

HERMENEUTICS  
AND  
LITERATURE

# PHAINOMENA

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## PHAINOMENA

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# ON HOME (*DAS HEIM*) AND THE UNCANNY (*DAS UNHEIMLICHE*) IN HEIDEGGER

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## *Abstract*

The paper aims to argue that the question of home (*das Heim*) is one of the crucial elements of Martin Heidegger's philosophy, which has been tackled by the German philosopher throughout his lifework in close connection to its opposition, namely the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*). The paper discusses the different understandings of home in Heidegger's philosophy starting from the seminal works, such as *Being and Time* (1927) and *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935), as well as Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister"

(1942) and “Letter on Humanism” (1946) including “Building Dwelling Thinking” (1951). In his argumentation on the topic from 1935 onwards, Heidegger developed the question of home within the hermeneutical analysis of Sophocles’s *Antigone*, specifically the first verse of the famous choral song and the term *δαινόν*. In the conclusion, the standpoints of Jacques Derrida and David Farrell Krell on the subject are confronted, in order to discuss the paradoxical structure of the topic of home in Heidegger’s philosophy and, more generally, within philosophy of architecture.

*Keywords:* home (*das Heim*), Martin Heidegger, *das Unheimliche*, uncanny, Antigone.

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### **O domu (*das Heim*) in nedomačnem (*das Unheimliche*) pri Heidegru**

#### *Povzetek*

122 Članek želi izpostaviti, da je vprašanje doma (*das Heim*) eden izmed ključnih elementov filozofije Martina Heideggra, s katerim se je nemški mislec v celotnem poteku svojega življenjskega dela ukvarjal v bližnji povezavi z njegovim nasprotjem, namreč z nedomačnim (*das Unheimliche*). Prispevek obravnava različna razumevanja doma znotraj Heidegrove filozofije, začenši s temeljnimi deli, kakršni sta *Bit in čas* (1927) in *Uvod v metafiziko* (1935), in vključujoč predavanja *Hölderlinova himna »Ister«* (1942) ter znamenito pismo »O ‚humanizmu‘« (1946) in spis »Gradnja Prebivanje Mišljenje« (1951). Od leta 1935 dalje je Heidegger v svoji argumentaciji vprašanje doma razvil znotraj hermenevitične analize Sofoklesove *Antigone*, zlasti prvega verza stajanke in besede *δαινόν*. V zaključku se z zadevnimi stališči Jacquesa Derridaja in Davida Farrella Krella spoprimemo, da bi obravnavali paradoksalno strukturo tematike doma znotraj Heidegrove filozofije in, splošneje, znotraj filozofije arhitekture.

*Ključne besede:* dom (*das Heim*), Martin Heidegger, *das Unheimliche*, nedomačno, Antigona.

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## Introduction

In the late 20<sup>th</sup>-century and contemporary philosophy, Heidegger's work stands as a significant reference point. In particular, the question of home has been the focus of many recent studies about Heidegger (Withy 2015; McNeil 1999; Vidler 1992). These studies have shown the significance of this multi-layered topic and an urge to rethink it within his philosophy. This paper aims to argue that the question of home (*das Heim*) is one of the crucial elements of Martin Heidegger's philosophy, which has been tackled by the German philosopher throughout his lifework in close connection to its opposition, namely the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*).

Heidegger's work has greatly influenced the humanities and arts, and has been a source of interest also in architecture.<sup>1</sup> In architectural theory, Heidegger has triggered a new theoretical approach to the understanding of the key elements of architecture, known as architectural phenomenology, where also the question of home stands at the center of the postmodern reshaping of architecture (Norberg-Schulz 1979 and 1985; Frampton 1983; Harries 1997).<sup>2</sup>

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### Materials and methods: From *das Heim* to *das Un-Heim*

This paper discusses the different understandings of home in Heidegger's philosophy starting from seminal works, such as *Being and Time* (1927) and *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935), as well as the lectures *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister"* (1942) and "Letter on Humanism" (1946) concluding with the essay "Building Dwelling Thinking" (1951). In his argumentation on the topic from 1935 onwards, Heidegger developed the question of home within the hermeneutical analysis

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1 More on the topic also in Kurir 2018.

2 One could argue that the interpretation of Heidegger's work on the topic of home has been in many ways problematic within the realm of architectural theory. It is, thus, commonly taken for granted within architectural theory that Martin Heidegger proposed an ideal image of home with an old farmhouse in the Black Forest as described by the German philosopher in the essay "Building Dwelling Thinking" (1951). Heidegger is usually described as an intellectual who is close to the rural ("Why do I Stay in the Provinces"; 1934; cf. Heidegger 1981), to the unspoiled countryside (*Feldweg-Gespräche*; 1944/45), and who struggles with understanding the pressing issues of contemporary industrialized world and its urban character.

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of Sophocles's *Antigone*, specifically the first verse of the Choral song. We will follow his hermeneutical approach and combine it with our methodological tools referencing works from philosophy, literature, and psychoanalysis.

In Heidegger's early works (*Being and Time*), the topic of home first extensively appears within a close connection to the question of being, presenting man as the one who is facing unhomeliness in the world. It persists in his later works as the destiny of complete homelessness and rootlessness of man ("Letter on Humanism"). The terms of home (*das Heim*), the familiar (*heimisch*), the secret and hidden (*heimlich*), but also of that which is unhomely and strange (*unheimisch*), and uncanny (*unheimlich*), hold an important place throughout Heidegger's early and late works. We suggest, thereupon, that there might be a common denominator to the intertwined fields of Heidegger's understanding of the position of man in space and, specifically, in home as such, which exposes the complexity of this topic in his philosophy: the term of *das Unheimliche*, the uncanny.

