MASTERARBEIT / MASTER´S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the master´s thesis

"The conception of home as the representation of paradise"

verfasst von / submitted by

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I'm goin' home, yes, I'm goin' home,
No more will I in this sinful world roam,
Jesus my savior, waits upon the throne,
Glory to God, tonight I'm goin' home.

Hank Williams, "I´m Goin Home"

The only true paradise is paradise lost.

Marcel Proust

Acknowledgements

Well, ladies and gentlemen, what´s been done so far?

No long way has been done, and speaking frankly, the metaphorical set itself, composed of ways, roads, crossroads, roadmaps, dead ends, traffic lights, etc., seems to have lost some of its previous persuasiveness.

But, maybe, if not the way – never mind the way, – the long and laborious work has been done since last time? Yet is it the time which prevails over us, or these are we, who prevail over the old man – the point remains unsettled, though I personally would still prefer to vail my bonnet before his gray-haired beard in order not to receive a sock from the snath of his scythe.

Or perhaps some crucial experiences transpired? Let my communication be yea, yea and nay, nay.

However it may be in the end, what´s done cannot be undone and as soon as I am disposed of my acknowledgements, the ensuing pages will enable the liberal and candid reader to take dubious pleasure in this fruit of my industry.

First of all, I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to the Internet and especially to Wikipedia, which, being the only of its kind, a village reading room, imparted to me the greater part of my knowledge. With pleasure and tenderness, will I always recollect the sweet evenings in its society.

No less deeply am I indebted to all the dead men – poets and philosophers, whose indefatigable presence has always been my comfort and joy and to whose *hominem quaero* I have always replied with the signals of my dark pocket torch.

And the last word of gratitude falls upon my country house, where the soothing chant of birds mingles with a nocturnal whistle of a distant train that lulls one into a peaceful and blissful slumber.

To all of those I hence dedicate my paper.

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Contents:

I.   Introduction

There exists an intriguing similarity between the rhetoric of current Viennese cardinal Christoph Schönborn and Kimberly McCarthy. The latter being an African American sentenced to death for murder two years ago. Her last words before lethal injection were: "This is not a loss. This is a win. You know where I'm going. I'm going home to be with Jesus. Keep the faith. I love you all."[1] In the other hemisphere, the Austrian Cardinal finished his writing against euthanasia in the local newspaper *Heute* with these words: "Hinter dem Thema Euthanasie steht die viel grundlegendere Frage nach dem Sinn von Leben und Sterben. […] Die Lösung liegt in der Mitte: Begleiten in Liebe! […] In diese Welt hinein und aus ihr heraus, nach Hause, zu Gott."[2]

For both – cardinal Schönborn, being ex facte Catholic, and McCarthy, who most likely belonged to one of the American Protestant congregations – *home* seems not only to function as god´s integral attribute, but, undergoing a certain metonymic shift, becomes nearly equivalent to it. God himself is a heavenly home, a paradise, which the soul of the sinner, once having left the body, is eager to return to. To die doesn´t just mean to *go* to god, but to *return* to god – just as one finally returns home after a long pilgrimage.

At first glance, the parallel drawn between going to god and going home seems logical and self-evident: a human being returns back to his/her father and creator – the circle of life is thereby closed. To be "in god´s hands" is as safe as to be at home, possibly, in the home of one´s childhood. Probably just due to its obviousness and comprehensibility the metaphor of homecoming has been widely adopted by a broad range of Para-Christian & Esoteric literature[3] and is perceptibly present in popular beliefs and mass culture. Its power and influence are especially remarkable when we consider how different the social and cultural backgrounds are between an Austrian cardinal and a murderess from the State of Texas. Both, nevertheless, use this metaphor in an identical way.

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[1] http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-23075873 <Last accessed 14.08.15>
[2] Translation from German: Behind the topic of euthanasia there is a much more fundamental question of the meaning of life and death <...> The answer is in the middle: attend with love! <...> In this world, out from this world, back home, to God. http://www.heute.at/news/oesterreich/wien/art23652,1023044 <Last accessed 14.08.15>
[3] With such titles as *Going Home: Jesus and Buddha as Brothers* (2000), *Going home to Heaven* (2010), *God is calling his children home* (2011) etc.

Examined closer, the metaphor cannot but raise questions concerning both its consistency and propriety relative to the context of contemporary theology and official Christianity, which usually evade any figurative comparisons: "the future life will have to do with god; that´s all we know".[4] The Bible uses the image of dwelling in describing afterlife[5], but its language, as well as the language of its classic translations, doesn´t differ between *house* and *home* in its modern connotation.[6]

Examples of the contemporary usage of the metaphor

From a theological point of view, the metaphor of unconditional homecoming contradicts the founding Christian thesis of retribution. It pales purgatory and hell into a certain insignificance. The prodigal son, though he sinned a lot, will inevitably be pardoned in a traditional "Hollywood ending." Isn´t it a sort of a personal Apocatastasis, which was anathematized as a heresy by the Synod of Constantinople as early as 543 AD – together with the most serious of the seven deadly sins, the sin of pride?

But being unburdened from strict religious dogmatism and regarded merely as a felicitous comparison, the idea of *coming home to god* nevertheless seems to quasi-originate from the deep of mystic Manichean thought: the world around us is not our *true* home, but the sinful and malicious creation of the Devil – yet the Lord waits for us in Heaven, where our souls *really* belong. This mortal life is just the soul´s long homeward bound.

This thesis is an attempt to investigate and systematize this metaphor in its various manifestations, to analyze its structure, to trace its roots and development, and contribute thereby the first share to the yet unwritten cultural history of homecoming, as well as to expand the field of study on domestication in the discourse of afterlife.

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[4] Colleen *McDanell*, Bernhard *Lang*, Heaven: a history (New Haven 1988) 352

[5] E.g. Eccles 12:5 For man goes to his eternal home while mourners go about in the street; John 14:2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

[6] *Anonym*, Article: Home, House. In: Leland *Ryken*, James C. *Wilhoit*, Tremper *Longman III* (eds.) Dictionary of Biblical Imagery (Nottingham 1998) 393

"Coming back home to god" is a composite conception. In order to achieve a deeper understanding of the whole its components will be examined separately. I conceptualized this division on two levels. First, home, endowed with connotations of paradise. Second, paradise based on the metaphor of the ideal home. This seemed most logical, for familiar things become the basis for the abstraction and not vice versa: The longing for a terrestrial home must be already known in order to be able to shift it to the further metaphorical projection. Thus, I consider the idea of the ideal home as primary, and the "domesticated" paradise as its derivative.

Accordingly, I will firstly observe the pair home-paradise, i.e. home viewed as paradise, as a sacred place, home as a certain ideal *condition*, which is being sought after. The researcher James Kaye described a similar understanding of home as "something that has been portrayed as sacred, mystically felt through the ages when the holy word "home", "hem" or "Heim" is expressed and understood. … an ideal prototype, something not real, but virtual, literally existing in essence and only as such fact."[7] Within the framework of this paper I place the main emphasis on the perception of home as a lost or never known ideal place of absolute peace and happiness, of home being the object of longing and idealization. Nostalgia for the unobtainable "ideal prototype," which can be only dreamt of, I hence regard as one of the necessary prerequisites for the appearance of the idea of the celestial home. Due to its unobtainability in this world, it must be consequently shifted beyond its borders to the metaphysical, irrational dimension of the afterlife.

In order to investigate this transition, I will firstly look into the making of home per se, briefly analyzing it from linguistic and anthropological positions. Staying mostly within the Anglophone cultural domain, I will diachronically investigate the palette of meanings and senses bound with the conception of home, paying special attention to the semantically close conception of *homeland*. The longing for home and the longing for homeland are often intertwined or interchangeable. As the notion of *returning* is significant for my argument, I will also go into basic mythological patterns, of which returning home is an integral part or the dominant idea (e.g. Odyssey, as the exemplary text).

After being constructed, home undergoes idealization, which in my hypothesis is in the broad sense the heritage of the period of Romanticism. I suggest that in the course of the establishment of the new bourgeois way of life and culture in Europe and the USA in the first

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[7] James *Kaye*, No one such place, "home" in Austrian and Swedish "landscapes" (Florence 2003) 9

half of the 19th century,[8] home obtained new significance. New social groups were established, for which family and home started to play the fundamental, identifying, and axiological role. This turned "home" into a kind of a sanctuary, the state and place where "real" and "unfeigned" life is possible in contrast with "false" and "hypocritical" public life.[9] Another crucial element, directly connected with this establishment, is the so-called "discovery" of childhood and the appearance of children's culture.[10] I assert that this led to the idealization of childhood – and consequently of the paternal home, as a state of innocence and utmost comfort. As the child grows, this home remains in the past, beckoning as a lost paradise. Special attention to one´s childhood, often mingled with nostalgic and idealizing connotations, has been a distinctive feature of memoirs since the 19th century.

The second part of the thesis explores the second level of the metaphor – the paradise-home pair, i.e. paradise viewed as home. In it I intend to show how the metaphor of home comes to be one of the representations of paradise in different Western afterlife discourses. In my hypothesis, the metaphor of heavenly home is preceded by another one, which conceptualizes life as a path or a journey. This understanding, highly influenced by Christianity,[11] renders great support to the idea of the final homecoming. If all earthly paths lead homeward: after the day´s work, war, or the long pilgrimage, then the much greater path – the Path of Life – should likewise, after all troubles and difficulties, lead "home". This synecdochean (in Hayden White´s sense) principle of expanding from the micro-level (concrete "path" or "journey") to the macro-level (the whole life understood as a "Path" or "Journey") becomes apparent with home/Home as the logical end of the journey/Journey.

Here I see a distinct parallel with the Biblical conception of human history:

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[8] See such works as Leonore *Davidoff*, Catherine *Hall*, Family fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850 (Chicago 1987), Orvar *Löfgren*, The Sweetness of Home: Trautes Heim. In: Peter *Borscheid*, Hans J. *Teuteberg* (eds.) Ehe, Liebe, Tod: Zum Wandel der Familie, der Geschlechts- und Generationsbeziehungen in der Neuzeit (Münster 1983) 80-96, Raffaella *Sarti*, Europe at Home: Family and Material Culture, 1500-1800 (New Haven 2004), Nacim *Ghanbari*, Das Haus und die wilhelminische Häusergesellschaft. Zur Überprüfung von Claude Lévi-Strauss´ Theorie eines historischen Übergangs. In: Inken *Schmidt-Voges* (ed.) Ehe-Haus-Familie, Soziale Institutionen im Wandel 1750-1850 (Wien/Köln/Weimar 2010) 71-98

[9] An obvious parallel to the mentioned above opposition between the "sinful" world of the body and "blessed" paradise – "the real home of the soul"

[10] See the controversial book by Philippe *Ariès*, L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime (Paris 1960) and the brilliant book by Karin *Calvert*, Children in the House, The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600-1900 (Boston 1992)

[11] In its turn highly influenced by Gnosticism, etc.

	1st Paradise/Home	Losing Paradise/Home	Seeking after Paradise/Home		2nd Paradise (Paradise/Home found)
Christian Conception	The Garden of Eden	Fall of man, expulsion from the Eden	Human history	Last Judgment	Heavenly Jerusalem
Homecoming metaphor	The state of innocence/childhood	Growing older, obtaining knowledge	The Journey of Life	--------------------	Heavenly home

Death as qualitative change --->

The hope of re-obtaining the once known (but forever lost), *home as paradise* is reflected in the hope of getting back to the lost paradise of Eden. The predicted finding of the City upon a Hill, preceded by a long journey full of asperities, mingles with the regaining of *paradise as home*. Death remains the border, dividing "this world" and the "other." It produces a qualitative change, placing the realization of the idealized in the metaphysical dimension. Reaching the ideal object of longing is not possible before crossing this last barrier.

As already mentioned above, a very characteristic peculiarity of the homecoming metaphor is that it doesn´t contain anything corresponding to the most important event in the Christian conception of history, namely, the Last Judgment. Such simplifications and adjustments are characteristic of the rethinking of theological dogmas within folk religion and popular beliefs, among which the conception of homecoming to paradise resides.

To fix the position of the home-metaphor among other representations of paradise, I will give a brief typological overview of them and see how paradise and the journey to paradise are constructed and how they function. Among the traditional Christian avatars – Garden, Kingdom, City I will also add medieval Fairylands, like the lands of plenty Cockaigne or Schlaraffenland, and the Otherworld, as described in the Irish Immrama and Echtrai or represented by the Fortunate Isles of Greek mythology. These topoi have similar constitutive components that are also shared with the conception of the heavenly Home: manifest other-worldliness, utmost pleasure, necessity of a journey to reach it, accessibility only after death or under fantastic conditions.

Then I will diachronically analyze realizations of the *coming home to god* metaphor in Western culture. I will do this through looking at North American and British middle-class culture of the 19th - 21st century. On the basis of such primary sources as personal letters, religious literature, folk songs, etc. I will examine the "domesticated" representations of paradise and investigate them in their different cultural and social conditions.

The last part of my thesis is dedicated to the particular usage of the homecoming metaphor when it remains as a symbol for death and dying, but is markedly not anymore laden with the idea of going to paradise after it. On the contrary, this specifically ironic reading presumes a real death instead of a pleasant "homecoming", even if so announced or shown. Here a bitter rethinking of the heretofore-soothing metaphor takes place. The homecoming loses its former optimistic and hopeful connotations, becoming a mere metaphor for death. In order to get "home" the character must literally die. This is the only way to find oneself in a safe place without troubles. The evolution of the established coming-home rhetoric will be discussed using examples from literature and film of the 20th century.

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II.   Approach

Cutting Apples: A Few Notes on History and Theory

Writing a master´s thesis on a subject like mine can invite certain questions; if not to the subject itself, made possible by cultural turns, achievements of the school of Neue Kulturgeschichte, by the development of conceptual history and the history of mentalities, but to the used methodology and limitations that unavoidably occur due to the format of such a paper. There is also a danger of sliding into an essay based writing style, instead of staying on the purely *scientific* level. However, I have always adhered to the opinion, that to regard history, and especially the history of culture, as a science, is a categorical mistake.[12] Isn't history rather a *discipline*, within which one constructs – *facts*, are shuffled according to another constructs – *points of views* and *methods*, and are then concluded with the third constructs – interpretations? And what is a fact, if not just a linguistic statement about an event, brought to life by a question?[13] What is a point of view, if not the (inevitable) constraining and conditionalizing of the "historical space" through its conceptualization by choosing a *subject* ("The history of France in the 14th century", "the position of women in Port Royal" – any subject is a forced Procrustean bed). What is interpretation, if not just another narrative within the episteme of the present, wholly dependent upon the personality and erudition of the scholar? Moreover, there is no way to carry out a scientific experiment; as F.R. Ankersmit noted in his *History and Tropology*, historians paradoxically don´t really have their object of study, but just deal with the sum of statements about it.[14]

And yet, in order to avoid naively falling into fruitless relativism, I suggest imagining a hypothetical apple of culture. There are millions of angles and spots at which the person cutting could insert the knife, making a completely different cut each time. Thrusting into "the history of swimming in Europe 1500-1800" causes the tightly focused and systematic history of swimming to rise into view on the apple´s halves; cutting into the "influence of the WWI on board games" produces a detailed iconographical and ideological analysis of board games based on the Great War. The apple is round and therefore has no end – one must only think about, where to enter the knife and also be technically good at cutting; besides, as each apple-

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[12] This is maybe a too categorical assertion either.
[13] Hayden *White*, The Burden of History. In: History and Theory 5-2 (1966) 127
[14] Franklin Rudolf *Ankersmit*, History and Tropology. The Rise and Fall of Metaphor (Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford 1994)

cutter will cut with their own style, numerous different versions of the histories of swimming and board games are potentially possible.

Thus, taking into consideration the postmodern state of the historical discipline today, I subscribe to the doubts about modernist idea of the last and ultimate historical truth or the possibility of a final "true" interpretation. On the contrary, a multitude of interpretations – the multitude of possibilities when cutting the same apple – seems to be the only remedy against being misled into the essentialist fetters of simplification. The past cannot be reconstructed, but only constructed over and over again – the only one interpretation is always wrong; doesn´t this view draw the fundamental line between humanitarian disciplines and the sciences, which demand verifiable *exactness*?

One could of course argue that critical approach to sources, their selection, classification and usage is the humanitarian equivalent of the exact sciences´ experimental research. What is more, we can observe regularities and structure them thereafter according to some reasonable – or seemingly reasonable – pattern; we can carry out quantitative analyses (however, these are due to the lack of data often vague, not falsifiable, and limitedly representative); apply different methods; we can (and must!), finally, *draw conclusions* and then *reflect upon them.*

I, in my turn, being aware of the conditional character of any historical writing – and also accepting it – cut the apple in the spot called "homecoming as a metaphor for death and dying in European and North American afterlife discourses".

Methods

This master´s thesis, remaining for the most part in the field of European & North American cultural history, is intended to be interdisciplinary positioned between the history of mentalities, concepts, and representations. As I adhere to the *cultural-historical method* and therefore regard any object or text made by human beings as a potentially investigable and interpretable cultural unit[15], the corpus of my primary sources is broad and cross-cultural: language, folklore, literary, religious and philosophical works, diaries and memoirs, film & animation, music, painting & sculpture, architecture & decorative art, popular beliefs, websites, gravestones, needlework, etc. The seeming randomness of my sources may appear as a disadvantage and a token of the little objectivity in the investigation as a whole, but the

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[15] Clifford *Geertz*, The Interpretation of Cultures (New York 1973)

narrow framework of the "coming-home-to-god" metaphor should itself suffice as a filter and limitation.

As a convinced *constructivist*, I tend to consider cultural and social phenomena as relative constructions, embedded into and growing from particular social, economic, and mental backgrounds.

Since my primary object of study is a metaphor, I use the *method of semantic analysis*, I look at the metaphor, into the family of meanings connected with it, as well as into its constituents, mechanism, and development.

Applying the method of *discourse analysis*, I analyze the interaction between the studied metaphor and a particular discourse. I investigate how concrete manifestations of the metaphor of homecoming to god function within the discourse of Christian afterlife and influence it, taking into consideration their mutual influence, as well as social, economic and cultural conditions.

Novelty of the Paper

The *homecoming to god* has not yet received much attention within Cultural studies. Appearing as a secondary topic within studies on homesickness and nostalgia, studies on heaven and afterlife, or specially investigated in the form of one of its manifestations, it hasn´t yet been tackled on its own as a primary object of monographic study, lacking therefore a more general exploration.[16]

This work intends to first conceptualize *homecoming to heaven* as an independent object of investigation. The framework of the thesis limits this attempt to a sort of introduction and typology. Each topic touched upon in my paper would lend itself to deeper investigation in another paper. In addition, I concentrate on the mechanism of the phenomenon more than on its particular manifestations – of which I examine only those, where the metaphor bears most sharp and evident character. I take the risk of drawing an inevitable essentialist veil over my work and thereby falling into a sort of superficiality, which might add a touch of the

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[16] The overview of these works is given further.

unrepresentativeness to my paper. Still, I doubt that there would be much sense in turning this thesis into one of special studies[17] while a *general work* is still missing.

Therefore, I see the main aim of this writing as a mere *introduction* of the topic to the scientific field, also directing the attention of other scholars to it.

