

2019

JEECA

**Journal for European Ethnology
and Cultural Analysis**

Special Issue 1
.....

Johannes Moser,
Nevena Škrbić Alempijević,
Alexa Färber, Irene Götz,
Ina Merkel, Friedemann Schmoll
(eds.)

**Ways of Dwelling:
Crisis – Craft – Creativity**
.....



WAXMANN

JEECA

2019

**Journal of European Ethnology
and Cultural Analysis**

Special Issue 1
.....

Johannes Moser, Nevena Škrbić Alempijević, Alexa Färber,
Irene Götz, Ina Merkel, Friedemann Schmoll (eds.)

Ways of Dwelling

Crisis – Craft – Creativity



Waxmann 2019
Münster • New York

Journal of European Ethnology and Cultural Analysis (JEECA)

Edited on behalf of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Volkskunde by Alexa Färber,
Irene Götz, Ina Merkel, Johannes Moser, Friedemann Schmoll

Contact

JEECA, Geschäftsstelle der dgv
c/o Institut für Europäische Ethnologie/Kulturwissenschaft
Deutschhausstr. 3, 35037 Marburg, Germany
E-mail: jeeca@d-g-v.de
Phone: +49 (0)6421/2826514
Proofreading: Philip Saunders



Indexing is in progress.



The print of this publication has been funded by UNED.

www.waxmann.com/jeeca

ISSN 2511-2473

Print-ISBN 978-3-8309-3954-2

E-book-ISBN 978-3-8309-8954-7

© Waxmann Verlag GmbH, Steinfurter Straße 555, 48159 Münster, Germany

Internet: www.waxmann.com, e-mail: info@waxmann.com

Book cover: Inna Ponomareva, Düsseldorf

Cover illustration: Friedlind Riedel, Weimar

Print: CPI Books GmbH, Leck



All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without permission in writing from the copyright holder.

Printed in Germany

Contents

<i>Nevena Škrbić Alempijević and Johannes Moser</i> Ways of Dwelling: Crisis – Craft – Creativity	7
<i>Regina F. Bendix</i> My Home is My Castle – My Coat is My Refuge Dwelling, Atmospheres, and Communicative Arts	10
<i>Maja Povrzanović Frykman</i> Transnational Dwelling and Objects of Connection An Ethnological Contribution to Critical Studies of Migration	28
<i>Trevor H.J. Marchand</i> Dwelling in Craftwork: The Art of Andrew Omoding	46
<i>Birgitte Romme Larsen</i> The Asylum Center as “Just Another Local Institution” Co-residency and the Everyday Practice of Neighborliness among Asylum Seekers and Locals in the Danish Town of Jelling	73
<i>Saša Poljak Istenič</i> Dwelling Participatory Style Power and Empowerment in a Neighborhood. Renovation and Revitalization	90
<i>Lorenzo D’Orsi</i> Reframing a Painful Past The Memories of the Uruguayan Military Dictatorship	114
<i>Hermann Bausinger</i> Dwellings and Dwindlings	135
<i>Walter Leimgruber</i> Constructing a Home <i>Heimat</i> as an Expression of Privilege, Belonging, Exclusion and Identity	142
<i>Beate Binder</i> “Ways of Dwelling”: Some Concluding Remarks	168
Authors	185

Nevena Škrbić Alempijević and Johannes Moser

Ways of Dwelling: Crisis – Craft – Creativity

This special issue has been created as a collaboration between the *Journal of European Ethnology and Cultural Analysis* (JEECA) and the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore – SIEF). The Society's mission is to stimulate scholarly work and to build platforms for critical debate, cooperation and exchange in the disciplines it represents. One of the ways in which SIEF achieves those goals is by promoting publication in its twin fields by not only supporting its journals *Ethnologia Europaea* and *Cultural Analysis*, but also entering into a partnership with editors of other international journals, especially when preparing issues that stem from its biennial congresses or conferences of its working groups.

Through this special *JEECA* issue, we want to revisit the experience of the 13th SIEF Congress hosted by the Department of Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology at the University of Göttingen, Germany, in 2017. The volume offers a selection of nine articles developed from the congress theme concept, keynote lectures, roundtable discussions and panel presentations, which all focus on the topic of dwelling. How are ways of dwelling imagined, conceptualized, narrated, crafted, materialized, put into practice, represented in artwork, transformed and challenged? What is the role of mobility and migration, memory and creativity, hopes and fears when individuals and groups make their homes? What epistemological and methodological grounds do ethnologists, folklorists and specialists from neighboring disciplines use to grasp the concept of dwelling? These were the core questions raised at the SIEF congress in Göttingen and in the articles presented in this issue, which apply novel and up-to-date approaches to deal with one of the long-established subjects of ethnological and folklorist research.