124 Home as a topic is intrinsically connected not only to Heidegger's work, but also to his personal life. We might even say that the topic of home is paradoxically structured within his work. Namely, Heidegger is usually taken as the German philosopher who gave speeches, such as "Why do I Stay in the Provinces?" (Heidegger 1981)—and spent all his life in a rural province in the South of Germany—, and who supposedly praised an old Black Forest farmhouse as the ideal image of the home and the homely ("Building Dwelling Thinking"). We will see, further on, that his notion of home within his philosophy was radically different and utterly modern. Additionally, Heidegger's philosophy has to be taken into consideration from the perspective of his close collaboration with the National Socialist regime: he did not only act as a member of the party, he also took his own philosophy to construct an ontological argumentation of the importance of the Nazi regime.<sup>3</sup> On the one hand, one cannot understand Heidegger's philosophy apart from his collaboration with the idea of National Socialism, as he was a philosopher of the Nazi regime, and, on the other hand, Heidegger is one of the most prominent, influential thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century whose short collaboration with the Nazi regime is often attributed to a terrible (temporary) slip and a

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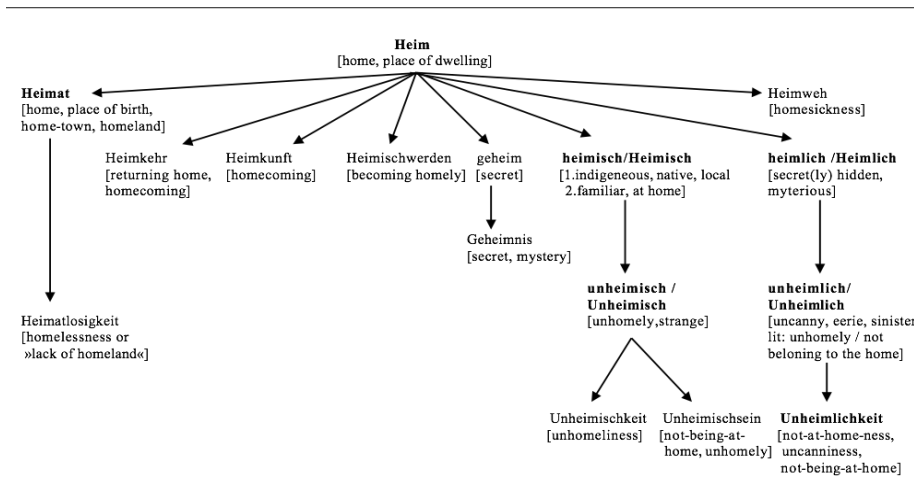
3 More on the topic in Safranski 1981 and Wolin 1992.

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mistake. Both prejudices arise from undeniable historical facts; nonetheless, they do point to the core of the problem we would like to expose here.

### Results: A hermeneutics of *das Heim* and *das Unheimliche*

In order to be able to elaborate upon the complexity of the topic, which might result in a Heideggerian hermeneutics of the terms home and the uncanny, we will firstly attempt to sketch a map of Heidegger's intertwined understanding of the term *das Heim*, using definitions that are captured in Heidegger's dictionary<sup>4</sup> (Inwood 1999) and different essays.<sup>5</sup>



Scheme 1:

An attempt of a terminological map of the term *Heim* in Heidegger's work.

4 Inwood's dictionary opens with an important note: "Above all, words matter to Heidegger. Words matter as much as meanings. None of the senses of a potent word is ever definitively excluded from Heidegger's use of it, and no other word, whether in the same or a different language, is ever an exact synonym." (Inwood 1999, 2.) Heidegger was notorious for the invention of new words and new terminology, but also for some (problematic) etymological interpretations of a few basic philosophical terms (such as *techné*, *poiesis*, being, etc.). Michael Inwood's dictionary is one of many available analyzes about the main terms and key references in Heidegger's philosophy; a similar dictionary provides Dahlstrom 2013.

5 My main references are: McNeill 1999; Farrell Krell 1995; Warminski 1990; and Fóti 1999.

The significance of *das Heim* for Heidegger (and in German, in general) can be broadly associated with home and/or with a place of dwelling. One of the most known derivations of the term *Heim* is *Heimat*, which could also signify home or, more exactly, a home place, but mostly covers the term homeland, even if in Heidegger's thought *Heimat* is "a term that oscillates between home and homeland and yet means neither" (Hammermeister 2000, 312). Undoubtedly, Heidegger puts *Heim* and *Heimat* at the center of his philosophical quest, but he does also pause at a number of possible derivations of *das Heim*, which could be viewed as independent topics or autonomous fields of meanings.

Such terms are two adjectives, deriving from *das Heim*: *heimisch* and *heimlich*. The word *heimisch* in German once covered the significance of something that "belongs to the home," but has gradually enlarged and now also covers the meanings of the "local, indigenous, native," and partly still maintains the meaning of "known, at home," which is generally used in a situation when one feels at home in a certain place. With the negation of the word *heimisch*, one obtains a new term, *unheimisch*, which can be used by Heidegger also as a noun and be written as *Un-heimische*—the meaning of which is broadly translated as "un-homely"—denoting something not known and strange. The term *heimlich* used to cover in German the same meaning as *heimisch*, but eventually distanced from it, as is now closer to the meaning of "secret, hidden, mysterious." The affiliation of *heimlich* to *Heim* seems to be almost totally lost in the general usage in the German language. Additionally, this term also presents a peculiar meaning in its negation. With the application of the prefix *un-* (usually used in German to make a negation, an opposition of the selected word) to the term *heimlich*, the term *unheimlich* emerges, which in Heidegger's philosophy literary means "not-belonging-to-home," and at the same time ultimately sharpens the meaning of "hidden" and "mysterious," combining it with the significance of dreadfulness, meaning in the end something as "uncanny, eerie, strange." We can conclude, thus, that the meanings of *heimlich* and *unheimlich* can be in German seen as being quite close, and precisely this proximity was also elaborated at length by Freud in his celebrated essay *The Uncanny* (*Das Unheimliche*; 1919; cf. Freud 2001). On the other hand, we can notice that the specific tonality of "eerie" and "dreadfulness" makes *unheimlich* distinctively different from *heimlich*.