A number of primary sources is put into use for scientific analysis for the first time. Among these are recent publications of the Esoteric/Para-Christian character.

Relevance of the Paper

The contemporary popularity of homecoming metaphorics in the afterlife discourse is a mark in the collective religious imagination. It is one of the images people have in their heads *now* and perceive as something "natural" and self-understood.

The understanding of Heaven as "home" seems to be fully integrated and accepted in today´s Western society: the rhetoric of obituary notices, going-home songs, popular quotes from the Bible, and religious discussions on web forums show the extent of the conviction that to die means to return home. It is also commonplace in contemporary popular culture: for example, the death of a character in a film, shown as the final *homecoming*, is easily decoded as a "striking" moment.[18]

These circumstances doubtlessly allot the exploration of the metaphor with value and make it worthy of analysis. Questioning its "naturalness" and tracing its conditions of origin can extend our knowledge and give us a new perspective on customary things.

State of Research

As already mentioned above, the discourse, generated by the *homecoming to god* metaphor, has been more or less a marginal topic in scholarly literature. However, the group of related concepts *childhood, death & dying, folk religion, home, homesickness, nostalgia, paradise/otherworld* have already been the subject of the scientific exploration. Whereas

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[17] It could be, e.g., "The motif of ´going home to heaven´ in American Folk music" or "The influence of the Victorian "consolation literature" on the arrangement of graveyards", etc.

[18] See the chapter *Homecoming as a Metaphor for Death and Dying: the Ironic Reading of a Commonplace*.

some of them, like *home* or *paradise* have quite a long history of study, concepts like *homesickness* started garnering attention not too long ago.

a. *Dwelling/Home*

The cultural and social history of domestic space is closely connected to social geography, cultural anthropology, the history of everyday life, and the history of emotions. This circumstance determined to a certain degree the selection of sources.

Numerous monographies and articles are devoted to the phenomenon of home, examining it from different interdisciplinary angles[19]. The school of thought related to these topics is actively developing as reflected in the activities of the London based *Centre for Studies of Home*[20] and the articles in several peer-reviewed journals, such as *Housing Studies and Home Cultures*.

One of the first works that thoroughly examined the idea of home, was the *Poetics of Space* by Gaston Bachelard (1958)[21]. This highly acclaimed work is one of the crucial texts for introducing home to scholarly discourse. Basing upon Jungian psychoanalysis and phenomenology, Bachelard looks into home, from the attic to basement, from a mytho-poetic position. *Poetics of Space* laid the foundation for the further work investigating home as a symbol.

Witold Rybczynski´s *Home: A Short History of an Idea* (1986)[22] delves into the historical-cultural analysis of the origin of "at-homeness" and traces its roots from the Middle Ages to 17th century Holland. The work reveals the roots of the modern connotations of home.

Anglophone cultural geographers Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling wrote an *Essential Guide to Studying Home* (2006)[23], concisely uniting the standpoints of different fields of knowledge, such as sociology, geography, anthropology, and gender studies. In addition, they provide an excellent bibliography on home and domestic studies.

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[19] To name just a few recent publications: James *Kaye*, No One Such Place, "Home" in Austrian and Swedish "Landscapes" (Florence 2003), Irene *Cieraad* (ed.) At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space (New York 2006)
[20] http://www.studiesofhome.qmul.ac.uk <Last accessed 14.08.15>
[21] Gaston *Bachelard*, The Poetics of Space (Boston 1994)
[22] Witold *Rybczynski*, Home: A Short History of an Idea (Markham 1986)
[23] Alison *Blunt*, Robyn Dowling, Home (London/New York 2006)

The first part of the monography *House in Russian Literature* (2009)[24] by Dutch Slavist Joost van Baak gives a very helpful survey of the concept of House from a position of anthropology, linguistics, and narrative. It also touches upon some archeological issues. Being a specialist in study of literature, van Baak examines a house as first and foremost a mythological place and as an object in different poetics.

b. *Afterlife/Heaven*

There were many attempts to give a cohesive cultural history of the representations of paradise (McDannel, Lang, Vorgrimler, Wright, Smith, Russel[25]), but such monographies are usually written by professors of religion. This circumstance doesn´t diminish the significance of these studies, usually brilliantly written both from a methodology and structural standpoint, but it inevitably imparts a certain tone of non-criticality and boundedness by falling within the scope of Christianity. Some of them (e.g. McDannel (1998) quite explicitly dwell on the beliefs around heavenly homecoming.

The cultural history of utopias, fairylands, and other "happy places" is a semantically close field. They are partly important for this thesis and there are several studies, mostly of a philological character which come into question (Gerber, Richter[26]).

c. *Childhood*

As mentioned in the introduction, childhood, its history and development are important topics for the theoretical conception advanced in this thesis. The historically important, but widely criticised monography, *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* (1960), written by French historian Philippe Ariès, was a groundbreaking work in its time. It advanced the conceptualizing of childhood as a subject for scientific exploration. It is important to bear in mind that his work is examining the idea of childhood, not real individual children.

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[24] Joost *van Baak*, The House in Russian Literature. A Mythopoetic Exploration (Amsterdam/New York 2009)
[25] Coleen *McDannell*, J. Bernhard *Lang*, Heaven: A History (New Haven 1998), Herbert *Vorgrimler*, Geschichte des Paradieses und des Himmels (München 2008), Bernhard *Lang*, Himmel und Hölle, Jenseitsglaube von der Antike bis heute (München 2003), J. Edward *Wright*, The Early History of Heaven (Oxford 2002), Gary Scott *Smith*, Heaven in the American Imagination (Oxford 2011), Jeffrey Burton *Russel*, A History of Heaven (Princeton 1997)
[26] Richard *Gerber*, Utopian fantasy: a study of English Utopian Fiction since the End of the Nineteenth Century (London 1955), Dieter *Richter*, Schlaraffenland: Geschichte einer populären Utopie (Frankfurt am Main 1995)

Among later publications I would single out the investigation *Children in The House* by American scholar Karin Calvert and *Die Entdeckung der Kindheit* by German scholar Horst Rabe[27].

d. *Death and Dying/Funeral Rites*

The attitude towards death and dying in different epochs and societies has been a subject for a number of studies in the field of Cultural and Anthropological studies. As the perception of death in the Christian Anglophone world is an essential topic for my thesis, I used many works that explored this topic and could single out the following categories among them:

- Works on the perception of death in the American society[28] and on the experience of Civil War.[29]
- Works on African American funeral rites, such as explorations by Raboteau, Ronald K. Barrett, Elaine Nichols.[30]
- Works on the perception of death & dying in Victorian England.[31]

e. *Nostalgia /Homesickness/Special Studies on Homecoming to Heaven*

Nostalgia, together with its various representations within the Nostalgic discourse are important elements in my argumentation, starting with the eminent representative of the Geneva School Jean Starobinski.[32] He was one of the first scholars to critically approach the problem of nostalgia. Its investigation has been a subject of interdisciplinary study at the intersection between cultural history, anthropology, and sociology (Bolzinger´s *Histoire de Nostalgie*, *Anthropology and Nostalgia*, Svetlana Boym´s *Future of Nostalgia*[33], etc.). Fred

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[27] Karin *Calvert*, Children in the house: The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600-1900 (Boston 1992), Horst *Rabe*, Die Entdeckung der Kindheit (Konstanz 1980)
[28] David E. *Stannard,* The Puritan way of death (Oxford 1977)
[29] Drew Gilpin *Faust*, This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War (New York 2008)
[30] Albert J. *Raboteau*, Slave Religion (Oxford 2004), Ronald K. *Barrett*, Contemporary African-American Funeral Rites and Traditions. In: Lynne *Ann DeSpelder*, Albert Lee *Strickland* (eds.) The Path Ahead: Readings in Death and Dying (1995) 80-92, Elaine *Nichols*, The Last Miles of the Way: African-American homecoming traditions, 1890-present (Columbia 1989)
[31] Michael *Wheeler*, Death and the Future life in Victorian Literature and Theology (Cambridge 1990)
[32] Jean *Starobinski*, The Idea of Nostalgia. In: Diogenes 14 (1966) 81-103
[33] André *Bolzinger*, Histoire de la nostalgie (Paris 2007), Olivia *Angé*, David *Berliner* (eds.) Anthropology and Nostalgia (Oxford/New York 2015), Svetlana *Boym*, The Future of Nostalgia (New York 2001)

Davis in his *Sociology of Nostalgia*[34] provides an intriguing categorization of the nostalgic experience, but obviously lacks a systematic methodology, due to the essayistic structure of the book.

Thomas Lange (1976) and Peter Blickle (2002)[35] give a comprehensive analysis of conceptions of Homeland and Nostalgia in the German cultural field. This was followed by the titanic monography by Simon Bunke (2009)[36] *Heimweh*, which perhaps gives the most explicit history of German homesickness. Bunke is probably the first scholar to analyze the roots of "homesickness for heaven" in German culture. Interestingly, he doesn´t mention it in the conclusion and this is what once again underlines its marginal status.

American scholar Susan J. Matt investigates in her recent book on homesickness (2011)[37] the discourse of homesickness throughout American history. She also mentions the popularity of the beliefs in the "final homecoming" and heavenly reunions of friends and relatives, but again only as a side topic in connection with the experience of the Civil War.

There are also two articles, fully elaborating on the theme of homecoming to heaven. These are, *Heaven Our Home* (published as early as 1974[38]) which brilliantly analyzes North American "consolation" literature. In addition, there is a recent paper on the interaction between Victorian literature and popular beliefs concerning the afterlife.[39] Both articles, mostly from the perspective of literature criticism, explore the attitude towards death and dying within the family oriented middle-class society of the 19th century.

Conclusion

In order to substantiate this paper, I will once again underline its general features.

The main aim of this work is to conceptualize *coming home to heaven* as an independent subject in scientific discourse. The subject of the investigation is a phenomenon that reflects

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[34] Fred *Davis*, Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia (New York 1979)

[35] Thomas *Lange*, Idyllische und exotische Sehnsucht: Formen bürgerlicher Nostalie in der deutschen Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts (Inauguraldissertation, Frankfurt am Main 1976), Peter *Blickle*, Heimat: a Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland (New York 2002)

[36] Simon *Bunke*, Heimweh: Studien zur Kultur- und Literatureschichte einer tödlichen Krankheit (Freiburg i.Br./Berlin/Wien 2009)

[37] Susan J. *Matt*, Homesickness: an American history (Oxford/New York 2011)

[38] Ann *Douglas*, Heaven Our Home: Consolation Literature in the Northern United States, 1830-1880. In: American Quarterly 26-5 Special Issue: Death in America (1974) 496-515

[39] Maia *McAleavey*, Soul-mates: David Copperfield´s Angelic Bigamy. In: Victorian Studies 52-2 (2010) 191-218

the popular beliefs, rhetoric, and emotions on death and afterlife of today's Western middle-class societies. This phenomenon is richly represented in numerous examples, including popular religious contexts, mass culture, and the arts.

Although there are several special publications, analysis of homecoming to heaven has a marginal status within scientific discourse and lacks a monographic exploration. This paper seems to be the first to concentrate on the idea itself, acting on a cross-cultural basis, and using a broad variety of primary sources.

III.   Research Questions

- How are concepts such as *home, ideal home,* and *at-homeness* being constructed in a diachronic perspective within the Anglophone cultural domain? What influenced them and how did they develop from an anthropologic and culture-historical view?

- What is the structure of classic paradisiacal topoi? Are there grounds to typologically reckon the *ideal home* among them?

- What are the possible origins of the *homecoming to god* metaphor? How is it being constructed and how does it function in its various manifestations?

- How and to what extent are such metaphors as *heavenly home* and *homecoming to god* used in religious discourses as a consoling instrument?

- How is an ironic reading of the *coming home after death* metaphor possible? How does it function?

IV.   Home

"Home doesn´t simply exist, but is made" Alison Blunt, *Home*, 23

1.   Home as an imaginary construction

Introduction

In their "essential guide to studying home and domesticity"[40], cultural geographers Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling state: "Home… is a place, a site in which we live."[41] A judgment, difficult to challenge – home is insomuch universal and all-around that it apparently needs no introduction. Home seems to start even before culture, it floats on the edge of Cultural, as animals also build their burrows. We are born into homes, they are our natural components, like legs or eyes; to a certain degree, we are *home*borgs. A homeless person often receives the same amount of pity as a handicapped person and we usually get rather nervous when the night catches us without a roof over our head.

Blunt and Dowling next assert, "home is also an idea … that is imbued with feelings … a spatial imaginary: a set of intersecting and variable ideas and feelings."[42] H. Easthope expresses the same thought in his article *A Place Called Home*: "Home is the fusion of a feeling "at home, sense of comfort, belonging, with a particular place."[43]

In summing up these ideas, I assert that home is a secure and comfortable space that one identifies with and feels belonging to.

As already mentioned above, "home" is a very broad subject. The framework of my topic makes it very important to distinguish between the study of the space itself and the study of a dream of a space. The ideal place is not a place, but a dream, a myth, and as such should also be analyzed. The central subjects of this chapter are neither a real physical place, nor the cultural practices connected with it, but the myth and abstraction derived from them, the "spatial imaginary" place of the idealized home. This is understood both as a locus and as a

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[40] Blunt, blurb of the book
[41] Ibid 2
[42] Ibid
[43] H. *Easthope*, A place called home. In: Housing, Theory and Society 21-3 (2004)128-138

direction: home as the best known condition – the loss of it – the longing for it – the search for the lost home and the idea of the impossibility of reaching it due to its ideality and metaphysicality. All these constituents pave the way for the appearance of the idea of a *home in heaven.*

In the following paragraphs I will analyze home, looking at it from anthropologic, linguistic, and cultural-historical positions.

Home: The Isolation of Meaning in Language

Such etymologic excursions are simultaneously rewarding and dubious when studying concepts taken out of their discursive context and seen only through the history of language. They can hardly hope to bring us nearer to a better understanding of them. But nevertheless, it can provide essential knowledge on the subject.

As Joost van Baak asserts, "the primary House terminology… belongs to the oldest layers of the Indo-European vocabulary."[44] The English *House* goes back to the Indoeuropean root *(s)keus- "to cover",[45] preserving its most distinctive element of meaning, shelter, protection, safety."

The representation of the idea of dwelling, built on one´s own territory, was expressed through Old English *ham*, from Proto-Germanic *haimaz.[46] Thus, *house* and *home* have different etymological backgrounds; *house* means protection, whereas *home* has connotations of settled way of life and of inheriting land. [47]

According to Kaye, the modern *home* in Germanic languages includes a palette of meaning which is lacking in other Indoeuropean languages, such as Slavic or Latin (1. Place of residence 2. Native land 3. A space for the domestic life, "abiding place of the affections"

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[44] Van Baak 24

[45] E.G *Koshkina*, Reprezentacija v jazyke mental'nogo predstavlenija o dome -zhilishhe kak centre «svoego“ prostranstva (diahronicheskij aspekt). In: Prostranstvo i metasfery jazyka: struktura, diskurs, metatekst (Moscow 2009) 180

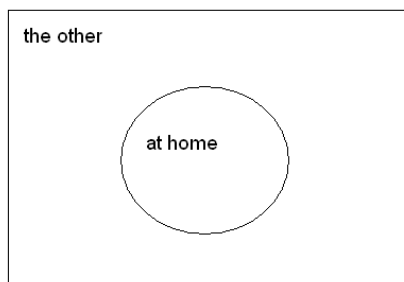[46] Online etymology dictionary http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=home <Last accessed 14.08.15>

[47] Koshkina 3

4. A place, where something was found or comes from, "home of the pine"5. A shelter, a place of refuge, and also the final rest, also the native and eternal dwelling place of the soul").[48]

It is important to indicate, as seen above, the word *home* itself is of course more ancient than its modern connotations, listed by Kaye, which appear in the opposition between "house" and "home."

The Home and the Other: The Establishing of Meaning

Humans have always tried to evade grief and suffering. They look for a place to find comfort and peace. The metaphorics used to depict such imaginary space have differed from age to age, but its basic function has never changed: it had to provide protection, fulfilling thereby the idea of the secure, impenetrable place and state (see picture). This includes the idea of self-fencing from the inimical "Other." The French anthropologist and archeologist André Leroi-Gourhan in his *L´espace de humanisé*[49] marks out three functions of a dwelling for all people:

1. The creation of a technically efficient milieu.
2. A framework for the social system.
3. The establishment of an orderly centre in an apparently chaotic universe.[50]

To understand a place as an "orderly centre", lying beyond the bounds of chaos, cloistered from it with four walls, is the first step towards "at-homeness". In this conception, home is a structured, ordered place, where things are familiar and clearly established, and internal processes often follow iterative models. It can be protected by patronizing gods,[51] or sacred objects, interpreted as such.[52] The hearth in its different manifestations – oven, dinner table, TV – is the notional centre of Home, projecting a metonymical similarity between home and

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[48] Kaye 22
[49] André *Leroi-Gourhan*, L´espace humanisé (Paris 1965) 150
[50] English translation by van Baak.
[51] J.M. *Lotman*, Vnutri myslyshih mirov. Chelovek-tekst-semiosfera-istorija (Moscow 1999) 464
[52] In contemporary dwellings this role can be played by decorative Buddha statues, Jesus figures, family pictures etc.

hearth ("to return to one's *hearth* and *home.*") Finally, warmth and dryness are the very first indicators of the idea of comfort.

Home is a place and condition best compared with solid ground under feet, something to grasp at, an orderly place in the hostile otherness of the surrounding space. Paraphrasing Bachelard, every dwelling, be it a hut or a castle, contains the primary principle of a shell. There is severe winter of otherness around, but it is warm and cozy inside the house. Joost van Baak formulates this consideration as: "a house … the cutting off, or partitioning off, of an amount of space from the rest of the world, and attributing to that piece of space particular preferences and values as the centre of the world from which all other directions and orientations are measured."[53]

The "fenced" character of the dwelling locus, the understanding of home as a secure and closed space is underlined by the particular significance given to the most notable openings through which its safety can be violated: door and threshold, window, or chimney. These openings, understood as symbolical holes in the boundaries of the cosmos of the dwelling, have a great significance in traditional cultures.

The second step, separating home from the outside Other is the realization of one's own belonging to the space. One identifies itself with a group, finding protection in a particular place and therefore also with the place.

Thus, home turns out to be a central and constitutive space with distinct borders. As we have seen, home – not "household", but the idea of home – comes to life as the element in the binary opposition to "own-other."

In fact, home makes a logical augmentation of potential binaries possible. A concept can form itself through its counterpart within a binary opposition: thus, if there is finiteness, then there *must be* also infiniteness, if there are transient things, then there *must be* eternal things. Thus, following the logic of grammar (often it is the pure matter of a prefix), new concepts can come to life. It is the same with the construction of Home: if there are states and places of uncertainty and suffering – the Other – then there again *must be* congruent reverse states and places – positioned on the other end of the binary opposition – associated with security, calmness and community, or the emotion of being "a friend among friends", i.e. the home[54].

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[53] Van Baak 11

[54] This dualism, intrinsic to human thinking and the problem of overcoming it – of the deconstruction of the law of excluded middle – has been of course the subject of many works, among which the books by L.Wittgenstein, G.Ryle, J.Derrida, etc.

