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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

DECONSTRUCTING DOMESTICITY AND THE ADVENT OF A HETEROTOPIA IN CHUCK PALAHNIUK'S *LULLABY*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

ENGLISH

by

Jeanette Garcia

2012

To: Dean Kenneth Furton
College of Arts and Sciences

This thesis, written by Jeanette Garcia, and entitled Deconstructing Domesticity and the Advent of a Heterotopia in Chuck Palahniuk's *Lullaby*, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual contents, is referred to you for your judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

Ana Luszczynska

Michael Patrick Gillespie

Bruce Harvey, Major Professor

Date of Defense: March 5, 2012

The thesis of Jeanette Garcia is approved.

Dean Kenneth Furton
College of Arts and Sciences

Dean Lakshmi N. Reddi
University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2012

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, who have instilled and nurtured my desire for learning, and from an early age, reinforced my love of literature and supplied me with countless works and hours at the library. I'm thankful for their constant loving support and encouragement.

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

DECONSTRUCTING DOMESTICITY AND THE ADVENT OF A HETEROTOPIA IN CHUCK PALAHNIUK'S *LULLABY*

by

Jeanette Garcia

Florida International University, 2012

Miami, Florida

Professor Bruce Harvey, Major Professor

Chuck Palahniuk's LULLABY is a novel that evaluates modern spaces both abstract and physical, especially in regards to an individual's experience in and attachment to domestic, regulated space as a source of identity, intimacy, and spatial representation. My thesis demonstrates how the destabilization of domestic space as a result of loss and grief led the characters of the novel to question their normative perceptions of space, and in turn, incited them to produce a new kind of space, a heterotopia, to compensate for their loss of identity and place in the world. The critical analysis of this text within this thesis demonstrates how Chuck Palahniuk employs his literary style, complex characters, and surreal plot to highlight the significance of how individuals interact and are affected by space, especially in regards to identity and relationships within society, particularly when confronting cognitive dissonance and uncanny affect. By assessing the haunting attributes of domestic space, the heterotopia that arises from cognitive dissonance, and the sentimental traits that anchor us to certain social spaces, readers will be able to value the influence of spatial practice, not only in the novel, but also in everyday life.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading a Chuck Palahniuk novel is definitely a journey in itself. Along with the complex and twisted characters are the story lines with nonlinear plots, curious relationships, and surprising supernatural qualities. As post-modern critic, Jesse Kavadlo proposes, most readers see a fragmented and chaotic world when they read one of Palahniuk's novels. However upon closer analysis, one notes the complete opposite, "that the world is not broken. Somehow, the world feels more together than before you started… Broken, but something disturbing and beautiful recreated in its place" (Kavadlo 3). The majority of Chuck Palahniuk's novels provide a melding of broken parts, more so, the characters are individuals struggling with their current spatial circumstances, while in search a sense of community, regardless of how unconventional the process of finding one may be. It seems Palahniuk uses exceptional modes of bringing a sense of acceptance and restoration to his characters, from creating a community of anarchical fighters who build explosives using soap made out of human fat in order to destabilize society's normative structures, to an individual repeatedly choking with the intention of being saved time and time again as a means of receiving loving attention from total strangers.

At the resolution of his novels, including *Fight Club* (1996) and *Choke* (2001), the main characters are not fully healed; nonetheless they have been able to view their lives through a new perspective, enabling them to begin again in more ways than one. In particular, Chuck Palahniuk's *Lullaby* provides readers with a close portrayal of the tension that spaces cause the human psyche, particularly those of the work place and the home as prescribed domestic space dominated by conventional representations, and

man's necessity to overstep those limiting conceptions of spatiality in order to establish one's identity. Not only can physical locality restrict humanity, but emotions such as grief associated to those spaces can be altogether psychologically and emotionally constricting. Although similar to Palahniuk's other novels regarding questions of identity, the struggle against societal confinement, and the human need for love and fruitful relationships, *Lullaby* demonstrates a much darker and emotive side to the human condition.

The novel revolves around a lullaby, that when spoken aloud or said within the mind, has the power to kill whomever the words are being directed to. The source of the novel's title is a lullaby that has been published in countless children's books and other sources whose origins date back centuries to a tribal group that created the spell for the purpose of alleviating those who were suffering and close to death. Upon reading the lullaby, anyone in proximity would die without apparent cause. The lullaby is customarily read within the private space of the family, frequently referred to as home. The inclusion of such a ritual inevitably challenges the conventionality and sentimental traditions of domestic space. The loss of loved ones intermingled with the absence of a domestic space is the basis for the tearing away of the identity of the characters within *Lullaby* and the propelling force behind the novel.

The novel's two major characters, Carl Streator and Helen Hoover Boyle, begin as two strangers who share tragic pasts associated with the deadly lullaby and become companions whose similar experiences and their desire to find a space of love, understanding, and acceptance bind them together. Carl Streator, a journalist who investigates crib deaths, finds out the power of the lullaby when he accidentally kills his

wife, Gina, and his two-year old daughter, Katrin in their home. In his investigation of the lullaby, Carl meets a real-estate agent, Helen Hoover Boyle, who began to resell haunted homes after inadvertently killing her infant son, Patrick, and later in a fit of confusion and anger uses the lullaby to kill her husband, John. The two attempt to find their place in society by continuing within the normative spaces of domestic life such as the work place and their private dwellings. When work is an insufficient distraction, they bury themselves in their distinct hobbies; Helen has a fetish for antique furniture, while Carl busies himself with building miniature models of homes. When bourgeoisie space proves limiting and boring, they take on the responsibility of extinguishing all the copies of the lullaby and seeking a master spell book known as the grimoire. For Carl and Helen, loss, sadness, and anger are major triggers resulting from their inability to cope with their past, and the cognitive dissonance that arose from the disequilibrium of their domestic spaces. In their process of seeking some form of psychological stability, the characters confront and deconstruct current physical and societal spaces associated with home and labor, and ultimately develop their own ideal space of living as they detach themselves from the fixity of place and the sentiments associated with them.

Carl and Helen are capable of establishing a differential space, solely defined by each other's company, which remains in flux and provides love and acceptance in new ways as they continue traveling throughout the United States. Their endeavor takes place during a cross-country road trip that leads them into a new kind of transient space, away from Westernized ideas of home and work place. The distance they create away from the confining bourgeoisie spaces of their past, provides room for them to enter into new notions of space, place, and intimate human relationships. Through their persistent

movement, they are capable of reaching a new space of identity that allows for a restoration of the love and acceptance they enjoyed in their no longer existing homes via a new, therapeutic, and unorthodox familial space.

Aside from *Lullaby*, Chuck Palahniuk is mostly known for his anarchical novel, *Fight Club*, that was later adapted into a film (1999) along with a second film adaptation in 2008 of his novel *Choke*. Both novels involve frustrated narrators undergoing a crisis of identity. The two protagonists, the first discontented by the limitations of bourgeoisie living, capitalistic consumerism, and a mundane existence, and the later, an employee of a colonial park, who is also a con-artist pretending to choke in restaurants in order to collect money for his mother's hospital bills, find themselves searching for purpose. At the core are the questions, who am I, and what is my place in society? While the unnamed narrator of *Fight Club* evidently struggles with finding himself as he conflicts with his fabricated, split-personality, Tyler Durden, *Choke*'s main character, Victor Mancini, has an unclear past concerning who his mother is, as he changed foster homes consecutively, and was raised by a woman who concocted intriguing stories, including that he was a direct descendant of Jesus Christ. Ultimately, both characters reach a partial resolution by coming to terms with the dilemmas of their egos, and embark on new beginnings with their corresponding significant others Marla Singer and Paige Marshall.

By destroying conventionality and social expectations, particularly relating to bourgeoisie living, labor, and familial connections, the characters make room for alternative, and at times, transgressive notions of space and community. Both discontented protagonists are pressured into constructive destruction by the banality of their work place and domestic spaces. *Fight Club* and *Choke* depict a continual cycle of

constructive destruction, also found in *Lullaby*, as a mode of coping, changing standards of normalcy, and the first step to a process of self-discovery that dissolves conventional notions of space, community, and relationships. While *Fight Club* concludes with a building nearly being destroyed in order to rebuild society from the ground up, and the narrator choosing to shoot himself in the cheek in order to cause his ulterior personality, Tyler Durden, to die, *Choke* ends with Dennis, Victor's best friend, constructing a space of stones that is left unidentified and open to new possibilities as a habitat or safe haven. In turn, *Lullaby*, follows two characters more closely in their interactions with specific spaces, not only the working environment, but also in the spatial dislocation they experience regarding living bourgeois space, and the consequent search and construction of a differential space outside of societally defined social spaces. As the characters readapt, they push the limits of intimacy, remolding the notions of romantic sentimentality via a postmodern, fragmented perspective.

Aside from Palahniuk's popular novels like *Fight Club*, which some scholars have selected as their central focus for analysis, *Lullaby* is a novel that has not received such acclaim or literary criticism and that addresses, in a different light, the effects of spatiality on identity, and the social bonds that fuse two dynamic realms of human existence. Even though Palahniuk explores the relation of the individual to time and space in *Rant* through Buster Casey's time-travelling legacy, the tension between space and the individual is most stark and more intensely explored in *Lullaby* as a result of the emphasis of how the self is obviously reflected in the places and spaces inhabited and experienced. Palahniuk uses *Lullaby* to depict an individual's drive toward reconceptualizing one's place in society and formulating a space away from conventional

limitations, primarily as a reaction to a growing awareness regarding the unreliable and hegemonic appropriations of bourgeoisie spaces such as the home.

While Carl Streator fabricates models and proceeds to destroy them as a means of therapy, Helen is absorbed by her obsessive attraction to antique furniture and her continual exploitation of domesticity by reselling spaces that are haunted to individuals seeking to create their own dwelling space. Despite their coping strategies and attempts to control the living and working spaces they occupy, Helen and Carl become disillusioned by their definitions of space, and long for a new kind of space that provides not only acceptance, but a sense of identity and individuality. With the copies of the lullaby scattered throughout the United States, Helen and Carl are capable of moving away from, deconstructing, and reappropriating their fixed ideas of place and conventional notions of space, and begin to formulate a differential space for themselves. Their increased exposure to one another and the growing relationship that develops throughout the road trip in a multitude of places and spaces, allows for the eradication of conventional, bourgeoisie space, furthering their progress toward abandoning prescribed place over the unlimited possibilities of open space.

Within the story there are also two youthful characters Oyster and Mona, whose pasts are murky, but whose agendas and concerns for spatiality are clearly outlined throughout the novel. Oyster, an environmentalist, seeks to destabilize major companies and corporations by publishing advertisements calling lawsuits against enterprises, which he believes to be the source of the world's ecological and spatial turmoil. Mona, a Wiccan, seeks to restore peace and harmony to the world by drawing humans, nature, and all its creatures together through spirituality and mysticism into a unified social space.

Both zealous characters see errors with the current definition and stratification of space, as well as the damaging effects that arise at times from human interaction with natural spaces, and strive to use the grimoire, the master book of spells, as a means of further destabilizing those hegemonic spaces. Throughout the novel, the four characters enter a kind of relationship with each other much like a family, which deteriorates when their attitudes and beliefs clash. Nonetheless they divide into two groups, which both produce new kinds of spaces that resist and challenge bourgeoisie and capitalistic space.

While considering the motivations, behaviors, and interactions of the characters within *Lullaby*, multiple theoretical approaches enhance the novel's compound layers regarding society's relationship to and construction of space, the psychological properties associated with loss and coping, and the role of affect in specific spaces of labor and the home. In the midst of deciphering and comprehending space, there have been studies to support various consistencies to the representation and associations attached to certain spaces and places especially in regards to identity. Both space and place provide points, and at times cores of identity and personal development, that vary from individual to individual according to their experiences within those loci. Humanistic geographer Yi-Fu Tuan's theoretical approach to space and place as intricately woven to bodily interaction, personal experience, and individual personalization of spatiality, adds perspective to the attitudes and behaviors of the characters in *Lullaby*. Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre's studies in spatiality, particularly bourgeoisie space ranging from the home to the work place, provides considerations of space that elucidates the characters' interaction and definitions of places of residence and labor, as well as the exploitation of natural space through its reappropriation for corporate use within the novel. According to

Lefebvre, spaces are first perceived through observation, and are later understood and conceived through a series of concepts and representations, which are combined and experienced through lived space, or the individual's day to day interaction with the spaces he or she encounters. What Lefebvre terms the "problematic" are the controlling spaces that are regulated and defined by the hegemonic state, and imposed on the collective through symbols, ideas, and images dispersed throughout urban spaces, from the home to the space of labor. Through a careful assessment of perceived, conceived, and lived space, an individual can deconstruct such commanding representations of space, and draw new conceptions of space, possibly even a new kind of space. In turn, Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia, or a space that lies both within and outside of real and representational space, addresses Lefebvre's concerns and enables a theoretical discussion concerning a space that is other, or that contests conventional and socially acceptable spaces. The experimental space that Helen and Carl create is a heterotopia of compensation that while taking from concepts associated with familial social space, seeks to alter the limitations and fixed physicality of those spaces, in particular the immovability and regulation of domestic space.