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In *Being and time*, Heidegger often uses the derivation of *unheimlich*, known as *Unheimlichkeit*, with which he marks, if we follow the reading proposed by Michael Inwood (1999), a distinctive way that could be understood as “not-being-at-home,” as something that could be translated as “uncanniness” and “horrifying.” Additionally, William McNeil has stressed that for Heidegger the term *das Heim* is essential, if we want to read the word *Unheimlichkeit* in its fullness. Thus, he adds: »For Heidegger is especially important the connection of *heimlich* with the hidden, the secret and the mystery (*Geheimnis*).» (McNeill 1999, 347.) With this contextual emphasis of the word *heimlich* that opens up a connection with the term *Geheimnis* as another key term deriving from *das Heim*, we are moving to the proximity of the definition of *unheimlich*. Notably, this is the nearness between *das Heim* and *unheimlich*, which was proposed in an observation by Schelling and is the one that is persistently repeated by Freud in his essay *The Uncanny*. Schelling observed that *unheimlich* is that which “ought to have remained ... secret [*im Geheimnis*] and hidden but has come to light” (Freud 2001, 224).

We would like to add here two important notes. 1) Heidegger is interested in the uncanny and dreadful, present in the meaning of the word *unheimlich*, as well as in that which is hidden and mysterious, as in the word *heimlich*, even if he operates with *unheimlich* in some very distinctive places of his work. 2) The meaning of the four “key” terms, namely *heimisch*, *unheimisch*, *heimlich*, and *unheimlich*, is closely entangled, which is notably evident in translations into a variety of languages, where a range of diverse solutions has been used for each of them, mostly taking the context of the embracing text to choose the “correct” term, even if in some cases almost the same word is used for the four of them.

Heidegger frequently elaborates on the term *Unheimlichkeit*, which is close to the meaning of an absent, missing home; it is generally translated within his work as “unhomeliness.” In this realm, one finds also *Unheimischsein*, which Warminski (1990) translated as not-being-at-home (a “solution” sometimes used for *Unheimlichkeit*). Heidegger chose, in his controversial translation of the choral song from Sophocles’s *Antigone*, to which we will return later, to translate the multilayered Greek word *δεινόν* (*deinon*) with the term *das Unheimliche*. Why is Heidegger’s translation known as one of his most

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problematic transpositions of a Greek term into German? Because it is usually translated into English as “fearful” or “terrible.” Moreover, Hölderlin himself chose a different solution for the translation of this adjective into German: he chose *ungeheuer* (“monstrous”) for δεινόν. Despite this debatable translation by Heidegger, we would like to underline here the triple meaning he attributes to δεινόν: he understands it as a meaningful unity of the fearsome, the powerful, and the extraordinary. With this triple meaning, the complexity of *das Unheimliche* is more evident.

Quite often in Heidegger’s oeuvre we encounter four additional terms, which are also rooted in *das Heim*: one is *Heimatlosigkeit*, in the translations of his texts usually transposed into English as “homelessness” or “lack of homeland”; furthermore, one finds *Heimkehr* with the translation of “returning home” and standing closely to *Heimkunft* or “homecoming,” then *Heimweh* or “homesickness”; and a crucial term for this article, *Heimischwerden*, translated as “becoming homely.”

128 All the indicated terms, not only *unheimlich* or *das Unheimliche* and *Unheimlichkeit*, are seldom present Heidegger’s philosophy. Heidegger otherwise often takes into consideration, within this realm, also the term *das Haus*, which can be read in its double meaning as “house” in English: as a building—this or that house—, but which partly also covers the meaning of home as such. When he wants to highlight the feeling to be at home, he uses the *zu Hause sein* or *zuhause sein*, and when he outlines its opposite, he speaks of *Un-zuhause*.

The questions of the homely and the unhomely or the uncanny, of *heimisch* and *unheimlich*, come to the surface of his philosophy already at its beginning, in 1925 and 1927, almost simultaneously with the question of Being and *Dasein*, and constantly re-appear in his work until later periods.

### **The differences between *das Heim* and *das Unheimlich* from 1927 to 1951**

The question of home occupies an exposed position already in *Being and Time*. Two aspects in connection to the topic of home need to be underlined here. 1) Heidegger assigns home and being-at-home “only” to the everyday world of the average, of *They* or *das Man*. 2) The topic of the familiar (the

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homely) and the unhomely, uncanniness (*Unheimlichkeit*) is disclosed through the analysis of anxiety.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger identifies the homely, the “being at home” (*Zuhause*) with the average, with the everyday openness of the public realm, as reflected within the majority. In the entire Heidegger’s opus this might be the only point where the individual is originally awarded a shelter within the meaning of *Haus* or of that which is intimate and familiar, of *heimisch*. Only a very distinct phenomenon, which can be seen as a radically modern interpretation of the significant mood of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, can move *Dasein* from this safe universality of man’s comprehensive mediocrity and anonymity to the other realm—to the haunting half of uncanniness (*Unheimlichkeit*): this is anxiety (*Angst*). Anxiety is a trigger, which pulls *Dasein* from *das Man*, it is the exact point where the transition of *Dasein*’s average everydayness to its singularity occurs and where the transition from being-at-home (*Zuhause sein*) to not-being-at-home (*Un-zuhause*) takes place, as anxiety is the phenomenon that shakes *Dasein* and pulls it towards its individuality.<sup>6</sup> Anxiety tosses *Dasein* from the alleged “home” into the non-familiar, into the not-at-home(ness). The uncanniness (of the unhomely) in the form of *Unheimlichkeit* is introduced here again and Heidegger tries to define it thus:

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In anxiety one has an “uncanny” [“unheimlich”] feeling. Here, with anxiety, the peculiar indefiniteness of that which *Dasein* finds itself involved in anxiety initially finds expression: the nothing and nowhere. But uncanniness [“*Unheimlichkeit*”] means at the same time not-being-at-home. (Heidegger 2010, 182.)<sup>7</sup>

Heidegger introduces one of the variations of the term *unheimlich* (which is initially secured between quotation marks) as a specific shade of anxiety. At this point, it is still not possible to grasp, *what* this term means, but what is obvious from this introduction, is that it discloses a transitional “stage” of *Dasein*, and,

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<sup>6</sup> “Anxiety, on the other hand, fetches *Dasein* back out of its entangled absorption in the ‘world.’ Everyday familiarity collapses.” (Heidegger 2010, 182.)