This clear contraposition between "own" and "other" found its expression in everyday usage of language; such idioms as *to feel at home*, *my home is my castle*, *make yourself at home*, *home is where the heart is* excellently illustrate the point.

My home is my castle emphasizes the element of security and safety, imminent to the conception of home. The Russian phrase, "ja w dómike" (I´m at home), used by children playing tag to designate truce time functions in the same manner. It is usually shown by folding one´s hands over the head in a form of a gable.

Home is where the heart is reflects the importance of the self-identification with a particular space, in order to be able to call it "home."

The expressions *to feel/to be at home in/ with something* have a figurative meaning of knowing something perfectly well. For example, being known for some talent; being able to do something without thinking too much about it; without scruples or doubts; *to feel/to be at home in/with French*. This manifold meaning presupposes the sameness between being at home and a certain omnipotence.

Similar to the aforementioned expression, the common, *make yourself at home* interprets "being at home" as the impossibility of making a mistake, the impossibility of awkwardness or constraint – it is the freedom from the alienation of the Other.

Similar connotations of home are to be observed on the material of German historic idioms. Being at home gives certainty: *Daheim ist ein Mann zwei*; is associated with omnipotence and independence: *Daheim ist man König*; isolates from the chaos of the Other: *Zu Hause ein Löwe, draußen ein Lamm* and *Fern vom Haus ist nah beim Schaden*; underlines the self-evident nature of the self-identification with the domestic place: *Daheim ist daheim*.[55]

The Real and the Flow: The Idealization of Meaning

The condition of "being at home" can also be defined in terms of psychoanalysis: I used for my exploration Lacan´s category of Real[56] and Csikszentmihalyi´s Flow[57].

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[55] Josua *Eiselein*, Die Sprichwörter und Sinnreden des deutschen Volkes in alter und neuer Zeit (Freiburg 1840) 110
[56] Dylan *Evans*, Wörterbuch der Lacanschen Psychoanalyse (Wien 2002) 250
[57] Mihaly *Csikszentmihalyi*, Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience (New York 1990)

Lacan developed the conception of Real in order to describe the condition of a baby when it does not yet divide itself from the rest of the world and gets everything it needs immediately. This is the ultimate fulfilment of all wishes and needs. The condition of the Real is followed by the gradual separation of the self from ones surroundings and the further development of self-consciousness (the famous Mirror stage). In other words, the Real is the pre-conscious condition of supreme happiness.

The idea of "Flow", suggested by Csikszentmihalyi, is used to describe a particular mental condition: when a person is so involved in an activity that time and space seem to disappear and his/her consciousness is fully engaged in the process. This experience is connected to highly positive emotions.

In my conceptualization, Flow brings the social actor nearer to the lost condition of the Real. As one ceases to be aware of time they experience constant happiness. The idealized "being at home" – i.e., in a secure place and within a group of friends – means being constantly in the Flow. In this case roles and actions are familiar and clear allowing for their constant *happy* repetition.

Thus, the idealized Home is a *state* of everlasting calmness and comfort. At home, time within the walls, and the space beyond them, dissolve and are not realized. The canonical description of this never-ending amalgam of home and paradise, of the minimalistic eternity of single permanency is given by Ray Bradbury in his famous novel *Dandelion Wine* (1957):

Sitting on the summer-night porch was so good, so easy and so reassuring that it could never be done away with. These were rituals that were right and lasting; the lighting of pipes, the pale hands that moved knitting needles in the dimness, the eating of foil-wrapped, chilled Eskimo Pies, the coming and going of all the people. [...] And last of all, the children, who had been off squinting their way through a last hide-and-seek or kick-the-can, panting, glowing, would sickle quietly back like boomerangs along the soundless lawn, to sink beneath the talking talking talking of the porch voices which *would weigh and gentle them down . . .* [...] And the *voices chanted, drifted*, in moonlit clouds of cigarette smoke while the moths, like late apple blossoms come alive, tapped faintly about the far street lights, and the *voices moved on into the coming years…*[...] [58]

The idealized Real-home, where all participants are in the constant Flow, is shown here amply, the description contains: 1. A secure place of a group with connotations of comfort and seclusion 2. Deep emotion of belonging and self-identification with a place and a group 3. The emotion of being in the "right place", doing right things, deeply embedded in the

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[58] Ray *Bradbury*, The Dandelion Wine (New York 1985) 44-45, italics supplied.

happening– being in a Flow 4. Nothing happens, and nothing is wished to be happening, time dissolves and the Real begins in order to never end.

Conclusion

In today's world *home* has developed into a set of features, into a specific mental construction which is superimposed on or associated with a given physical or imaginary space. This construction is constituted by two crucial elements: 1. Ultimate safety 2. Self-identification and the emotion of belonging. Home is thought of as a harmonic place amidst chaos, bringing together a binary pair. On a psychoanalytical level this formed conception of home correlates with Lacan´s category of Real, the preconscious state of ultimate happiness due to the special state of the "I", when it is not yet separated from its surroundings. The loss of the Real conceptualized as the loss of Home is of enormous importance for the homecoming discourse, and consequently for the metaphor of homecoming to heaven. It is examined in detail in the chapter titled, *Nostalgia for lost "Home as Paradise"*.

2. The Making of Home: The 19th Century Middle-class Home Revolution

Introduction

It is very important to bear in mind that it is the image of the ideal home that is of interest for us in this paper. In the first part of his *The House in Russian Literature: a Mytho-poetic Exploration,* Dutch slavist Joost van Baak suggests several types of house images. One of the types fully encompasses the scope of concepts of the immense palette of what house/home can stand for:

"The House of Childhood, the Paternal/Parental House,

the House … as Paradise, the Old House,

the House of Memory and the House of the Future (that is, more genuinely Utopian in the political, or eschatological sense)"[59]

This is a comprehensive set of related home images, fundamentally important for the appearance of the "domesticated" version of afterlife. The conception of the ideal home as Paradise, which was once lost, as it was the parental house of childhood and which is hoped to be obtained in a Future (life). This additional meaning of home as a Parental & childhood space is of a high importance for the establishing of the coming-home-to-god metaphor and is

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[59] van Baak 70-72

elaborated farther in this thesis. This understanding of home is a more complicated one; this home is something more than just the idea of a giving protection and being identified with space. It is a superstructure, an overlay of new connotations over the "old" "basic" home. In the previous chapter we characterized the core of the mental construction "home." This chapter deals with the historical roots of the seemingly self-evident "at-homeness." Since when have we referred to this idea as a social and cultural phenomenon? How did it come into being and how was it developed? How did it influence worldviews and public imagination – especially about an afterlife? On no account do I imply in this chapter, that the described processes of "home-making" were developing identically in USA, Great Britain, Germany or Russia. What I do assert is that the idea of longing for some "ideal home," often incorporated into and adopted by religious rhetoric, doesn´t show structural differences within these societies. The social and historical processes which operate within social groups are unique and complicated, but the idea of coming back "home" is in comparison as simple as any other abstract and speculative idea. If the details and practices within its various manifestations differ – be it Goncharov´s *Oblomov*[60] or African American spirituals,[61] the so-called "core" (emotion of longing for the image of the ideal supernatural home that is unattainable in "this" world) is always the same.

Thus, this is a very general and a very short overview of the most important elements which historically conditioned the appearance of the notion of "home" that are common today. As in the rest of this thesis the examples are based mostly on Anglophone cultural material.

Three Elements of the "Making of Home"

    a. Separation of Spheres

As observed by Hareven, "the concept of the home as the family´s haven and domestic retreat emerged only about one hundred fifty years ago, and was initially limited to the urban middle classes."[62] However, according to Witold Rybczynski, the starting point for the development of the modern connotation of home was set in an earlier period, namely in the Holland´s Golden Age, and since then has been developing and was intensified by the processes of urbanization and industrialization.

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[60] See p. 44 of this thesis.
[61] See p. 64 of this thesis.
[62] Tamara K. *Hareven*, The Home and the Family in Historical Perspective. In: Social Research 58 (1991) 254

Due to them, the workplace was removed from the dwelling. As a result, the house gradually lost its significance as a place of daily work done by men and passed to the domain of women and children[63]. Men continued working outside the house and their perception of it gradually changed. The house came to be regarded as a place of rest; a respite from the public and work; and the space for the private life.[64] The second important consequence of the separation of spheres was the gradual appearance of a separate place for every type of vital activity, sleeping, washing, cooking, and eating.[65]

In America, the changes brought by the separation of spheres were combined with the development of labour-saving instruments and a democratic dislike for servants. This led to an even greater significance of the housewife as such.[66]

Apart from a new axiological position, the new domestic sphere soon gained its own culture, expressed in specific rites, artefacts and emotions. This specific domestic culture played a significant role in the establishing of the image of the ideal "sweet" home.

The working "father of the house" was seen practically as the emanation of god (in Germany it was the direct line from *Gottesvater* through the *Landesvater* to the *Hausvater*). The woman was considered his "helper," responsible for maintaining the sanctity of home and motherhood.[67] As a result, almost every manifestation of the image of the ideal house features such a correlation between masculinity and femininity taken for granted. Furthermore, this image *also* provided people with connotations of ideality.

b. The Making of Childhood

Taking into consideration that the experience of childhood is inherent in the constitution of the *ideal home, (forever) lost* as analyzed in this paper, it is essential to examine the history and social constructs surrounding the contemporary conception of childhood.

Gaston Bachelard alludes in his *Poetics of Space* to the modern child´s experience of home, describing it as a "land of Motionless Childhood", where we "live fixations of happiness"[68] what corresponds in an interesting way with the "Neverendingness", intrinsical to both home and paradise, mentioned above.

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[63] Ibid 259

[64] Witold *Rybczynski*, Home: A Short History of an Idea (Markham 1986)

[65] Davidoff, Hall 359

[66] Susan J. *Matt*, Homesickness: an American history (Oxford/New York 2011)

[67] Christina *de Bellaigue*, Faith and Religion. In: Colin *Heywood* (ed.) A History of Childhood: Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times Vol. 5 (Oxford/New York 2010) 151-153

[68] Bachelard 5-6

Bachelard emphasizes childhood as an immediate *living experience of paradise*:

[Home] maintains him [the human being] through the storm of the heavens and through those of life. <...>
It is the human being´s first world. <...> always, in our daydreams, the house is a large cradle. <...>
Life begins well, it begins enclosed, protected, all warm in the bosom of the house. [69]

In other words, childhood seems to be inseparable from Home, as it starts from it and is the "first world" and "cradle" of the child. Bachelard also appeals to the nostalgic and sedative elements of the once known home, comparing the thought of it with a retreat, a safe shell, where we "return in our night dreams", where the "garret" and "attic" we once loved remain. [70] It is notable that in analyzing the child´s experience of home Bachelard underlines the image of the first Parental House associated with the emotion of the metaphysical remoteness of childhood. An emotion shaped by idealized memories of lost happiness and purity lays the foundation for the future image of the ideal home.

These seeming self-evident patterns – almost "anthropologic constants" [71] – are in fact the very specific product of the European history of the Early Modern Age. European and North American middle-class childhood, fully integrated in and originating from the specific domestic culture with its rites and rules, made a big impact on the shaping of the image of the ideal happy home and its concrete manifestations through the social practices.

According to Ariès, the perception of childhood started to gradually change and it was first realized as a special period in the 17th century. [72] In medieval Europe children were treated as common members of grown-up society, wearing the same clothing, doing the same work, and participating in the same leisure activities as adults. Infants were seen as awkward "underdeveloped" adults, who should be as soon as possible helped to obtain the "normal" condition of maturity, this being expressed in bipedalism and talking. [73] A child was neither a child in today´s sense of the word, nor a grown-up in miniature, but rather a younger member of the society, "adult´s double, whose role he will get in the future." [74]

Toys and games were not seen as the priority of children, and in general, culture for children didn´t exist as it is known to us now. Childlike behavior was regarded on the same level as foolishness or the animal condition. Childhood was not constituted as a specific period and

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[69] Ibid 7
[70] Ibid 10
[71] Horst *Rabe*, Die Entdeckung der Kindheit (Konstanz 1980) 41
[72] Philippe *Ariès*, L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime (Paris 1960)
[73] Karin *Calvert*, Children in the house: The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600-1900 (Boston 1992)
[74] Calvert 67

therefore not as a separate and very special condition preceding adulthood; therefore it also *couldn´t* have been missed or the object of any later nostalgia. Karin Calvert writes in her monograph *Children in the House*, that society perceived children as underdeveloped grown-ups; childhood was a period of insufficiency, whereas adulthood was the aim and the reward.[75]

Childhood was perceived as a tiresome time, followed by more interesting periods of development. This can be deduced from analysis of the broad material of biographical and autobiographical character of the first decades of the 19th century.[76]

Deep changes occurred after 1750, when among many middle-class families in the US and Britain there was a certain revision of all popular forms of children furniture, clothing, and toys.[77] This is the period of the initial formation of children's culture. After 1770 children in portraits are shown with toys, which are now understood as the natural belongings of childhood. The attitude towards childhood gradually changed and it was apprehended as a very special separate period of life, provided with special activities, approved by society.

Comparing the attitude to children in the beginning of the 18th century and in the end of it through the example of English literature makes this change of perspective especially clear. Daniel Defoe´s *Roxane* (1724) gives birth to approximately 10 children during the novel, of which she tries to get rid of as soon as possible. Her children are depicted as constant obstacles. As one of her daughters pursues her, Roxane doesn´t dare to order to kill her for fear of… rumors and persecution. In the gothic novel, *The Monk* (1796) by M. G. Lewis, a mother attempts to prevent the murder of her daughter with her own life, even after death she returns as a ghost in order to continue protecting her child. This proto-Victorian relationship between loving mother and innocent child replaces the attitude, which one literary critic summarized as such: the children in 18th century prose were born and then immediately brought away in order to never come up again.

If the parents of the 17th and 18th centuries used clothes and furniture to make their children ready for the world, the parents of the 19th century used clothes and furniture to protect them from contact with the world. The connections of the child to the rest of the society, the market, village, or town decreased. A certain isolation between the child and the rest of the

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[75] Ibid 81
[76] Ibid
[77] Ibid

society took place.[78] Consequently, the framework of home was more deeply institutionalized, becoming the "first world" of the human experience.

The romantic 19th century saw children as innocent and almost holy beings, uncorrupted by the cruel and sinful world. Karin Calvert wittily notices that, in this era the culminating moment of one´s life occurred at childhood, surrounded by an aura of sanctity, and ever after the curve of life went downhill.[79]

Traditional Christian notions on the innocence of the child, such as the Biblical are enmeshed with the Romantic understanding of children as pure and natural beings.[80] Popular theology, represented by the increasing number of edifying journals and literature, conceptualized children as bearers of the pure and innocent spirit.[81] Childhood became sacred. Babies were compared with angels that had descended to earth, if they died they just returned back to their usual state.[82] Wordsworth best expressed this Romantic understanding of the heavenly essence of babyhood: "our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting,"[83] during our life we are withdrawing from god. Growing-up was not seen as progress anymore, but rather as a regression.

Childhood started to morph into a synonym for the ideal, best, happiest, and purest time in life. Whatever there is later, at first everything was full of hope and happiness. Adulthood contained the new anxious feeling of loss, opposite to the previous sentiments attached with childhood i.e. getting through it as soon as possible. This deep axiological change in the perception of one´s own childhood is one of the pillars holding up the homecoming to heaven metaphor. See more on the influence of the experience of childhood lost on the homecoming metaphor in the chapter *Nostalgia for lost "Home as Paradise"*.

   c. *New Domestic Culture of Comfort*

The establishment of home as a "key institution of society"[84] was in many ways a phenomenon of the same order as the separation of spheres and the new conception of

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[78] Rabe 42
[79] Calvert 153
[80] De Bellaigue 150
[81] Calvert 149
[82] Ibid
[83] William *Wordsworth*, Ode: Intimations of Immortality (1804), http://www.bartleby.com/101/536.html <Last accessed 14.08.15>
[84] De Bellaigue 149

childhood, if not its consequence. The image of home grew to contain immeasurable value and the growing aspiration for comfort was integral to its conception as such.

Taking into consideration the number of dangers threatening one outside the walls of home – as Davidoff and Hall write, "continuing political unrest, the exigencies of poverty, brutality, pressing sexuality, disease and death were all too familiar"[85] – its significance as a bulwark and haven becomes more than apparent. The more dangerous it was outside, the more concrete and desirable was the idea of a separate and secure place, of a comfortable shell. One Italian traveller wrote on his impressions of the voyage to England in the 1820's: "comfort is in the mouth of every Englishman at every moment" and that "family took the place of continental "society"; even the English national song seemed to be "Home Sweet Home."[86]

Home turns to the main bourgeois ideal of space and gradually achieves clear connotations associating it with paradise. Iconographically, the whole 19th century – from anonymous American needle-works, to German Biedermeier painters, to the domestic Swedish idylls of Carl Larsson – is one big devotion to home.

19th Century. New England origin. Needlework sample

A peasant´s homecoming, F.G.Waldmüller, 1833
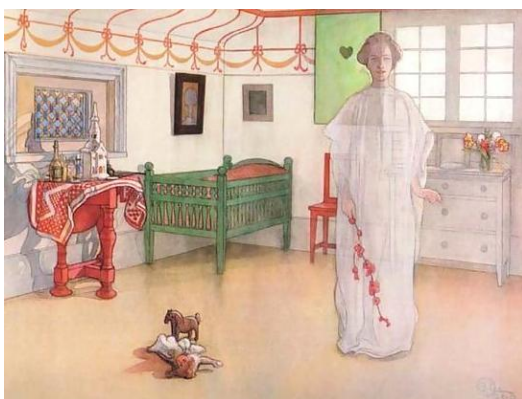
Home's Good Angel, Carl Larsson (1853 -1919)

[85] Davidoff, Hall 357
[86] Ibid 360

Religion, especially in its Evangelical forms, also played an enormous role in the "idealized conceptions of the domestic realm"[87]. E.g. popular Evangelical authors William Cowper and Hannah More understood home as "a sanctuary" from the world of commerce, "lost in iniquity".[88] The sanctity of home and the holiness and innocence of children living *in*side were in clear opposition to the "sinful" and dangerous *out*side – this familiar binary "own-other" is traced here at a new level of representation.

Obviously under its influence, Martin Heidegger argued, "it is only in the private sphere that one can be one's authentic self, as opposed to the impersonal and identikit They of the public realm."[89] Due to the separation between public and private spheres special clothes and behavior for the home emerge and the importance of common meals grows.[90]

This comfortableness, a new coziness, is the essential element in the making of home. Brigitta Schmidt-Lauber in her *History of Gemütlichkeit* (2003) considers it to be an integral part of the private-life-discourse and traces its origins to the differentiation between private and public life. The desire of much of the middle class for the ideal home was embodied in the image of a "white cottage with thatched roof and porch embowered with honeysuckle and roses".[91] It is a place where "the world´s cares and sorrows might cease, for all was humility, comfort and peace."[92] Later we will see these "white cottages" transposed to heaven (s. chapter on *Heavenly Reunions in Victorian England & North America*).