This volume is introduced by Regina Bendix, who asks how classical cultural science approaches on building and living can be linked with forms of communication and atmospheres. Her contribution serves to develop an analytical basis for the concept of atmosphere to show how different narrative genres express our experiences of living. Maja Povržanović Frykman traces migrants' personal objects in transnational living contexts. She is particularly interested in everyday objects which are transported across national borders and embedded into familial material practices to let migrants feel at home in different locations. She delivers a contribution to the

critical studies of migration with a differentiated observation of mundane objects, which does not imagine migrants in terms of difference.

Trevor H.J. Marchand in his essay delivers a very thick description of the working method of the artist Andrew Omoding, who creates relationships between disparate objects by embedding them into new constellations of meaning. Birgitte Romme Larsen focuses on an asylum seeker center located in the middle of a small Danish city for 25 years. Precisely for this reason, a highly specific dynamic of encounters between local residents and asylum seekers arises which she studies from an anthropological perspective.

Saša Poljak Istenič focuses on the oldest socialist quarter in Ljubljana, built after 1945, and shows the changes in the post-socialist era. She particularly addresses the ways of operation of participatory processes in which the imaginations of the residents collide with specific power relations that both facilitate and hinder processes of empowerment. Lorenzo D'Orsi is the 2017 winner of the SIEF Young Scholar Prize. His contribution deals with experiences during the military dictatorship in Uruguay. He aims for an engagement with the concept of trauma which goes beyond psychology and, therefore, pursues a multifaceted approach to the traumatic experiences of the victims and their relatives, as well as the social context. In his opinion, the concept of trauma focuses too much on the individual and does not give enough consideration to the historical and political circumstances. His approach is to create possibilities for analyzing victim memories in larger collective contexts.

Hermann Bausinger starts off the series of keynote addresses printed here which concluded the conference. He devotes his contribution to the role of age and links it to questions of dwelling and dwindling. Starting from fundamental considerations on aging and aging research, Bausinger arrives at the connection between housing and concepts of home as well as the significance of habits in living and in life overall. Walter Leimgruber focused his concluding address on the construction of concepts of home. In a historical overview, he shows the romanticizing of the term 'home,' one the one hand, and the significance of inclusion and belonging regarding the possibilities of making oneself at home, on the other hand. The latter is increasingly questioned because of migration and other transformations which characterize current societies and let many people long for a kind of home that has never existed as such. In her concluding contribution to this volume, Beate Binder links the overarching aspects of this conference with fundamental anthropological considerations. She drafts dwelling as a concept or a perspective with which very different subjects can be researched. In doing so, she links the aspect of dwelling with central anthropological concepts and key terms which were also discussed at this conference. To name but a few, Binder describes assemblage or care as important approaches in describing lifeworlds. The terms crisis, craft and creativity, which

appear in the conference title, are reflected and, just like questions about temporalities, futurity and imaginaries, put into a broader anthropological context.

The authors who have contributed to this publication come from diverse institutional contexts and scholarly traditions, from various parts of Europe and different stages of their careers. Their texts are not representative of all the myriad ways of dwelling and around 800 congress presentations that discussed them. However, they view the theme from a multitude of perspectives and, thus, provide us with an insight into the potential of our disciplines to understand, discuss and become involved with people's manifold ways of being and belonging, and cultural and societal mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion from the aspect of dwelling.

Regina F. Bendix

My Home is My Castle – My Coat is My Refuge

Dwelling, Atmospheres, and Communicative Arts¹

Abstract: Seeking new approaches to the huge complex from house to hovel, shack to skyscraper, or castle to condominium, the SIEF Congress entitled *Dwelling. Crisis – Craft – Creativity* sought new avenues to old and well-established areas of research. The present article complements the long history of research on vernacular housing in cultural research with a query on how narration and other communicative arts endow dwellings with atmosphere. Drawing from vernacular and popular sources, the approach seeks an analytic grounding for the concept of atmosphere, in this case, showing how different narrative genres express and/or guide the experience of dwellings and capture sensory perceptions in communicable forms.