<sup>7</sup> The word “*Unheimlichkeit*” in the last sentence, which is not present in the original translation, has been included by the author of the present paper.

even more important: Heidegger understands uncanniness (*Unheimlichkeit*) and not-being-at-home (*Un-zuhause*) as something very similar, if not even the same.

What does this mean? We emphasized above that Heidegger puts another equivalence in *Being and time*, namely that this being-at-home (*Zuhause*) can be identified only with the average, everyday openness of the public, of a world that is shown to the majority. Nevertheless, what should be stressed, here, is that this not-being-at-home (*Un-zuhause*) is a more primordial phenomenon than being-at-home, that can be found in the shelter of *das Man*, of “They.” To quote Heidegger: “Not-being-at-home must be conceived existentially and ontologically as the more primordial phenomenon.” (2010, 183.)

130 Namely, in *Being and Time*, the individual, referred to here as *Dasein*, does not—in the original and basic state—possess a home of any kind. In fact, *Dasein*’s position in the world in the context of this book is radically uncanny. It is a state of original homelessness that lies at the core of *Dasein*’s being and is revealed with another kind of urge, of immanence for this being—with anxiety, which cuts *Dasein*’s apparently safe and quotidian relationship with the average, with “They” (*das Man*).

Being at home (*Zuhause*) is opposed to two different states of *Dasein*, and not just one: its first opposition is not-at-home-ness (*Unheimlichkeit*), the other is not-being-at-home (*Un-zuhause*), which could be seen as a more direct negation of the familiarity of being-at-home. Even if Heidegger on some occasions uses these two oppositions as different terms, he also draws an equivalent between the two in connection with anxiety. Heidegger equates the two states of *Dasein*: “In anxiety one has an ‘uncanny’ [*unheimlich*] feeling. Here, with anxiety, the peculiar indefiniteness of that which *Dasein* finds itself involved in anxiety initially finds expression: the nothing and nowhere. But uncanniness means at the same time not-being-at-home.” (Heidegger 2010, 189.)

Anxiety is the basic mood that opens or discloses the not-at-home-ness as not-being-at-home, it is the mood that interrupts the immersion of our everyday life: with anxiety within a Heideggerian perspective, we are confronted with the truth of our world and our existence.

*Das Unheimliche* is referred to in *Being and Time* as a specific layer of anxiety. But, can we perhaps say that *das Unheimliche* is just one specific tone

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of anxiety? Heidegger scholars have been puzzled with this question. For Hubert Dreyfus, *unheimlich* reveals a “radical un-rootedness” or a human activity without proper foundation, which indicates that “people can never be at home in the world.” William Richardson says that *unheimlich* indicates that ontic dwellings are not the true home for *Dasein*: this is the reason why to be permanently expelled is immanent for human essence; to be a man means to be in permanent exile. Richardson here refers to Heidegger’s equation of not-at-home-ness (*Unheimlichkeit*) with not-being-at-home (*Un-zuhause*).<sup>8</sup> Farrell Krell points out that Heidegger made only one reference to the equation between *Unheimlichkeit* and *Un-zuhause* after *Being and Time*—in the lecture *History of the Concept of Time* in Marburg in 1925, which is actually an introduction to *Being and Time* (cf. Farrell Krell 2009).

With the introduction of *das Unheimliche Dasein*, in fact, opens to: 1) the ontological<sup>9</sup> (the world as the world); 2) its own main essence. The introduction of *Unheimlichkeit* in *Being and Time* is closely intertwined with the understanding of home as such. But we are facing an open dilemma here, as Heidegger does not define home or its essence. Although we do not know exactly *what* home is, we know *where* it is: in the safe enclosure of mediocrity. The homely is thus the modus of the unhomeliness of *Dasein*, of the *not-being-at-home* (as the opposition to the homely or the familiar). *Dasein* is faced with a specific, existential disclosure: the inner constitution of *Dasein* is already constitutive and has banished it from any home. The home of *Dasein* may be located only in the non-familiarity, in the not-being-at-home.

After *Being and Time*, almost ten years passed without a noticeable mention of *das Unheimliche* in Heidegger’s work:<sup>10</sup> but when it did come back in two different lectures, it was not used in a marginal way as in 1927. *Das Unheimliche* became almost a key term in 1935: Heidegger uses it to name the core of human existence, it defines man as such.

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<sup>8</sup> More on the topic in Withy 2011.

<sup>9</sup> The ontological means—to put it in simple terms—that which refers to the being of Being, to the essence of all beings, whereas the ontical refers to the being, to everything that is.

<sup>10</sup> Heidegger stops briefly on the topic also in *The History of the Concept of Time* and in *What is Metaphysics?*

*Das Unheimliche* is no longer just one shade of anxiety: it is almost a concept that has a decisive existential-ontological significance. It is no longer just a mood, because it moves within Heidegger's thought conceptually away from that fleeting feeling, as Freud has treated it, or of that affective state that is induced to humans by anxiety. In *Introduction to Metaphysics* and in *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister"*, *das Unheimliche* becomes a permanent enigma, which defines the indefinable: the essence of human existence.