Conclusion

Due to social and economic development, the domestic space was separated from the place of work and turned to the domain of women and children, thus acquiring new connotations of privacy and comfort. The gradual "discovery" of childhood laid the basic foundation for the principal possibility of experiencing and losing "paradise." This is tremendously important for the metaphor of homecoming to heaven.

The new meaning given to family and home, filled with religious connotations, qualitatively reflected the new attitude to the domestic space, as the best, most comfortable and desired

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[87] De Bellaigue 150

[88] Ibid

[89] Martin *Heidegger*, Building, dwelling, thinking. In: M. *Heideger*, Poetry, Language, Thought (New York 2011) 141-159

[90] Brigitta *Schmidt-Lauber*, Gemütlichkeit: eine kulturwissenschaftliche Annäherung (Frankfurt/New York 2003) 154

[91] Davidoff, Hall 361

[92] Excerpt from a commonplace book of an Essex farmer´s daughter. In: ibid 361-362

place. In the 19th century, the idea of home became a new *self-evident* value of the "earthly paradise" and "best place in the world." The fixation on home is seen by the popularity of the invocation "Home, Sweet Home", "ubiquitously reproduced on doormats, embroidered wall-hangings, pictures and other items."[93]

3. Nostalgia for lost "Home as Paradise"

Introduction

Whereas the two previous chapters examined the constitution of home from anthropologic and cultural-historic positions, the third is concerned with the description and analysis of the longing for home. It is a crucial link in the thread of my argument, illustrating how the new conception of home turned into one a popular representation of paradise. I will concentrate on the phenomenon of nostalgia in the form of homesickness that is connected to it – the longing for "home lost" and the impossibility of fullfilling this longing. This fact brings us to home's metaphorical correlation with the abstract paradise of the afterlife.

Nostalgia-Homesickness

Homesickness was put into scientific discourse in the 17th century and has since come to be considered as a real malady for over two centuries. According to Bunke, this late, strictly medical discourse is the reason why we can´t talk of *The Odyssey* or *Exodus* in terms of homesickness.[94]

Swiss physician Johannes Hofer published his *Dissertatio Medica de Nostalgia, Oder Heimwehe* (Basel 1688), which defined and described the new disease. Doctor Hofer coined the term *Nostalgia* (from Greek *nostos*, meaning "homecoming" and *algos* meaning "pain"), determined its symptoms; identified groups of people especially prone to it; its anamnesis, and a possible treatment.[95] Hofer´s concern were Swiss soldiers and mercenaries who got sick if they stayed away from their homeland for too long. In fact, it was so much associated with the Swiss that nostalgia´s other name was *the Swiss disease*.

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[93] Bridget *Bennett*, Home Songs and the Melodramatic Imagination: From "Home, Sweet Home" to The Birth of a Nation. In: Journal of American Studies 46 (2012) 171
[94] Bunke 196
[95] Ibid 26

The malady was considered to be a serious one and of to have an epidemiological character as well; it was accompanied by anxiety, loss of strength, and depression. People fell to the ground and their only thought was of their home and families. The lethal outcome was not at all excluded and was even inevitable, unless the patient returned to his homeland, at least for a while. The new diagnose caught on in medical quarters and its diagnosis grew quite quickly.

In the scope of Romanticism homesickness tended to be interpreted more generally and was gradually released from its pathological / clinical dimension.[96] The distant homeland / home underwent romanticization and became a classic topos. Practically, it is the loss of a state which promotes its further idealization. The longing for home became one of the forms of Sehnsucht, longing for a mystical distance mingled with the longing for the lost home, lost childhood, and finally lost innocence – as Blickle writes in his book on the conception of Homeland in German culture, "the nostalgia associated with the idea of Heimat has its source in every adult´s awareness of change and of the losses that accompany the loss of youth."[97]

I don´t see a conundrum in the distinction between homeland and home within the discourse of nostalgia. On the structural level the function of both remains here the same, whereas the imaginary can be quite varied. These can be descriptions of familiar nature or household / domestic issues. Are they not interchangeable here, if their function remains the same – to serve as identification marks?

In *Yearning for Yesterday* (1979), Davis suggests that nostalgia uses the past to recreate a specially constructed past that serves the present-day´s needs of man and society.[98] It corresponds with the famous statement by Ernst Bloch, who said, "Heimat is that which shines everyone into his or her childhood, but it is a place where no one has ever been".[99]

Childhood – and therefore the parental home as the structured universe of the child´s experience – becomes that region of happiness, lost somewhere on the mythical side; it migrates to the border of a dim dream. Childhood is the ideal object of nostalgia, due to its farness and vagueness while at the same time bearing features of stability.

Why One Can´t Really Come Home?

In 1798 Kant noted that people who returned home after long absences were usually disappointed. They thought that they desired to return to a *place*, but of course they desired to

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[96] Ibid 392
[97] Blickle 131
[98] Fred *Davis*, Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia (New York 1979)
[99] Ernst *Bloch*, Das Prinzip Hoffnung Vol. 5 (Frankfurt am Main 1965) 16

return to a *time*.[100] Coming back home is spoken of as returning to paradise – the aforementioned mythologisation of the left home, its "paradising" is on hand – but it is impossible in "this" world. People return, but alas it´s not the same river and not the same man. Paraphrasing Ankersmith, the way forward is the broad highway, but the way back is a cobweb of side streets and dark alleys.

As Hobsbawm noticed, the emigrants from villages of Creus didn´t consider themselves Creusois, until they moved to Paris.[101] This is the "experience of home from a non-home perspective."[102] The nostalgic notion of home is possible after the cognition of the void of Otherness.

The turn of the century brought about technological progress and the general urbanization of the population – country people moved to the towns, settling in small rooms and losing their aboriginal homes. "This was a period in which mass immigration, increasing urbanization and expansion involving forced migrations were all contributing to shifting formations of the nation, creating a nostalgic longing for home."[103]

On the whole, during the 19th century, changing social conditions brought dramatic changes to everyday life. Families felt that they were divided by forces beyond their control. Men left home every day for work, elder children went to school, and the younger remained in their nursery upstairs. Such situations were of course a fertile soil for the flourishing of nostalgia. Objects such as the cradle became symbols, called to represent the conception of idyllic past, when the family lived and worked together in harmony by the hearth – living in poverty, but in happiness. Not without reason in Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916) a cradle is chosen to symbolize abstract mankind.

Starting with the centennial of the USA in 1876, Americans developed a new interest in their colonial past. It seemed far away enough to assume new idealized connotations. Many middle class people began to compile family trees, histories of their towns, and collecting antiques.

As long as geography was an obstacle people thought that they longed for a lost space. In reality, they always longed for a lost time. Due to fast industrialization that led to radical transformations in everyday life, migrants, returned back home after many years away. They

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[100] I. *Kant*, Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht (1798) www.korpora.org/Kant/aa07/119.html <Last accessed 14.08.15>
[101] E. *Hobsbawm*, Exile: a keynote address. In: Social Research 58, Home: a place in the world (1991) 65-68
[102] Theano S. *Terkenli*, Home as a Region. In: Geographical Review 85-3 (1995) 328
[103] Bennett 173

realized that the home which was the object of their passionate desires was not anymore / never was as they imagined. It changed, and / or they changed too. After journeys to the old home and returning back to the new one, many questioned whether they had any home at all; thus were the beginnings of the emotion of existential homelessness. An emotion characteristic of the 20th century frame of mind.[104]

Coming Home – Coming to Paradise: The Path Leading Home (Home as direction)

Since its appearance as such, the image of home has been understood as an ideal and desirable destination, as "a stable refuge for the individual."[105] On the mythological level, home is simultaneously a starting and final point: "the point of departure and return for journeys."[106] A hero in Campbell´s conception of *Monomyth* starts his journey from home and after many adventures, returns back home again.[107] As Alison Blunt writes, "home becomes a temporal signifier as an imagined point of origin and return that implies a longing for an unattainable past."[108]

Joost van Baak formulated this idea in following words:

It need hardly be said that the Homecoming story is of fundamental importance. Suffice it here to refer to the Odyssey as a model. Its status as a universal and archaic plot type demonstrates the intrinsic, natural connections within the triangle that constitutes the basis of the "arch-fabula": Hero-Road-House (or Home). This triangle implicitly represents a specific world-order in which the House is the invariant "centre" to which all plot developments gravitate.[109]

It is also noteworthy that the verbs of movement "come", "go", "arrive," etc. in combination with the lexeme "home" are always used without any preposition: *come/go/arrive home* – home is the destination per se, the proto-destination of all destinations.

The desire to return home can become a real obsession. Susan Matt gives a brilliant example on this point in her investigation *Homesickness in America*. In 1920 a Romanian immigrant Marcus Ravage and his French wife visited their villages of origin. Ravage wrote about their journey:

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[104] Matt 6
[105] J. Douglas *Porteous*, Home: The Territorial Core. In: Geographical Review 66-4 (1976) 390
[106] Ibid
[107] Joseph *Campbell*, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (Princeton 1968) xlvii
[108] Blunt 213
[109] Van Baak 68

"As for the old place, why it was the one thing in all the world I wanted to see. It was the thought that some day I would go back that had kept me alive. Only I had been dreaming of it so long that the craving has come to seem more agreeable that the realization. To return to Rumania was like going to heaven." [110]

Thus, home becomes home not only through the experience of it in childhood, but also through the experience of its loss. "Home...can be most fully appreciated only by leaving it. As psychic space, home paradoxically involves a journey, the result of which may be the loss of the original home image and an infinitude of regret."[111] Thus, the journey, the road, is the integral part of home, one of its inalienable constituents. It is the element, through which home can in principle be enunciated. But, transferred to a higher level of abstraction, Home and Journey acquire – not without Christian influence – more general meanings. One´s life begins to be understood as a journey, and any journey inevitably leads to one only possible direction – home, which is then understood as the end of all sorrows, as the final object of the Sehnsucht. But it is Death, which is in the end of life (Journey), which is thus understood as the final Home (last place of repose after the Journey) and adopts metaphorics peculiar to it. Dying (euphemistically "departing (!)") is then conceptualized as the final homecoming. The saying, *to reach one's journey's end* reflects this conception. Just as one returns home after a long and dangerous journey, awaited by worried relatives, in the same way one returns after a much longer journey – the Journey of Life – back to the awaiting loving Father.

Sehnsucht for The Real

If we remember the conception of the Real, mentioned in the first chapter, and apply it in the context of nostalgia, we will see that the longing for the lost Home is to a certain – psychoanalytical – extent the longing for the lost Real. The Real and the Home can both be truly realized only through their loss; as soon as we become aware of Home, we lose it and become homeless.

Freud´s follower Otto Rank expressed similar thoughts in his widely known *Trauma of Birth* (1929), in which he psychoanalytically connected anguish and fear with the unrealizable desire of returning back to the womb.

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[110] Marcus Eli *Ravage*, "Our sentimental Pilgrimage," Saturday Evening Post 195 (March 17, 1923): 4; Marcus Eli *Ravage*, "Our sentimental Pilgrimage: The Return of the Native," Saturday Evening Post 195 (March 24, 1923):138. In: Matt 170
[111] Porteous 390

The blissful womb, the beautiful Real, the miraculous Eden, the sweet Home – we can use many graceful comparisons, but the whole process always has the same basic structure: the state of happiness is superseded by the state of loss and subsequent desire of regaining lost happiness.

All images of these spaces of ultimate happiness are always static, as nothing can ever happen there (recall the Bachelard´s descripton of Parental home as "motionless"), no dramatic development is possible in paradise. To be in a "happy place" – in any of its manifestations – is imagined as the eternal uninterrupted Flow, a particular condition of the forgetfulness of self. Conversely, the state of searching for Paradise, the emotion of being excluded from a happy place, is characterized by clear awareness and accountability.

Different manifestations of this phenomenon, which I interpreted as a "Sehnsucht for Real" can be observed in many literary texts.

In his *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* (1915) James Joyce depicted this desire through the main character. A boy in a Jesuit boarding school gets sick and wants to go back to mother. Realizing that it is impossible, as she can come only in a fortnight, he decides to fall asleep. Either go home to mother (Real), or not feel, not realize, disappear (Real´s substitute). In the earlier short story by Anton Chekhov *Sleepy* (1888) the little babysitter, torn from her family, kills the infant in her care because it keeps her from sleeping. Death-like sleep functions as the substitute for the static condition of longed-for self-forgetfulness of the Real.

The Sehnsucht for Real taken to extremes, has found its expression not only in a literary form, but also came to the scope of criminology. Karl Jaspers´ famous *Homesickness and Crime* (1909) examines a series of infanticides, committed by nurse-maids. The motive was always the same: desperate homesickness. They believed that if the reason which kept them abroad would disappear they would be able to return home. The nurse-maids did things that they would never do in other circumstances. Again, desires to return home and to fall asleep are in both cases equally strong and display in a certain sense a yearning for the Real, a yearning for the pre-conscious state, for the Rankian womb. The surrounding reality comes into collision with the known happiness of the lost home. The paroxysm of homesickness can thus be resolved only by falling asleep (imitation of Home / Real) or removing an obstruction.

The symbolic impossibility of coming home correlates with the objective impossibility of return. An article on the recapture of fugitive slaves, published in one of the colonial

newspapers, gives an account of a case when five slaves endeavored to float away in a canoe down the Ogeechee River. They hoped that the river would lead them back to Africa.[112] In 1913, just after her arrival to Cleveland, Jewish emigrant Matlya Wichman sent a picture postcard with a big ship to the relatives she left. It read, "Please God, on this ship I will go back to Russia".[113] Depicted however, was a steamship, which plied the waters between Cleveland and neighboring Buffalo on Lake Erie. Wasn´t this ship indeed a sort of a symbolic canoe? This becomes even more apparent when we consider that WWI and the October revolution took place shortly afterwards.

The sublimation of yearning, the replacement of the desired-for "Real" to the imaginative metaphysical realm is intrinsic to our study of the metaphor of homecoming to heaven. The Sehnsucht finds its expression in a dream of returning to the "far-off country" of our own past. A country where solace could be found and is supported by the idealized memories of a directly known experience of paradise, i.e. childhood in its "middle-class" shape. The impossibility of reaching the desired-for in "this" world – being the integral part of the Sehnsucht per se – compels us to displace it to an Esoteric "other world." The emotion of being "not at home" impels us – according to examined earlier dualistic logic – to imagine, that "somewhere" there *actually* is a "home", and if not "here below", then "up in heaven."[114] Thus, homelessness and the emotional experience of home *being far away and therefore missed* are the crucial elements, which lay the foundation of the conception of heavenly homecoming.

The Prime Example: Oblomovka

The domestic and family culture of European and Russian aristocracy in the 19th century was to a great extent homogeneous in its practices and manifestations. I permit myself to use a Russian text as an example for the Sehnsucht for the Real, not only to show its extent and cross-cultural ubiquity, but mostly to give the most finished example of it as applied to the forever lost and never obtainable "fixation of happiness" (in Bachelard´s sense) – home of childhood.

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[112] Philip D. *Morgan*, Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry (Chapel Hill 1998); See more in the chapter *Homegoing in African American Culture.*
[113] Author´s archive; translated from Russian.
[114] In chapters on manifestations of the homecoming metaphor in the African American culture and on ironic reading of the metaphor are examined illustrative examples of suicide as way out of homesickness.

The Sehnsucht for the Real, represented by home, manifested itself in its entirety in Goncharov´s *Oblomov*[115] (1859), which is one of the most significant novels in Russian literature. The main character, Oblomov, is a 32 year old landowner. He lives in St. Petersburg and spends every day on his couch, feeling no motivation or desire for any sort of activity. He feels indisposed to *public* work, he rejects visiting public places, but he also has no family. Spending his life in a half-dream, half-wake, he has wonderful dreams about his childhood, spent in his old family seat at Oblomovka. The descriptions of the estate and of its way of life are a key element in the novel, constituting a reference point of constant mental asylum for the main character. Oblomovka represents a sacred, blissful place, where fairy tales are almost indiscernible from real life. There, dreams are the continuance of reality and are intertwined with it. Oblomovka is the ideal, secure, and agreeable parental home. It has an almost mythological quality:

…that peaceful corner of the earth upon which our hero, in his slumber, opened his eyes. There, on the contrary, the heavens seemed to hug the earth--not in order that they might the better aim their thunderbolts, but in order that they might the closer enfold it in a loving embrace. In fact, they hovered low in order that, like a sheltering, paternal roof, they might guard this chosen corner of the earth from every adversity [...] the stars twinkle in the heavens with the welcoming mien of friends.[116]

The space itself is domesticated and full of love, represented through favorable natural conditions. The sky makes a natural ceiling, enclosing home from every danger, and the far-off alien stars are "friends with the welcoming mien," resembling at the same time the ceiling of a nursery or gothic cathedral. The hills are as domesticated as the sky and take over the role of the walls:

Also the hills of that spot were no more than reduced models of the terrible mountains which, in other localities, rear themselves to affright the imagination.[117]

Oblomovka complies with all the requirements of an image of paradise (see chapter *Paradise*). It is a quiet and protected place, where blissful existence seems to be truly infinite. Nothing happens there and nothing can happen; it is a place without time, and consequently without death; death is expelled from there, as no one dies in Paradise:

Indeed, during the past five years not a single soul of that local population of hundreds has died either a violent death or a natural. Even should a man or a woman expire of old age or a senile disease, it is not long before the rest have got over their astonishment at the unusual occurrence.[118]

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[115] Ivan *Goncharov*, Oblomov (New York 2008)
[116] Ibid 104
[117] Ibid

Oblomovka is a representation of the most domesticated space, fully fixated on itself, on home, family and family life. A childhood, spent there as a young master, became for Oblomov, a living experience of paradise. The more he was bereaved of it, the more the myth grew. As Porteous writes, "people... come to know home much more by its absence, from a non-home perspective."[119]

Oblomov's nurse told him fairy tales and magic stories of utopian places,

"Whereof nothing was known except that folk there went for walks, and were free from sorrow and care."[120]

Fairytales mingle with the reality, constituting a unified idea of the forever-lost ideal home, so dissimilar to Oblomov´s surroundings:

Mournfully he gazed about him, and saw that everything in life was charged with evil and misfortune. And as he did so he would keep thinking of the magic country where neither cruelty nor noise nor grief existed, […] where folk were fed and clothed for nothing. [121]

Oblomov´s only real longing and desire was to return to this unreachable paradise and its peace. Compared with the domestic universe of Oblomovka, the public world and his house in St.Petersburg seems for him to be a false and untrue sphere of life. In fact, using Hofer´s terminology, we could diagnose the clear case of *heimweh*, as all symptoms are on hand: lack of will, weakness, reclining position. Finally, he marries a woman, who, lavishing maternal care upon him, was able to build up an *imitation* of his dream, which he accepted.

Conclusion?

The study of the "coming home to heaven" would have been incomplete and deficient without taking into consideration the nostalgic patterns, analyzed above. In this chapter, written in what may be a somewhat controversial style and using a seemingly arbitrary material, my aim was to show the internal structure of "a deeply sentimental nostalgia for one´s own personal childhood"[122] and home, which can equally affect Swiss soldier, Romanian immigrant, or a Russian landlord.

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[118] Ibid 109
[119] Porteous 328
[120] Goncharov 121
[121] Ibid 123
[122] Blickle 131

The experience of the loss of home is crucial for denoting its ideality. As Peter Blickle writes, "to long for a Heimat and to perceive Heimat, we had to become mobile and homeless."[123] The only possible form of the "true" home is the longing for it.