Keywords: narrative, atmosphere, sensory perception, space, emotion

“The intransitive verb ‘to dwell’ aptly conveys [a] conception of life as a *task* that has continually to be worked at.” (Ingold 2005: 504, italics in original)

On January 29, 2016, pictures of a young woman trended in social media, accompanied by the tagline “Syrian wearable refugee shelter.” Reading John Brownlee’s report on this invention, ‘my coat is my refuge’ popped into my mind as a potential proverb. Created by graduates from London’s College of Art in consultation with *Médecins Sans Frontières*, the coat can be turned into a tent or a sleeping bag as needed (Brownlee 2016). The design innovation was not just a practical and sensible protection for human bodies and beings fleeing from Syria and elsewhere toward

- 1 This paper expands on the introductory remarks I presented at the preparatory workshop “Paths toward Dwelling” for the SIEF Congress in Göttingen in February 2016, funded by the Thyssen Foundation. In enlarging it, I profited from the contributions and discussions of all involved with this meeting – Birgit Abels (whose work with atmosphere concepts has further aided in the crafting of this article), Lydia Arantes, Silvy Chakkalakal, Moritz Ege, Sophie Elpers, Michaela Fenske, Katharina Eisch, Alexa Färber, Julia Fleischhack, Andre Gingrich, Valdimar Hafstein, Cornelius Hantscher, Dorothee Hemme, Ulrich Kockel, Orvar Löfgren, Trevor Marchand, Máiréad NicCraith and Ola Söderstrom – as well as from the eventual contours of the full SIEF congress in March 2017. Thanks also to Wolfgang Mieder for assistance in finding vital references, and to my then student assistant Ute Seitz, who proved very crafty in supporting the search for data. Finally, participants in my seminar on dwelling in the winter semester of 2016–17 offered stimulating contributions to explore the theme’s many possible dimensions.

the colder temperatures of Central and Northern Europe. It also affirmed the ever-growing alternative to ‘my home is my castle,’ an actual proverb associated with a perhaps – though not necessarily so – more sedentary lifestyle, and it finds affine proverbs such as “At home, everyone is a king” (Reinsberg-Düringsfeld 1973: 477), “Your own home, your own jurisdiction” (Mieder 1986: 231), or “A little house has a wide mouth” (Mieder 1986: 240) and “The dog is a lion in his own house” (Knowles 2009: 112). How proverbs build connections between dwellings and human practices and dispositions would be worthy of its own treatise; they are used here as a springboard into the larger question of how verbal arts craft imagery that render atmospheres. When a Hanover clothing designer opines “One has to be able ‘to inhabit’ a piece of clothing,”² and features as part of her craft’s philosophy fashion designer Christa de Carouge’s dictum “The skin, the dress, the house are the three wrappings within which we live”³ on her homepage, she affirms the malleability of ‘dwelling’ and ‘home’ concepts. She does so by relying on proverbial formulations, one among many forms of verbal art that express and, thus, make socially sharable what we might feel or experience individually – or that suggest how we ought to view and experience a particular matter. Whether refugee shelter *cum* jacket or wistful fashion, both express the sensory immediacy that inheres to the experience of materiality and the range of its protective qualities – a quality by which dwellings are measured and judged. The verbal, thus, offers inroads into the sensory and explicates the bridge between the experiential and the material.

Proverbs are part of what Roger D. Abrahams (1968, 1972, 2005) conceptualized as the rhetoric of everyday life. They can be deployed within conversation as anything from normative guideposts to ironic subversions and are but one of a plethora of minor and major forms of verbal art that affirm or contest, interpret or guide human experience. In the case of the home termed castle, the proverb carries not just its medieval and early modern legal meaning of ownership, protection and, possibly, also honor: It may carry a sense of wealth and an encouragement to feel empowered and free in its modern interpretation.⁴ Cultural practices and material surroundings involved in the space one may call shelter or home, and thereby achieve meaning and connotation within the web of words (as well as silences) and images spun in speech and various forms of narration. The present contribution explores how nar-

2 German original: “In einem Kleidungsstück muss man ‘wohnen’ können.” Cf. „Philosophie – Annette Spitzl“ <http://anette-spitzl.de/anette-spitzl/philosophie/> (May 7, 2018).

3 German original: “Die Haut, das Kleid, das Haus sind die 3 Hüllen, in denen wir leben.” Cf. „Philosophie – Annette Spitzl“ <http://anette-spitzl.de/anette-spitzl/philosophie/> (May 7, 2018).

