

In other words, for many reflexive ethnographers, textual reflexivity relies heavily on an immersive mode of ethnographic practice. The ethnographic text may be fraught and baroque, but its very ability to attend, however partially, to the complexity of human experience, derives from the immediacy and subjective intensity of the ethnographic experience. Paradoxically, the homes of our interlocutors may be understood as messy and multiple – rather than neatly unalienated – but when it comes to their own practices of dwelling within the field, ethnographers are nonetheless encouraged to strive (or to portray) as unalienated a perspective as possible. Thus, Marcus (2007) notes that, reflexive, messy-baroque texts continue to rely heavily on narratives of arrival and immersion that paint ethnography in terms of immediate, intense presence. Indeed, even after the reflexive turn, we have continued to see various explicit conceptualizations of ethnographic fieldwork itself as entailing deep immersion – as 'being there' (Watson 1999), as 'epistemological intimacy' (Herzfeld 2016), or as 'witnessing' that which cannot be easily put into words (Taussig 2011).

Moreover, Marcus (2002) points out that these two tendencies emerging out of the wake of the 'writing culture' critiques – of privileging textual sources and methods of critique and of valorizing the immediacy of the ethnographic encounter – are not always contraposed, but often present within the same 'messy baroque' texts. Or, as Sam Hillyard puts it:

> Ethnography is animated by this desire for intimate communion. It wishes to 'be right there', participating immediately and directly in the lived experience of others. The reflexive self-doubt that typifies non-realist ethnography is not the negation of this élan but one of its proofs, as is the assiduous regard of scientific method.
>
> (2010: 183)

To sum up: While the reflexive turn within anthropology has made reflexivity a commonplace concern for anthropologists and other ethnographers, it has done so by privileging a textual model of reflexivity. In the first instance, ethnography is imagined as the capture of texts, be they written or intersubjective. It is only in the second instance, when it comes to writing that one's relation to these texts and matters of interpretation are engaged with reflexively. Guided

partly by this model, some ethnographers have moved to privilege the textual materials or modes of critique in their ethnographic investigations. Others, however, have sought to emphasize that the intersubjective experiences of traditional ethnography are immediate and rich enough to facilitate 'messy baroque' accounts and reflexive analysis. As such, they have insisted on a vision of ethnography as immersive dwelling, which allows the ethnographer access to the messy realities of life as lived. This ideal of ethnographic immersion mirrors and draws on visions of the unalienated home as the template for ethnographic dwelling.

As a consequence, the dominant model ethnographic fieldwork – when not oriented towards the archive – privileges acts of immersion over what might be thought of as acts of intervention. Positionality is something to be aware of and accounted for, and thus be woven into texts, but it is not something to actively play with. So, for instance, when considering the implications of feminist standpoint theory for ethnographic practice – the former of which argues for the fundamental situatedness of all knowledge – Judith Okley concludes that 'the researcher's presence and positionality must be *confronted*' (2013: 81, emphasis added). In this vision of fieldwork, ethnographers ought to participate as well as to observe, so as to access embodied forms of understanding, but this participation is one which always follows cues – it is participation *in*.

Hillyard (2010) argues, however, that if ethnography is inescapably mediated – that we inescapably come at ethnography with a particular *perspective* – then we ought to see these mediations as technologies of knowing. Particular positionalities and practices within the field itself serve as techniques and as ways of knowing particular things over others. Building on this, what we would like to suggest is that while *dwelling* is a familiar, well-established and resilient technique within ethnography, ethnographers could also do with adopting *home-making* as a counterpoised practice.

If techniques of dwelling emphasize immersion, receptivity and following the lead of others, techniques of home-making emphasize taking part in the choices and labour which creatively reproduce the ethnographic field. We suggest these techniques are complementary but counterpoised: an overemphasis on dwelling risks obscuring the field as a site of creative labour, contestation choice and dilemma; it often subscribes to the most powerful accounts of life in the field for fear of becoming embroiled in struggles in which one has no part; and it limits the sorts of commitments that ethnographers can come to share with their interlocutors, and so come to understand. As Salzman (2002) suggests, to fail to take part in shared process of meaning making, when one

is ultimately out to write a text, is to effectively insist on one's own subjectivity as the ultimate source of all possible knowledge. Or, again, contra Fabian and others, ethnography produces its object not only in writing, but in each moment when the ethnographer approaches the field as something given, rather than taking part in the creative, laborious process of ensuring life goes on.