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[123] Ibid 40

V. Paradise

1. The Mechanism of a "Happy Place"

Introduction

My aim in this chapter is to take up the discussion of the main features of images of paradise and to see how the image of the ideal home, analyzed in the previous chapter, correlates with it. I will briefly go through different representations of paradise/idyllic/utopian spaces, intrinsic to Western culture. I will analyze them typologically as a space and a destination. In short, I want to show, what makes paradise a paradise.

Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang in their book *Heaven: A History* suggest two models of how Heaven can be constructed, visualized, and described – the theocentric model and the anthropocentric model.[124] The representations of Heaven that conform to the theocentric model are characterized by a high level of abstraction, they don´t go into detail regarding the afterlife: "eternal life will concern god; this is all we know."[125] The anthropocentric model, on the contrary, tries to depict the afterlife focusing on the human. This short analysis focuses strictly on the anthropocentric models, as the theocentric models of the afterlife are usually scarce in terms of imagery and details.

Thus, I don´t presuppose differentiating between fairyland, paradise, idyll, or utopia, but to regard them just as different manifestations of the same idea. This being the obviously metaphysical / esoteric abstract space or condition that is full of comfort and joy and devoid of pain and suffering (a "happy place" or a "happy state" in my terminology). The aim of this chapter is not to give a cultural history and evolution of concrete topoi of this "place of absolute happiness" but rather to contrastively look at the typical iterative elements, which endow images with connotations of paradise and are the means through which such manifestations are at all possible.

In order to place the home-metaphor among other representations of paradise, I will give a brief typological overview of them and examine how paradise and the journey to paradise are

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[124] McDannel 353
[125] Ibid 354

constructed and function. Whether Christian or Pagan, these topoi, complying with the anthropocentric model, have similar constitutive components. They are also presupposed by the conception of the heavenly Home: manifest other-worldliness, utmost pleasure, necessity of a journey to reach it, accessibility only after death or under fantastic conditions.

Space/Direction – Where is "Happy Place"? How to get there?

The main and most essential feature of the space/condition of ultimate happiness, of any kind, is its fundamental inaccessibility. The conception of Paradise is constituted by contrast with its surroundings in the framework of binary opposition: if there is so much sorrow everywhere, then there *must* exist a place – somewhere – free of it. Placed "somewhere," paradise is not bound (or bound conditionally) to geography. It is essential that it *cannot but be*, due to the aforementioned dualistic logic. This is also the reason for the impenetrability of paradise – it exists, but not on this end of the binary. The whole situation must be turned upside down in order to make paradise penetrable. One of the most common and "logical" "turnovers" is the notion of death, symbolically opening this gap – a basic part of vast varieties of religion and mythology.

However, there exist several possibilities to get to the mythical place, yet all of them contain a strong magic element and should be therefore also seen as "turnovers." For example, finding a special cave (like the famous one near Lake Avernus); to eat one´s way through the porridge (Schlaraffenland); to plant magic beans (Jack and the Beanstalk); to draw a circle on the mirror at midnight and utter magic words (children´s "magic" rites & games; e.g. it can summon the Candy King, who would bring the young conjurer to a Candy Kingdom, lying on the reverse side of the moon), etc.

The second trait of a "happy place"/"happy state" is that it is elusive at the very last moment. Orpheus always turns around on the last step. Gilgamesh, with great difficulty, manages to obtain the flower of immortality for all people. When he had nearly returned to his hometown Uruk, the snake ate the flower. Adam and Eve had a chance to stay in Eden forever but they lost it through a vexing mistake.

Certain manifestations of a "happy place" can be gained only through a nostalgic insight, like those of Golden Age or Home. It is impossible to *get* there, but only to *return* and only through mental speculation.

Finally, one can attempt to reconstruct "the ideal place of absolute happiness" in reality. However, the search for paradise (happiness, eternal life, ideal Oblomovka, Communism, etc.) seems to function as an asymptote: paradise can seem to be endlessly approached, but never really reached.

Characteristics – What is "Happy Place" Like?

The imagery of all ideal spaces is inevitably influenced by reality and notions of happiness from within the society in which the image of the particular ideal space was shaped. Interestingly, the freshness and shade of the Garden don´t usually arise in cold climates. In this respect the interdependency between the divine Garden and landscape-gardening is an interesting point. The formal baroque garden is the counterpoint to the "wilderness" of the English garden, After Milton, the understanding of uncultivated nature as of the successor of the Eden, created by god, came to the front. It also fit in the Rousseauistic antithesis of Nature – Culture as the contraposition between divine and human gardens.

Nevertheless, every ideal space on a basic level is a hypertrophied *locus amoenus*, with its necessary constituents – mild weather, plenty of food, and utmost beauty. Among classical and ancient descriptions provided by Pindar or Horace, we find further accounts of places like this in Germanic poetry: Anglo-Saxon *Happy Land* or the Middle High German *Poor Heinrich*, proving the continuity of the archetypical image. Paradise is described apophatic to the known reality: there is no cold, no suffering, etc.

Further crucial characteristics are distinct borders, stasis, and occupancy:

- The happy space usually has clear and firm borders: as any garden, the Garden in paradise has a fence and pearly gates, locked with keys; Greek Fortunate Isles, Celtic Avalon, and St. Brendan´s paradise island are fenced off by water; Arcadia is firmly fortified by lofty mountains. As Russel writes, "paradise... is a city when seen from outside and ... garden when seen from inside."[126]

- Every image of the happy space bears a sharply defined static character. There is a famous anecdote about Dante, who is said to have been suffering a lot when writing

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[126] Russel 106

his *Paradiso*. It was truly tormenting for his imagination because nothing can happen in paradise. Every ideal space represents a quasi-frozen happy moment, set on endless repeat (remember the aforementioned Flow in the Real).

- Every manifestation of the happy space presupposes the presence of equally happy inhabitants. Without a certain staff, in the person of saints, relatives and friends, psychopomps, ancient heroes, famous personalities, etc. every anthropocentric picture of paradise loses an integral constituent. Moreover, it is occupied by divine creature(s) of a higher order, taking over protective and patronizing functions.

Home as "Happy Place"

Conceptualizing domestic space as "happy place" has a long history. Taking into consideration the increase in significance of the domestic space and the appearance of the new connotations of "home" that were analyzed in the previous chapter, it is not surprising that the comparison between *home* and *paradise* soon became commonplace.

The tendency to make a paradise out of a domestic space can find its rhetorical expression in a multitude of ways: beginning with book titles, such as *My Home, My Paradise*[127] and ending with marketing tricks, like naming a new village of cottages "paradise."[128] The juxtaposition of home and paradise is seen as something "natural" and self-evident. Home as the state of calm and happiness is being provided with absolute parameters and thus undergoes idealization.

The idealization of "at-homeness," which found a broad expression in Western culture, included a set of features that allowed for the positioning of the "ideal home" in line with such classical paradisiacal topoi as Garden, Blissful Island or pastoral Arcadia. The ideal home always has a comfortable climate (roof), is safely protected from external actions (walls), there is plenty of food (a kitchen), time doesn´t exist (no events can shatter the permanent repetition of the same ritualized actions), and the happiness of its inhabitants (family members; among them parents as patronizing creatures) is therefore endless.

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[127] http://www.amazon.de/Home-Paradise-Elemente-natürlichen-Lebens/dp/3854981325 <Last accessed 14.08.15>
[128] http://rai32.ru/about <Last accessed 14.08.15>

The ideal home as paradise, as "happy place" takes on the notion of being the most beautiful place imaginable and also as the lost place, which is being sought after. An innocent child lives in the earthly paradise, until it leaves it and eagerly tries to return back, this not possible – like the impossibility of going back to a Golden Age or Eden.

In sum, home appears thus as the "credible" and actual version of paradise for the Modern Age. Dante, writing in the Middle Ages, would never use any "home" epithets. Home has overtaken the function and structure of classical paradisiacal topoi and the notions of a *happy place* – an anthropocentric image of the place of refuge from the processes of time and mortality – of the modernist human.

2. Origins of the Metaphor of "Homecoming to Heaven"

Introduction

The discourse surrounding the Homecoming to god has grown historically and its coming-to-be did not occur in the course of the development of a singular thought. It was rather the fruit of a spontaneous mixture of several independent ideas. In this chapter the archaic origins of the modern understanding of "home in heaven" will be analyzed. I will look at the basic conceptions which underline and precede the considered metaphor: 1. Heaven conceived of as a dwelling of god(s) 2. Death and dying interpreted as a move to another dwelling 3. Belief in the celestial origin of the soul.

Archaic Roots: The Dwelling

a. Sky as the House of God

The idea of a *dwelling* is of the fundamental significance for any further development of our metaphor. In order to be thinkable, any creature or appearance must "dwell" somewhere. Dwelling is the imprescriptible quality of any being. Man dwells in the hut, deer dwells in the woods, water dwells in the river. A homeless[129] person is always frightening, is always the outcast, they break out of the order of things. Spirits and divine beings constitute no exception

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[129] In the context of this paper, where the differentiation between *home* and *house* is of high importance, it would be better to say "without a dwelling" or "abodeless."

and also have their living quarters. The overwhelming majority of mythologies and systems of belief place them in the sky or "behind" it, turning the sky into a heaven. This is a classic topos for the unattainable mystical *house* of super-beings and chosen-ones (see previous chapter).

b. *Grave as the House of the Dead*

The change of social position usually involves a change of dwelling – the parental house is left after growing-up or marrying, a new president moves to the White House or Kremlin, etc. Death, as *the* crucial status´ change, is also accompanied by moving to another "dwelling" – the tomb (as mentioned above, in the framework of archaic thinking, everything and everyone must "dwell" somewhere). This understanding of death and funeral as a *move*, as a passage from the *house* of the living to the *house* of the dead is widely represented in the world´s funeral practices, both in rites and – especially – in the shape of the tombs which imitate real houses. For example we can look at the so-called hut-urns of the early Iron Age, Roman gravestones, and sarcophagi,[130] as well as Russian *domoviny*.[131] The new body of the dead requires a new dwelling; noteworthy in this context is the poetic metaphor of *dark/narrow house* for grave. For Victorians, graves were "calm dwellings" and the graveyard an "exquisitely beautiful Dormitory"[132]

900-850 BC, hut-urn, Latial culture   *Russian Domovina*   *Modern US tombstones*

Tombstones in the shape of houses, or stylized archetypical elements such as a gable roof, are also popular today. Thus, the name of the deceased can be designed as the door-plate, place

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[130] Thus, the famous sarcophagus of Simpelveld (2-3 AD) is decorated inside as a living room. The tombs for wealthy people often included even several rooms with doors, among them a special dining room for relatives.
[131] Old Russian for "tomb; *dom* means "house" in Russian.
[132] David E. *Stannard*, The Puritan way of death (Oxford 1977) 180

for flowers as the flower-bed before the "porch." The grave fence can look similar to the fence around the house, etc.

The domestic character of the status of the dead is further underlined by the ancient practice of putting food and personal effects directly into the tomb or coffin. Tombstone pictures and sculptures of chairs, guitars, cars, computers, etc., symbolically taken with into eternity, serve the same function.

The providing of the dead with a house doesn´t presuppose any hope of coming back to life and is often accompanied by dark rhetoric. When *The Book of Ecclesiastes* describes the dead as "living" in their new house, it doesn´t give any hope of their return:

because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets (Ecclesiastes 12:5)

Nor does the *Epic of Gilgamesh*:

Me did he lead to the Dwelling of Darkness, the home of Irkalla,
35.Unto the Dwelling from which he who entereth cometh forth never!
(Aye), by the road on the passage whereof there can be no returning,
Unto the Dwelling whose tenants are (ever) bereft of the daylight,
Where for their food is the dust, and the mud is their sustenance (Epic of Gilamesh, 7 plate 34-35)

The dwelling of the dead is actually a bedroom. The moribund is compared with "a tired traveller, falling into a sweet slumber." The bed motifs are known from both Roman and Victorian tombstones. Sleep, as one of the most ancient metaphors for death, correlates with the desire for the happy unconsciousness of the Real (recall the aforementioned examples from Joyce and Chekhov).

It is very important to hold in mind that neither the dwelling of gods, nor the dwelling of the dead could imply any modern connotations of home. As it is shown earlier in this thesis, "at-homeness" is a specific phenomenon, developed in European and North American societies over the 17-19th centuries. Here the idea of the house is a mere reduction of things to order, as no one is logically "allowed" to be left without a dwelling, including such supernatural beings as gods or the dead.

The "Gnostic" Influence: The True Homeland is in Heaven

I put the term "gnostic" in quotation marks because I don´t mean historic Gnosticism, but the view characterized by bounding together such dualistic oppositions as Heaven & Earth, Soul & Body, Truth & Falsity, which can be found as far back as Ancient Egypt and

Zoroastrianism. This sort of dualism, in different variations, has always been an extremely popular and influential way of thinking, crossing over barriers between religions and ages. The perishable and corrupted world is created by the maleficent god; our bodies belong to evil, whereas our souls, created by the good god, are immortal and should return to the place of their origin. As the good god is thought to dwell in the blessed Heaven (the aforementioned *House of God*), the souls – as his creations – should return there, too. Thus, heaven becomes the lost homeland of the soul and dying is conceived of as the liberation of the pure "imprisoned" ghost, suffering "in" the sinful machine. This is a typologically similar scheme to the already discussed oppositions between "own / other" and "private / public".

The House of God merges with the House of the Dead, acquiring at the same time and features of the Homeland. This understanding of Heaven as true Homeland is to be widely found in many "pre-domesticated" contexts. It is the model for any possible "domesticated" representation of the afterlife, as the late and seemingly self-evident paradise-like perception of home easily amalgamates with it.

The Domestication of the Heavenly Homeland

The idea of Homeland is one of the key elements for identification. But self-identification with the unknown is a hard task. In the "gnostic" model, the speculative unknown House of God obtains the status of the true Homeland, overshadowing one´s known homeland. According to the model, this physical place of origin is regarded as a false homeland. In the "homecoming to heaven" context these metaphysical remoteness and foreignness of Heaven are compensated by the connotations of the intimate home. This generates the interesting effect of concurrent farness and nearness. It is known and unknown, here and there *at the same time.*

Thus, the metaphor of *coming home to god* unites the "gnostic" understanding of Heaven as soul´s *Homeland in the House of God* with the modern conception of home, embodying comfort, safety and family happiness. In this scenario the true, but unknown Homeland, is being provided with the qualities of the known but "false" homeland. The metaphor presupposes the returning both to the lost homeland and to the ideal home – at the same time, since *homeland* and *home* merge here in semantic equivalency.

This is a typical case of Sehnsucht: homesickness is experienced after the never known and only metaphysically existing home. This allows for such paradoxical statements like, "my home is in Heaven, I am only travelling through this world,"[133] etc.

3. The Transformation of the Idea of Afterlife (The Liberalization of Religion)

In this paragraph I will briefly look at the transformation of the idea of afterlife within the new tendencies in Western Christianity during the Modern Period, which found a great support in domestic rhetoric and imaginary.

The "humane turn" in Religion, carried out by some Protestant movements (such as Methodism, Arminianism, etc.), fit quite well with the mental, economic, and social set-up formed in non-Catholic European and North American societies during 17-19th centuries. The belief in one´s own strength, the neglect for the Catholic ceremonial "trumpery", and the search for the ("gnostic") Truth functioned as a certain Occam´s razor, cutting off everything that seemed redundant. The Arminian doctrine of unlimited atonement is opposite to the Calvinist idea of predestination. It grew in popularity and everyone now had a chance to be saved. The only necessary things were to stay virtuous and to believe in Jesus and salvation. With time the images of Hell and the Last Judgment gradually receded into the background.[134]

The rise of the significance of private life reflected in the Romantic, Schleiermacherian[135] understanding of Christianity and further steps towards a more liberal and intimate attitude to religion were made in this new framework. All theological cobwebs and dogmas were declared to have lost their importance and a personal relationship between Jesus and human being was announced to be the only thing valuable in religion. God gets more and more merciful and disposed to forgiveness. Special emphasis is placed on the humaneness and kindness of Jesus, who is now perceived not so much as a king, but more as a family member – elder brother and friend, opening his arms to every believer.

The parable of the prodigal son obtains in this respect a particular popularity and an unequivocal iconographical interpretation: the returned sinner bends in the classic Rembrandtesque pose not before the abstract father, but before Jesus, whose forgiveness and

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[133] Used by, e.g. famous minister Billy Graham, etc.
[134] Gérard *Vincent*, Article: Religion. In: Philippe *Ariès*, Antoine *Prost* (eds.) Geschichte des privaten Lebens in 5 Bänden. Vol 5 Vom Ersten Weltkrieg zur Gegenwart (Frankfurt am Main 1993) 354-355
[135] Friedrich *Schleiermacher*, Der Christliche Glaube (Berlin 2008)

love are permanently strong. Now the soul doesn´t just return to its *homeland* in Heaven, but literally returns *home*. Jesus awaits the believer, *at home* in Heaven, in order to *hug*[136] and forgive. An interesting iconographical parallel to this deeply intimate and familiar gesture can be found in the ancient image of paradise as Abraham´s bosom, which holds the souls of the righteous in his lap.
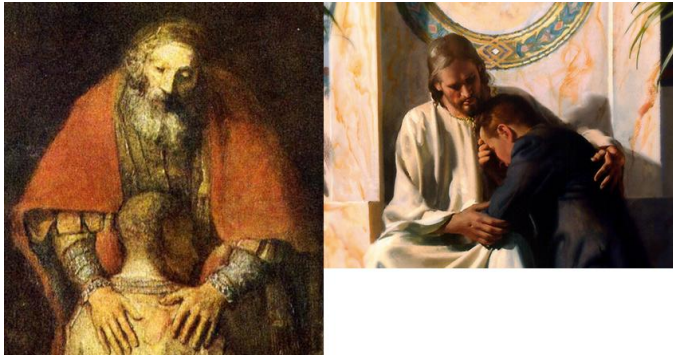
Rembrandt, The Return of the Prodigal Son, 1669 (fragment)

Liz Swindle, The Return of the Prodigal Son, 2005(fragment)

As we know, the language of the Bible and of its translations doesn´t differentiate between *dwelling*/*house* and *home*[137], not to mention that it couldn't contain any modern connotations of home. Any text, and especially a sacred text, is open to multiple interpretations; depending on what is wished, it will be found there. The Bible could boast an especially rich history of interpretations and quoting. Thus, as the significance of family, familiar and domestic relations grew, the Biblical passages related to home/house rhetoric received new interpretations, which seemed logical and obvious within a domestically oriented society. Thus, in this new, domestic frame of reference, Jesus´s famous quote "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."(John 14:2) or Paul´s, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (2 Corinthians 5:1-21) acquire a very particular meaning. They become one of the grounding arguments for all sorts of hopes for heavenly reunions and social life in heaven.