4 Archer Taylor traced the genealogy of ‘A man’s home is his castle’ to 1567: “*Ma meason est a moy come mon castel hors de quell le ley ne moy arla a fuer.*” This we can properly claim to be English, for the language is Law French, for centuries the juridical language of England. It is perhaps going too far to call it a proverb, for it is little more than a definition of a man’s home as a sanctuary, but proverbs and definitions are often closely akin” (Taylor 1965: 280).

rating conjoins dwelling (the gerund) and dwellings (the noun), and, thus, equips the act with purpose and emotion or, as Tim Ingold puts it in the opening quotation, the task of living within shelter however constructed.⁵ Narration is thereby broadly conceptualized rather than tied to medium: we are enmeshed in oral, literary, audiovisual and digital communication in everyday life, with the reported and seemingly realistic bridging seamlessly into fictions and utopias. Hence, I expand Richard Bauman's term 'verbal art' (1977) to 'communicative art' – acknowledging the intermediality of minor and major flows of communicative forms within which the visual has vastly increased with the successive unfolding of cinematic, televised and digital entertainment.⁶ Different genres, though, still offer interpretive guidelines, however provisional the distinctions established for academic comparison may be:⁷ The proverb, as we have just seen, describes how a home is or should be perceived. Different narrative genres may elucidate comfort or horror, caution, encouragement, or hope associated with dwellings, encircling change or imagining utopias.

The article begins with a brief assessment of house, home and dwelling in the history of ethnographic disciplines. In drawing attention to cognitive and sensory openings that link to and suffuse the bodily perception and experience of the materiality of dwelling, I point to the concept of atmosphere and suggest working with, if not exclusively, communicative arts as a means to grasp the interlocking of dwelling and atmospheres. I then offer a few examples to illustrate the potentials of research focused on communicative arts for understanding what dwelling entails.

* * *

Seeking new approaches to the huge complex from house to hovel, shack to skyscraper or castle to condominium, the SIEF Congress entitled "Dwelling. Crisis – Craft – Creativity" sought new avenues to old and well-established areas of research.⁸

- 5 Mary Douglas, in her acerbic exploration of what a home might be, also draws on literary works, similarly indicating that understanding the concept of home requires a departure from the physical structure and focuses on the assessments, meanings and memories associated with it (Douglas 1991).
- 6 Similarly, distinguishing between the vernacular, popular and elite arts is increasingly problematic – even though not only taste regimes, along the lines of Bourdieu's *Distinctions* (2010) but also academic disciplines and subdisciplines are built upon more or less arbitrarily drawn boundaries. We tend to crisscross such boundaries within everyday life, with categories of value not disappearing but flattening (cf. Bendix 2015).
- 7 The question of genre has preoccupied narrative researchers since the 19th century. Andre Jolles' *Einfache Formen* (1930) received intensive debate (cf. Shuman and Hasan-Rokem 2012) and was problematized particularly by Dan Ben-Amos (1976), who lobbied for a differentiation between academic and emic genre terminologies. For a recent, brief summation on genre and its deployment in ethnographic work, cf. Bendix (2013).
- 8 The call for papers illustrates the conference organizers' hope to mix up established divisions between disciplinary canon fields (SIEF 2017a).

Ethnographically based disciplines gathered in this journal under the heading of European ethnology and cultural analysis and easily extendable also to folklore and folklife studies have tended to compartmentalize research in their development as a discipline, following, at least in the early 20th century, a path from universalistic holism to a more positivist division of human activity.⁹ From a present day perspective, a concept such as dwelling challenges compartmentalization, but far into the 20th century, dwelling would have been subsumed under material culture within such canon fields, and there, in turn, under vernacular architecture. Aspects such as lifestyle and taste gained prominence much later under the impression of Pierre Bourdieu's study of distinction (2010 [1979]; e.g. Katschnig-Fasch 1998). A tremendous wealth of scholarship has been dedicated to the documentation and preservation of traditional houses, paying some attention to the tools involved in their construction, and tracing the spread and adaptation of forms.¹⁰ The habits of research were, as Karin Gustavsson (2014) was able to trace with the Swedish case, focused strongly on measuring and cartography, concerned with capturing vanishing styles. Researchers returned time and again to the built edifice as a primary research task over its potential inhabitants (Wietschorke 2017: 246).¹¹ It was the rare study that linked the builder's tacit knowledge to the capacity to bring forth the form (e.g. Glassie 1976), or, as Martine Segalen (1983) did, that examined the layout of house, hearth and land in conjunction with gender and labor. Social class, rural versus urban, and environmental givens were seen reflected in the contours of dwellings – with less attention paid to the mutuality of production and practice between people and structures. Approaching (not necessarily vernacular) architecture from a perspective informed by cultural analysis is only just beginning to gain more ground (Wietschorke 2017), and could, as sketched below, benefit from the concept of atmosphere as employed within architecture and design practice.