Meanwhile, an overemphasis on home-making would entail running roughshod over the field, imposing one's own understandings, commitments and practices onto others, often from a position of material or social advantage. Ethnography at its best gains much of its insight through deep humility, where ethnographers work to suspend familiar understandings, beliefs and values and work instead to take seriously the lives, understandings and experiences of others, in their own terms. And yet the history of the social sciences is marked less by humility and more by the use of ethnography to shore up Western-centric modes of knowledge and hierarchies of value. Divorced from the insights gained through genuinely humble ethnographic immersion, home-making as a technique risks reproducing the worst excesses of this history. Yet, despite this peril, we would like to suggest that when practices of ethnographic home-making are informed by sensitive practices of ethnographic dwelling – and vice versa – there is potential for a richer portrait to emerge.

Dwelling may be our most familiar ethnographic technique, but home-making as method has its own particular history among ethnographers. A particular strong inspiration comes from the 'material semiotic' tradition, which has picked up and extended the feminist debates on domestic labour. Here, we take a lead from figures such as Donna Haraway (1988; 1994; 2016), who reminds us not only that claims to a neutral standpoint are never more than assertions of superiority but also that knowledge can emerge through actively *building* relations; we follow Bruno Latour (2007) in understanding that to produce an account of the world is never simply to describe it, but to intervene within the world, both through technologies of knowing and through the text itself; and we draw on Webb Keane who reminds us that all relationships, whether social or material and including those produced through ethnography, are stores of potential that enable all parties to act on the world in specific, interdependent ways (2005; 2016).

Collectively, when it comes to ethnography, the material semiotic tradition reminds us that producing accounts is more than just a matter of arranging words on the page. Rather, accounts are articulated through arranging elements of the material world in a particular way. These arrangements 'enrol' others, who bolster or challenge these accounts. The clue is in the name – 'material semiotics'

– which indicates that the making of meaning is not simply a textual practice, but a practice of arranging the physical and social world in a particular way. Such accounting is a continual process, but when ethnographers enter onto the scene and seek to understand the field, they do so in ways which inescapably implicate them in the production, maintenance or challenging of particular accounts.

So, for example, to decide that a particular high-rise building in Glasgow is initially modern, durable and comfortable (homely), and then later to decide it is decrepit and not fit for inhabitation (unhomely), are not simple, factual claims. Rather, both these versions of reality are 'assembled', by announcing them in newspapers or activist meetings, getting city councillors and town planners to behave *as if* they were true, and by highlighting particular material arrangements. Strong steel pillars and big open living rooms help assemble an account of durability and comfort, and help get this account accepted; small cracks in an interior wall, the presence of asbestos and some tenants moving out assemble an account of decay, even though the steel pillars, open living rooms and other residents living happily are all still there. In both cases, researchers, journalists and other storytellers are key players in giving each account reality (Jacobs et al. 2007).

From this perspective, the home – or indeed any other element of the social world – gains its reality from being enacted in diverse material ways. Home is the place where we sleep, the place we keep and use furnishings, the place where we eat, drink and interact with close kin. Perhaps it is also a place where we express ourselves, painting walls and building up wardrobes. Perhaps, again, we define our ideals of home in terms of images in magazines, cherished childhood stories or conversations with friends. Perhaps it is the familiar walk, arriving in and winding through our neighbourhood, with its bent trees and colourful playgrounds, rather than the house itself, which plays the most decisive role in making us feel 'at home'. Material or social, imagined or instantiated in practice, every form of home is enacted within the world in a particular way. And so, any different arrangement of these elements inevitably enacts a different sort of home.

When accounts are brought into the physical world in this way, the warning that there are no neutral, non-mediated standpoints from which to understand the world takes on greater weight and importance. Read in this way, reflexivity cannot be simply understood as an exercise for when it comes time to write. Rather, to participate in the world is to be involved in the reproduction of particular accounts – particular arrangements of reality. And to participate in the world by insisting on not participating, as much as possible, is at the very

least to become a stubborn physical limit to the accounts of others. Many ethnographers who have been present during a family meal and have attempted to refuse food will know this very well; people insist we eat, not merely because it is customary, but because if they are unable to feed us, then other familiar truths begin to fall apart: perhaps this refusal suggests they are not good hosts, or caring companions. Perhaps it suggests that food lacks the ability to bring people together or produce kinship, even though everyone says so. So we eat. But do we learn to cook for others, and to insist in kind that they eat? If not, are we suggesting that ties of intimacy can be forged in one direction, but not in the other? No matter how we act, we are taking part in the making or unmaking of worlds. As Borneman and Hammoudi (2009) argue, ethnography is inescapably a practice of ethical risk, to which the only response is ethical commitment. And if we accept this, then ethnography may need to entail not only immersive dwelling, but decisive action as well.