Conclusion

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[136] One of the first appearances of the idea of *embracing God* in Christian context can be found in the Flowing Light of the Godhead by the German Medieval mystic Mechthild of Magdeburg; compare: Also, de wir die gotheit begriffen mögen mit der menscheit, gebruchen gliche der heiligen drivaltekeit, *halsen* und küssen und vnbegrifliche gotheit *vmbevahen* (italics supplied). In: Offenbarungen der Schwester Mechthild von Magdeburg, oder Das fliessende Licht der Gottheit 7-1 (Regensburg 1869) 219 Very interestingly, but it is Mechthild who embraces God, not otherwise!

[137] *Anonym*, Article: Home, House. In: Leland *Ryken*, James C. *Wilhoit*, Tremper *Longman III* (eds.) Dictionary of Biblical Imagery (Nottingham 1998) 393

Owing to a concatenation of a number of circumstances, the metaphor of home could strengthen itself as a new representation of paradise. This mostly conformed to the new domestic axiology within middle-class culture. It soon moved beyond Methodist circles to the wide swaths of the population.

There takes place a superposition, at first glance inconspicuous by virtue of its seeming logic: the archaic understanding of death as the return of the soul to its celestial *homeland* contaminates with the new image of the *ideal home*, which proved to be structurally similar to other representations of paradise.

In the next part of the thesis I will analyze several most typical examples of the usage of home-oriented rhetoric in afterlife discourse.

VI.   Homecomings to Paradise

Introduction

In this part of the thesis I will observe the development of the idea of posthumous homecoming in different societies and time periods. Due to reasons discussed earlier, there was no basis for a consequential development of the homecoming-to-heaven idea until the 19th century. Only after home had gained the new significance as the locus of comfort and refuge could homecoming establish itself as the new recognizable and quasi self-evident manifestation of religious beliefs and desires.

1.   Heavenly Reunions in Victorian England & North America

In the 19th century, popular representations of afterlife in the imagination of British and North American societies became dominated by the domesticated model of heaven. As McDannel and Lang write, "industrialization, urbanization, the rise of mass culture, and Christian evangelism all contributed to the creation of a readership ready to associate together the notions of family love and heavenly life."[138] This is a sharply defined anthropocentric model of paradise, which endows afterlife with distinctive humane elements, such as living in families and houses, as well as engaging in professions and hobbies, etc.

One of the main prerequisites for this model was a deep concern for meeting friends and relatives in Heaven after death. However, the "recognition of friends" was not the original product of popular religious thought of the 19th century – already Plato, Cicero and Petrarch wrote of their hope to meet old friends and historic characters – but it is exactly this time period and in this society, where this thought starts to shape the general idea connected with the afterlife. Besides, Cicero and Petrarch didn´t place their reunions in the domestic interior, and didn´t specify any details, remaining more or less speculative in their conjectures, which had more of a poetic prospect than a religious belief. The Victorians, on the contrary, were obsessed with the details. They took it as a matter of fact that the heavenly reunion of the family could happen only in the heavenly equivalent of their sanctum sanctorum – at home.

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[138] McDannel, Lang 228-229

Starting with Swedenborg, who was one of the first authors to depict in vivid colors life after death in its socialized variant, [139] the earthly relations and categories actively begin to be projected on heaven. "At-homeness" takes root in the posthumous life, turning the pastures of heaven into cozy cottages. The new accent focused on the reunion of the *family* – not so much friends and loved-ones, as brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, parents and children, tore apart by death, will happily meet again in heaven.

The idea of a sentimental reunion beyond the tomb was supported by the large quantity of the popular Christian literature, mostly in the Protestant United States and Great Britain, but also in Catholic countries of Europe throughout the 19th century. [140] The popularity can be estimated by considering the fact that, *Heaven our Home* (1864) by William Branks was even read by Queen Victoria and Albert. [141]

The authors (mostly "liberal clergymen and devout women", as Douglas characterizes them[142]), resting upon Paulian Gnosticism, [143] indefatigably underscored that memories and personalities will not vanish, and that relatives will be able to recognize each other in the next world – for example, by "tone of voice, or a quick lighting up of the face with an old familiar smile."[144] Among the arguments supporting the domesticated and family oriented version of paradise was this: "as Jesus met his mother in Heaven, so shall we meet our mothers".[145] Finally, Jesus returned home to his father, and all just persons could do the same, constituting one happy family in Heaven.

In the epoch when emigration to the New World usually didn´t presuppose coming back, when the Civil War tore away forever husbands and sons from their wives and mothers, when medicine not infrequently only worsened the situation, the consoling thought that the parting was solely temporary, couldn´t but win great popularity. The meeting in the next world compensated for the impossibility of the reunion here below. Following Swedenborg, the authors of the "consolation literature" conceptualize angels as dead Christians who take care

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[139] Swedenborgian paradise is not yet the paradise of families, but the mystical paradise of sacred love, the paradise of couples, in love, who don´t need a marriage.

[140] These are publications, pertaining to the genre of so-called "consolation literature" (term coined by Douglas): *Heavenly Recognition* (1852), *Heavenly Home* (1853), *Our Friends in Heaven* (1854), *Heaven our Home* (1864), *Life in Heaven* (1865), *The Recognition of Friends in Heaven* (1866), *Going Home to Cloud-heaven* (1875), *Das Wiedersehen im anderem Leben* (1879), *They met in Heaven* (1895), etc.

[141] Wheeler 128

[142] Douglas 498

[143] For example, these quotes would be used as a theological foundation: For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2 Corinthians 5:1-21); But our citizenship is in heaven. (Phil 3:20)

[144] Robert M. *Patterson*, Visions of Heaven for the life on Earth (1877) 178

[145] Father *Blot*, In Heaven We Know Our Own, or Solace from the Suffering (New York 1890)

of their living relatives. Taking into account the high level of the infant mortality, the belief, that dead babies become happy angels in paradise could often have an enormous consoling significance for their parents. Deceased mothers, became good angels for their little orphans.[146]

Thus, having such hopes in mind, a father could write to his daughter in the middle of the 19th century: "If death (the common lot of us all) takes any of us before that time my trust is that we may all meet in the Spirit land were partings, & sorrows are no more, & all is love, peace, & joy." The same conception of Heaven was shared also by the young dying soldier: "His last words were 'I am going home now'".[147]

But the more the family and the family house became formed and grew as the safe bulwark amidst the dangerous world, the more unbearable was the thought of parting. In other words, another grounding for the metaphor became the hope for the continuance of happiness, which was already known in earthly experience. If in the earlier centuries of Christianity the afterlife in Heaven could seem incommensurably better and happier in comparison to life on Earth, then better living conditions, the appearance of "at-homeness," and the direct experience of paradise in childhood (for the wealthier people) shook this view. The afterlife was now to a certain extent expected to be not a change, but the continuance of the *already known* paradise. The paradise had already been found. The thought that earthly life, earthly relations, and earthly memories should be consigned to oblivion seemed inadmissible. It is not anymore the hope for personal salvation, but for the salvation of the *chosen collective*: to praise god *together*, reunited with all departed relatives – this is the image of paradise of the society in which family and home are its "natural" and essential foundations.

In this way home doesn´t cease with death, but continues after it on the qualitatively new level. Paradise is already not so much the "House of God," as "one´s own" home for every righteous man, as it is already peopled by the souls of loving relatives. As one of the Protestant authors of the time wrote, "There is a living union between the Christian´s home on earth and his home in heaven."[148] The coming to god´s dwelling is now imagined as coming back to a dear home: heaven is "Our Father's home, with […] familiar homelike scenes, […]

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[146]Compare the influence up to the late Edwardian novel for girls *Polyanna* (1913) by Eleanor H. *Porter*: "Pollyanna caught her breath audibly. "You did? And you knew my mother, really – when she was just a little earth angel, and not a Heaven one?" quoted by www.readonline.net/read/46872/95788 <Last accessed 14.08.15>
[147] Charles Brackett to his daughter, August 18, 1861; to his wife, September 23, 1861. In: Matt 92
[148] Samuel *Phillips*, The Christian Home (New York 1859) 367-368

not the cold ivory hall of a strange king."[149] As Wheeler noted, "such heavens are often more like a middle-class suburb in the sky than the city of God."[150]

Side by side with books and brochures, a particular iconography of happily reunited families was being developed. Wearing white clothes, relatives and friends spend their time taking leisurely strolls in the society of Jesus against idyllic landscapes of the second Eden. Towards the close of the 19th century, few believing Christians doubted that the family and home were the basis of the afterlife – as well as of mortal life. For a true Christian, death was no more that the move from one home, full of love, to another one. There is of course also the implication of *the return of the soul to its homeland*, but the focus clearly shifted from god to family. The reunion with the family insensibly became the main point of the afterlife and the reunion with god slightly receded into the background. Although this belief contradicted the famous Biblical quote: "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:36-37), the pure desire and popular sentiments were stronger than the dogma.

The bestseller and quintessential work of the "consolation" genre was the novel by American author Elisabeth S. Phelps *The Gates Ajar* (1868),[151] which brought in more than 20,000 dollars in the first month of sales, and by the end of the 19th century was, measured by the number of copies sold, second only to *Uncle Tom′s Cabin*. The greater part of the novel (followed by two sequels) is dedicated to the description of paradise. With the help of these descriptions the protagonist, Aunt Winifred, comforts her friend's angst over the death of her husband. Depicted within the numerous details, the afterlife appears in an utterly socialized and domesticated version. The Heaven of Aunt Winifred is a heaven of big families, consisting of reunited relatives, friends, and famous personalities. Marriages are sanctified and endorsed once more by god, and are thus the depurated versions of the earthly marriages. In paradise people live in separate houses, resembling Victorian manors, eat breakfasts, dinners and suppers, work, raise children, take care of their pets; musicians get there their musical instruments, inventors – their inventions; fallen soldiers meet President Lincoln; gray hair turns black again; and every poor girl gets a piano.

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[149] Henry *Harbaugh*, Heaven; or An Earnest and Scriptural Inquiry Into the Abode of the Sainted Dead (Philadelphia 1853)
[150] Wheeler 121
[151] Elizabeth Stuart *Phelps*, The Gates Ajar (Boston 1868)

In paradise, everything is taken into account with enviable and thorough housewifeliness. In Heaven, as Aunt Winifred teaches her daughter, there will be everything that she could wish for, including her favourite ginger cookies. Afterlife, in the representation of Aunt Winifred, resembles her favourite place on earth – the State of Kansas. As McDannel and Lang observed, heavenly love is expressed in the novel not through prayer, but through social relationship.[152] Aunt Winifred believes, that in heaven she will have her "beautiful house, her husband, and child, as it was here, on earth."[153] *The Gates Ajar*, being extremely influential in its time, carried the domestication of the afterlife to its logical conclusion. The soul, returning to its eternal home from a transitory place, where it was only a "guest, passing through," takes its entire *household* along.

The enormous popularity of the book – as well as of the whole system of images – is explainable. The consumer of the domesticated image of heaven could have been practically everyone. Anyone who had experienced the loss of family members and knew the condition of being torn from a *happy home* due to migration or the Civil War. To a varying degree, families from most social and cultural backgrounds were affected by the trauma of separation from loved-ones. This pain pierced the whole society. Thus, the system of images described above was very appealing to the potential reader. Such authors as Phelps or Branks, constructed a special mental space for the realization of sweet consoling dreams. In other words, the readers dreamt of the *personal* reunions and the writers provided the appropriate scenery and interiors – those of the ideal stereotypical middle-class home. Phelps herself called her book a "fictionalized mourning manual, touched by the grief of the thousands who lost beloved sons and husbands in the war."[154] Phelps´ father, a prominent minister, confessed that, "the conception of heaven as a place… not unlike this world" made life endurable to him.[155]

To make certain of the omnipresence of such aspirations both in Antebellum America and after the Civil War, we can look to private correspondences of the time. Clarissa Ward, separated from her sister by a distance, wrote to her in 1825: "I hope and trust that if we never meate Again in this world we shall all meate in heave[n] where parting is no more. Where I trust we shall meate our dear Sister that has gone but A little before us."[156] In order to be

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[152] McDannel, Lang 266
[153] Phelps 140
[154] E.S.*Phelps*, Chapters from a life (Boston 1897) 97
[155] E.S.*Phelps*, Austin Phelps: A Memoir (New York 1891) 18, cited by Douglas.
[156] Owen and Sarah Ward to Amasa and Mary Angell, with postscript from Clarissa Ward to Amasa and Mary Angell, May 1, 1825, John Carpenter Angell Family Correspondence. In: Matt 55

psychologically endurable, the separation had to undergo a process of sublimation. This took the unreserved shape of meeting "despite everything," meeting despite death. The tragic experience of the Civil War only strengthened such sentiments. Drew Gilpin Faust writes of Civil War soldiers, "these men frequently sought comfort in the belief that families would be reunited in heaven, which they envisioned as their true and ultimate home."[157] She then carefully adds, that it is not least due to this faith in heavenly reunions that it was possible to gather so many men for both armies, as without it "few would have been willing to make such sacrifices."[158]

Indeed, the soldiers´ letters constantly emphasize the "meeting in heaven" as the alternative and a much better substitute for the terrestrial homecoming. Thus, in 1862 the Northerner Wesley Gould, wrote to his sister Hannah of their brother Charles's death: "I have often thought how happy we would be if we should all meet at home after the war was over. But alas we can never meet with him again on earth, but let us try and meet him in heaven. What a joyful meeting that will be when we shall meet to part no more."[159]

On the other side of the lines, the Southerner William R. Barry wrote to his wife Sally: "Dear Sally, I do not want you to fret about me remember that the same kind providence watches over us when we are separated that does when we are together and if it is his will we will meet again, and live happy together in this world if it is not I hope that we may meet in heaven where there is no parting no wars to trouble. … if we never meet in this world god grant that we may all meet in heaven where parting is no more." [160]

Another circumstance, which conditioned the popularity of the set of metaphors around home and family in religious context and rhetoric was its specific orientation to the female audience and its demands. The cult of domesticity, descending from the discussed above separation of spheres, provided images of the ideal women leading a virtuous life of the housewife and mother, "teaching their children religious music around an idealized hearth."[161] This had an enormous impact on females´ identity and self-perception. A woman was conceived of as a central figure in the domestic realm, responsible "for raising good moral Christians."[162] Thus, in the American South women were the main audience for books with religious hymns, which

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[157] Faust 175
[158] Ibid
[159] Wesley to his sister, March 18, 1862. In: Matt 91
[160] William R. Barry to his wife, Sarah, December 22, 1862, folder 256.01.01 (c) 01 Correspondence 1862, William R. Barry Correspondence. In: Matt 91-92
[161] Kristine M. *McCusker*, Funeral Music and the Transformation of Southern Musical and Religious Cultures, 1935-1945. In: American Music 30-4 (2012) 436
[162] Ibid 435

were sung at home and referenced this domestic imagery. McCusker asserts, "the bonds created within these musical moments were later celebrated at funerals when each of the constituent members passed on, precipitating that celestial moment when the family reunited and these domestic scenes were reenacted."[163] In sum, the homecoming-to-heaven discourse was developing with constant and close interaction between the believers and the authors of the religious texts. These two groups, for all practical purposes, shared the same values and desires.

2. Homegoing in African American Culture

The idea of coming home after death bears great significance within African American culture and religion. It is so ubiquitous that African American funerals are called *Homegoing celebrations*. Many spirituals & gospels have "homecoming to the Lord" as their leading idea. Even the biography of the prominent African American painter William H. Johnson has the word "homegoing" in the title.[164] Where does this idea of homecoming come from in this context and how was it formed?

Considering the period of slavery, Suzanne E. Smith states that, "death was often imagined as the ultimate "freedom" from a life of oppression."[165] Death was seen as a final release from the mortal world of suffering, as a journey to the spiritual universe.

According to Raboteau, Smith, Matt, and Roediger, the first generation of African American slaves believed that death was the way to get back to their homeland. Susan Matt cites the words of a slave ship captain: "…We had about 12 negroes willfully drown themselves, and other starv´d themselves to death; for ´tis their belief that when they die they return home to their own country and friends again."[166] Roediger, quoting an analogous example, adds, that "many let out triumphant cries from the water.[167]

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[163] Ibid 436
[164] Richard J. *Powell*, Homecoming: The Art and Life of William H. Johnson (New York 1991)
[165] Suzanne E. *Smith*, To Serve the Living: Funeral Directors and the African American Way of Death (Cambridge 2010) 17
[166] A journal of a Voyage made in the Hannibal of London, Ann. 1693-1694, from England to Cape Monseradoe, in Africa… by Thomas Phillips, commander of the ship said; from Churchill, Collections of Voyages and Travels (1732). In: Matt 21-22
[167] Roediger 177

In fact, we can trace this belief back to as early as the 17th century. Aphra Behn, one of the first professional English female-writers mentions in in her famous *Oroonoko* (1688), the story of a captive African prince and princess:

He (grieved to death, yet pleased at her noble resolution) took her up, and embracing of her with all the passion and languishment of a dying lover, drew his knife to kill this treasure of his soul, this pleasure of his eyes; while tears trickled down his cheeks, hers were smiling with joy she should die by so noble a hand, and be sent into her own country (for that's their notion of the next world) by him she so tenderly loved.[168]

Thus, the idea of going to one's homeland after death emerged not only due to nostalgic thoughts but dates back to aboriginal West- and Central African beliefs and religions. In these spiritual traditions there is the presence of reincarnation and a complex correlation between soul and spirit,[169] which were transferred to America with the Africans during the transatlantic slave trade. Though there were many differences between the religions of tribes from different regions, and some slaves were even Muslims, Raboteau mentions that "similar modes of perception, shared basic principles, and common patterns of ritual were widespread."[170]

These beliefs conceived of reality as consisting of two worlds, "ours," and the otherworld where ancestors lived. Death was not seen as the end, but as a transition to this otherworld.[171] The trauma of a separation with one's native land superimposed on this traditional belief and the consciousness of slaves the idea that the otherworld of ancestors mingled with their lost homeland – Africa. As Morgan states, "slaves frequently mixed the signs and symptoms of homesickness with traditional West African religious practices, believing that after death they would return to Africa and be free."[172]

Furthermore, as these beliefs mingled with the Christianity – almost always in its Methodist version, which, as already mentioned, presupposed the liberal doctrine of unlimited atonement ("God would save all who believe in him") – the homeland shifted to the spiritual level and began to be associated with Christian Heaven. Roediger adduces an interesting example, when a slave woman told "all about heaven where all would be free. Then (she) would talk of Africa; how that they were all once free there."[173]

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[168] Aphra *Behn*, Oronooko: or The Royal Slave (1688) http://www.gutenberg.org/files/29854/29854-h.htm <Last accessed 14.08.15>
[169] Albert J. *Raboteau*, Slave Religion (Oxford 2004) 32
[170] Ibid 7
[171] Ibid 8
[172] Morgan 642
[173] Roediger 178

We can observe here an application of the same "gnostic" model as on p. 12

- 1st Paradise/Home – Africa "all once free there"
- Losing Paradise/Home – Losing freedom
- Seeking Paradise/Home – Living a life in the *un-home* (in a Heideggerian sense)
- 2nd Paradise/Home found – "heaven where all would be free"

It was said of Chloe Spear, captured in the 1760's as a teenager, that she "sighed, and wished for *death*; supposing that when she died, she would return to her country and friends."[174] In sum, death was not at all perceived as a reason for mourning, but on the contrary, as an occasion for celebration – the celebration of a soul´s final homecoming. It was the most important step towards liberation and for this reason it demanded certain preparations. Susan Matt gives a story of a "haughty Congo Pump," who