Urban research, connected to a broadening of the ethnographic and cultural historical gaze beyond the agrarian and pastoral world, has, almost by necessity, yielded insights into urban planning and design and social class, the disciplining

9 European ethnology, folklore and folklife have also, of course, a very strong cultural historical dimension, an aspect that until rather recently also marked their difference to social anthropology. There were good reasons for stepping away from more universalistic perspectives of the 19th century, with titles evoking 'land and people' and more speculative assessments rather than insights supported by empirical research.

10 The works here are legion; hence, I confine myself to a few mentions. Bedal (1978) offered a much relied on introduction in German and Roberts offered a summary of work up to the late 1960s (1972). A great deal of scholarly work has been done at open air museums around the world, often in conjunction with detailed publications and special exhibits – which have increasingly taken into account matters beyond form and function and turned toward social life, class differentiation and (im)migration.

11 Cf. Löfgren's (2012) differentiated assessment of diverging developments of material culture perspectives in European and American cultural analysis, including a view towards house and home.

nature of ready-made architectures and the influx and impact of temporary shanty towns in connection with labor migration to industrial centers. However, the focus has almost invariably been on the way of life, with Louis Wirth's (1938) essay setting the – indeed important – direction. The actual intermeshing of cultural practice with the built environment has had less attention – a lacuna that visual media have filled implicitly in compelling ways¹², not least and going along with the argument offered here, because documentaries generally encourage the viewer to look for and sense a narrative thread. Since the late 1980s, the spatial turn has begun to contribute to a perspective geared more toward dwelling rather than houses (Bachmann-Medick 2016: 211–243), though the dwelling experience remains oddly lacking.

Language and, within it, vocabulary are a first tool for grasping how a dwelling is perceived: Is it a building or a residence, a box or castle, a den, cave or flat, a shack, roost, tent or sanctuary, a domicile, habitat, haunt, hole or quarter? Choosing from the lexicon available, an initial decision is made regarding the atmosphere a given place evokes in the speaker – or what kind of atmosphere she or he wants to bestow upon it, to invoke Roman Jakobson's (1960) emotive and phatic functions of language respectively, and to give space to the rhetorical direction a speaker may choose with every utterance. Paying attention to speech and narration surrounding the task and nature of dwelling offers a possible methodological path to understand the experience and construction of atmosphere. Bernhard Tschofen rightly pointed out, in his stimulating address pointing to avenues of grasping the experience of culture, that the atmosphere concept is theoretically appealing and convincing but “hard to operationalize and in danger of losing relevance if one starts asking after dimensions of practice” (2017: 19). He points to cognitive styles as one plane that can be ethnographically addressed (ibid.: 12) and criticizes an understanding of space within which culture ‘happens’ rather than recognizing the intertwining of practice and space in bringing forth atmosphere (ibid.: 12–13). Jens Wietschorke's assessment of recent contributions in architectural sociology presents some practice-focused directions that redress the vagueness of the concept of atmosphere by seeking to grasp “the ‘social efficiency’ of built space” (2017: 250).¹³ The Finnish ar-

- 12 From a plethora of options, I would like to draw attention to Torsten Näser's documentary *Erinnert und Vergessen* (2003), which shows the transformation of prisoner of war barracks into homes for refugees from former German territories after WWII; a deep engagement with dwellings that were lost or flooded is evident in Frauke Paech's documentary about Hamburg's flood of 1962 (2007). Furthermore, the audiovisual program of the Göttingen SIEF Congress 2017 contained numerous films exploring the dwelling theme (SIEF 2017b).
- 13 Wietschorke's 2017 survey is full of foresight in bringing together and emphasizing precisely the kinds of avenues one would like to have seen fostered more extensively during the SIEF 2017 Congress. He gives due attention also to the joint efforts of Rolshoven and Ohmahna (2013) to bring together cultural analysis and architecture. Pallasmaa (2014) is noteworthy for a deeper probing of space, atmosphere and architecture.

chitect Juhani Pallasmaa (1994) drew attention to this dimension: He pointed to the importance of the remembered, felt and narrated in conjoining architectural form and the notion of home, urging his profession to acknowledge “a conflict between architecture and the intrinsic requirements of home.”¹⁴