Although scarcely considered by most, each of us constantly dwells in stratified and socially defined spaces and places, which we can choose to question and reformulate on the basis of our perceptions and representations, or allow to be defined and delineated repetitively by the structures already in place. Openness and motion through space broadens an individual's perception of the world and one's capacity for growth. While closed spaces sometimes allow for security, a sense of belonging, and a firm idea of origin, they can be confining and restricting to a person's identity and behavior. *Lullaby*

explores the differentiation of the two extremes, and illustrates the effect of the two extremes on the identities of the characters, while simultaneously demonstrating the correlation between spatiality and emotional responses. In the novel, spaces such as an enclosed apartment or an empty house incite individuals into particular mental and emotional states that lead to constructive and destructive responses. The characters' choice to remain in transit throughout the later part of the novel shows their reconceptualization of place, particularly the home and bourgeoisie space. In the end, movement through space proves to be the only answer toward achieving detachment from haunting spaces of pain, a progression toward new representations of living space, and the opportunity for self-reflection, allowing the characters to reach a new and therapeutic space, the kind of space that Lefebvre deems necessary for true individual and social transformation to occur.

The lullaby itself represents a symbol of a traditional principle of control, regulation, and discipline within domestic space and home life. Decoding symbols leads to society's ability to decrease or even dissolve the constricting and limiting influence that those constructed representations of space have on cognition, social relations, and societal productivity. Therefore, the many-layered conceptions of space from the domestic to the corporate should be untangled and reassessed, in order to reach an even fuller understanding of its role in society, principally in regards to identity. By decoding space, one is capable of deconstructing the prescribed definitions associated to places, moving away from regulated and appropriated spaces, to eventually constructing a new differential space that benefits not only the individual, and the development of their

identity, but society as a whole, enabling those that feel uncomfortable or incapable of seeking a space to create their very own.

When the boundaries in society no longer work for the individual or supply a space of acceptance, he or she is driven to exceed those societal spatial boundaries. For Carl and Helen bourgeoisie space shifts from one of positive influence and a necessary factor in their lives, to a corrosive space that must be replaced with a better alternative. The concept of home changes as the social space between the two central characters begins to grow, and as Oyster and Mona begin to challenge Carl and Helen's previous notions of home, and other spaces. For Carl and Helen, "home" becomes an individual rather than a place. Although masked by their forthright desire for violence, Carl and Helen are truly longing to rediscover themselves, and do so by forming an intimate bond with one another. Carl and Helen do so, and succeed in breaking away from controlled spaces by creating their very own.

I. HAUNTING SPATIALITY: DECONSTRUCTING DOMESTICITY

"Home is where one starts from.
As we grow older
The world becomes stranger,
the pattern more complicated
Of dead and living.
Not the intense moment
Isolated, with no before and after,
But a lifetime burning in every moment
And not the lifetime of one man only
But of old stones that cannot be deciphered."

-From "East Coker" by T.S. Eliot

In "East Coker," one of T.S. Eliot's four quartets, he proposes that home is the origin of the self, and an attribute closely linked to the complex life of an individual, endowed with meaning that "cannot be deciphered." Our perception of home as our inner world largely affects the way in which the world outside of it is conceived. Home has been and continues to be the locus for human development and identity. Although the notion of home life has changed to a considerable degree from the nineteenth century, both socially and structurally via egalitarian perceptions of social spheres including tearing down the binaries of gender roles within the household, the basic individual identification and attachment to a private sector, a dwelling intricately tied to one's sense of self, still remains. However, that dwelling has been chaotically refashioned and continues to be reworked according to the needs of individuals who feel restricted by social constructions of homes or by traumatic events that deconstruct those concepts.

The characters of *Lullaby* are initially deeply anchored in the spaces of the home, and the domestic activities associated with them, exhibiting dependence to those spaces as evidenced by the characters' continual memorialization. A major reason for the characters' fixation to home is that it is connected to an individual's development, and is

"as much cosmic as it is human. From cellar to attic, from foundations to roof, it has density at once dreamy and rational, earthly, and celestial. The relationship between Home and Ego, meanwhile, borders on identity. The shell, a secret and directly experienced space…epitomizes the virtues of human 'space'" (Lefebvre 121). Most strongly, the intimate moments shared within those spaces appear to be the hardest link to sever for Carl and Helen because of their intense grief and the longing to hold on to the fading memories that still linger, precisely because the home is, "an affective kernel or centre: Ego...dwelling...It embraces the loci of passion, of action, and of lived situations, and thus immediately implies time" (Lefebvre 42). The storing of time and memory designates the representations attributed to spaces like the home. As a space connected to the past and the present, the home acts as, "the center of one's life, and center (we have seen) connotes origin and beginning" (Tuan 128). Thus, home is a foundation to the self, as a source of identity and an ideological construction through which other spaces are not only perceived and conceived, but also lived.

Before the death of their families, Carl and Helen's dwelling places are imparted with meaning as locus points of pause and return from their work and other external activities. An individual's fixation with place is caused chiefly by the value one adheres to it, whether that value consists of "the security and stability of place," or on the contrary when what is valued becomes the space that is without, and that possesses no limitations (Tuan 6). The space that is open and on the fringes, calls for a kind of transgression and rethinking of conventional notions of domesticity, which Carl and Helen ultimately engage in. A home offers an intimate and familial space as a fixture of nourishment, stability, and continuity, which is contrasted by the inconsistent and fluxing

state of the spaces around it. Home, for either of them, became the cornerstone of identity and consistency, embodying intense emotion, self-awareness, and definition. As a center of the self, the home becomes "the guarantor of meaning as well as of social (spatial) practice" (Lefebvre 232). In turn, the representation of other structures emerges from the regulated domestic sphere of the home. Henri Lefebvre elucidates that even with the disintegration of certain social bonds, "the symbolic space of 'familiarity' (family life, everyday life), the only such space to be 'appropriated', continues to hold sway" (232). As a center of ideology, it provides a means of not only contrasting the exterior nondomestic space of employment and of social life, but supplying them with meaning as well, and thus infusing the home with incredible sentimental value.

In order to comprehend Carl and Helen's behavior throughout the novel, one must understand the relationship of the characters to space and place on account of their senses and experiences, the representational spaces they ascribe to, and their reactions and subsequent actions when those representations collapse into reality. The very act of reading lullabies as a ritualistic event that takes place within the home shows the extent of the characters' prescriptive observance to the essence of home life, and their adherence to the construction of that space as regulated and disciplinary. They have adhered to sentimental traditions that led them to loss and immense grief. The fact that the lullaby kills the families of both Carl and Helen within those domestic spaces highlights how those representations should be challenged and decoded. Despite the familiarity of the home spaces created by both Carl and Helen respectively, the traumatic events of accidental homicide that occur, result in an exposure to the uncanny leading to cognitive

dissonance for the characters, thus causing them to abandon those prescribed places, a break in their identity, and a reconceptualization of domestic space.

During the 19th century, domestic space meant comfort and fine living made possible by the presence and accessibility to commodities that ranged from teas to fine furniture, as well as by the carefully delineated roles of each family member. Along came modernists such as Eliot, Joyce, and Woolf, who reconsidered the home, and through their works brought out the tensions and differing sentiments related to that unit, especially in regards to nostalgia and feelings of alienation. The drive toward the deciphering proposed by Eliot seems to transmute in the postmodern era into deconstructing the fixed notions of that which is heimleich, or homely, and confronting the growing angst and uneasiness towards domesticity. Dissolving traditional and limiting notions of domestic spaces is made possible through an ironic reappropriation of previously designated domestic spaces, while drawing attention to the fetishism of such domestic spaces, as noted in *Lullaby*, through the use of surreal scenes and characters that deter what has been traditionally dubbed "homely."

Initially, Carl observes and values domestic space tremendously as a kind of legacy and sense of identity. Carl's first house replica is the construction of the house he lived in, which is also the model that was meant for Katrin, his daughter. The unchanging state of the replica allows for an unusual permanence of Carl's idealization of domestic space, and as a legacy for his child, and thus, a continuation of those prescribed notions of domesticity, "Everything had to be perfect. To be something that would prove our talent and intelligence. A masterpiece to outlive us" (Palahniuk 217). Carl and Gina's involvement in the building of a replica of their home demonstrates how significant their

home was to them. However, in the end the views of the home cannot be handed down as legacy because Carl kills his only heir. The realization that domesticity and the space of the home is sustainable only to a degree causes Carl to destroy his copy of that space and proceed to repeatedly create and destroy other illusory representations of social spaces. The trauma he experienced brought disturbing realizations including his overbearing grief and an absence of intimacy.

Carl and Helen's homes shifted as living spaces from the familial to the uncanny upon the accidental murders of their loved ones using the lullaby. Thus, Carl's identity is fractured when the nurturing space of his home is changed by a traumatic event, and its representation is quickly transformed. Carl cannot help recalling the love and satisfaction produced by the proximity of his body to his wife's within the space of their bedroom and the developing bond between them. Unfortunately it is suddenly disrupted and Carl explains the alteration, "The next morning, you wake up but your family doesn't. You lie in bed, still curled against your wife. She's still warm but not breathing. Your daughter's not crying" (Palahniuk 20). The individuals that gave home the concept of identity were no longer alive to participate within that space. Their absence created a void in Carl's ego. The home would cease to represent the love, life, happiness, and plentitude, he had once experienced in their company, making the idealized image of home irrecoverable. Instead intimate space takes on associations of absence, anger, death, sadness, and loss. The space imbued with such strong identity and consanguineal ties becomes emptied of that social space, and what remains are the vacant rooms and furnishings. At that point, the physically perceived space loses the conceived representation it had been attributed with for so many years, whether for Carl and his time with Gina and Katrin, or for Helen

and the moments she shared with John and Patrick. As Tuan asserts, “For most people possessions and ideas are important, but other human beings remain the focus of value and the source of meaning” (Tuan 139). The physical place is not enough to provide mental and emotional stability for either character. On the contrary, Carl and Helen both flee their respective homes in search of a new space that can possibly provide the psychological equilibrium in cognition, emotion, and action that is lacking. According to Thomas Gieryn, author of the article “A Space for Place in Sociology,” the psychological effects of losing one’s place results in, “being without a place of one's own-persona non locata [and] is to be almost non-existent” with a continual search for “a home, a neighborhood, a community” (482). For Carl, the only approximation to such a community occurs after meeting Helen Hoover Boyle and the consequential bonds he forms with Mona and Oyster. Although both characters manage to cling to certain notions of domesticity, eventually Carl and Helen deconstruct those conceptions, while transgressing against the limiting notions of spatiality upheld by instruments such as the lullaby, and seek out a new alternative, intimate space capable of bringing some kind of restoration.

Carl begins his move toward reconsidering spatiality in a slow manner, as he proceeds from one domestic space into the next. Carl moves into a new apartment whose spatial characteristics including noise, frustrate him and later incite him to aggressive and destructive behavior. Despite his attempts at beginning anew, Carl continues to be flooded by memories of his loss, and finds himself struggling once again with the notion of space. The space of his apartment does not offer him the ability to relax after a long day of work, “even in the bathroom, even taking a shower, you can hear talk radio over

the hiss of the showerhead, the splash of water in the tub and blasting against the plastic curtain" (Palahniuk 59). It is precisely Carl's inability to claim his own appropriated space that heightens his exasperation at the current state of his residency, and causes a reexamination of domestic space. Carl encounters what Lefebvre refers to as dominated space, or a space that is "transformed – mediated—by technology, by practice" (164). Through every area of his apartment, including the space of the bathroom, which is typically reserved for functions done in private, such as cleansing and defecation, Carl is still accompanied by the disturbing noises of others. "The music and laughter eat away at your thoughts. The noise blots them out. All the sound distracts" (Palahniuk 19). The noise represents a power struggle for Carl, not only of physical space, but also of a mental and emotional magnitude that proves exhausting for him The growing access to technology allows for other individuals to quite easily take over the space of others. Carl emphasizes that the sound emits from all sides pressing him through the tile below, the shouts rising from the floor, and the noises that reverberate through the walls. Although domesticity has shifted in regards to the physical place where Carl resides, his living space is still regulated and dominated. There is no room for intimacy. The influence he once had over his own home appears to have ceased along with his family. In an individual's struggle for space, Lefebvre explains that ideally "the outside space of the community is dominated, while the indoor space of family life is appropriated" (166). Carl contrasts his current living arrangement to the pleasant dwelling he once had as he shares, "these days, this is what passes for home sweet home" (Palahniuk 15). The interaction he once experienced with his wife and child has now been replaced by the vocal presence of strangers on television screens with a "muffled thunder of dialogue"

and “laugh tracks recorded in the early 1950s” (Palahniuk 15). The foreign voices are incapable of supplying him with the comfort and love he once had. Carl notices the trend not only in his apartment, but also in the surrounding apartments.