Heidegger's work in the 1930s is dedicated to the thinking of Being outside metaphysics, which was never completed within Nietzsche's philosophy. In this period, his work is marked significantly by the figures of Nietzsche and Hölderlin, each of them giving their own interpretations of the void after the "expulsion" of God: Nietzsche replaced this lack with the concept of "the overman" (*Übermensch*), Hölderlin announced the arrival of new gods. Heidegger's thought echoes both of these perspectives, while he positions historicity at the core of his thinking, with the emphasis on the end of metaphysics and the new dialogue with poetry.

132 Freud had posed *das Unheimliche* at the heart of the Enlightenment project,<sup>11</sup> Heidegger, on the other hand, delves deeper into this concept; in order to establish the meaning of the homely and the unhomely, he goes as far back as Antiquity, to the first chorus song of *Antigone* from the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The song, known also as "Ode to Man," occurs in the first scene of the tragedy, when at daybreak all decisive figures gather in front of the royal palace in Thebes. Creon's ardent conversation with the chorus and the guards takes place after the introductory scene, in which Antigone reveals to her sister Ismene that she will bury their brother Polynices despite Creon's ban. At the moment of this early morning, when the gathering of state elders and leaders takes place in the clearing of a new day, and when Creon positions himself on the throne and declares the judgment for the sons of Oedipus, the poet gives way to the first choral song about the mighty, powerful, and also terrible power of man. The song opens with the famous verses:

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11 More on this in Dolar 1991.

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*Polla tà deinà koudèn  
anthrópou deinóteron pélei [...]*

This is usually translated into English as:

*Wonders are many on earth,  
and the greatest of this is man [...]* (Sophocles 1947, 148.)

Heidegger renders this in a rather negative fashion, as the English translation of his German interpretation divulges:

*Manifold is the uncanny, yet nothing  
more uncanny looms or stirs beyond the human being.* (Heidegger  
1996, 108.)

In Heidegger's extensive and controversial interpretation of these opening lines, he analyzes the song's central term, *δεινόν*, and defines it on three semantic levels: as fearsome, powerful, and extraordinary. He translates *δεινόν* with *das Unheimliche*: man is the one who brings *das Unheimliche* to Earth and inhabits it in being.

Thus, Heidegger's definition of *das Unheimliche* is almost word-for-word the same as Freud's: *unheimlich is the unfamiliar in the familiar*, the unhomely in the homely. Because of this connection and co-belongingness, it is possible that the unfamiliar (*das Un-heimische*) is at the same time the uncanny (*unheimlich*) in the sense of alienation and of haunting, which causes anxiety.

*Das Unheimliche* is the power that pushes man from the homely as that which is close to home (*Heim*). In 1935, Heidegger positions the concept of home at a specific location—in the *polis*. Man's journey into Being, with his knowledge as a violent activity, is what plunges him/her from the homely into the unhomely, writes Heidegger. This is the reason why, for Heidegger, Sophocles calls man a "*pantoporos aporos*," since at the very core of human essence lies an unsolvable aporia: man is constantly on the powerful journey into Being as a whole, and tries to dominate the earth, the ocean, animals, and everything else besides him/her; however, man has at the same time no

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exit, when he/she faces the nothingness of death, since he/she is existential and primarily thrown into the limits of life. Death constantly sets limits to man, for a human being always “stands in the occurrence of death” and is “the occurrence of un-homeliness [*die geschehende Un-heimlichkeit selbst*].”<sup>12</sup> In the aporia of death, man finds himself/herself for the first time before the unstoppable power of *δεινόν*, because only by comprehending death man can fully understand what it means to be only and just as *δεινόν*. Death, as reflected upon in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, should be seen through the Greek, non-metaphysical, poetic definition of man: it is set as an extreme and immovable boundary that outperforms all other boundaries and puts man constantly in the unhomely.

134 When man intervenes in Being with (the violence) of his knowledge, he becomes unhomely, but at the same time he/she moves towards opening the *homely* as such. In Heidegger’s understanding, when man becomes “aware” of this unhomeliness, the Being as a whole in an ontological sense unfolds to him/her. As Sophocles explains—at least the Sophocles as transmitted by Heidegger—, with the uncanniness of the unhomely (*das Unheimlichkeit*), Being opens to man. The Greeks stepped into Being with a decisive force, and this violence was the power of their knowledge. The entire Western civilization, and with it its metaphysics, derives from this violence of man against Being that forms man in the unhomely. Yet, and this is extremely important for a philosopher on the quest to answer the question of Being, in the uncanny of the unhomely, being unfolds itself to man. The unhomely of this *δεινόν*, which is transferred into modern thinking by Heidegger with the term *das Unheimliche*, thus does not have an “impact” only on the definition of man and his essence, in the middle of which man is immanently settled: this unhomely is also an ontological project that allows the opening of Being. This statement is decisive also in the light of Heidegger’s later works, where he will go on to point out that man can be at home only ontologically, that is, in Being. No other “mode” of dwelling can be considered for him as a possible (authentic) position of being-at-home.

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12 Cf. McNeill 1999.