New phenomenologist Hermann Schmitz’s theoretical work on the felt (as opposed to the material) body¹⁵ and its role in the experience of atmospheres (2014) has impelled efforts to concretize it, especially in music research.¹⁶ Schmitz’s insistence that (human) feelings are themselves, in their embodied nature, “half-things” (Schmitz 2014: 188) and co-constitutive of atmosphere (Abels 2013: 224) is particularly provocative and/or productive. Schmitz’s “half-things” may prove helpful in concretizing atmospheres ethnographically and complement Monique Scheer’s proposal regarding emotions as a kind of practice (2012: 196–198):¹⁷ Thinking of both atmospheres and feelings as half-things dissolves the line between subject and object and between materiality and immateriality; they permit agency and ambivalences. Atmospheres analytically integrate dimensions of cultural (including emotional) sensing, practice and material culture. Though Anke Rees (2016) draws from a different set of atmosphere thinkers, her expansion of the actor-network to an atmosphere-network research paradigm connects well with that emphasis on the felt and effecting body (of both human and edifice). This is key for unlocking the dwelling complex, giving it a central place in cultural anthropology.¹⁸

14 In addition to Pallasmaa’s “Notes on the Phenomenology of Home” (1994), also see his more recent work engaged with space (2014).

15 Schmitz, writing in German, distinguishes between “Körper” and “Leib,” which in English is generally rendered as ‘material body’ and ‘felt body,’ respectively. Schmitz offers compelling conceptualizations of atmospheres in singular and collective terms, with formulations such as “involuntary life experience which is everything that befalls humans without them seeking it out purposefully” (2014: 30). However, as a philosopher, he stays away from the concreteness of ethnography. Schmitz’s concept of the body as a “half-thing” has been variously taken up and translated, for example, by Griffero (2017) as “quasi-things.”

16 See, for example, Abels (2013, 2017) and Riedel (2015). The panel “Dwelling in Sound. Place Making in Music” at the SIEF dwelling congress 2017 took up the challenge to concretize the atmospheric interest in analyzing the music and culture interface under the dwelling matrix. Some of the papers will be published (Titus, in press 2019).

17 Scheer regards emotions as a bodily or embodied practice; she builds productively on efforts to overcome the Cartesian mind-body split so as to facilitate the possibility of emotion as embodied, habituated practice. Neither she nor the author collective that researched and published the recent lexicon of emotions – of which Scheer formed a part (Frevert et al. 2014) – used the atmosphere concept – potentially precisely because of its irritating vagueness.

18 In further deepening the atmosphere concept, one might reach back to Susan Langer’s *Philosophy in a New Key* (1948), deployed by Mary Douglas in her essay on “The Idea of the Home.” In it, she ties that very idea of the home to Langer’s notions of virtual time and space: “Langer proposed that kinaesthesia works by creating analogic structures from one experience to another. [...] She insisted that art is not a depiction, a copy of something else that is not art. Art for her is a com-

Tschofen seeks an ethnographic path *not* relying on “representations, symbolic forms and intellectual practices” (2017: 19) – to which, of course, the communicative arts also belong. Yet, I would argue that working with speech and narration may prove one possible analytic grounding that concretizes the atmosphere complex. The communicative arts are not just instrumental in witnessing a diversity of experience, they are themselves also deeply bound up with aesthetic parameters, combining the sensual and sensory with the intellectual, which all prove crucial in invoking and communicating atmospheres.¹⁹ If one acknowledges that body, sensorium and mind, equally and inextricably combined, participate in the experience of atmospheres, drawing also – if not exclusively – on the communicative arts is a valuable means of understanding how atmospheres arrive at culturally shared ingredients. The felt body is, after all, not an unthinking one, and hence I will now try to encircle parts of the dwelling complex through genres that narrate dwelling(s).

* * *

Houses have stories, of course, narrated not just in architectural histories but inscribed in the materials used to build and – perhaps repeatedly – renovate them, leaving layers that skilled and experienced craftsmen may recognize and, in turn, utilize in repair work (cf. Bendix and Hemme 2018). Open air museums and heritage endeavors also endow houses with character, allowing visitors to understand the interwoven existence of dwellings and dwellers. There are preservation efforts warranting narration in major newspapers, such as the recent salvage and transfer of Civil Rights'-activist Rosa Park's house first from Detroit to Wedding, a district of Berlin, and its subsequent return to the USA to be exhibited in Providence, Rhode Island, as part of a show on racism (Joseph 2017). Having her simple wooden house available appears to concretize the magnitude of her political courage just as much as, for instance, the 18th century massive residence of Johann Wolfgang Goethe in Weimar, Germany, does. The latter bears material witness to where he thought, wrote and entertained until his death, and the colored walls continue to illustrate his (unproven or mistaken) theory of colors (Klassik Stiftung Weimar 2018).²⁰ Film director Wim Wenders (2014) went as far as enlisting five colleagues to produce architectural

municative effort that makes specialized projections of the common dimensions of experience” (Douglas 1991: 290–292).