Carl’s new living space worsens his perception of society and creates an intensified detachment from his own identity and from being capable of relating to others. His fixation with his own secluded space causes him to isolate himself from others, leading to a deterioration of his social capabilities that contributes to his inclination toward transgression. The space made for human interaction and bonding has changed into a hub-bub of clouded and distorted sound that communicates nothing and that silences what Carl needs most, the possibility for mental clarity and human connection. Instead he returns to his apartment, a space polluted with noise of “panicked voices...someone shouting, a dog barking, doors slamming, the auctioneer call of some song” and such noises are what “passes for civilization” (Palahniuk 16). Instead of communicating a desire for private space, individuals try to out do the other by trying to conquer each other’s space, demonstrating the popularized notion that space itself is to be owned and commodified. The cycle continues and as Carl perceives it, “this is really about power” (Palahniuk 17). The domestic space originally set aside for conversation has been taken over by a different kind of discursive space. Domesticity has turned into solitude for Carl. He cannot bridge the gap between himself and others because of his distaste for their company, and the discord that exists within the surrounding domestic spaces, “they’ll shout at each other across the space of a dinner plate” (Palahniuk 16).

While acknowledging the struggle for individuals to claim a space of their own, Carl refuses to step outside of the overbearing environment he finds himself within

because of the familiarity and conformity it provides. Carl has come to accept and remain within the oppressive space precisely because it offers plenty of distraction from dwelling on the pain and regret of killing his wife and child. Entering into a new space and venturing outside of the spaces of domesticity he is accustomed to, force Carl to shift his current spatial paradigm, or to altogether detach himself from those prescribed notions of space, a move he feels he is unprepared for. According to Gieryn, "Place attachment facilitates a sense of security and well-being, defines group boundaries, and stabilizes memories" (481). Since the founded local point that he created with his family is absent, Carl clings to the new space of his apartment as an attempt to regain a place in which his identity can flourish in new ways. However, his attempts are futile since his notion of home and private space continues to be radically changed by the altering environment of his apartment, and his discontent at the present living arrangement.

As a result of his inability to create or participate in a living space where he can be intimate with someone, Carl engages in building replicas of houses and other spaces to cope with his lack of one, and begins to fetishize domesticity by engaging in spatial construction. Interestingly, he does not look at the box to see what the house should look like, making sure the box is covered in bags, and opening it in the dark to avoid looking at the end result of all the pieces. He prefers to build it on his own, despite all his errors. He shares his curious process, "One Dutch Colonial mansion, I installed fifty-six windows upside down" (Palahniuk 20). The cognitive dissonance produced by the uncanny experiences within his home with Katrin and Gina has shaken the foundations of space production for Carl. Lefebvre argues that like the architect who constructs his own space, each individual has the power to enact control over already built spaces and

reappropriate them, or construct new spaces distinct from those already recognized by society. His models exemplify the representations of space and domestic life that he has chosen to take on, which are derived from his ideology and background. Once he has put every piece in its proper place including the Welcome mat, the mailbox, and even "the tiny, tiny milk bottles on the front porch [and] the tiny folded newspaper," Carl switches on the lights in the cold, dark apartment and observes his finished product with scrutiny (Palahniuk 21). Similarly, Carl's design originates from his own preconceived ideas of the ideal living space and the representation of home he has been exposed to up to that point. Instead of distancing himself from a domestic space he feels he cannot truly recuperate (only through representation), he is fixated by it and prevents himself from detachment.

In addition, Carl resorts to creating and destroying his models in a cyclical pattern as a form of catharsis for the dissonant pain and remorse he feels at being the murderer of his wife and child. Carl voices the process of grief and his own coping mechanisms, "You'll take up a hobby. You'll bury yourself in work. Change your name. You'll cobble things together. Make order out of chaos" (Palahniuk 20). His hobby appears to be the only means through which he has control over space and where he has the power to create it on his own, urging him to bury himself in the details. The order that arises for him is the freedom and control in constructing a new physical and conceptual space. Once Carl obtains the perfection he once had in the models he builds, he does what he feels he did to his family, destroy them, "Now take off your shoe, and with your bare foot, stomp. Stomp and keep stomping. No matter how much it hurts, the brittle broken plastic and wood and glass, keep stomping until the downstairs neighbor pounds the

ceiling with his fist" (Palahniuk 22). The hobby provides a form of cathectic repetition through which he invests his stored emotion and desire for home into the physical object of the model by engaging in spatial practice, "you glue the doors into the walls next. You glue the walls into the foundation. You tweezer together the tiny bits of each chimney and let the glue dry while you build the roof. You hand the tiny gutters. Every detail exact. You set the tiny dormers. Hang the shutters. Frame the porch. Seed the lawn. Plant the trees" (Palahniuk 20). The physical pain he experiences when the pieces pierce the skin on his feet, is a means of punishment as well as a distraction from emotional pain. The ongoing mantra "constructive destruction" is a part of Carl's attempt at renewing his perception and memories of domestic space, and coping with his grief. The control and release he experiences in his hobby of model home building explains his obsession with it.

Contrary to the space of his no longer existing home, he is capable of managing the replica and bringing about a sense of stability and restfulness. Thus, upon its completion his reaction is the following: "From this far away it looks perfect. Perfect and safe and happy. A neat red-brick home. The tiny windows of light shine out on the lawn and trees. The curtains glow, yellow in the baby's room. Blue in your own bedroom" (Palahniuk 21). When he witnesses the perfection of the space he has created, memories of the domestic space he had once inhabited flood his mind and he seeks to destroy the false replication of that ideal place he can no longer inhabit. The hobby not only provides Carl the ability to cathect through the act of creating space, but also offers a form of restoration through catharsis. Although temporary, the hobby provides a release and escape from the pain, "You'd be surprised just how fast you can close the door on your

past. No matter how bad things get, you can still walk away" (Palahniuk 17). A part of him believes that through the reconstruction of the space he once lost, he is effectively moving on. However, a part of him recognizes that despite his hobby and his persistence in creating the lost space he longs for, he knows it will not resolve his problems, "No matter how you put it together, you're never sure if it's right" (Palahniuk 18). Carl's interaction in the creation of domestic spaces via his models, and their destruction provides a means of destabilizing fixed notions of domestic space, and moving toward generating his own experimental and alternative space. Nonetheless, before he can form a new intimate space away from his grief, he meets Helen Hoover Boyle, who adds to his already present aversion to domestic spaces.

Palahniuk employs the character of Helen to not only remark on the potential conniving schemes of the real estate business, but most importantly to draw attention to the prescribed significance of the "home," and its reality as a dominated and commodified space, haunted by society's expectations. Helen sees the nature of human kind to want to establish a place of domesticity, and seeks to deter that goal precisely because she no longer believes in its existence. Through her occupation as a real estate agent, she exploits the search for such a space, by reselling "distressed houses" where supernatural incidents occur, usually as a result of haunting heinous crimes associated with that space (Palahniuk 5). Instead of preventing other families from entering a space haunted by horrific experiences, Helen contently profits from exploiting the idealization of the home by other families. Carl explains the kinds of spaces Helen seeks to resell as "homes," "Forget those dream houses you only sell once every fifty years. Forget those happy homes...What she needed was blood running down the walls. She needed ice-cold

invisible hands that pull children out of bed at night" (Palahniuk 4). While Carl creates and destroys physical models of inhabited spaces, Helen sells a representation of that space, which later proves to be nothing like what the tenants desired. Their idealized conceptions of home are diluted by the haunting presence of previous occupants, which symbolically represent the lingering ideations of domesticity that society upholds, and that continue to have a hold on the construction of familial space. By commodifying the home, Helen moves closer to detaching herself from false principles of domesticity and private space. Since her own representation of an intimate space has been destroyed by loss, she no longer believes in the existence of such a space, and instead benefits financially from the disequilibrium of the home. Haunted by the memory of her son, Patrick, and her guilt, she takes no issue with allowing others to be haunted as well.

Helen's exploitation of society's search for an ideal home demonstrates her own incapability of establishing such a space, and the cognitive dissonance that the concept causes her. She mocks the very idea of a dream home with her tagline: "Helen Boyle Realty. The Right Home Every Time" (Palahniuk 75). Whether a "severed head" coming down the stairs or a "severed hand that crawls out of the garbage disposal," the gruesome sightings are far from Helen's concerns (Palahniuk 209). Their haunting is of no comparison to the trauma in her psyche at being the cause of her son's death, and the destabilization of her home. When she shares her story with Carl, we learn that she lived in a trailer with her husband who began to blame her for the death of Patrick. Helen realizes that she was the cause of Patrick's death when she, unknowingly, read him the deadly lullaby. After that point, intimacy was out of the question for both Helen and her husband, John, and the two began to argue profusely, until one day Helen used the lullaby

in a moment of angered frustration and murdered John. Helen's past experience with domestic space and its deterioration has led her to exploit those notions, and enabled further deconstruction of the home. Although Helen refuses to face the haunting guilt, sadness, and anger produced by the death of her son, she exhibits signs of coping. Through her coping mechanisms, Helen is capable of suppressing the painful emotions of loss associated with her past. In the same manner, Carl is also haunted and even refers to his wife and child as "ghosts" after seeing the photograph that Oyster has chosen to publish in the paper. Her dominance over places that could be potential homes gives her a sense of control over a space that she believes is unattainable for her. However, Helen ultimately quits being a real estate agent, and embarks on a journey for the lullaby and the grimoire, detaching herself from traditional domestic and intimate space.

Helen does not only offset her loss of that ideal space of home and the absence of Patrick through monetary compensation in reselling haunted houses, she also exemplifies a fetish for damaging antique furniture. Lefebvre contends that the West in particular has formed a kind of look, or "façade" even within the space of the private, making that space be dominated rather than appropriated. That façade calls for a certain aesthetic layout that includes furniture. In Chris Cullen's article "Gimme Shelter: At Home with the Millennium," he evaluates the significance of interior space, its furnishings, and design as a search for one's own personal space. Her continual presence near furniture, and her desire to acquire antique furniture at the lowest prices, shows Helen's underlying fixation with the physical layout of domestic space. She relates furniture to the familial space of the home by distinguishing them into the categories of "married" (those furniture pieces that are a part of a collection of antiques), and "divorced" furniture (the only remaining

piece from a collection). The pieces are not merely objects, but representations of the individuals that occupied the domestic space. Even though Helen appears to be refusing conventional associations of home life through her exploitation of home buyers, she uses objects within that space to cathect.

Helen's attachment to furniture stems from her attempts to cope with loss, and to somehow find an object for her emotion to be released upon. Like the damage she enacts on the furniture, Helen has been wounded and psychologically affected by loss and abuse. The harsh words of accusation and hate she received from her husband, John, after Patrick died, coupled with the incredible pain of having killed her child manifests itself in Helen's actions. The destruction of the furniture provides Helen with objects of cathexis. Her fetish enables some kind of alleviation and distraction from the lack she feels at losing her home. Helen specifically chooses the furniture warehouse for her private meeting with Carl, precisely because it allows her to be surrounded by objects she can transpose her emotions onto without extreme consequences, and without using the lullaby. While she appears to love the furniture, she simultaneously exerts hate towards it because of its ability to outlive countless lives, including her beloved son, Patrick. Helen observes that unlike those that inhabit the houses, furniture seems nearly indestructible and continually in transition. The furniture also provides her with a reflection of herself that she wishes to avoid because she does not desire to look within. Carl observes how she drags "her diamond, midway across the face of a wide, beveled mirror" (Palahniuk 85). Later in the novel, Helen ruins another set of furniture as she uses her wedding ring to imprint the furniture with ways out of the space of the store. The ring that ties her back to her deceased husband, as well as to the familiar space of home is used as a weapon to

mar objects that can be found within it, and in a way causing an imprint on objects that have outlived her loved ones. The furniture for Helen represents permanence, the same permanence associated with her faded home life, "People die...People tear down houses. But furniture, fine, beautiful furniture, it just goes on and on, surviving everything" (Palahniuk 51). The durability of the furniture is contrasted by how fleeting life is, as Helen recognizes from her own loss, and how transitory the construction of a domestic space is. Although her past and the home she had with her husband and child was a space of positive emotions, losing them has triggered cognitive dissonance, and the search for a replacement. Her simultaneous attraction and repulsion to the furniture and domesticity enables her to alleviate damaging emotions she stores within.