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Seven years later, in the lecture *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister"*,<sup>13</sup> Heidegger reflects upon home within the proximity of the term of becoming homely (*Heimischwerden*). Becoming homely in this interpretation, mainly coming from Hölderlin's elegy on the river Danube,<sup>14</sup> stems from the local. The local, the journey, and the river are some of the key terms used in this lecture, forming a selected terminological triangle together with *becoming homely*. As the local is created in this interpretation by the river, becoming homely can also act as a point of fusion between the local and the journey, adds Heidegger. Furthermore, the river is the one that determines the essence of man's home, as it itself also dwells and forms man's historical path in his journey back home. The river, described phenomenologically by Heidegger, names the place of man's dwelling and at the same time posits man as a historical being; the river is present even more significantly as the one that forms man's way of being at home. In Heidegger's understanding, the river is the locality of the local in the home: the journey of the river is such that it begins and creates a home. The process of *becoming homely* is particularly significant for man, since in it rests his/her true essence. Becoming homely is closely connected to the locality and to the journey of the river. More precisely, becoming homely is exactly what is mysterious and difficult to reach—this is the original, the authentic, or, in Heidegger's language, one's own (*das Eigene*). One's own, in Heidegger's perspective, is something, which is the most hidden and to which only great poets, such as Hölderlin, can shed any light with their poetry. It is important to stress that precisely this part, where Heidegger in his

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13 Hölderlin wrote many hymns on rivers; Heidegger prepared lecture courses on the topics of his poems "Germania," "The Rhine," and "The Ister." In the lecture course on "Germania," Heidegger makes a known assumption on the topic of the place (*Ort*) and of the homeland (*Heimat*), which could shed some light also on the theme discussed here.

14 Heidegger includes, in his private notes to this lecture, an interesting anecdote stating that he was the grandson of a shepherd who used to take his sheep to the riverbanks of the Danube. His remarks are written in a highly complex manner and are ironically summarized by Otto Pöggeler thus: "To one of the grandchildren of the shepherd spoken of by Hölderlin (Heidegger wants to say) fell the task of asking, by way of an 'occidental conversation' with Hölderlin, how man can once again become 'the shepherd of Being' and win back a homeland. If one excludes the great politicizing pseudo-myths, it will be difficult to find many examples in our century of such self-mythologizing." (Pöggeler 1992, 123.)

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reading of Hölderlin's hymn introduces one's own as that authentic principle, characteristic of home and the homely, is also the sequence in the whole lecture, where he comes closest to a specific Nazi rhetoric in speaking of the fatherland.<sup>15</sup> Continuing his remarks on the fatherland of the Germans, Heidegger adds: "This coming to be at home in one's own in itself entails that human beings are initially, and for a long time, and sometimes forever, not at home." (Heidegger 1996, 49.)

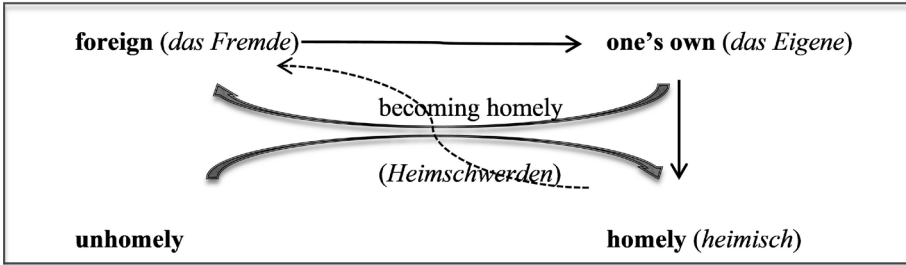
136 In Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister", Heidegger works extensively to build an argumentation of a *specific process*, during which a home of man can be built. If we try to simplify the rather complex and extensive interpretation, Heidegger passes through the duality of one's own and the foreign, and connects it to another pair of contrapositions, namely the homely and the unhomely, in order to finally conclude that becoming homely (*Heimischwerden*) stands at the center of these two counter-positions. For Heidegger, the homely (*heimisch*) always stands at the point of difference between becoming homely and the foreign: "Coming to be at home is thus a passage through the foreign." (Heidegger 1996, 49.) Heidegger writes about this process, following the lead of Hölderlin. This passage, this encounter with/through the foreign, which can lead to the homely, means also a point of discussion with the ancient Greeks. The Greeks are the foreign that can open the most authentic path to the core of the German. This (*only*) path to one's own (to the original, the authentic) and the homely can (*only*) be led to by a poet.

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15 Interpreting Hölderlin's hymn, Heidegger writes: "What is one's own in this case is whatever belongs to the fatherland of the Germans. Whatever is of the fatherland is itself at home with mother earth." (Heidegger 1996, 49.) In this sequence, Heidegger uses the term *das Vaterland* to refer to Germany as homeland, he does not use the word *Heimat*.

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### Scheme 2:

Heidegger's understanding of the unhomely, the homely, the foreign, and one's own.

Heidegger, following the poetic words of Hölderlin, chooses here to go into a (rather selective) foreign for the Germans, since he is taking a journey to Ancient Greece and to Sophocles. For Heidegger, the Greek tragedy does not only lead to the core of the Germans, but is also a paradigm for the thinking of history.<sup>16</sup> Heidegger's path of argumentation might be seen as bizarre from today's perspective, but we must take into consideration that Sophocles and his *Antigone* has been a constant reference point for a great number of German intellectuals who were building the "core" of the German national identity exactly within the connection of Germany to the Ancient Greece: this specific "movement" is present also in the writings of Goethe and Hegel.

Heidegger is mainly interested in *Antigone*, because for him it stands, as a poetical text, which opens the doors to a world, outside metaphysics. Here, he repeats the already known definition of man—proposed by Sophocles—as *das Unheimlichste*. In this lecture, in comparison with the interpretation of 1935, he stresses several times that he had chosen to translate *deinon* with *unheimlich*, because this word also covers the meaning of *unhemisch* or of something unhomely and not proper to home. He also connects the definition of man as *das Unheimlichste* with the notion of home, since man is always and immanently on the way to his hometown, but at the same time his home repeatedly rejects him/her. Therefore, man is substantially unhomely: "human beings in their innermost essence are those who are unhomely" (Heidegger

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Schmidt 2001, 226.