Just as there is an intellectual tradition which grounds the technique of ethnographic home-making, so too are there strong examples of this technique in practice. Take, for example Paloma Gay y Blasco's accounts (sole- and co-authored) of her life and friendship with Liria de la Cruz Hernández. Even in the initial stages of their relationship, as ethnographer and informant, entanglements emerged quickly. Lira, a Spanish Gitano (gypsy), details in her own words how welcoming Paloma into her home was related to her curiosity around the fact that 'Payos [non-Gitanos] live more independently in their lives' and her ongoing frustrations around living in the shadows of constant gossip and judgement while dealing with a difficult marriage (Gay y Blasco and De La Cruz Hernández 2012: 4). Over time, Paloma learns of the consequences Lira has faced in housing her, in terms of the intense Gitano culture of moral scrutiny; Lira has not only taken her in, but in doing so has re-positioned herself as a disruptive figure and has instigated a range of rumours and questions that she must constantly manage. Paloma reciprocates by helping Lira fulfil her curiosity around Paya life – helping her lie to her husband and leave the neighbourhood, to share her own experiences of middle-class Madrid.

When Lira leaves her Gitano husband for Younes, a young Moroccan immigrant, these experiences of autonomy and exploration help inform her decision, and she turns to Paloma for support. After Lira is found and returned to her husband, her family reach out to Paloma to convince her to stay: 'They knew how close Liria and I were, and were desperate for me to take sides' (ibid). Torn between conflicting commitments to her interlocutors and to her close friend, ultimately Paloma acts to help Lira escape her family, seek a divorce and

gain custody over her daughter, in defiance of the Gitano customs that she had spent so long wanting to understand, and writing about – and in defiance of other friends and interlocutors. Paloma's presence in the field was involved in the active unmaking of one home, but was also the catalyst for the construction of another.

While leaving room for the voices of others, or even co-writing accounts, are ideals emerging from the tradition of reflexivity-as-writing, Gay y Blasco's ethnography is instead an account of co-action, where her presence in the field triggered a series of shifts in perspective and contestations in which she was forced to choose to whom her commitments lay, and to act accordingly. In her accounts, these entanglements not only precede the act of writing, whether solely or jointly, but also cannot be negotiated through writing alone (Gay y Blasco 2017).

Gay y Blasco's reflections chime with Audra Simpson's work on 'ethnographic refusal' among the Mohawk of Kahnawake (*Kahnawakero:non*) (2007; 2014). While Ortner (1995) argues that to refuse to write about negative, potentially unflattering depictions of informants is to produce 'thin' and ultimately dehumanizing accounts, Simpson inverts this characterization. She argues that written accounts often have political consequences for the individuals and groups depicted within them. Supposedly rich, tell-all texts may lead to new forms of stigma, exclusion and governmental control – new forms of dehumanization – which can dismantle and thin out the possibilities for life within field sites themselves. This is no coincidence, she suggests. Colonial anthropologists certainly understood that their accounts would have concrete consequences for how lives were lived and governed. Contemporary anthropologists who claim only to be motivated by providing rich accounts not only forget this history and its consequences, but also overlook that the contemporary accounts our interlocutors produce continue to be inescapably entangled in efforts to prolong or bring into existence particular visions of the world. The questions we ask, the processes we do or don't participate in, the conversations or forms of change we do or don't initiate, and indeed the texts we write, all have implications for what happens to the worlds spoken by our interlocutors. As ethnographers both our presence and our texts make, transform or undo particular forms of home in material ways.

What might home-making as a technique of ethnography involve in practical terms, then? Firstly, it would involve carving out moments of reflection during fieldwork, during which emerging forms of implication and commitment might be traced and scrutinized. Such reflection should strive to move beyond

those modes of understanding and judgement which are most familiar to the ethnographer. However, even when striving to be sensitive to, and to think with, forms of judgement found within the field, there is always scope to think about positionality and commitment. Secondly, it would involve making conscious choices between these commitments, while remaining aware that one cannot be everywhere or understand everything at once. Third, these processes of reflection and choice may lead to the explicit chasing of new commitments, with those who may be inaccessible, marginal or otherwise less visible from one's position within the field, rather than simply continuing to 'go with the flow' of engaging with the most readily available interlocutors. It is necessary not only to recognize any field site as criss-crossed by different perspectives, commitments and power relations, but to decide actively how to respond to this plurality; we must choose who we will become entangled with, and how.