Yet in the same vein as Carl who marvels at the model homes he builds, the beauty she sees in the creation and permanence of furniture, must be tainted, and destroyed, as she takes sharp objects and scars their surfaces. When Carl alludes to Patrick and whether his death is linked to the lullaby, Helen attacks the furniture even more aggressively as Carl observes, "and she just keeps walking, trailing her fingers along the carved edges, the polished surfaces, marring the knobs and smearing the mirrors" (Palahniuk 52). The memories of Patrick and the home they dwelled in trigger Helen's darkest emotions and incite her to mutilate furniture as she tries to displace her grief. Helen takes the door handles and the metal parts of a polished armoire as a means of diminishing its value and preventing someone purchasing it. In maiming the furniture, she is capable of finding a new focal point for thought and emotion on which she can exercise control, while also shaping the remaining artifacts of countless domestic spaces. Her obsession as collector preoccupies her mind from entertaining thoughts of loss and

pain, and distracts her from using the lullaby to kill. Upon hearing of Carl's testimony and his own loss, Helen continues on her rampage of ruin by passing her hand throughout the rest of the furniture, not just drawing arrows for directions out of the warehouse, but removing the glossy and waxed surfaces of the furniture by tainting them with her fingerprints. Carl observes her movements, "she starts walking, but slow, dragging her hand along the wall of cupboards and dressers, everything waxed and polished, ruining everything she touches" (Palahniuk 84). Rather than intact furniture that can be resold and placed in new spaces, Helen makes the pieces marred and unsellable. She believes that in doing so, she is capable of winning one small victory against death and permanence, and the objects that define, inhabit, and survive familial spaces.

Unlike Helen who is self-employed and has a great deal of opportunity to move freely from one space to another without reporting to anyone, Carl is bound by yet another space that hinders his freedom and greatly alters his affective state. While Carl initially appears to uphold his space of employment, he begins to note that his work place is regulated and dominated, limiting him physically, mentally, and socially. He must conform to deadlines, story topics, and demands from his editor. Throughout the novel, Carl shows continual frustration toward his editor's requests and attitude, which ultimately builds up and becomes stored anger and resentment. The overbearing environment and expectations of his work place lead him to use his editor, Duncan, as the first test subject to verify the power of the lullaby. Out of all his potential guinea pigs, Carl strategically chooses the individual who is in control of his work place as a means of destabilizing the restrictions and confinement he experiences while there. Carl's heightened physical state brought about by both the excitement of the lullaby and its

mystery, as well as by the hate felt toward Duncan, can be noted by his remark, "my face feels livid and hot with oxygenated hemoglobin while I read the poem out loud under the fluorescent lights, across a desk from my editor with his tie undone and his collar open, leaning back in his chair with his eyes closed" (Palahniuk 36). With Carl's use of the lullaby, a space that once possessed authority is now becoming a space where death unfolds and roles are reversing. Carl is now in control unbeknownst of Duncan. The fact that Carl chooses Duncan's office to read the lullaby to him shows the desire he has of removing him from his spatial position of power and reaching a sense of freedom within his work place. However, Duncan's death is only the beginning of him reappropriating his place of labor. Once Henderson steps in as editor, Carl repeats the same process and eliminates him from power.

The spheres of public and private spaces are distinguished for Carl on the basis of communication and the acceptance of one's identity. While at one moment Carl is speaking to Helen in what he refers to as a "forest" of furniture, the next he finds himself once again in the overbearing environment of his work place. Unlike the intimate conversation he had with Helen amid the crowded space of the furniture warehouse, the moment he walks into his office, his new editor, Henderson mentions that Duncan is dead, and prompts him to write a piece for his funeral. Henderson's attitude transforms a space of labor into one of derogation and insult that leads to detrimental effects on a person's psyche, as he questions Carl's attire, "Streator, is that nasty blue tie the only one you got?" (Palahniuk 40). Despite the crowded space of the warehouse, Carl's focus on his interaction with Helen allowed him to be in a comfortable and secure space, far from the confining and limiting elements of his work place. The ridicule and demands of

Henderson do not measure up with the openness, acceptance, and communication he is capable of engaging in with Helen. Not only is Carl a slave to the expectations of his editors and the limiting parameters of the kind of writing that is expected of him, he is also confined in identity by having to portray himself in a certain matter through attire and behavior.

Even in his occupation as a journalist covering crib deaths, Carl focuses on the details of the space where loss has occurred, and through his practice deconstructs the sentimentality and intimacy associated with domestic spaces that have been transformed by loss. As Carl enters the private sphere of others, he scrutinizes their living space, simultaneously removing himself from the representations of those domestic spaces that the families have imbued their homes with, and further detaching himself from notions of domesticity. His time at the newspaper has programmed Carl to react to loss in a detached and apathetic way and to use it to his advantage in order to report the story without considering the pain of the families. Being "an impartial witness," Carl focuses on the details of the setting. Duncan, his editor, seeks to bank on the pain of others and people's ability to empathize with loss as he tells Carl the goal, "We'd show this could happen to anyone" (Palahniuk 13). Ironically, Duncan assigns Carl to the story in order to show readers "how people cope. How people move forward with their lives… we could show the deep inner well of strength and compassion each of these people discovers. That angle" (Palahniuk 13). The very emotion Duncan seeks to expose in an exploitative manner is buried deep within Carl and later manifests itself through his impulsive use of the lullaby. Similar to the physical space he occupies, Carl views the mind as a kind of domicile that one cannot migrate from. Within the landscape of his own mind, Carl

designates particular rooms of thoughts with corridors of opened and closed doors that differentiate the thoughts and emotions he wishes to explore or avoid, as Carl explains, "The shortcut to closing any door is to bury yourself in the details. The facts" (Palahniuk 34). In his view, the closing of a door represents a kind of closure to psychological trauma. By being buried in the details (whether the specifics of journalism or the particulars of model home building), the subjective mind can cover over the unpleasant memories connected to cognitive dissonance with emotionally-detached, objective detail. By focusing on trivial details such as whether the sink was "single or double," what "the model of the refrigerator" was, and whether or not they had a calendar, the familial space is deprived of its essence and identity, simultaneously allowing Carl to move away from the pain that the memories of his own home cause him (Palahniuk 23). Through his practice, domestic space is not only commodified and exploited for the sake of readership, but the trauma derived from the loss of a child is reduced to an ornament, or any other object located within that space. The home is devalued into a place through which profit can be made or a story can be reported. Carl's exposure to domestic space as such, enables him to detach himself from those prescribed notions of sentimentality. Consequently, Carl's empathy is replaced by his desire to excel in his work, one of the many devices in his life that enable him to be occupied and less inclined to contemplative moments. In turn, it affects his view of social space and the realm of his apartment.

Once he notes that the lullaby does work, Carl begins to dwell on the possibility of being able to fully control who occupies the space of the world, limiting it to those he wants to share it with, and finally taking control of a space of his own. The vehicle that allows for that detachment to fully occur is the lullaby, ironically the same device that

destabilized his previous intimate space. Through the lullaby, Carl acknowledges the defragmentation of the home in society, the lingering effects of the stagnant view of space, and the necessary deconstruction of home. The regulation of domestic space extends to include that of mental space that encompasses conceptions and perceptions of spaces that are influenced by the media and an overwhelming exposure to a multitude of expressions, "Anymore, no one's mind is their own. You can't concentrate. You can't think. There's always some noise worming in. Singers shouting. Dead people laughing. Actors crying. All these little doses of emotion" (Palahniuk 19). Thus, the uncanny nature of his loss and the absence of his beloved family cause a disruption not only in Carl's identity, but also in his way of coping with emotion. Carl's propensity to use the lullaby, sometimes without even thinking of it, is tied to the unresolved pain and cognitive dissonance he is still recovering from. Mona shares that as an unbalanced person, Carl's "powder keg of.. Rage. Sorrow" causes him to release thought into action more quickly and intensely (Palahniuk 77). His inner conflict, including the guilt within, disables him from considering the other individuals that inhabit the world, or the social space he resides in, and allows for transgression to be an acceptable release. In turn, Carl contemplates the possibility of reshaping the world's social space by using the lullaby on unpleasant people and stopping the influence of media on society, "It's hard to say if that world would be any worse than this, the pounding music, the roar of television, the squawk of radio. Maybe without Big Brother filling us, people could think. The upside is maybe our minds would become our own" (Palahniuk 60). Full of grief and anger, and no one to be intimate with on any level, Carl desires to be in control of who inhabits the world, "And sure, the world just might be a better place without certain people. Yeah, the

world could be just perfect, with a little trimming here and there. A little housecleaning. Some unnatural selection" (Palahniuk 58). At this point, it appears that Carl's coping mechanism has increased in destructive potential from building and destroying model homes, to murdering people. Contrary to his present living space, in the fabricated space of Carl's own ideal universe, he would be able to exercise his autonomy, while attaining the peace and quiet he longs for without having his space be appropriated by another. The overbearing domination of space Carl experiences leads him to use the lullaby as an instrument to somehow enact control and appropriate social space even through violence. However, Carl and Helen's transgressive acts are insufficient release, and they are driven to seek their own place in society, and bring some appeasement to those dealing with grief, the angst of domestic spaces left behind by their loved ones, and issues of identity.

The cognitive dissonance encountered by Carl and Helen is later exemplified in detail by the domestic spaces the two visit in search of the lullabies, which strikingly demonstrate the demise of domesticity, and the continued use of fetish to cope with the realization that an intimate space has been abolished. Upon visiting Rhonda Pelson, Carl immediately draws his attention to the essence of the home's physical space, as well as Mrs. Pelson's physical appearance. Mrs. Pelson's loss and her sense of guilt are shown in the disarrayed state of her home, in her gestures, her behavior, and her thin, unattended, appearance. "In the living room, the chicken woman is still looking at the ceiling, only now she's shaking with long, jerking breaths" (Palahniuk 121). Mrs. Pelson remains fixed within the trailer, while undergoing a struggle between what she finds familiar, and what she finds uncanny about the shock of her loss. By examining the space of Mrs. Pelson's trailer, Carl is able to make deductions about the events in her life and her

identity. “On the dinette table in the kitchen are more big flower arrangements, just dead stalks in thick, stinking water… wasted roses or black, spindly carnations growing gray mold. Stuck in each bouquet is a little card saying: *In Deepest Sympathy*” (Palahniuk 121). The fact that the flowers have collected mold and that the water smells shows that the child has died some time ago, yet Mrs. Pelson still has the toys in the front yard. The child’s toys serve, as objects of remembrance of times where he was alive, yet consequently have become fetishized relics. Carl observes that Mrs. Pelson finds herself immobile and incapable of participating in any more domestic duties, “There are dirty clothes separated into different-colored piles... Somebody’s jeans and shirts stained with oil. There’s towels and sheets and bras. There’s a red-checked tablecloth” (Palahniuk 121). The order and cleanliness Mrs. Pelson strove to maintain in her familial space is no longer a motivation for her, since that space has been permanently altered by loss.

Helen draws on her own forms of coping, including the fetishization of objects, to bring some kind of temporary managing and compensation to Mrs. Pelson. Since Helen has coped with the loss of her son for some years, she provides Mrs. Pelson with advice to surpass her current depression. Before Helen began to use the lullaby for personal gain, she attempted to restore her peace of mind and identity by bringing attention to herself and her physical state through makeup and fashion. Instead of having the familial space be a marker of her identity, she began to fetishize over cosmetics, jewelry, and clothing to transpose her grief. Since it seemed to work temporarily, she believes the process will result for Mrs. Pelson, and Helen shows her an assortment of jewels to distract Mrs. Pelson from the pain. In drawing Rhonda’s attention to the specific cuts inside the jewelry and their shimmering allure, Helen distracts her from the larger reality that she

has lost her child, at least for that moment. Even though Rhonda's focus is literally drawn to the jewelry by the magnifying glass that Helen has placed near her eye for a closer look, she is psychologically diverting Rhonda's attention to an object that could provide temporary cathexis. Helen voices her notion that pain can be converted into financial gain once the pain is fetishized, and grief is transformed into a commodity, "You're still a young woman, Rhonda. You need to go back to school and turn this hurt into money" (Palahniuk 122). By revealing to Rhonda the value of the jewels she has left her with, Helen believes she is effectively leading Rhonda toward some kind of a distraction from her loss. Rhonda is no longer paralyzed by her loss, but driven by self-gain.

Carl and Helen reach the conclusion that all spaces including the mind and emotion are constantly in flux. Like the exterior of the body moving throughout the world, the mind is also a space of constant change and adaptation. Although desperate to hold onto the memories and experiences within those spaces, Helen and Carl also desire to move past the traumatic events and formulate new conceptions of space and identity that are no longer fixed to those previous places of residence. Ultimately, Helen and Carl are capable of moving away from the prescribed notions of spatiality and gradually deconstruct and reappropriate those spaces. The characters' awareness of the instability of domestic space, and the fluidity of its meaning, is what allows them to move toward a reconceptualization of place and an embrace of an alternative kind of familiarity and intimacy. Carl's scrutiny and Helen's fetishism uncovers the superficiality associated with domestic space and the deconstruction of those spaces that occurs through such practices. Their lack propels them into questioning and embarking on the search for a new kind of space that remains unregulated.

II. HETEROTOPIC PATHS: A ROADTRIP BEYOND BOURGEOIS SPACE

"In my beginning is my end.
In succession
Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended,
Are removed, destroyed, restored, or in their place
Is an open field, or a factory, or a by-pass.
Old stone to new building, old timber to new fires,
Old fires to ashes, and ashes to the earth
Which is already flesh, fur and faeces,
Bone of man and beast, cornstalk and leaf."