"escaped to a swamp near Truro on Cape Cod – a swamp now called by his name – and placing at the foot of a tree a jug of water and loaf of bread to sustain him on his last long journey, hanged himself from the low-hanging limbs, and thus obtained freedom."[175]

Many others didn´t think of suicide, but hoped throughout their whole lives to return back to where they came from, making constant preparations. Jim Cole, captured in 1715 in the age of twelve, collected all sorts of bagatelle during her life, "treasures to take back to her motherland: all kinds of odds and ends, colored rags, bits of finery, peculiar shaped stones, shells, buttons, beads."[176]

Phillis, another slave woman from Connecticut also prepared her whole life for the final journey to Africa. "When she died, it was found to contain pies, cakes, nut, raisins, shawls, aprons, and handkerchiefs – some of which had been stored there fifty years." When she was asked, where she expected to go when she died, she answered: "Why, go Guinea, whar udder folks go – fool you!"[177]

And indeed, conforming to the logic of our model, the posthumous returning to one's homeland was unconditionally conceived of as a journey. Thus, Roediger reports about the burial of an African child:

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[174] R.W. *Brown*, Memoir of Mrs. Chloe Spear 17; 74-76. In: William D. *Piersen*, Black Yankees: The Development of an Afro-American Subculture in Eighteenth-Century New England (Amherst 1988).
[175] Matt 24
[176] Ibid 25
[177] Ibid

The father buried the body and with it a small bow and several arrows; a little bag of parched meal; a miniature canoe and a little paddle (with which he said it would cross the ocean to his own (country)... and a piece of white muslin with several curious figures painted on it.., by which... his countrymen would know the infant to be his son.[178]

Another influence came from the Biblical book of *Exodus*. Black slaves soon started to identify themselves with the enslaved Jews, and awaited their Moses, who would lead them out to the blissful land of Canaan – lead them home.[179] These metaphors found expression in gospels and spirituals. They also had a second meaning in the context of the famous Underground Railroad, where Canaan and home meant free Canada, and *going home* allowed an interpretation as *going home to freedom*. In fact, when singing about "going home after death," the slaves were singing about going to freedom from under the power of the slave-owner. Thus is the famous slave spiritual *Oh, Freedom*:

Oh Freedom, Oh Freedom, Oh Freedom over me!
And before I´ll be a slave,
I´ll be buried in my grave
And go home to my Lord
And be free.[180]

As the members of slave families were often sold separately, the only hope of seeing each other again was reunion in heaven.[181] They believed that after death they would return to their homeland and again meet their relatives and loved-ones "in some happy region"[182]. Starobin adduces an interesting quote from the letter of an educated slave, sold away from his family, to his wife: "If we Shall not meet in this world I hope to meet in heaven.... My pen cannot express the griffle I feel to be parted from you all."[183] Others sang consoling spirituals: "My soul and your soul/ Will meet in de day/ When I lay dis body down."[184]

This reminds us of heavenly reunions analyzed in the previous chapter. Here, Africans' homesickness passed through Christian influence and came into contact with the new domestic culture of the 19th century. It is no longer the abstract "homeland" which is longed-for, but a quite concrete familial happiness. We can look at the warmth and tenderness with

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[178] Roediger 178
[179] Raboteau (2004) 311
[180] Smith 18
[181] Rabouteau (2004) 262
[182] Charles *Ball*, Fifty Years in Chains (New York 1970) 265
[183] Abream Scriven to Dinah Jones, 1858. In: Robert S. *Starobin* (ed.) Blacks in Bondage: Letters from American Slaves (New York 1974)
[184] Albert J. *Raboteau*, Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans (New York 2001) 49

which the cabin of Uncle Tom was described and how deep his longing for it was (though it is obvious that the novel was written by a white middle-class woman, who implied her axiology in it, the significance that family and home had always held in African American culture is no secret).

"To go home" soon started to function as a synonym for "to die". Raboteau gives an interesting example from the pre-war South. A wicked slave-owner died, and when some slaves tried to console their mistress with words: "Never mind, missus, massa gone home to heaven," the other said among themselves: "Thank God, massa gone home to hell". [185] Thus, it is also possible to go home to hell as well.

The African American case is a very specific and important one within the homecoming-to-heaven discourse. It is also of a great importance because it features a constant motive to go home, expressed mostly in musical culture. This enriches the European, middle-class based metaphor from the other end, piercing American folk culture with motifs of homecoming to heaven (see examples in the *Appendix*).

3. The Homecoming Metaphor in the Contemporary Christian Context

We can´t do much but observe tendencies; people have always adjusted their environment to themselves, according to their own conceptions, hopes, dreams, and beliefs. This also concerns, to a great extent, their beliefs about the otherworld. The attitude towards pain and death in contemporary Western societies is avoidance. Today´s US and European societies – as middle-class societies – are pierced by the constant desire for softening and making life more comfortable; the fixation on private life and expectation of a *happy* end became a custom and a habit (at least, this is my prefiguration of the historical field, if following H. White´s terminology). In comparison to previous ages, where death and suffering were omnipresent themes,[186] today they are banished from the popular imagery and are expelled from social discourses. They are considered unsuitable, indecorous topics. Nevertheless, this imagery is always present in the media, shown as something, "that happens only to others." According to Baudrillard, civilization masks death, death is forced out, like sex once was[187]. It is also children´s attitude toward death that has changed. If they were fixated on death in the

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[185] Raboteau (2004) 297
[186] See studies on perception of death and suffer in Medieval and Early Modern Age.
[187] J. *Baudrillard*, L'échange symbolique et la mort (Paris 1976)

19th century, the children of the 20th and 21th century think of death as something far-away that only happens to old people.

As our thresholds for pain decrease, a desire for a symbolic general anesthetic as a remedy against pain and "all the unpleasant things" increases. This desire to experience as little pain and unpleasant feelings as possible is logically extended by another wish – the wish for the own individual paradise after death. Again, this is a wish for the continuance of happiness known in "earthly" life. There is a desire to die without pain and suffering, leaving out all Last Judgements or Purgatories, and immediately slip under god´s wing! The usual Christian dichotomy between Hell and Heaven weakens and the significance of Last Judgement diminishes. Living conditions are high, so instead of the "reward in heaven," there is a wish for the continuation of known positive emotions and feelings of the private life. This Sehnsucht for the ideal home is in the best way represented by the unexampled popularity of the works by famous contemporary American artist Thomas Kinkade. His paintings show ideal houses and villages with warmly lit windows carried to theirs ultimate, and are said to be hanging in one of every 20 houses in America.[188]

In my conceptualization, this development finds its living embodiment in the encoding of dying as "coming home," conforming to both euphemistic and escapist needs. The contemporary religious conception of posthumous homecoming, expressed in various Para-Christian/Esoteric literature, music, videos, and web-pictures don´t cardinally differ from the conceptions provided in the 19th century. Although these conceptions underwent certain development and have to a great extent lost their "gnostic" and compensatory connotations, they have been enriched with new iconography, full of bright colours, made possible with computer graphics and the accessibility of printing. The arguments, metaphors, and biblical quotes remain the same.

Having its theological basis and origins in Methodism, the imagery of the domesticated afterlife spread its power over believers from different Christian congregations. It is common place in obituary notices,[189] numerous sermons, and commemorative YouTube-videos.[190]

Thus, according to the data collected by the periodical *U.S. Catholic*, in heaven, respondents of various ages and social background want to "hug God" and meet their families, including

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[188] https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/arts-post/post/thomas-kinkades-polarizing-legacy-how-will-the-painter-of-light-be-remembered/2012/04/07/gIQAov1G2S_blog.html <Last accessed 16.11.15>

[189] See, for example, http://ncronline.org/blogs/bulletins-human-side/heaven-homecoming-andrew-greeley <Last accessed 14.08.15>

[190] One of the numerous examples: https://youtu.be/tuMgvxTuaCA <Last accessed 14.08.15>

dead babies. [191]As McDannel and Lang sum up, the respondents "felt comfortable in describing heaven variously as a place where lots of baseball is played, an isolated spot in the country, or a region filled with whatever pleases each person [...] God will be a personal character willing to be hugged, individuals will retain their personalities, families will reunite, and earthly activities will continue."[192] Here, we have a complete set of popular ideas from the 19th century whose logic, establishment, and expansion were analyzed earlier in this thesis.

The encoding of paradise as a home-like space, though obviously originating in folk-religiosity, is shared by ordinary parishioners, ministers, and great religious figures. This is an excerpt from a 2014 Methodist Christmas sermon with the title *Coming Home*:

Home is so important to God that we see in the scriptures references such as "the children of God," "Community of believers," "family of God," "brothers and sisters." So important is this connection of God with His creation to be one family that believes that God sent His Son, Jesus to become "human and made his home with us." This sense of home we discussed earlier finds its epitome in the presence of God with us.[193]

Mother Teresa, one of the most popular contemporary religious figures, was also deeply convinced of the self-evident nature of home as a religious metaphor:

 "My mother and sister must be very happy to be home with God, and I am sure their love and prayers are always with me. When I go home to God, for death is nothing else but going home to God, the bond of love will be unbroken for all eternity."[194]

This fixation on home, within which *death* is "nothing else but going home to God" and *home* is declared to be "so important to God," is also the continuation of, and heir to, the 19th century influence of new domestic culture on religious thought. Its frequent usage led to the reduction of this rhetoric to a commonplace and thus it was possible to have an ironic reading of this trope (see next chapter).

Thus, the domestication of the afterlife exists today with renewed energy. Hand in hand with music,[195] iconography, and literature[196] which have to do with this theme, the first decade of

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[191] James *Breig*, Beyond the Pearly Gates: What U.S. Catholic Readers Believe about the Afterlife," U.S. Catholic 48 (1983) 6-18
[192] McDannel, Lang 309
[193] http://www.centermorichesumc.org/sermons/coming-home-christmas-2014/ <Last accessed 14.08.15>
[194] http://griefandmourning.com/quotes <Last accessed 14.08.15>
[195] These are not only popular in Evangelic hymns & gospels, but also popular Country music, like Hank Williams or Johnny Cash (see Appendix for examples).

the 21ˢᵗ century shows a certain diversification of the topic. A whole number of publications has a reunion with pets[197] as its subject, a reunion not only with such traditional pets as cats and dogs, but also with horses and guinea pigs.[198] The authors of the brochures use the same logic of argumentation, used in books on reunions with people: our pets wait for us in heaven, they can´t wait to see us again, and they give us signs – "one should only notice them." The heavenly home is thus extended by new constituents of domestic happiness.

An interesting observation could be made here: the evolution of the contemporary post-Christian consciousness is moving towards a new unconscious half-paganism. As noticed earlier in this thesis, a pagan segment has always been an essential element in folk Christianity. Putting personal effects like, "a small bow and several arrows" or one´s glasses in the tomb, has always been a widespread phenomenon. In addition, the more "merciful" god becomes in the popular religious imagination, the more freedom is given to the believer when interpreting his "intentions." Such Christianity completely breaks with the "gnostic" notion of the "falsehood" of the earthly life, and gives itself up to fixations on love and attachment. These go beyond the continuum of family and work relationships. According to this logic, everything loved and worthy is to be taken along to eternity, and pets are certainly not last on the list.

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[196] These are rather common *God is Calling His Children Home* (2011) or *We'll Meet Again: Irish Deathbed Visions - Who You Meet When You Die* (2013). as the example of a Para-Christian Usage of the metaphor: *Jesus and Buddha as Brothers* (1999) or, of a purely Esoteric sort *Coming Home: The Experience of Enlightenment in Sacred Traditions* (1995)

[197] Motif, already known by *The Gates Ajar* (Boston 1868)

[198] These are for the most part the publications from *US: Furry Friends Forevermore: A Heavenly Reunion with your Pet* (2013), *I Will See You in Heaven (Cat Lover's Edition)* (2011), *We Will See Our Pets in Heaven: The Afterlife of Animals from a Biblical Perspective* (2013) etc.

VII. Homecoming as a Metaphor for Death and Dying: the Ironic Reading of the Commonplace

Introduction

As shown previous in this thesis, the 20th century inherited the well-elaborated nexus between dying and going home, which very soon became commonplace and an easily decodable euphemism. As any other established language construction, it turns to an instantly recognizable sign. Taken as such, it can be easily rethought and become material for any further transformation.

In this chapter I am going to take up ironic interpretations of *homecoming to god*. These are cases when the usual homecoming rhetoric is used in connection with death and dying, but are not anymore laden with religious, heaven-like, or divine images and are used either to underline the horror of death or to provide consolation.

Homecoming after Death as Conciliatory Rhetoric

Home and Death constitute the opposite ends of a binary pair (see chapter *Home as an Imaginary Construction*). According to it, Home, conceptualized as the most pleasant and best-known condition forms a clear opposition to Death – painted in the darkest colours at the end of life. The unwillingness to accept death generates its metaphorical displacement. Symbolic return home after death reveals a structure similar to the "King in the Mountain" pattern:

- King Arthur didn´t die, he had just gone to Avalon.
- Gabriel Garcia Márquez didn´t die, he had gone to Macondo[199].
- John didn´t die, he returned home.[200]

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[199] User Don Kelly's post on twitter on Márquez´s death:
https://twitter.com/thedonkelly/status/456911707240026112 <Last accessed 14.08.15> Similar accounts on the writer´s death on Russian social network vk.com: "magician went home" (transl.)
[200] "About ten years ago, a colleague died. On his mourning card was written, ''John is at home.'' Wim *Dekkers*, On the notion of home and the goals of palliative care. In: Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics 30 (2009) 335 Think also of the obituary notes, discussed in the previous chapter.

Thus, practically, saying or showing (e.g., in film) that "somebody went home" instead of "somebody died" allows for: 1). Avoiding direct and hurtful words, "emphasizing the humane and personal character"[201] of a consoling sentiment 2). switching to the "sublime" – but not necessary a religious one – layer of meaning which has a consoling and soothing effect and activates the emotion of "triumph over death."

This version of a "triumph of life over death" is often an element in narratives. A character died and didn´t die at the same time: the image of dying as the beginning of a journey to the far-off country, or to the far-off homeland, as coming home is an artistic rectification of the injustice of death. This can serve as a culmination, catharsis, or a striking ending.

We can remember *E.T.* (1982), who died under an operation *and* returned home to his planet; or *the Little Prince* (1943), who returned to his home planet through the deadly bite of a snake:

He made no answer to my question, but he added: "I, too, am going back home today…" Then, sadly – "It is much farther… It is much more difficult".[202]

As *The Little Prince* is a symbolic fairy tale, a parable, it remains open to interpretation what really happened to the protagonist. He "died" here in order to "return" there, or he just in fact died, being so un-adapted to this world. In the latter case, his return home is just a poetic image, again reconciling a loss through the thought that, "when the character is at home, it means that everything is good." It is also notable that the *true* homeland of both E.T. and little Prince is *above* – in the sky, activating the old "gnostic" mental layer.

The homecoming after death as a poetic reconciliatory image stands out in Ridley Scott´s *Gladiator* (2000). The wife and son of the gladiator died. During the whole film, full of dangers and asperities, he sometimes sees them waiting for him in a small house in the middle of the fields – obviously, in the Otherworld. The boy holds out his hand, looking for father. In the end, when the protagonist dies in the circus arena, he finally returns and is reunited with his loved-ones. The image of the reunion reconciles the spectator with the death of the main character, which they have just seen on screen. We know that the gladiator was killed – we

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[201] Ibid 346; Also compare with "John left us", "John departed", "John gave up spirit", "John teleported", as these are expressions of the same euphemistical order.
[202] *De Saint-Exupéry*, The Little Prince (1943) 57-58

have seen it with our own eyes – but we have also seen that he is finally happy, as he had achieved what he had been really longing for, namely, the reunion with his loved-ones.

Ridley Scott´s Gladiator

In contrast with *The Little Prince* and *Gladiator*, the much lesser known Russian social drama *Babusja* (Granny) (2003) is shot in a realistic manner. An old granny was living in a village, but, expelled from her house, is compelled to seek shelter somewhere else. Just as the modern Queen Lear, she consequently knocks on the doors of her grown-up daughters and their families, hoping that they would allow her to stay at their places. Rich elder daughters with big houses turn her down, and so she trudges to the threshold of her poor youngest daughter, who gives her refuge, even when she and her family are in no good condition. The granny leaves her final abode, not willing to be a burden, and wanders away into the winter night. There is no place for her in *this cruel world*. In the next shot we suddenly see that it is summer and we see her in her winter coat in front of her old village *home*, with her dead relatives looking out from the windows, greeting her and smiling to her.

The spectator wholly understands that granny dies in the diegesis, and that her "coming home" is a mere symbolic act. The tension between death and home achieved here its greatest force. We don´t see granny´s literal death, it is not shown, but we understand it, because her *coming home* is shown. This is not like *Gladiator*, where the death of a protagonist is directly shown. The granny, who was homeless during the whole film finally comes home, and this homecoming is identical to death: only having died, one can come home. They become interchangeable, one becomes the sign of the other. It is not necessarily that she went to god – she just came to *her* home. The iconography of the house, its visualization, is also typical: it is a classic wooden village house with a pitched roof.

Bobrova´s Babusja (granny) is coming home

The Breach of the Metaphor

The ironic reading of the "homecoming after/through death" presumes a bitter grin. Irony generally means giving deliberately wrong names to obvious things without concealment. It relies upon the wit of the interlocutor and his ability to discern truth from the obvious lie. Thus the metaphor of coming home after death constitutes a wide field for ironic distortion. The metaphor "breaks" and ceases to work properly anymore. It loses its consolatory component of going to heaven after death, but "hypocritically" continues to involve it. We can compare it with our model:

	1st Paradise/Home	Losing Paradise/Home	Seeking after Paradise/Home		2nd Paradise (Paradise/Home found)
Christian conception	The Garden of Eden	Fall of man, expulsion from the Eden	The human history	Last Judgment	Celestial City
Homecoming metaphor	The state of innocence/childhood	Growing older, obtaining knowledge	The Journey of life	--------------------	Heavenly home
The ironic reading of the homecoming metaphor	The state of innocence/childhood	Growing older, obtaining knowledge	The Journey of life	--------------------	--------------------

Death as qualitative change --->

As we see, the ironic reading is characterized by the loss of the most important element of the construction: the regaining of the final home. Thus, it presumes a real death instead of a pleasant "homecoming," whereas the other elements remain unchanged.

A classic example of such ironic reading can be found in the Soviet drama *Optimistic Tragedy* (1963). The action is set during the Russian Revolution. Revolutionary sailors detain two officers while heading home from the front. One of the officers lost his hearing. Not being able to hear the conversation between the marines on whether the captives should be shot as potential Whites, he hopes that they will be released to go home. In response to the constant questions from the deaf man about permission to go home the marines nod with a grin. The deaf officer is full of joy. Finally, both are "sent home" by means of a bullet. The metaphor doesn´t bring consolation anymore, but due to the ironic usage underlines and contrasts – for the spectator – the understanding of the fact that home is surely *not* the place where they will return. Death is not replaced by home, but, being nominally called so, increases its realism. One should literally die in order to "get home." Moreover, this turns out to be the only way to find oneself in a safe place without troubles. This narrative has the quasi appeal of the archaic understanding of death as a move to the house of the dead (see chapter *Origins of the Metaphor of "Homecoming to Heaven"*).