19 Sensory ethnography has grappled with the issue of how to grasp the sensorium since its inception and, at times, argued similarly for representational techniques other than language to do justice to the felt rather than spoken nature of sensory perception (cf. Bendix forthcoming).

20 Cf. “Goethes Wohnhaus.”

heritage documentaries in most of which the dwellings themselves are literally given voice to narrate their own genesis and everyday lives.²¹

Next to such representative, or even famous, houses adumbrated with scholarly documentation, the everyday realities of dwelling surface in personal and family stories. Were we to elicit them fully with an ear toward dwelling, the felt body and its imprint on memory would surface, invoking atmospheres as the teller recollects them. My own childhood memories contrast the homes of my grandmothers and, as my daughters never met them, I would depict for them the midtown apartment of my mother's mother, with the hallway's flowery, brownish flooring giving off a smell that was forever new and sticking oddly to the soles of no matter what kind of shoes one wore. The light from the dining room guided one through this dimly lit corridor, past the kitchen into that space, dominated by a heavy dining table, with its high ceiling and tall windows, doubly curtained, from which one could look down onto the alley lined with plane trees. Within this home my quite tiny grandmother exuded control over everything except for the large portrait of my grandfather, hanging next to the tile stove that was never used, as central heating had been installed. My father's mother's square though stately two-story house sat beside a fenced-in garden plot full of berry bushes, fruit trees and roses. It had an always warm tile stove, with pillows that could be climbed on. From the wood framed windows, with lacey curtains tied to the sides, one could look out over the small village, but one could also climb up to the small rooms under the roof where four children, now long gone, had once grown up; the slanted walls and tiny windows, the empty closets and nightstands, beds without bed linen and pillows bare of cases made one feel slightly chilled, enough reason for a small person to clamber back down to the snuggery, onto the broad lap of this grandmother who served black tea with lots of sugar and cream in porcelain cups decorated with bees. In both dwellings, the spatial configuration and the kind of light they facilitated, the arrangement of furnishings and utensils, endowed with the patina and smell co-created between inhabitants and things, contributed to the dwelling experience.

Such remembrances of homes lived in and visited, with their divergent yet familiar atmospheres, may not necessarily be narrated, but they are bodily-cognitively felt and accumulated and form a frame of reference for stories heard, read and seen. Folklorists have published extensive collections of vernacular stories gleaned particularly from oral narratives. Looking at some of the key entries with connections to the dwelling complex in the major encyclopedia of narrative, the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, one finds a complex of narratives ever since antiquity contrasting rural and urban dwelling (Hartmann 2007). House and home narratives contain representations and reflections on topography, on the benefits and drawbacks of built

21 Máiréad Nic Craith, Ursula Böser and Ashvin Devasundaram offer a compelling examination of the effect of giving voice to heritage (2016).

fortification, social hierarchy, economic opportunity and proximity to what is – *pace* Tim Ingold – categorized as wilderness. The myriad of tale types featuring houses – ranging from huts to palaces – mark that core achievement of sedentary life, a place to set out from and return to or a place to set out from on the way to something materially and socially better, as is the case with many folktales featuring a young person leaving home, never to return. And, again – *pace* Tim Ingold – houses, homes, fortifications feature time and again as demarcations between human life and safety versus ‘nature’ – be that figured as ‘the elements,’ wild animals or entities who threaten the social fabric, such as bandits, murderers, witches and demons (cf. Moser-Rath 1990).²² While the topic of dwellings is, thus, deeply present in vernacular storying, the atmosphere tends to evaporate when orality is transformed into print and the capacity of voice and gesture to evoke what protagonists feel and think goes missing (cf. Bendix 2004a).