-From "East Coker" by: T.S. Eliot

As demonstrated in Chapter 1, numbing overexposure to bourgeoisie space and living intermingled with the paralyzing trauma of losing loved ones pushes the characters to suffer dislocation, not only from regulated spaces of home and work, but also from their own identities. As Tuan expresses, "human beings require both space and place. Human lives are a dialectical movement between shelter and venture, attachment and freedom. In open space one can become intensely aware of place, and in the solitude of a sheltered place the vastness of space beyond acquires a haunting presence" (54). The rupture of monotonous domesticity leads Carl and Helen to rigorous anomie, resulting in a cross-country road trip that presses both of them to abandon their quotidian lifestyles both in their living and working spaces; Carl quits his job, and Helen abandons her position as real estate agent. Palahniuk extends the traditional motif of the road trip as an endeavor at renewal and self-discovery, by exemplifying the uncanny affect that lies behind such impetus. Carl and Helen's lack of an "enclosed and humanized space" or fixed place operating within the hegemonic society, has sent them on a voyage for purpose, definition, and an unrestricted development of the self. The open road provides an alternative space where all grounded notions of intimacy are done away with, and new

forms of intimacy are considered within a transitory space of "otherness". Helen's car is the machine, or as Tuan explains, the vehicle for increased freedom and travel throughout the continental United States, heightening their accessibility to space without settling in one specified location. The unexplored terrain where space opens is latent with possibilities, especially in the context of heterotopia. Thus, in one way or another, a body in transit can help to release and possibly remedy some or all of the cognitive dissonance that can arise from loss and an exposure to the uncanny. The rupture in identity that both Carl and Helen experience is capable of being repaired through spatial practice.

As lovers and parents to their deceased loved ones, Carl and Helen were intimate beings, and continue to be. New spaces and modes of intimate expression arise throughout Carl and Helen's migration away from their social centers. As Lefebvre elaborates, "Social relations, which are concrete abstractions, have no real existence save in and through space. Their underpinning is spatial" (404). In an interview with Adam Dunn, Chuck Palahniuk comments on the significance of social interchanges, and how space influences those exchanges, "It's getting people from one place to a new place, and it's not necessarily a better place, but at least they're all together...Before they were all separate, living their subsistence lives, and now at least they're... back into a *form* of community and giving them a cause that keeps them together" (4). The group's unified cause to eliminate the lullabies, and find the grimoire, the master book of spells, acts as an adhesive to the family nucleus, and the starting point in developing their relationships. The long duration of the trip increases the group's exposure to open space and, therefore, heightens sociability, transparency, and self-discovery. Because the landscape and landmarks are indistinguishable at night, "every place is the same place in the dark"

(Palahniuk 125). The sense of place loses its hold on Helen and Carl, and they are capable of transcending their attachment to domestic space. The unification of Helen, Carl, Mona and Oyster within Helen's car, after they decide to burn the copies of the lullabies, allows them to form a unique social space of acceptance and community, and further heighten their awareness of the agency they possess in managing and creating their own intimate space, where they can openly develop individually.

As a result of their interactions with Mona and Oyster in the early stages of their meeting as well as throughout the duration of the road trip, Carl and Helen begin their movement into a differential space through a new familial, social space that incorporates the two young adults. The ritual party that Mona invites Helen, Carl, and Oyster to, acts as an introduction to a future social space. While Mona's party was held in her apartment and remained in an enclosed space of domesticity, the four can engage in conversation outside of a controlled space on the road. Not only does the movement of the car show the perpetuation and direction towards a wide unset future, it opens for them the means of acquiring the grimoire which will facilitate the development of new spaces. Helen poses some of the opportunities offered by their search for the grimoire, "Maybe you can live forever... Maybe you could bring about world peace... Maybe you could clean the environment and turn the world into a paradise...Maybe limping around a noisy apartment for the rest of your life isn't enough" (Palahniuk 86). The grimoire's powers would allow for a complete reappropriation of space at all levels, including physical, social, and conceptual. The four characters possess varying perspectives of the ideal world in which to reside, and have contrasting definitions of what constitutes a space that enables their identity to flourish. The disparity in assessing, defining, and confronting

space, particularly hegemonic spaces, causes inevitable conflict. They ultimately separate into fragmented social spaces where their ideologies can be properly manifested with Mona and Oyster disconnecting from Helen and Carl. However, during the beginning and middle of the road trip, Carl and Helen are capable of constructing and maintaining an intimate space of love and acceptance alongside Mona and Oyster, that resembles the familial space they once lost, and believed was irrecoverable.

The most difficult obstacle in moving past dominating and appropriated spaces for Carl, Helen, Oyster and Mona is the task of creating a completely new space that has not yet been conceptualized and arrogated. Lefebvre acknowledges that exposure to varying social spaces, and the experiences that arise in the representation of space, allow for an individual to become "aware of the conflicts at work within it, conflicts which foster the explosion of abstract space and the production of a space that is *other*" (391). All in all, Carl and Helen's reappropriation of space is characteristic of a heterotopia of compensation that allows for the deconstruction of conventional notions of domesticity that are no longer capable of defining them, and therefore produces a new kind of space that provides them with identity. According to Foucault, "Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality" (24). The space which Carl and Helen create, and therefore occupy, while being relational to those spaces already existing, "suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect" (Foucault 24). Their heterotopia is capable of both exposing the flaws and inconsistencies of domestic and corporate space, while simultaneously opening up a new kind of space that moves away from the illusion provided by regulated spaces like places of labor, apartments, or houses. In particular,

Carl and Helen are capable of entering differential space in heterotopias that are transitory such as the festival, and Helen's car that provides them with access to open space away from the already constructed space of the city. Although the four characters do not travel on a transient ship through a vast sea, which marks "the heterotopia par excellence" for Foucault, they most certainly continue to travel on the road, pausing only to fulfill their mission of extinguishing the copies of the lullabies (27).

The emerging social space that arises from the interactions between Carl and Helen begin to take on a kind of unconventional family nucleus, which each of the characters accepts for a time, but which can also be assessed through a tongue-in-cheek derision of familial bonds. While observing the interwoven links between Helen, Oyster, and Mona, Carl perceives a representation of an alternative family with Mona and Oyster as potential children to him and Helen. First, he addresses the possibility of Mona being his daughter's age if she were still alive, "She's the age my daughter would be, if I still had a daughter" (Palahniuk 101). Later he looks at Helen as a reflection of his own wife, "Helen's the age my wife would be, if I had a wife," and lastly at Oyster, whom he sees as a figure for Helen's son, Patrick (Palahniuk 101). "This might be the life I had, if I had a life. My wife distant and drunk. My daughter exploring some crackpot cult. Embarrassed by us, her parents. Her boyfriend would be this hippie asshole, trying to pick a fight with me, her dad" (Palahniuk 102). Oyster begins to pick up on the roles that are appropriated by each character and addresses Carl as his dad and Helen as his mother, "Hey, Dad. What's the big daily newspaper in Nevada?" (Palahniuk 110). Knowing that Carl is a reporter, Oyster identifies him as a figure of authority, knowledgeable of print culture. The way Oyster addresses Carl greatly differs from his earlier confrontation

when he degrades Carl and tries to instigate his anger at Mona's ritual party by telling him he is impotent of killing someone. Oyster's tone and behavior show a definitive progression toward viewing Carl as a potential father figure. Later in that conversation, Oyster once again addresses Carl and Helen as family, "Mom, Dad? What's a really posh restaurant in Reno, Nevada?" (Palahniuk 113). Afterwards, Helen and Carl pose as husband and wife in order to get copies of the lullaby from residential homes. Through the creation of unconventional family ties, Carl is capable of getting a glimpse at what his family could have been, "Maybe this is my second chance. This is exactly the way my life might have turned out" (Palahniuk 102). However, these titles are challenged via sexual tensions that exist between Carl and Mona, as well as Oyster and Helen, showing how the nascent familial paradigm is definitely unorthodox.

On several occasions, Carl exhibits a lustful attraction to Mona, while Oyster also appears to be sexually aroused by Helen. Carl observes, "Oyster sees Helen, still watching him in the rearview mirror, and he winks at her and tweaks his nipple. For whatever reason, Oedipus Rex comes to mind. Somewhere below his belt, the pointed pink stalactite of his foreskin, pierced with its little steel ring. How could Helen want that?" (Palahniuk 113). The sexual tension makes Carl uneasy and somewhat jealous, yet he hypocritically expresses the same thoughts toward Mona. As Mona cures Carl's infested feet, Carl finds himself alone in a hotel bedroom with her and is evidently turned on by her presence, "with her kneeling, you can see the three black stars tattooed above Mona's collarbone. You can see down her blouse, past the carpet of chains and pendants, and she isn't wearing a bra, and I'm counting 1, counting 2, counting 3…" (Palahniuk 152). It seems he has to remind himself of what she could represent to him in order to

keep him from sexual thoughts towards her. Once Mona has healed his wounds, Carl reminds himself of the role him and Helen have given to her, "Mona. Mulberry. My daughter" (Palahniuk 156).

Beyond the ironic reconception and satirical tonality of familial titles and roles presented in the novel, there still exist strong affective acts among Carl, Helen, Mona, and Oyster that further the construction of a distinct social space, enabling a fresh, communal space to emerge. Even though it may not be the typical familial paradigm, there are undeniably strong affective bonds that are both selfless and sacrificial. As proposed by Tuan, for many the conceptualization of home is formed by individuals rather than fixed places. As his surrogate son, Carl begins to feel a duty to protect Oyster, despite Carl's initial frustration toward his behavior. At one point, Carl inserts the lullaby into his own mouth, chews it, and swallows it in order to keep Oyster from having the means of using it against society and protecting him from the corrosive effects of learning it. When Carl questions why Helen confided in Oyster about how she resold haunted spaces, Helen replies, "For the same reason I didn't kill him. He could be very lovable at times" (Palahniuk 197). Helen and Carl provide Oyster and Mona with the acceptance, protection, and direction associated with familial space, and the guidance they were unable to give to their own children. Helen still holds on to the rocks she received at the coven meeting held by Mona, demonstrating that regardless of all her apparent annoyance while she was there, a part of her enjoyed being in a space where she was accepted, alongside Mona, Oyster, and Carl.

One of the liberating aspects of our heroes' road trip, or any heterotopia, is that normative gender roles and stodgy sexuality can be disposed of. In addition to the sexual

tension experienced between all four characters, Carl and Helen both share power regardless of their sex, and mutually decide where to go next on the mission to find the copies of the lullabies. Carl and Helen are not like the hegemonic family whose goal in sex is to reproduce a child, reside inside the confines of a house unit, and participate in capital production and consumption. With the absence of a physical home base, Carl and Helen develop other differential spaces of intimacy, whether in motion or stationary, ranging from supernatural means such as having sex while floating in an empty estate to more probable settings like conversing at the top of a Ferris wheel. Lefebvre explains that heterotopias are distinguished in that they break with routine and social order creating difference and enabling a rift to occur in modes of thinking and ways of being. As Lefebvre states, the "genital order of the family" should be discarded when considering true space production (384). Rather than being concerned with being included within a familial paradigm, the characters recognize their exclusion from society and develop their own clique with unconventional relationships. The fact that Carl and Helen draw on existing representations of familial space, such as when they refer to Mona as their daughter and Oyster as their son, is simply a part of space production, as a demonstration of contempt toward the notion that what is familial is only defined through consanguine ties. While space production occurs by imitating objects in space that incite and perpetuate social relations, space production simultaneously exceeds conventional ideologies and representations of space. For quite sometime, the four members of the heterotopia take on roles within the family, and participate in the social space related to the familial via Helen's moving car. Even the loose family framework that Carl, Helen, Mona, and Oyster appear to have ultimately dissolves when Oyster and Mona separate

from Helen and Carl in order to embark on their own space production. Thus, the representation of home and belonging transforms once again, avoiding stagnation and predictability.

With the encouragement of Mona, Helen and Carl enter into a carnival referred to as "LaughLand, the Family Place," where Helen and Carl are capable of experiencing a positive and intimate space that transforms into a heterotopia (Palahniuk 181). Initially, both Helen and Carl feel uncomfortable in the space of the carnival because of the crowded ambiance, and the associations of the carnival to normative ideas of family and fun. Helen's first reaction at the idea is to burn a brochure advertising the place, "The photos of happy, smiling families puff into flame… Helen kicks the burning families into the gutter" (Palahniuk 184). She shares her thoughts with Carl, "I find that no matter how many people I kill, it's never enough" (Palahniuk 195). Her hate toward the idea of visiting the carnival like a family is caused by the memories those images stir, of a time where Helen was once content with her husband and son. Her respond is "I don't do fun" (Palahniuk 184). Her reluctance to partake in the carnival is a result of the cognitive dissonance she associates with conventional familial spaces. All the noise, music, and dense crowds of people are also discomforting to Carl who prefers quiet and seclusion. Helen and Carl's perception of the carnival does change as a result of their increasing attraction to one another, and they transition into reappropriating the carnival for themselves as a heterotopia. Carl and Helen are capable of allotting the space of the Ferris wheel for their own personal needs and desires, while establishing a representational space of positive affect they had not anticipated. As Lefebvre explains, "the true space of pleasure, which would be an appropriated space par excellence, does

not exist…[however], an existing space may outlive its original purpose and the raison d'etre which determines its forms, functions, and structures; it may thus in a sense become vacant, and susceptible of being diverted, reappropriated and put to a use quiet different from its initial one" (167). Helen and Carl's display of affection and verbal openness transforms the Ferris wheel into a space of remarkable intimacy.