1996, 90). Because of this double game, in which man is constantly turning between the homely and the unhomely, the highest level of *unheimlich* (the dreadfulness and uncanniness) is attributed to man. In this understanding of man as a terrible creature, as *das Unheimlichste*, Heidegger does not present man as a being that brings the worst terror and is the most frightening. What he was probably trying to do here is to define human essence in a fundamental way. This essence of man is best captured by the term *das Unheimlichste*, because it shows and includes in a specific way also the unhomely, as the negation of home, as *Un-heimische*. One of the most important conclusions Heidegger makes in Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister" is the equation between *das Unheimlich* and *das Unheimische*: the frightening nature of man comes from his inability to dwell in, to have a home. The conclusive step in Heidegger's argumentation is to connect the unhomely with the place of human dwelling:

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To say that the human being is the most uncanny being does not mean that human beings arouse most fear or instill the greatest terror. [...] *Das Unheimliche*, however, the uncanny, is not meant to be understood in terms of an impression but to be conceived in terms of *das Un-heimische*, the un-homely, namely, that unhomely that is the fundamental trait of human abode in the midst of beings. (Heidegger 1996, 90–91.)

In this cosmos, man always searches for his home, but his core is characterized by becoming homely (*Heimischwerden*) or, to use different words, in this constant *not-being-at-home*: "Dwelling itself, being homely, is the becoming homely of a being unhomely." (Heidegger 1996, 137.) This is one of the crucial points Heidegger makes in the lecture on "The Ister": the notion that man is *becoming homely* in the unhomely, or, moreover, that he is adjusting to his imperative homelessness.

This is not the only emphasis Heidegger makes: he also elaborates here on dwelling, which will take the central position in the apparatus of his late philosophy. One of the main texts, where Heidegger deals with the essence of dwelling, is the essay "Building Dwelling Thinking." Since this particular lecture and its almost famous implications, such as: "the essence of building

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is dwelling” and “only if we are capable of dwelling, only then can we build,” have been interpreted quite often by architects, architectural theorists, and philosophers, I will not stop on this topic at this point. I will focus only on the question of *das Unheimliche* and make my last stop in this journey of its evolution.

Heidegger highlights the basic position of *man as a being who is not at home* quite frequently in his later works. In this late period, he also describes this position in a more negative and extreme way. One of the most notorious statements on the topic can be found a few years prior to “Building Dwelling Thinking” in the “Letter on Humanism,” where he states: “Homelessness is coming to be the destiny of the world.” (Heidegger 2009b, 243.) The term of *Heimatlosigkeit* or homelessness is one of the central terms of Heidegger’s late philosophy: within it, man is essentially seen as a being that cannot be at home and has a distinctive destiny: he is doomed to homelessness.

Homelessness as the dark side of dwelling is introduced by Heidegger in the very final part of “Building Dwelling Thinking.” Here, he proposes a completely different reading of home than previously suggested in *Being and Time* with the concept of *das Man*, which is an important shift. The urgency of homelessness appears when man is thinking about the real plight of dwelling. Homelessness is a specific symptom that points to the oblivion of Being inside the whole history (of metaphysics) and can be seen as the first warning, the first indication that Being is being ignored, excluded, removed. In this context, homelessness is something man cannot escape. Thus, Heidegger concludes this essay with an appeal to (re)think homelessness: “Yet as soon as man gives thought to his homelessness, it is a misery no longer. Rightly considered and kept well in mind, it is the sole summon that calls mortals into their dwelling.” (Heidegger 2009a, 363.) Only when homelessness appears, dwelling in its full meaning can commence.

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### **Discussion: The paradox of home**

One may argue that the topic of the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*) is one of the key terms of Heidegger’s philosophy; it seems more relevant and central in comparison to the question of home (*das Heim*). Almost every time

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Heidegger writes of the homeland, the home, and the homely, he adds that man essentially can never be at home in the world. As the essence of man is defined by uprootedness and by homelessness, his/her essential dwelling imminently distances him/her from the possibility to be at home in the world that surrounds him/her. As Heidegger defines this topic in *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister"*: man is forever, or for a long time, evicted from home. Man is originally without a home, but home and the homely are of crucial importance for this creature, which stands in the midst of being. Heidegger dwells on the other side of the homely: the unhomely, the uncanny. Strictly speaking, the uncanny is not only one form of *das Unheimliche* among others, it exceeds all others; this relationship is expressed by the poet who defines man as being the uncanniest. The biggest catastrophe of all, writes Heidegger, is man who is set in the midst of being and who is always forgetting Being. In this way, therefore, the home becomes a vain search, which is only filled with fleeting human activities.

140 If the destiny of modern man in Heidegger's philosophy is not to have a home, the question of architecture is not even posed: but when it is posed, it has to come exactly from this basic position, exactly from this specific dwelling of man upon his homelessness.

When Jacques Derrida wrote one of the most influential interpretations of Heidegger's philosophy in *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, he focused also on the intersection between Heidegger's philosophy and the Nazi regime. In the introduction, Derrida explores the difficulties of the task he is about to embark upon, since he will be talking about the question of *das Geist* in Heidegger. Here, he makes a remark, which could be seen as trivial or just a casual observation: "[...] the enigma of this *deinon* marks all the texts we will have to encounter here" (Derrida 1987, 17). This remark is a direct reference to the term of *das Unheimliche*, which was repeatedly used by Heidegger to translate the word *deinon*. Since Derrida was one of Heidegger's most in-depth interpreters and scholars, it might be argued, that this remark confirms our hypothesis: the *deinon*, and with it *das Unheimliche*, is one of the key subjects of Heidegger's philosophy. Without the understanding of *das Unheimliche* and its controversial and notorious meaning, we might not be able to understand Heidegger's work, especially from the later period.