However, when we turn to audiovisual narrations of, for instance, legends of haunted houses, their capacity, including light and angle as well as sound,²³ to render a dwelling’s atmosphere are augmented in ways that draw the body into the haunted dwelling and make an experience that is far more immediate.²⁴ That stories of haunted houses are an enduring narrative topos bespeaks a deep-seated anxiety: Are the very places which we build and/or move into for protection and comfort actually providing for that need in enduring ways?²⁵ Whether it be a feature

- 22 Tim Ingold has been advancing a view foregoing a nature/culture divide for many years, instead, seeing human beings enabled to develop skills based on their capacity to dwell. Thus, he stated: “Apprehending the world is not a matter of construction but of engagement, not of building but of dwelling, not of making a view of the world but of taking up a view in it” (Ingold 2000, 42). Ingold’s approach is instrumental for a continued, cultural analytic perspective on the dwelling complex, including its interspecies dimensions. One has to keep in mind for the present effort of exploring the narrative adumbrations of dwelling and dwellings, however, that communicative artists/narrators and their listeners, viewers and readers have not shaken the nature/culture divide – it is deeply encoded in religious ideologies and in the Enlightenment’s assumptions of human progress against the background of a static nature. As much as late modernity acknowledges the constructed nature of this divide, it remains a handy crutch, especially in conceptualizing dwellings as a more or less impermeable, protective boundary against a ‘outside’ however constituted. Narratives that question precisely that taken-for-granted safety of the familiar dwelling are, thus, all the more interesting.
- 23 The role of sound is mentioned only marginally in this piece, yet its importance in the build-up and lasting mental resonance of (dwelling) atmospheres is worthy of greater attention. In a brief note advertising the new documentary *Score – eine Geschichte der Filmmusik* (Score – a history of film music), one reads that film scores are “the emotional scaffolding of the images” (Mobil 2018).
- 24 See, however, Susan Stewart’s excellent analysis of oral and literary horror stories, and their fear-inducing techniques (1982).
- 25 Researching motifs associated with narratives concerning dwellings, haunted or otherwise, has been systematized for folkloristic research by Stith Thompson through a six-volume motif index (1955–58), made available in 2016 on the “Internet Archive” – a tremendously useful resource for narrative (and other) research. In Thompson’s motif index one finds, for instance, a series of mo-

film classic such as *Poltergeist* (Hooper 1982), a series such as David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* (1990–91, 2017)²⁶ or the 2017 horror film on American race relations, *Get Out* (Peele 2017), we encounter dwellings initially staged to be a welcoming home, yet atmospherically, that everyday normalcy is gradually or suddenly ruptured by dangers already there, or into which the horrifying and threatening intrudes. Whether told orally or visually, we are ready to share in the uncertainty, doubt and fear of protagonists lying in bedrooms turned ominous once the light is extinguished, descending creaking basement steps with cobwebs intruding into their body space, or walking through a maze of unfamiliar rooms with rising discomfort. The number of short horror movies (home and professional) on YouTube, with titles alluding to 'the monster under the bed' or 'tuck me in,' pick up on the narrative expansion of many a child's anxiety: Asked to fall asleep alone in a dark room or possibly admonished not to leave the bed so the monsters would not reach out, imagination and narrative motifs interfere with letting go and allowing the intimacy of sleep to take over. Such waking nightmares may give way to actual dreams full of confusion and fears, unconscious narrative fragments associated with that seemingly safest of places, the bed (Bendix 2004b, 2004c).

Darkness makes audible aspects of a dwelling's materiality and life within it that we ignore in the bustle of daylight: Wood may creak and the wind generally howls more in the dark; the scurrying of mice or birds in the attic excite the imagination, as does the knocking in the pipes, and what finds easy explanations in the light of day casts a new kind of shadow within a darkened home. Legends, the genre to which tales of horror tend to belong, enhance the unsettling and unfinished, they appeal to veracity, but give only fragmentary verification; the 'facts' or motifs told release us from their grip with questions unanswered (cf. Dègh 2001). The atmosphere woven around dwellings is, thus, ambiguous, teetering from comfort and safety to danger and potential violence. Sites of murder and mayhem remain inscribed into the material fabric and require destruction – as narrated in many a legend woven around ruins of castles – or else ritual action to undo the offenses to the social charter and make it inhabitable again.²⁷ In keeping with the conserva-

tifs grouped under motif E280 with the label "ghost haunts building," or motif F771.4.2.1. "Castle (house) infested by demon cats" – many more motifs could be added, confirming the widespread storying of haunted dwellings. While Thompson's systematization remains bewildering, today more so than in the heyday of folk narrative research guided by specific content rather than structure, repertoire or performance, the index is helpful particularly in its digitally searchable form.

26 On the construction of horror in David Lynch's work, cf. Bergs (2010).

27 Real estate agents, not surprisingly, share occupational narratives concerning failed sales, problems with financial institutions and empty houses rendered unsellable by homeless squatters. On one of the numerous sites sharing such stories, I found the narrative of the real estate agent specializing in selling 'houses of horror': "It may seem hard to believe, but there is a breed of real estate agent, who specializes in the selling of stigmatized houses, or homes where great tragedies,