When Carl looks up he sees the stars, and he dwells on the possibility of an alternate space far from the overbearing world, away from the pain and the entanglements with the law; there, he sees what he has been searching for, an alternative space of freedom and contentment near someone he loves, his ultimate heterotopia. As he peers upward he contemplates the space above, "Think of deep outer space, the incredible cold and quiet. The heaven where silence is reward enough" (Palahniuk 198). Earlier in the novel, Carl referred to "the deep outer space" as "the incredible cold and quiet where your wife and kid wait" (Palahniuk 21). However, when Carl finds himself atop the Ferris wheel with Helen by his side, deep outer space is transformed into a free and open space of possibility. The openness of outer space "has no trodden paths and signposts. It has no fixed pattern of established human meaning: it is like a blank sheet on which meaning may be imposed. Enclosed and humanized space is place. Compared to space, place is a calm center of established values" (Tuan 54). Carl thus moves away from defined, humanized space into the vast unexplored terrain of "deep outer space." The security of place and the vastness of space merge into one. The space above the carnival is far from the chaotic, annoying microcosm that, according to Carl, must be silenced and emptied in order for a new space to emerge. The Ferris wheel acts as a vehicle through space, beyond the pungent smells and noises of the fair below, and allows Carl to turn inward to

his own private experiences. Carl expresses his sentiments, his growing freedom, and his new view of the carnival, “this far away it all looks perfect. Perfect, safe, and happy” (Palahniuk 199). His words reflect those of his description of the model replica of his own house, the one he shared with his wife, Gina, and his daughter, Katrin, “from far away it looks perfect. Perfect and safe and happy. A neat red-brick home. The tiny windows of light shine out on the lawn and trees” (Palahniuk 21). The two spaces although physically different and possessing different associations, unite into one conception, as Carl actively redefines his previous notions of “home,” while reappropriating the carnival and imbuing it with personal representation.

The new space created by Carl and Helen is not fixed as place, and is most stark when they become socially intimate. As Tuan legitimizes, the most intimate moments include vulnerability, exposure, and physical affection, all resulting in a new kind of experience. At the height of the Ferris wheel, Helen is capable of voicing her true feelings for Carl, “I’m glad you found me out. I think I always hoped someone would...I’m glad it was you” (Palahniuk 199). The lack of restriction, the silence, and the solitude of them up on the Ferris wheel create a private social space for them to express the extent of their emotions, not limited to the domestic. Helen also drops her planner, containing the names of her clients and targets, which further liberates her from her work and the murders she has been committing. Like Carl, Helen has reached a space where she can let go of regulated spaces, and be open to a new developing social space.

Not only is the space of the carnival conceptually and emotionally liberating, it becomes physically freeing as well. Carl and Helen engage in romantic touch when Carl stretches out his hand, and she takes it. They remain with their hands held together,

despite how Helen's rings are burying into Carl's flesh. The interlocking of their hands transforms the meaning given to the carnival and the Ferris wheel, and sets the foundation for further gestures of affection. Because of the similar experiences including the dissolution of home and family as a result of the lullaby, and their struggle with using the lullaby, Carl and Helen were able to truly understand and empathize with one another on a level that no other person could, allowing for the highest levels of intimacy to surface. As Tuan explains, "There are as many intimate places as there are occasions when human beings truly connect. What are such places like? They are elusive and personal" (141). The swaying Ferris wheel supplies both Carl and Helen with the space to let go of their past and their apprehensions toward emotional and physical intimacy. Helen loses the ring she was given by John and all that remains is Carl and she. Helen must further develop the intimate space between her and Carl, and does so by confiding in how valuable she esteems Carl, "It's nice to have one person who knows all your secrets" (Palahniuk 199). At the end of it, all Helen searched for was acceptance, trust, and communication with another human being. She desired to form a bond with an individual who could truly understand her. In doing so, Helen reconstitutes her ideation of home from that of a fixed physical locality to the transient nature and company of another individual.

Her growing intimacy allows Carl to be more open to allowing affection into his life. Carl's lack of intimacy for so many years is a result of his last sexual encounter. Since he unknowingly had postmortem sex with his wife, Carl abstained from forming any new relationships or engaging in any sexual activity. When Carl asks Helen "when was the last time she rode a Ferris wheel," Helen transfers his question to the sphere of

sexual intimacy (Palahniuk 196). She questions when was Carl's last sexual experience, and Carl merely replies, "You know," since Helen is well aware of his past (Palahniuk 197). He has shared with her the most painful of memories, and because, Helen also lost her child and spouse, she too understands Carl's hesitancy to be intimate once again. The space of the Ferris wheel and its distance from the rest of the world enabled the two of them to open up their feelings to one another and allowed them to commence a committed fulfilling relationship via a heterotopia.

Lefebvre discusses how the space of leisure positively opens up a decomposition of conventional spaces and the advent of new alternative spaces, which explains how the carnival and the Ferris wheel act as spaces where a reconceptualizing of normative spatial associations occur. Lefebvre expounds upon the space of leisure:

> this space further reveals where the vulnerable areas and potential breaking-points are: everyday life, the urban sphere, the body, and the differences that emerge within the body from repetitions (from gestures, rhythms or cycles). The space of leisure bridges the gap between traditional spaces with their monumentality and their localizations based on work and its demands, and potential spaces of enjoyment and joy (384).

It is within the space of leisure, away from the burdens of work and the confines of their customary living places, that Carl and Helen are capable of creating an experimental space for themselves. Carl's solution to the tension that arises between Mona, Helen and himself, is to keep moving to new spaces, in the hopes that their novelties will somehow solidify the quasi-familial bond that has been severed, "I say, how about we just keep driving?…See more sights. Another carnival, maybe...We could

have some laughs, loosen up a little. We were a family once, we could be one again. We still love each other, hypothetically speaking. I say, how about it?" (Palahniuk 210). Since it has worked in the past, Carl believes further motion and exposure to new spaces will help in mending their relationships and possibly allow them to enter into a heterotopia. Nonetheless, his suggestion comes at a time where the social space developed between them becomes deprived from the trust and unity it once provided.

The differing perceptions of spatiality and the contrasting views on the best use of the grimoire, creates a struggle within the members of the community Carl has established, as Oyster observes, "We have the entire power structure of Western society in this one car… the 'dads' have all the power so they don't want anything to change" (Palahniuk 142). His means of reappropriating space is not in tune with Carl and Helen's views of space. Oyster sees a problem with the domination and regulation of space by the hegemonic order and confronts it even within the family nucleus created by him, Mona, Helen and Carl, "'You want to keep the world the way it is, Dad, with just you in charge.' Helen, he says, wants the same world, but with her in charge" (Palahniuk 160). Oyster does not accept a space that embodies the hierarchal family order and desires for its abolition, disregarding the affective bonds that have been made. Rather than hierarchy or any form of authoritarianism, Oyster seeks a space where power is shared and where politics are communal. The relationships explored in the novel are then unearthed as being founded on power rather than love. Carl voices his own insight, "It's not about love, it's about control" (Palahniuk 188). Both Carl and Oyster's reassessment of the familial community the four have developed, their motives, and their interrelationships cause the group's authenticity and the essence of its heterotopia to be questioned. The

struggle for some autonomy and the lack of consensus regarding the use of the grimoire leads to a rupture in their familial bonds of the group. Carl cannot even bear to listen to Oyster's views and begins to count in order to refrain from using the lullaby on him. Even Mona, who appears to be the most tolerant of Oyster's views, places a pillow over her face to shut out Oyster's words. Frustrated by the dismissal of his plans, Oyster becomes violent and attacks Helen to take possession of the grimoire, which prompts her to banish Oyster from the car.

The unconventionality of the family Carl and Helen have adopted and the tense power struggles within it make it difficult to distinguish between tough love and violence, generating an uncanny affect while confronting standard modes of affection and traditional familial order. Not only has Helen been physically hurt, but the trust she had developed for Oyster and the time they had shared suddenly transforms into a compilation of lies and malice. As Carl observes, Oyster has now taken on the figure of "the evil, resentful, violent son Helen might have, if she still had a son" (Palahniuk 185). Helen tries to transfer her anger from a desire to kill Oyster to one of displacing her anger in a less fatal manner, and therefore "slaps him hard across the face, dragging her fistful of keys through each cheek. A moment later, more blood" (Palahniuk 185). Although it may appear that her actions are brutal, she actually attempts to manage her anger and direct it elsewhere to avoid using the culling spell on Oyster. "And Helen's eyes snap up from Oyster bleeding to the starlings circling above us, and bird by bird, they drop…Their dead eyes just staring black beads" (Palahniuk 185). Although the love that Helen has for Oyster is not strong enough to prevent the lullaby from racing through her mind, she is capable of managing the force of the lullaby and transferring it to the birds.

Despite his apparent hostility toward social constructions of space, Oyster appears distraught at being evicted from the alternative space they had created within the car. Oyster longs to belong to a kind of community regardless of its order, and he has now been rejected from the social space he had become a part of. The dismissal Oyster experiences manifests into intense anger, which is exemplified by the violent acts he later carries out on Helen. Oyster makes the point to inform Helen, Carl, and Mona of the repercussions of their decision to shun him from their social circle, "'You can flush me, but I'll just keep eating shit… And I'll just keep growing" (Palahniuk 188). The banishment from their heterotopia leads Oyster on a mission to establish a new heterotopia where his otherness is acceptable, and where space is appropriated and managed by him. He also seeks to develop and become a force that destabilizes the established order and conventional definitions of spatialization. To Oyster, "every place is the same place" precisely because it has been appropriated by the dominating classes and power structures that have deprived individuals from truly forming the differential spaces which Lefebvre believes are necessary (Palahniuk 115). Oyster observes that space is being used to expand corporate franchises such as McDonalds, while oppressing societies, and perpetuating class distinctions, and points out the negative impact that their encroachment on native and natural space has on the inhabitants of the world. Oyster remarks, "We are landscaping the world one stupid mistake at a time" (Palahniuk 115). Through his censure, Oyster brings focus to our involvement in spatial practice and the production of space as a vehicle for capital, many times without the regard of non-hegemonic groups, individuals, modes of thinking, or without considering how human engagement transforms natural space into dominated, domestic spaces.

Oyster's strong opinions about the corporatization and commodification of space drive him to destabilize such conceptualizations in order to bring a new perspective to how space can be used. By suing the establishments that have polluted natural spaces with their capitalistic ventures, Oyster believes he is participating in an ongoing appropriation of space and therefore, of power. Mona explains Oyster's involvement in the reconceptualization of those spaces, "Oyster calls it antiadvertising…Sometimes businesses, the really rich ones, they pay him to cancel the ads. How much they pay, he says, reflects how true the ads probably are… Other people fill in the blanks. Oyster says he's just planting the seed of doubt in their minds" (Palahniuk 152). Oyster uses the discursive avenue of the newspaper advertisements to enter the minds of the public and to influence society's perception of the spatial identity of corporations. By drawing negative attention to specific establishments, he has society rethink how they have been conditioned to define those spaces, and leads them to question and further investigate their true nature, while threatening "the illusion of safety and comfort in people's lives" (Palahniuk 152). Oyster eliminates the aura of luxury and status that the creators of businesses have formed. He actively engages in what Lefebvre believes is necessary for the rise of differential space. Lefebvre expands further on the point, "the world of images and signs exercises a fascination, skirts, or submerges problems and diverts attention from the 'real' – i.e. from the possible. While occupying space, it also signifies space, substituting a mental and therefore abstract space for spatial practice" (389). Because the representation and meaning of images and signs associated with spaces are in flux, it enables a rethinking of certain spaces, which Oyster employs to his advantage as he taints the images of businesses via false slandering advertisements.