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Derrida states that a meaningful reading of Heidegger should always take into account—besides the text itself—also what this German philosopher had left out, what he did *not* include, which arguments or poets<sup>17</sup> he included and who was left out. Sometimes, in Heidegger, that which is apparently left out, which is avoided, is part of the essential meaning of his whole argument. It seems that this is the case in the question of home Heidegger is proposing; a powerful misconception is continuously reiterated: that home for Heidegger stands in the countryside and that he is a philosopher of the rural and the provincial. In this article, we wanted to point out that Heidegger was speaking of something entirely different. His vision of a modern man is utterly different and radical: man is forever banned from home, into the abyss of the uncanny.

On the other hand, Derrida's book can also point out us something genuinely precious: there are some paradoxes in Heidegger's work that need to be considered. To come to the core of what Heidegger was aiming at, we sometimes need to think about both sides of the coin simultaneously. This is also the case that Derrida makes with Heidegger's involvement with Nazism: for him, the idea of Nazism stands at the core of Heidegger's work, since the idea of *Geist* is central to his philosophy and to Nazism itself. Nazism, in Derrida's terms, did not come from the desert or from an unknown location, but precisely out of the woods in the Central Europe. The woods that are the spring of the Danube, the river that presents the locality itself for Europe. Despite or because of that, Heidegger's philosophy is no less or more important—but in order to understand it, one needs to consider both sides of this paradox at the same time and think them together.

David Farrell Krell emphasized that Heidegger's thought on the topic of home (*das Heim*) revolves around a terrible irony: "human being is being in the world and dwelling on the earth—and yet we are never at home in the world, never rooted in the earth" (Farrell Krell 1995, 94). The irony of continuous openness and discontinuities on the earth and in the world for man as such is something that Heidegger never succeeded to overcome.

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17 Heidegger always chose "true" German poets, such as Goethe, Trakl, or Hölderlin. He never wrote an essay or proposed, for instance, a lecture about a Jewish poet or writer.

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A detailed reading of Heidegger's reflections on the subject of home (*das Heim*) has shown that the presumed image of an idyllic home, often ascribed to Heidegger on the basis of his late work and the image of a homestead in *Schwarzwald* (cf. Heidegger 1951), is not grounded in his work. The question of home is thrown directly into the abyss of the uncanny. Instead of the presumed familiarity and warmth of a home in the traditional environment of the past, home for modern man is in his horrifying nature, which is perpetuated by the uncanny (*das Unheimlich*). This utterly modern understanding of man's essence, but also of modern space, is particularly manifold and—in some sense—remains paradoxical.

### Conclusion

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Heidegger questioned the topic of home from his early onwards through to his later work. We might claim that the possible layers and contexts of Heidegger's understanding of home are in many ways also the reflections on the dominant topics he was devoted to at the time of writing on home. His early work was defined by time and temporality; it was in many aspects the expression of the general "subordination of space to time in Western thought" (Farrell Krell 1995, 41) within the metaphysics in general from Plato onwards. The key horizon for Being in this context for Heidegger was time until *the turn* in 1935. Home in this context of *Being and Time* is a possibility that is offered to Man. His later work is precisely demarked by the shift towards space and spatiality: within this notion, the contextualization of space in his philosophy changes, including the understanding of Being and the reflection upon home. When Heidegger writes about the "malignancy of homelessness" in connection with the lack of housing, he refers to the impossible spiritual condition for modern man, because he/she was not spiritually able to be at home in Being. Home is a place of intimacy, a significant place, for which we might claim that it stands at the intersection of being and Being, and is prominently outlined by the unhomely, the uncanny as that which is fearsome, powerful, and extraordinary. The uncanny in Heidegger's later work, after *the turn*, structures home as the place of intimacy precisely with the characteristic, which stands as a negation of home as the place of safety and intimacy.

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“Architectural phenomenology has drawn from Heidegger” (Sharr 2007, 116), and maybe even more than that: within philosophy of architecture, where architectural phenomenology had a decisive role in the 70s and the 80s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with works by Kenneth Frampton, Karsten Harris, and Cristian Norberg-Shultz as well as many others, the work of Heidegger was in many ways crucial. These authors were attracted by the figure of Heidegger, who remained one of the few philosophers who addressed architects directly with the claim of the urge to reconnect dwelling and building with his notorious essay “Building Dwelling Thinking.”

After the significant mark Heidegger’s work left on the theory and philosophy of architecture, different theories appeared: from such attitudes as “critical regionalism” (a term coined by Frampton) to the importance of human experience for architecture as such (which started with the authors, such as Norberg-Schulz, and continued within the work of Alberto Gomez-Perez, Juhani Pallasmaa, and others). Here, it is important to note that within architectural philosophy, especially within architectural phenomenology, the uncanny as one of the decisive themes in Heidegger in connection with his understanding of home, modern dwelling, as well as space and spatiality is usually poorly or even scarcely present. One of the aims of the present article was to underline the importance of the uncanny in Heidegger’s philosophy, in order to foster a new reading within the philosophy of architecture on the topic.

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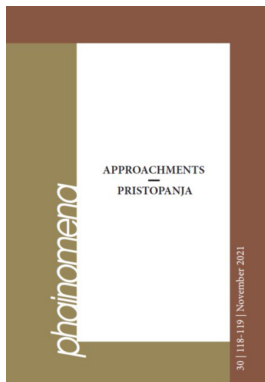
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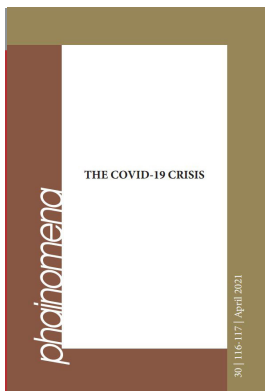
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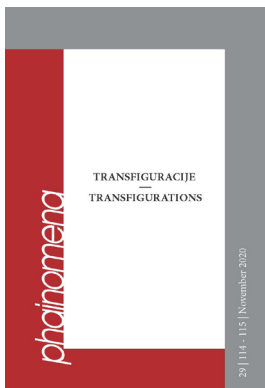


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