Fourth, this might involve a more conscious and intentional use of ancillary technologies, such as daily schedules, purposeful 'networking' and virtual forms of connection, in order to foster or manage particular commitments. Different constellations of commitments will lead to different understandings of the field, and it would be a mistake to privilege only those relationships which are most readily available. Techniques such as explicitly managing one's time, in order to divide it between multiple, differently positioned interlocutors, working deliberately to cultivate elusive relationships, or even intentionally cutting ties from overly confining relationships offer the potential of revealing new perspectives on one's field site.

Fifth, there may be moments where one might choose to make deliberate interventions within the field. Recognizing that one's very presence is always already a disruption, requiring novel responses from one's interlocutors, ethnographers may opt to deploy this presence in ways which invite *particular* responses. Whether in inviting people around for a home-cooked meal, or leading in the formation of a campaign group, there are interventions which may prove ethnographically productive. The language of 'intervention' ought to highlight the colonial roots, and present-day structures of power and inequality in which academic research and ethnographic methods remain entangled. And yet recognizing that one's presence in the field itself is an intervention, we might use insights gleaned from techniques of ethnographic *dwelling*, to engage in practices of ethnographic *home-making* which serve as more empowering, caring or responsive interventions, than that posed by our more passive presence.

Sixth, deploying home-making as a technique would involve understanding that all commitments have costs, some of which may be unacceptable. Recently,

attention has been cast on the ways in which immersive models of fieldwork can put ethnographers at risk (Clark and Grant 2015; Hanson and Richards 2017; Pollard 2009; Stacey 1988). When faced with danger, abuse or difficulty, fieldworkers may find themselves reluctant to cut ties, ask for help, or confront others, if they are convinced that doing so would be a failure to fully take part and immerse oneself as an ethnographer. This reluctance may be compounded by the prospect of limited institutional support in instances where one's colleagues also subscribe to a view of ethnography primarily as an immersive practice.

Seventh, again recognizing that field sites are full of different perspectives, which provide different accounts of the world, we ought to be attentive to the various forms of labour done to reproduce these varied perspectives, and the costs associated with maintaining them. In other words, we need to recognize that the homes of our interlocutors – those spaces, imaginaries and practices which ground their perspective, their sense of belonging and their feeling of subjecthood – are always themselves products of particular forms of labour. And, recognizing this, our task cannot simply be to dwell in such homes. We must also ask how we ought to relate to these varied forms of labour. Doing so is likely to direct our ethnographic attention in new directions – whether towards particular humans and non-humans whose life-sustaining presence goes unacknowledged, or towards the global forms of exchange which mediate access to particular domestic goods, or ideal visions of home.

Eighth, recognizing the inescapable entanglement between the labour of reproducing or remaking particular worlds, and the production of ethnographic knowledge, we need to recognize ethnographic knowledge itself as a collaborative enterprise – as something also sustained through distributed labours – rather than the product or sole possession of the lone fieldworker. In turn, this ought to push us towards other ways of conducting ethnography – for instance, working in teams, or through reciprocal collaborations with those in the field. Likewise, this should prompt a broader reconsideration of the 'ends' of ethnographic knowledge, beyond the production of academic texts and towards approaches which better honour and support the world-sustaining labours through which we come to know.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, drawing on practices of ethnographic *home-making* would shift ethnographic reflexivity from a *consideration* of positionality, to a *practice* of co-implication. Co-implicated, we would be forced to grapple not only with the presence of ourselves in our interlocutor's homes, but with their presence in ours. Taking the relations, commitments and obligations which emerge out of ethnography seriously may involve inviting interlocutors

into our own homes, within the field, within the academy and within the texts we produce. For some scholars, this may mean producing pieces of writing together, for others it may mean making our own status, knowledge and time available to our interlocutors to turn towards causes that are important to them. For all of us, it would pose the challenge not to see interlocutors as mere 'informants' but as collaborators and companions.

Again, there are limits to how productive techniques of ethnographic home-making will be, as well as limits on how ethical they may prove. The challenge, however, is not to simply consider our taken-for-granted techniques of *dwelling* as *necessarily* more productive or more ethical. By intertwining techniques of dwelling and home-making, we hope for a richer, more reflexive and more engaged ethnographic practice than either method would produce on its own.