The illusion presented by the creators of the locales Oyster targets make sure to create a kind of façade, especially taking into account the kind of name given to their businesses. The first ad is spotted by Carl in a newspaper and addresses the "Patrons of the Treeline Dining Club" (Palahniuk 24). The chosen name for the location, that of "club," promotes a kind of exclusivity to those that attend. The ad inquires, "Have you contracted a treatment resistant form of chronic fatigue syndrome after eating in this establishment? Has this food-borne virus left you unable to work and live a normal life? If so, please call the following number to be part of a class-action lawsuit" (Palahniuk 24). However, with Oyster's advertisement asking attendees of the club about their health, he discredits the space and makes it no longer prestigious or hygienic. Oyster's ads cause consumers to doubt the image that has been constructed of those corporate spaces, thus causing attendants and readers of the advertisements to move away from being dominated by those false images and spatial abstractions. Viewing himself as the modern day Johnny Appleseed, Oyster plants his seeds by bringing the demise of the top ranking locales in various cities and running them out of business through lawsuits. Through his sabotage, he believes he is modifying space in a positive way, restoring it once again to nature or to open space, as businesses close and new lots of land open up for reappropriation.

In addition, Oyster and Mona efficiently reappropriate a series of spaces across the United States showing that it is possible to transform a defined space with a particular ideology into a completely alternative space. Approaching Stone River, Nebraska, Carl and Helen noticed that the city name on the sign has been changed to "Shivapuram," which is a close spelling of a city located in the Thanjavur district of India (Palahniuk

191). Previously a city of cattle farming and meatpacking, Carl and Helen find the cows roaming freely throughout the town from the police station to the post office. Those areas of the city typically delineated for human population and transportation have been overtaken by cows, showing an alternative use of what was once a civilized and regulated space. As a result of Mona and Oyster's involvement with the town and their use of spells, they have converted the entire town to Hinduism, simultaneously revolutionizing the lifestyle of the people that dwelled in that place. "You smell curry and patchouli. The deputy sheriff's wearing sandals. The deputy, the mailman, the waitress in the café, the bartender in the tavern, they're all wearing a black dot pasted between their eyes. A bindi" (Palahniuk 192). Mona used an occupation spell to enter the Judas Cow, or the cow that leads the other cows to the slaughter, and spoke saying, "'Reject your meat-eating ways…The path to moksha is not through the pain and suffering of other creatures'" (Palahniuk 192). Mona's influence on the inhabitants of the town led them to turn vegetarian and respect all life. The space where the cows once lived until they were slaughtered has been emptied, and it is being used to create more life. "They've planted vegetables in the feedlot" (Palahniuk 193). Her involvement with society and nature, and the change of behavior toward life allows Mona to experience the kind of paradise she sought to establish while she was still with Helen and Carl, "My hope is this trip will be, you know, like my own personal vision quest. And I'll come up with an Indian name and be…transformed" (Palahniuk 114). Mona's outlook of the trip reflects the typical portrayal of the road trip or the moving away from a locus point, in order to reach self-realization. Like Carl and Helen, Mona is also seeking some kind of self-metamorphosis to emerge from her journey away from regulated spaces. Rather than being tied to her

apartment, Mona seeks to explore other places to come to know and understand herself and the world she resides in. By using the spells, Mona is reforming spatial practices, particularly the use of slaughterhouses, and modifying the social contracts between human beings and animals. "The Judas Cow talked all afternoon. It said human beings destroyed the natural world. It said mankind must stop exterminating other species" (Palahniuk 193). Mona's reappropriation of the city renovated the spatial practice within, from a space of animal commodification to one where society lives at peace with all life.

Oyster and Mona challenge the delineation of natural and unnatural space that has been formatted and maintained by society. They seek to eliminate the hegemonic control over regulated spaces by completely redefining them, and opening them up for spatial experimentation. With the help of the grimoire and its spells, Oyster and Mona use the incantations on creatures and plants in order for nature to reappropriate regulated spaces in society. One spell in particular allows a kind of ivy to grow without ceasing. Carl explains the effects of the ivy's encroachment on the space of the city, "Some vines had rooted into the side of the brick façade and were inching up…No one noticed until the morning the residents of the Park Senior Living Center found their lobby doors sealed with ivy" (Palahniuk 166). The places prescribed for caring for the elderly, like the Park Senior Living Center, and those constructed for experiencing entertainment such as the theater, are deprived of their designated uses once the ivy takes over their physical geography. The citizens of the town must help to evacuate the elderly from the space of the building and be relocated, or they will be forever enclosed within it. The control held by the city builders, architects, and residents of the town over the vegetation and natural space of the city has now been reclaimed by nature, and the ivy appears to be holding the

remnants of the city from further collapse, “The windows are squeezed until the glass breaks. Doors won’t open because the frames are so warped” (Palahniuk 166). The ivy acts as a disruption to the normalized and designated spaces for human living and recreation causing the stratified notions of space and place to be reevaluated. Rather than society defining and regulating space, nature has retaken possession and is reclaiming places previously reserved for human use. Oyster has begun to liberate society from the prescribed and constructed notions of normalized space into new forms of reappropriating and creating new spatial opportunities. The space that has been overtaken and manipulated is now changing the environment, “the ivy roots spread. The roots collapsed tunnels. They severed underground cables and pipes” (Palahniuk 167). Even the National Guard is incapable of regulating the effects of the ivy on the space of the town, which according to the waitress at the diner, is also growing in areas of Portland and San Francisco. Palahniuk’s inclusion of such an incredible event demonstrates the delineations of natural versus unnatural space and raises questions about human concern for spatiality, especially in regards to natural space as a source for further spatial expansion, and the repercussions of claiming such a space for one’s own commodification. Regardless of the supernatural means by which physical spaces are reappropriated within the novel, Oyster’s previous advertisement scheme and the experiences of Helen and Carl at the carnival demonstrate a realistic approach to the reconceptualization of spaces, and the movement toward limiting domestic and corporatized space, and instead contemplating unconventional ways of approaching space.

Carl confronts the same reshaping of his perception and conceptualization of space as he reevaluates his apartment, with a new perspective about the nature of quietude and domestic space. Since he has been in constant motion throughout the road trip, upon returning, his apartment seems even more discomforting than before. Carl acknowledges that his attempts at constructing a specified location for home is unsuccessful, "My old way of life, everything I call home, smells of shit" (Palahniuk 211). Rather than being welcomed by the bustling sounds of his neighbors, there is only silence, which rather than stir peace, prompts him to anxiety, "Coming through the apartment walls, there's nothing. No one" (Palahniuk 214). The silence allows Carl to momentarily reflect on his own perception of space and the incredible change in his view of social space. Because of his continual movement throughout the road trip, and his exposure to a heterotopia in the company of Oyster, Mona, and Helen, Carl is no longer accustomed to enclosure or silence, so he turns on the television to cover up the quietude, and the monotone essence of domestic space. When the television is not enough, he switches on the radio as well. His views of living space and the qualities that should constitute it have changed, and domestic space is now completely unbearable.

In addition, he begins to examine his destroyed models, and Carl becomes drawn to make one more construction from the remnants. The act of putting together all the broken model pieces is symbolic of how he is carefully seeking to piece back his life and effectively construct a space of his own. He wishes to bring himself to justice, since he has used the lullaby to kill others, but he also wants to hold on to his fulfilling relationship with Helen. In addition, he desires to hopefully repair the damaged bond between him and Mona. In the process of his reconstruction of his broken models, he is

creating a completely new and conglomerated space from various structures with contrasting definitions, purposes, and ideologies, "Romanesque aqueducts run into Art Deco penthouses run into opium dens run into Wild West saloons run into roller coasters run into small-town Carnegie libraries run into tract houses run into college lecture halls" (215). The space of the home is no longer solitary, but attached to other spaces and is no longer a distinguishable, localized point or represented space. The movement and amusement of rollercoasters fuses together with the quiet and intellectual spaces of libraries. Carl has finally reached a point where space is no longer prescribed, and where he has ultimately understood his necessity to create a new kind of space, not just once, but continually. He attempts to do so artistically via a model before he does so in his life, "I glue together bay windows … and jack arches and stairways and clerestory windows and mosaic floors and steel curtain walls and half-timbered glass and Ionic pilasters…On the floor in front of me are Chinese pagodas and Mexican haciendas and Cape Cod colonial houses, all combined" (Palahniuk 216). The meaning behind Carl's actions can be examined through Lefebvre's analysis of the elements, processes, and significance of space production, "Within time, the investment of affect, of energy, of 'creativity' opposes a mere passive apprehension of signs and signifiers. Such an investment, the desire to 'do' something, and hence to 'create', can only occur in a space – and through the production of a space" (393). Carl is no longer working toward "perfection," but finally coming to terms with his own baggage and moving forward in order to designate a unique space for himself. The construction of his new and unique model allows him to reach that conclusion. "And what's glued to the floor in front of me is a bloody mess. It's nothing perfect or complete, but this is what I've made of my life. Right or wrong, it

follows no great master plan" (217). The unique process of Carl's new model leads him to understand that the space he occupies in society and his definition of home is not the normalized standardization of one, and he is completely fine with that realization. Despite his unorthodox conceptualization of space and the cognitive dissonance that arose from that destabilization, Carl has finally accepted himself via his appropriation of space, and has succeeded in establishing a transitory heterotopia with Helen.

Despite the move toward differential spaces and the acquisition of a heterotopia outside of normative spaces, Helen, Carl, Oyster, and Mona still cling to a kind of sentimental view of human relationships. The inconsistencies of their past intimate spaces and familial paradigms merely propels the characters into formulating new spaces that continue to embody sentimental elements. Regardless of their experiences within heterotopias, they continue to borrow from normativity by returning back to romantic notions of interpersonal relationships, primarily as demonstrated through Carl and Helen's continual love for one another even after she occupies Sarge's body.

III. COMPROMISING WITH CHAOS: THE IRONIC POSTMODERN SENTAMENTALIST

"…And so each venture
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate
With shabby equipment always deteriorating
In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
Undisciplined squads of emotion. And what there is to conquer
By strength and submission, has already been discovered
Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot hope
To emulate—but there is no competition—
There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
And found and lost again and again: and now under conditions
That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain nor loss.
For us, there is only the trying."

-From "East Coker" by T.S. Eliot

Regardless of the characters' desire to move away from the normative prescriptions of home, and hegemonically controlled spaces, Carl and Helen ironically demonstrate a continual return to sentimentality, particularly in regards to affection or eros and the spaces where intimacy can transpire. Carl and Helen succumb, dwell, and relish in destructive chaos (referred to by Freud as thanatos), yet emotional concerns—cathecting one to the other—necessitate a return to stability and in fact a return, albeit in transformed guise, to old affection patterns. No matter how far they have come, Carl and Helen remain characters embedded in nostalgia that lures them back to classic demonstrations of affect and a nostalgic longing for belonging.

Precisely because sentimentality relies on closure, whereas postmodern texts emphasize the presence of chaos, the continual necessity to deconstruct ideologies, and one's inability to obtain totality or secure meaning, Kimberly Chabot Davis poses the question, "how, then, can something be postmodern and sentimental simultaneously?" (2). It is no doubt possible, but how do the two compromise to the extent that they can

exist mutually? One explanation is that the chaos informs the order, and vice versa, creating a helix of necessary elements that complement each other. When the uncertain arises from deconstructing the norm, Carl and Helen draw upon familiar convention for comfort. However, as Marianne Noble explains, sentimentality can be both empowering and limiting, "Sentimentalism does not simply idealise the compassionate observation of another; it offers an intuitive and visceral understanding of the other's fear and anguish. A state of union, then, is achieved through suffering, which is the mechanism enabling one to 'enter into' another person, as it were" (65). In turn the helix of order and chaos cannot exist without the dialectic of home as a source of identity, a disruption of that idea, and a return to intimacy in more novel polymorphous forms, one being the concept of dwelling in the other. The sentimentality exhibited in *Lullaby* is done so not only through the reappropriation of home the characters achieve and their ironic remembrance and return to them, but also through polymorphous forms of intimacy, as seen in Carl and Helen's relationship, despite Helen's occupation of Sarge's body, who is actually a stocky male cop. Before the drastic turn of events that causes Helen to be removed of her body, there are several apparent signs of an indispensable nostalgia that demonstrates this ongoing dialectic, and a kind of transcendental regression that allows the characters to effectively detach themselves from normative societal and spatial praxis.

Carl's sentimentality and his inability to remove himself from convention are exemplified when he returns to his father's house with his newly formulated family. The relationships Carl develops with his surrogate children, Oyster and Mona, and his companion, Helen Hoover Boyle, echo the family and community that remained absent from his life up to that point. Regardless of his acquisition of a heterotopia, he revisits the

fixed location of his childhood home, in remembrance of the love he once experienced there. In spite of the unresolved tensions between him and his parents, Carl still holds on to a space and time where his mother and father did understand him. While present outside his parents' home, he evaluates the differentiation between what was and what currently is, as he contemplates, "This is the life I have now. For better or for worse. For richer, for poorer" ironically using conventional marriage vows to define his current unconventional bonds with Helen, Mona, and Oyster (Palahniuk 178). The moment leads him to recall a similar scene that he had with Katrin and Gina, as Carl remarks, "It's the same moment now as it was then. We're parked under a tree…It's some kind of flowering tree and all night, pink flower petals have fallen on the car, sticking to the dew" (Palahniuk 179). Carl's inner dialogue demonstrates a fusing together of his previous notions of home, with his current space of identity and acceptance alongside Oyster, Mona, and Helen. Not only does Carl draw from his past domestic life, Carl's perception of that space is also incredibly idealized as he shares, "The morning light shining in through the layer of petals is pink. Rose colored. On Helen and Mona and Oyster, asleep" (Palahniuk 179). Carl's memorialization of the moment reflects his inclination toward the nostalgic. As Stewart expounds, "nostalgia wears a distinctly utopian face, a face that turns toward a future-past, a past which has only ideological reality. [A future-past is a] point of desire which the nostalgic seeks is in fact the absence that is the very generating mechanism of desire… its lack of fixity and closure: nostalgia is the desire for desire" (23). Although in that moment Carl appears to be content, it is merely a reminder of what was absent and what remains irrecoverable. Carl's return to his parents' home exemplifies his longing to hold onto convention, and to the space and time that has been

lost, and his refusal to completely rupture those ties. His identity is intertwined with a mixture of breaking through his nostalgic tendencies, while simultaneously revisiting and basking in sentimentalism. However, through his revisiting, Carl transcends his hurtful past as he encounters new forms of being and intimacy.