A more complicated model is found in the short story *Door in the Wall* (1906) by H.G.Wells. The main character, a successful man, tells the story-teller, that though his had a wonderful life, he still feels disappointed, as if he had missed something, as if his life was strange to him. Then he reveals the reason, for he is desperately longing for the magical garden, once visited by him in his *childhood*, when he opened a green door in a white wall. The description of this garden bears a sharp resemblance to *paradise*; the character himself mentions that he felt there as if he had finally *come home*:

There was something in the very air of it that exhilarated, that gave one a sense of lightness and good happening and well being; there was something in the sight of it that made all its colour clean and perfect and subtly luminous. In the instant of coming into it one was exquisitely glad […] And everything was beautiful there […] Heaven knows where West Kensington had suddenly got to. And somehow *it was just like coming home* […] it was *as though they* [friendly creatures] *welcomed me home. There was a keen sense of home-coming in my mind*, and when presently a tall, fair girl appeared in the pathway and came to meet me, smiling, and said 'Well?' to me, and lifted me, and kissed me, and put me down, and led me by the hand, there was no amazement, but only an impression of delightful rightness, of being reminded of happy things that had in some strange way been overlooked. There were broad steps, I remember, that came into view between spikes of delphinium, and up

these we went to a great avenue between very old and shady dark trees. All down this avenue, you know, between the red chapped stems, were marble seats of honour and statuary, and very tame and friendly white doves […] [203]

Garden, doves, friendly beasts, a fair girl – all symbols, all constituents of the image of paradise, merging into one picture of supreme happiness. The protagonist meets other children there, they *play* beautiful *games*, and there are *lots* of wonderful things *to eat* (see Fairylands in chapter *the mechanism of a "happy place"*). But the vision ends and he founds himself again cast out from paradise. The character seeks to return to this place throughout his life, always looking for this green door in the white wall, but he always fails, until one day:

They found his body very early yesterday morning in a deep excavation near East Kensington Station. It is one of two shafts that have been made in connection with an extension of the railway southward. It is protected from the intrusion of the public by a hoarding upon the high road, in which a small doorway has been cut for the convenience of some of the workmen who live in that direction. The doorway was left unfastened through a misunderstanding between two gangers, and through it he made his way.

Here we see the model comprehensively unfolded: the childhood is the paradise, the "true" home, forever lost and never to be found; life in the strange world is the constant search for a once known paradise; the symbolic "return" to this paradise is possible only through one´s death. Though the reader understands that this return can be meant only with a bitter irony, as the door, finally opened by the protagonist, was the worst possible door. Here functions the afore explained replacement within the framework of the binary opposition [death-home], when "home" is ironically used instead of "death," intensifying its realism. The door, that should have been leading home, turns out to be mere bait. This is unlike *Gladiator*, where the spectator can be reconciled with the thought, that even if the protagonist died, he still "met" his family, as it was at least shown on the screen.

One of the most illustrative examples of the ironic reading that carries out an almost direct appeal to the system of the imaginary of "afterlife as home" with its following deconstruction can be found in a short story, written by Ray Bradbury for his *Martian Chronicles* (1950). *The Third Expedition* (first published in 1948 as "Mars is heaven!"[204]) tells the story of an expedition from Earth heading towards Mars. However, it is not the unfriendly red desert that

[203] H.G. *Wells*, The Door in the Wall (1906) italics supplied http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/456/pg456-images.html <Last accessed 14.08.15>

[204] Interestingly, but Mars has in fact already once been the scene of action in "consolation literature": Agnes L. *Pratt* "The City Beyond: The Story of One Who Dwells in the Next Planet." In: Godey´s Magazine 137 (Philadelphia 1898)

awaits them, but a neat American town, in which each of the three crew members recognizes his own childhood home. They immediately associate this place with paradise:

"Is this Heaven?" asked Hinkston…"This couldn't be Heaven," said the captain, ironically. "Though, I must admit, it looks peaceful and cool, and pretty much like Green Bluff, where I was born, in 1915."[205]

Moreover, their dead relatives and loved-ones come out at once and greet them with love and tenderness. The astronauts are struck and shocked, soon even the captain loses control. The happy family reunion happens and the earthling are welcomed home. The members of the expedition lose their minds from happiness and joy, and each of them goes to "his home," in order to celebrate the happy reunion and to spend an idyllic evening in the bosom of the family. The longing for the lost home and the joy of its return overcame the explorers and made them forget their true aims on Mars. They lost their vigilance, and paid for it with their lives. The would-be home, the Phelpsian paradise, turned out to be nothing more than a trap, and the supposed relatives – the Martians, used their telepathic powers in order to make use of the Earthlings´ nostalgic impulses, turning them to the instrument of their own destruction. Thus, the Martians, disguised as relatives, killed the invaders and buried them. Entirely turning inside out the popular concept of homecoming to paradise, Bradbury appeals to its schematic and conditional character: instead of cozy "Green Bluff" the lifeless valley of death springs up again. We see how quick the transition is from home to death. If in Wells´ story home was a symbolic bait, here the image of home is explicitly used to trap and deceive. The expected homecoming turned into the feast of death.

From the screen version of Martian Chronicles.

Andrei Tarkovsky, in whose films the image of home plays a central role (*Mirror, Nostalgia*), interests us with his quite free film interpretation (1972) of Stanislav Lem´s novel *Solaris* (1960). Solaris is a far-away planet, representing one big intelligent ocean, which has a telepathic ability to bring to life the most sacral, hidden, or repressed dreams, fears and

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[205] Ray *Bradbury*, Mars is Heaven! In: Planet Stories, 3-12 (1948)

desires. Chris, the protagonist, leaves Earth and his private home (depicted very poetically and in detail) in order to investigate what is happening on Solaris. This is because a crew, which was sent there, no longer responds to contact from Earth – Tarkovsky´s story starts there, where the Bradbury´s story ends. When Chris enters Solaris´s orbit, he finds out that each crew member is coping with the "re-created" visions of their deepest anguish and fear that have been generated by the Ocean. The planet brings to life again, what they tried to forget or displace. Thus, the ocean soon "resurrects" the wife of the main character, who committed suicide 10 years before. In the end of the film, we see Chris returning to his paternal home and his father, waiting for him on the threshold, whom he embraces in the recognizable Rembrandtesque pose of a prodigal son. The house, which represents home, is shown as a not-too-big but not-too-small summer house, an archetypical Russian dacha. The camera pans up, and it turns out that the whole scene is not actually happening on Earth, but on a small island in the middle of the ocean on Solaris.

In comparison to a rather straightforward Bradbury´s text, the conception in this story is more complicated. The sequence can be interpreted doubly. In the first version, it can be interpreted as a conscious choice of the protagonist; he uses the telepathic powers of the intelligent Ocean in order to create a virtual ideal home and decides to stay there, having symbolically died on Earth and in reality, preferring a virtual homecoming.

Chris returns to his father (Solaris)

According to another interpretation, he was entrapped by the Ocean, not being able to resist the sweetness of home. So home is then a trap again, and homecoming – a deadly temptation.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to investigate more ironic readings of "homecoming" in the framework of one chapter of the master´s thesis. An independent paper could be written on it. I chose the most characteristic examples, for I´ve seen my aim in highlighting this discourse as based on the homecoming-to-heaven metaphor and showing its possible evolution.

VIII. Conclusion

Homecoming to god is not a uniform construction. Within its framework there is the interweaving of two conceptions: the archaic, but still powerful idea of the returning of the immortal soul to its heavenly homeland after the death of the body. Secondly, there is the later idealization of domestic space, which affected various strata of society in Europe and North America in the 19th century. After a long evolution, home and family are perceived as "natural," self-evident, and sanctified by god and religion. So much so that it becomes the locus of imagining the afterlife. On the strength of the morphologic proximity between such perceptions of home and paradise, heaven begins to be swiftly domesticated. Due to the efforts of numerous authors of so-called "consolation literature," the Christian paradise more and more resembles the Pagan Mlyvo, the afterlife from the Nivkh mythology, where people continue to lead their usual life: go fishing, get married, give birth to children.

The functionality of the metaphor is obvious – the image of a domesticated afterlife is directly preceded by the desire to deprive death of its hazardousness, to domesticate it, bringing it into correlation with home, thereby replacing one with another. Domesticated death, as a domesticated wolf, bereaved of its fangs, can´t pose a threat anymore. Home, as the most familiar and known, and death, as mostly strange and non-amicable, constitute the ideally adjusted binary opposition. In this framework, one of its ends is being transposed on the other, thereby withdrawing its danger.

By the 20th century, the metaphor of homecoming after death becomes easily decodable commonplace, opening wide possibilities for ironic readings. Retaining its rhetoric and continuing to encode death and dying, it loses its consolatory element of coming "home, to heaven." In this case it presumes real death instead, underlying the realism of death by this contrast. To get "home" is then possible only after having died. Death and home become interchangeable, the one turns out to finally be a sign of the other.

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X. Appendix

This appendix is an attempt to make a short "anthology" of selected texts and media from different ages and cultures which involve homecoming metaphors in respect of the afterlife. . They are arranged not chronologically, but according to the typology, developed in this thesis.

House of the Dead

Bible:

For man goes to his eternal home while mourners go about in the street (Eccles 12:5).

Epic of Gilgamesh:

Me did he lead to the Dwelling of Darkness, the home of Irkalla,
Unto the Dwelling from which he who entereth cometh forth never!
(Aye), by the road on the passage whereof there can be no returning,
Unto the Dwelling whose tenants are (ever) bereft of the daylight,
Where for their food is the dust, and the mud is their sustenance

S.T. Coleridge, excerpt from *Three graves*:

And when the death-knock at the door

Called home the maid forlorn,

This spade was seen to mark her grave

Beneath the flowery thorn.

From Russian spirituals:

Из русских духовных стихов:

Вижу я гробы, гробы,
Предвечные наши домы

Камени то головье мое
Песок, источник - постеля моя
Черви, то соседи мои
Мать, сыра земля
Прими на вечную жизнь меня.

Childhood as paradise

Thomas Traherne (1637-1674) was one of the *first* English writers to embody his private childhood memories in the discourse surrounding paradise:

Certainly, Adam in paradise had not more sweet and curious apprehensions of the world than I when I was a child… The city seemed to stand in Eden, or to be built in heaven… So that with much ado I was corrupted, and made to learn the dirty devices of this world. Which now I unlearn, and become as it were a little child again, that I may enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

 (From Centuries of Meditation, edited by Bertram Dobell, 1908 modernized English)

"Gnostic" Dualism Expressed in the Home-Death Binary

Ancient Egypt:

Death is in front of my face today,
like a well-trodden way,
like coming home from war.
…
Death is in front of my face today,
like a man's longing to see his home,
having spent many years in captivity. (third canto from Discourse of a Man with his Ba)

From one of innumerable sermons:

THIS WORLD IS NOT YOUR HOME, YOU'RE JUST PASSING THROUGH…. There's coming an Eternal Homecoming! The greatest homecoming you will ever know is when you come by faith to Jesus Christ confessing your sins and you determine to follow Him in obedience.

Bible:

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. **14** For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. **15** And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. **16** But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. (Hebrews 11:13-16)

Heaven as Homeland

One of the meanings for Heimat in Grimm´s dictionary:

Für christen ist der himmel die heimat im gegensatz zu erde auf der er als gast oder fremdling weilt (For Christians heaven, Heimat as opposed to earth where one stays as guest or foreigner – Grimmischen Wörterbuch, 4. Band 2. Abteilug, Leipzig 1877,col. 865-866 – english cited by Kaye p.38-39)

wann, friedensbothe, der du das paradies

dem müden erdenpilger entschlieszest, tod,

wann führst du mich mit deinem goldnen

stabe gen himmel, zu meiner heimath?

HÖLTY 84 *Halm;*

ein zarter fremdling auf der rauhen erde,

der bald zur heimath sich zurückgeschwungen.

UHLAND *ged.* 126*;*

fremdling bin ich nur im staube,

meine heimat such ich wieder,

meine grüne himmelslaube.

ARNDT *ged.* (1840) 486.

Philip Sidney, from the 5th sonnet:

True, that on earth we are but pilgrims made, And should in soul up to our country move.

The Corpus of American Folk Songs, Spirituals, Gospels, and Blues on Home in Heaven

The motifs of heavenly home in American white and black folk, country, and blues music unite "gnostic" elements of the homecoming metaphor with "domesticated" ones. This is integral cultural layer, worthy of independent investigation. Here, I give a very short selection:

1. Hank Williams – I´m going home

(G) Standin' by the bedside of a (C) dyin' friend one (G) day,
Tears in my eyes, 'till (A7) I heard him (D7) say,
(G) Don't weep for me, don't (C) cry when I'm (G) gone,
For glory to God, to-(D7) night I'm goin' (G) home. (G7)

Chorus:
(C) I'm goin' home, yes, (G) I'm goin' home,
No more will I in this (A7) sinful world (D7) roam,
(G) Jesus my savior, (C) waits upon the (G) throne,
Glory to God, to-(D7) night I'm goin' (G) home.

2. Johnny Cash

- Oh lead me gently home father
  Lead me gently home
  When life's toils are ended
  And parting days have come
  Sin no more will tempt me
  There from thee I'll roam
  If you'll only lead me father
  Lead me gently home

- Hymns: are all the children in
  When I'm alone I often think of an old house on the hill
  Of a big yard hedged in roses where we ran and played at will
  And when the night time brought us home hushing our merry din
  Mother would look around and ask are all the children in
  Well it's been many a year now and the old house on the hill
  No longer has my mother's care and the yard is still so still
  But if I listen I can hear it all no matter how long it's been
  I seem to hear my mother ask are all the children in
  And I wonder when the curtain falls on that last earthly day
  When we say goodbye to all of this to our pain and work and play
  When we step across the river where mother so long has been
  Will we hear ask her a final time are all the children in

- Many years ago in days of childhood I used to play till evening time would come
  Still winding down that old familiar pathway I hear my mother call at setting sun
  Come home come home it's suppertime the shadows lengthen fast
  Come home come home it's suppertime we're going home at last
  Some of the fondest mem'ries of my childhood are woven around suppertime
  When mother used to call from the backsteps of the old homeplace
  Come on home now son it's suppertime my how I'd love to hear that once again
  But you know time has woven for me a realization of truth that's even more thrilling
  That someday we'll be called up to gather around the suppertable up there
  For the greatest suppertime of them all with our Lord
  I can almost hear the call now comin' from the portals of heaven
  Come home son it's suppertime come on home
  Come home come home...

- I am a pilgrim and a stranger
  Traveling through this wearisome land
  And I've got a home in that yonder city, good Lord
  And it's not (good Lordy it's not) not made by hand

  I got a mother, a sister and a brother
  Who have gone to that sweet home
  And I am determined to go and see them, good Lord
  Over on (good Lordy over on) that distant shore

  As I go down to that river Jordan
  Just to bathe my weary soul
  If I could touch but just the hem of His garment, good Lord
  I believe (good Lordy I believe) that it would make me whole

  Now when I'm dead, laying in my coffin
  All of my friends all gather round
  They can say that he's just laying there sleeping, good Lord
  Sweet peace (Lordy sweet peace) his soul is found

3. Folk songs

    - I´m alone all alone in this world
      Chorus:
          E
      I'm alone, all alone in this world
          B   E
      I'm alone, all alone in this world

99

A

    I'm alone, all alone in this world

            E   B   E

    Take me home, dear savior, take me home

    I have no father/mother/brother/sister/sweetheart in this world

    Take me home, dear savior, take me home

- Heaven will be my home

Heaven will be my home some sweet day oh Lord don't let me fall by the way
Heaven will be my home some sweet day hold on to my hand oh Lord don't let me stray

So many times the way was so dark so dark I couldn't see my way
But I called on Jesus and he came right away
I'm holding to his precious love for he has made me see
Heaven will be my home...

- Home in heaven
- Swing low sweet chariot
- Blow your trumpet, Gabriel
- Praise member
- Poor rosy
- Michael row your boat ashore
- I know when i am going home
- Archangel open the door
- I want to go home (spiritual)
- Fare ye well (spiritual)
- Good-bye
- Shout on children
- O´er the crossing
- Don´t be weary traveller
- The golden altar
- I´m going home
- Brother guide me home
- De Lord will call us home
- Wayfaring Stranger
- Wayfaring Pilrim
- Steal away

"Goin´ home to Jesus": the conception of home as a metaphor for the representation of paradise in Western afterlife discourses (abstract for the master´s thesis)

My paper aims to investigate the structure, origins, and development of the metaphor of *coming back home to god* through the 19th – 21th centuries. This includes the broad variety of its manifestations in literature, music, cinema and arts; analyzing spiritual & country music, Victorian "consolation literature" and its contemporary continuators, I take out "domesticated" representations of paradise and investigate them in their different cultural and social conditions.

Analyzing the metaphor, I distinguish between two levels of representation: home viewed as the sacred lost place, and – based on it – paradise, seen through the perspective of the ideal home. I hypothesize that, the "discovery" of childhood and the establishment of the new bourgeois way of life and culture in the first half of the 19th century led to the idealization of home as a place of innocence and comfort, positioning it thus within the imagery and symbolism of paradise.

Finally, I investigate the cases of the ironic reading of the homecoming metaphor, characteristic of the 20th century, when it remains to function as a symbol for death and dying, but loses the idea of going to paradise after it, presuming a real death instead of a pleasant "homecoming."

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"Goin´ home to Jesus": das Konzept von Zuhause als Metapher für die Repräsentation des Paradieses in Westlichen Jenseitsdiskursen (Abstract für eine Masterarbeit)

Das Ziel der Arbeit besteht darin, die Struktur, Ursprünge und Entwicklung der Metapher *coming back home to god* über 19 – 21 Jhds. zu erforschen. Dies erfasst eine breite Vielfalt ihrer Erscheinungsformen in Literatur, Musik, Film und Kunst; in der Analyse von spiritual & country Musik, victorianischer "consolation literature" und deren heutigen Fortsetzungen konzentriere ich mich auf die "domestizierten" Repräsentationen des Paradieses und erforsche sie in ihren verschiedenen kulturellen und sozialen Bedingungen.

In der Analyse der Metapher unterscheide ich zwischen zwei Ebenen der Repräsentation: das Zuhause, gesehen als sakraler verlorener Ort und – darauf basierend – das Paradies, gesehen durch die Perspektive vom idealen Zuhause. In meiner Hypothese, führte die "Entdeckung" der Kindheit und die Etablierung eines neuen bürgerlichen Lebensstil in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jhs. zu einer Idealisierung des Zuhauses als Ortes der Unschuldigkeit und des Komforts, was es in die Metaphorik und Symbolik des Paradieses platzierte.

Schließlich untersuche ich die Fälle der ironischen Lesart der Metapher des „Nachhausekommens", die für das 20. Jh. charakteristisch ist. Die Metapher funktioniert somit weiter als Bezeichnung von Tod und Sterben, verliert jedoch die Idee der Rückkehr ins Paradies, und nimmt stattdessen einen realen Tod anstelle des angenehmen „homecoming" an.

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