One significant intimate moment arises between Helen and Carl in quite supernatural circumstances, that enables them to shatter the sexual frigidity and fear of affection caused by the uncanny affect of their grief. Although the Gartoller Estate may be perceived as a normative, domestic space, it becomes not only a space of refuge for Carl, but also a space where total intimacy can be initiated, as Carl shares, "I say, I need a place to stay. From the police. I don't know what to do next. Holding out her hand. Helen says, 'Here.' And I take it and she doesn't let go" (Palahniuk 222). The fact that Carl and Helen first met there, shared the story of the loss of their families there, and later engaged in sexual intimacy, shows a revisiting of space and the memorialization of it, typical to sentimentalism. Helen's initial "Get out" response to Carl when he first confronts her about the lullaby is contrasted by the current comfort and intimacy present within that space. Although they are within a domestic space, the spell Helen casts allows for their bodies to rise. Despite Helen and Carl's ability to defy gravity, Carl shows some initial anxiety, "This high above the floor, I panic and grab hold of a swooping glass arm" (Palahniuk 221). Carl is so accustomed to both gravity, and the emotional and psychological weight of his thoughts and actions, that he fears giving in to a burden-free state that may allow room for intimacy, and continues to hold on to what he has lost, rather than give in to the moment. Nonetheless, feeling Helen's touch, Carl is finally capable of letting go. In the space of the Gartoller Estate, Carl and Helen reserve nothing

from one another and reveal themselves completely, not only emotionally, but physically, "My swollen infected foot, Helen's crusted, scabby knees from Oyster's attack, there's no way to hide these from each other" (Palahniuk 222). In their physical vulnerability, Carl is provided with the space to demonstrate his love, and he expresses his disbelief at being able to experience such an emotion after the death of his wife and child, "It's been twenty years, but here I am, somewhere I never dreamed I'd ever be again, and I say, I'm falling in love…I'm in love with her. In love. With Helen Hoover Boyle" (Palahniuk 222). In that organic, intimate space, Carl is finally able to have sex with someone after twenty years of abstinence. The trauma of having had postmortem intercourse with his deceased wife left him unwilling to engage in any sexual activity. The Gartoller Estate becomes a space where Carl is capable of leaving behind the haunting aura of intimacy tainted by his past, and where both Helen and Carl are able to start again and replace their brokenness with trust and intimacy between each other.

In spite of Carl's displays of sentimentality, there are moments where he approaches those notions with complete cynicism and detachment showing his wavering penchant for the nostalgic. Oyster's last advertisement mocks the very nature of Carl's longing. Carl describes the photo and shares his cynical insight, "my wedding picture, me and Gina smiling twenty years ago…our public declaration of commitment and love for each other…The old power of words. Till death do us part…The man in the photo is so young and innocent. He's not me. The woman is dead. Both of these people, ghosts" (Palahniuk 213). Carl recognizes the rupture that has occurred in his psyche after his wife and child's deaths, and declares his old self dead as well.

Similarly, Helen undergoes a fragmentation of herself as a result of her loss, and finds remedy in the company of Carl, even showing regard for a future along his side. In one instance, she tries to use a spell to see her and Carl's future. She reads the spell into the mirror, "Mirror, mirror, tell us what our future will be if we love each other and use our new power" (Palahniuk 229). Carl's cynicism at the time prevents him from joining in Helen's affective sentiments. While Carl is fixed on whether Helen is controlling him or not with the use of her spells, Helen seems determined to know whether or not she will live happily ever after with Carl, as she says to the mirror, "show us our future together" (Palahniuk 229). Alas, the mirror appears to show an idealized image of the couple as Helen exclaims, "There we are. We're young again. I can do that. You look like you did in the newspaper. The wedding photo" (Palahniuk 229). The mirror takes on the role of the imaginary and the symbolic for Helen, which she hopes will become reality. Through her fragmentation, she has found some sense of completion in Carl. In contrast, Carl observes it as an imaginary projection that will not transpire because of his current fatalistic and chaotic state of mind, "everything's so unfocused. I don't know what I see…Inside the shifting mess of the future, I can't recognize anything. I can't see anything except just more of the past. More problems, more people. Less biodiversity. More suffering" (Palahniuk 230). Most importantly, despite the romanticism behind Helen's projected image of the couple, the audience is aware that Helen and Carl's future will be much more unconventional than what Helen views in the mirror, especially since Helen is forced out of her body and remains permanently stuck in the body of Sarge, the male police officer she has occupied. The scene once again highlights the characters' inability to detach themselves altogether from longing for the conventional, while still

embracing chaos. Nonetheless, all of Carl's doubts regarding the sincerity of his feelings are later replaced with a certainty for his sentiments, when the couple faces a violent disruption in their normative modes of intimacy and lifestyle.

Most importantly, Helen and Carl's emotions for one another are solidified as more than tawdry sentimentality via several violent and life changing moments, as Helen is faced with the permanent destruction of her son's body, the traumatizing experience of her body's demise, and the transfer of her being into a male body. Her immediate exposure to chaos, the defragmentation of her being, and the intense paralyzing pain are exhibited drastically when she clings to Patrick's broken body, and squeezes his melting head into her chest. Helen's pain at seeing Patrick dead in his crib is revisited when she sees his shattered body, thus forcing her to relive her trauma. Helen's hope is completely obliterated, as she faces the fact that Patrick is no longer returning to life, and through her screams, commits herself to an expression of total anguish. Most striking are Helen's final words to Carl as he holds her in his arms, "I don't want to go back to how it was before…the way my life was before I met you…Even with all the power in the world…I want to be with my family" (Palahniuk 250). Her words emanate an incredible longing for permanence, and for a nostalgic return to how things were with Carl. Carl does his best to be there for Helen in her last moments holding her in his arms, and speaking calming words. "I say, everything will be alright. I hold Helen, rocking her, telling her, rest now. Telling her, everything is going to be just fine" (Palahniuk 255). Carl finds himself in the same space of loss he did twenty years ago with his dead beloved and child. It is this scene that authenticates Carl and Helen's relationship and demonstrates how they truly dwell in the other.

However, because of the story's chronology, the audience knows that Helen is in fact alive in Sarge's body. After vacating her body, repossessing the body of the Sarge, and coming to Carl's rescue, Helen is capable of continuing her life with Carl. The only way Helen is capable of surpassing the unbearable pain of losing her child for good is through the comforting love and support of Carl. Unknowingly he pleads with Helen, who is in Sarge's body, to be deprived of his life rather than live without Helen, "Kill me so I can be with Helen again" (Palahniuk 258). His identity had found such fulfillment in Helen that he cannot bear the rupture that her death will cause on his psyche. At first, Carl is not entirely comfortable, nor in agreement with how Helen uses the occupation spell to take over another man's body, as he considers, "Helen's inside this man, the way a television plants its seed in you. The way cheatgrass takes over a landscape. The way a song stays in your head. The way ghosts haunt houses. The way a germ infects you. The way Big Brother occupies your attention" (Palahniuk 243). Even though Helen's transfer into Sarge's body is a difficult one at first, slowly the two begin to adapt to Helen's new vessel, and the process is one of love and acceptance. At this point, the novel turns full circle because Sarge is actually Helen. The fragmentation that Carl felt at the thought of Helen's death, can now be replaced by a sense of equanimity at learning that Helen is in fact alive. Once Helen, in Sarge's body, shares that there is no love spell, Carl finally comes to terms with the fact that he is "really in love with Helen. A woman in a man's body," and once again embraces sentimentality (259). Simultaneously, the transfer of Helen into a male body disrupts normative forms of intimacy for the heterosexual couple. As a result, Helen and Carl's intimacy changes, from the standard bourgeoisie male/female intimacy guided by heteronormativity to more polymorphous forms of

intimacy. Carl highlights some of the new changes, “we don’t have hot sex anymore, but as Nash would say, how is that different than most love relationships after long enough?” (Palahniuk 259). Sex is no longer a determining factor in the success of their relationship or a measurement for their love, which many times serves as an element in qualifying relationships as normative. Carl and Helen have chosen to remain a couple, because of the love they have for each other, and their alternative forms of intimacy that emphasize companionship and solidarity, transcends those conventions and standardized forms of domestic intimacy.

The transfer of intimacy from one form to the next is made possible via Carl and Helen’s developing bond. The two characters embody the loss that each of them share, and the void that either of them seek to somehow fill in. AnnKatrin Jonsson illustrates, “these relations of same and other are woven into a tapestry of sentiments and sentimentality: longing, suffering, love, bliss. The longing and suffering in question are not a result of the failure of the ego’s project so much as the failure of the intersubjective connection; a connection which, when it succeeds, is the pinnacle of love and may approach bliss” (361). The connection fostered by Carl and Helen makes way for them to branch into other forms of intimacy, and to continue onward in their search for the grimoire. Carl fully recognizes that he is not alone in his process toward rediscovering himself, as he voices, “And I’m not alone. I have Helen” (Palahniuk 134). In Helen, he has found someone to view the world the way he perceives it and share in the same construction of that space. In a world where Carl was incapable of establishing a social connection with another person, he has found Helen and he believes that they have developed a true relationship. Their experiences travelling throughout the country in

search of the lullaby and later evading the law, merely act as a means of further bonding, leading to a kind of dependence as Carl acknowledges, "I need her" (Palahniuk 225). The same need Carl demonstrates for Gina and Katrin is exemplified toward Helen, causing him to return to his previous emotional necessities, despite his move away from conventionality.

Upon escaping prison, Carl recognizes that he has begun a new kind of life that defies conventional living, spatial definitions, and unorthodox intimacy. Carl and Helen are pressured into an intermittent shifting of spatiality, a no place of sorts, as outlaws of society, causing them to further reconsider "home" and proceed in the fabrication of a space of love and acceptance the two of them can exist within. For Carl and Helen, "home" becomes an individual rather than a place. The social space Carl enters with Helen, and the similar affective states of loss, grief, and love, allow for Carl to have hope in the world. "Imperfect and messy, this is the world I live in. This far from God, these are the people I'm left with" (Palahniuk 235). Like Tuan's description of those who elope without a determined destination, Carl and Helen "are free of attachment to things and to locality…For such reasons we speak of *resting* in another's strength and *dwelling* in another's love" (87). Regardless of their freedom from spatial limitation, they appear to remain tethered to a time, and to ideas and conceptions of home that continue to haunt them despite their established heterotopia, and which appears to be an irremovable aspect of their identities.

It is apparent that sentimentality does exist in postmodern works, via new experimental spaces and forms, especially given the emphasis on identity, emotion, and relationships that *Lullaby* exemplifies. It is via spatial practice and the relationships that

arise from an alternative space of intimacy, that Palahniuk's characters not only destabilize domestic space, but simultaneously exemplify a postmodern return to sentimentality, and a newfound alternative space of expression and identity. The very sentimental domesticity that brings about the death of his family appears to be an ongoing character trait for Carl and Helen. However, that very longing and the defragmentation of identities and ideologies that resulted, enabled the two characters to assess spatial practice and its representations more critically, and challenge the conventionality of intimacy and loving relationships through polymorphous forms of intimacy. When Carl acknowledges, that "the power has shifted" because Helen and him "will be forever playing catch-up" in their quest of capturing Oyster, Mona, and the grimoire, Carl is simultaneously acknowledging how the familial order and the domestic space that is regulated through it has been shaken at its foundations (Palahniuk 260). While scholar Susan Stewart refers to a souvenir as a symbol for longing over the place of its origin, ultimately, Carl and Helen make the grimoire their new object of desire, since it opens new possibilities for their heterotopia. The grimoire supplies Carl and Helen with a number of spells that can defy not only physical laws, but in addition influence the hegemonic order, spatially, socially, and politically. Although they have found restoration in each other's company, Carl and Helen are far from crossing their arms and accepting the current state of living and being in the world, seeking to continually challenge normativity, and progressively push the boundaries of bourgeois lifestyles and ideologies.

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