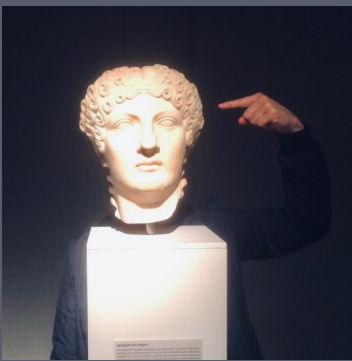


”

It is essential to pataphysics that the basis of empirical physics, the repeatable experiment which produces an outcome that may be generalized into a law or axiom, is challenged by the science of the particular. Each experimental occurrence is, in pataphysical terms, a unique event that follows its own singular laws.

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Hugill, Andrew. 2015. *Pataphysics: A useless guide*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.



Anna S. Beck

Christine Finn



I think permanence would be an appropriate word for describing my experiences with the phenomenon of home. I have lived in the same place for more than ten years now and in total I have only lived in five places in my life. This includes my childhood home—a house with a long family history. It was built by my great-great-grandfather in the 19th century and since then it has been inhabited by the family. My parents still live there but recently they have started talking about whether I or one of my siblings should take over in the future. As such, stability and endurance can be said to have permeated my experience of feeling ‘at home’ already from the beginning.

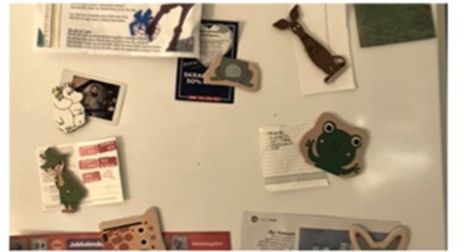
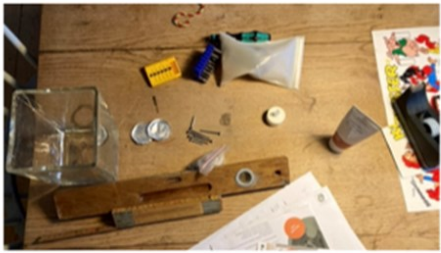
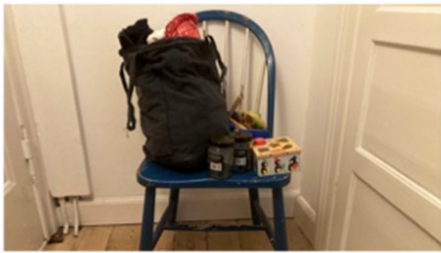
I don't have a place to call home just now. For more than five years I have explored being home-less. Not as a conceit, but a financial reality after the financial crash of 2008 and the ramifications of that. So, I dwell in various places - in hostels, art and writer residencies, friends' homes, strangers' homes; I cat-sit and house-sit and Feb 2020 I start a month-long dog-sit. After the dog-sit ends I have no idea where I go next. I am pursuing so many hopes of funding and leads to home, so I am pretty preoccupied by this. I never imagined to be home-less at 60, and it is painful... more, I think, because in the UK at least, it reduces my life to a dismal failure—property is such an obsession here. Actually, it is hard to get into a dialogue about home just now as I am very anxious about where I go to next. Keeping the Jacquetta Hawkes bio on track is a priority here, and I am working alone, and have very limited time in any settled place. Perhaps that is a sufficient response in itself?

However, my experience is also that permanence is not simply a natural consequence of staying in a place for a long time. Rather, for me, it must be created actively through the engagement with the place in ways that create a sense (or illusion if you want) of permanence and endurance independent of the actual time spent in a place. To illustrate what I mean with an extreme example: When I am staying overnight away from my normal home—e.g., at a hotel, at friends or on vacation—I have noticed that I have a habit—almost an obsession—of unpacking my bags. Even if I am just staying for a short period, it seems essential to unload, to organize things on the shelves, on the table, in the bathroom. From a logical perspective, it is an irrational act as I will soon be out of there again. Unpacking only leaves more work to do when actually leaving. However, with the things still in the bag, I would be aware that I am ‘on the road’ whereas unpacking gives me an illusion of staying for an undesignated amount of time—tricking myself to settle and ‘feel at home’.

But in terms of how I create a home every time I arrive at a new place, it revolves less around what I carry now, than what I bring... what I wear, which I then place beside me as I go to sleep. I have this ring I bought in Hawaii when over there in 2008, covering the Presidential election which Obama won. I was with his team in Hawaii watching it unfold so the ring for me signifies ‘hope’. The wooden ring with its shell spiral—typically Pacific—suddenly cracked a few weeks ago when I was

doing a recording at the BBC. I went to take it off, so I didn’t ‘knock’ during recording, and it suddenly went ‘crack’. Not broken entirely, it did that in a supermarket in Leicestershire, essential shopping during Covid 19-lockdown. As a practice... I make an array using whatever natural is to hand... flowers, shells, stones... an arrangement is satisfying and says ‘home’.

A similar, but maybe more subtle way, that for me give my home a particular sense of endurance, I find in the material traces left by the daily routines and practices—a homeless screw, some old paper notes and shopping lists, unread reading material, small stones, toys, unidentified objects, reusable stuff and utensils, souvenirs and the like that gather in unused surfaces and corners when allowed; in other words, in the ‘sediments’ of everyday life. It is the number of keys for long-forgotten doors gathered in my key box, it is the monthly magazines and newsletters that I hope to read at some point in the magazine rack at the bath room, it is the tons of saved rubber bands and other fittings in the top kitchen drawer, it is the random assemblage of things temporarily resting at the table, it is the things going to the charity shop collected around the chair by the door, it is the chaotic combination of mementos, writing utensils and important papers in the basket at my desk, it is the layers of outerwear not fit for the current season and the selection of notes, photos and recipes displayed on the fridge.

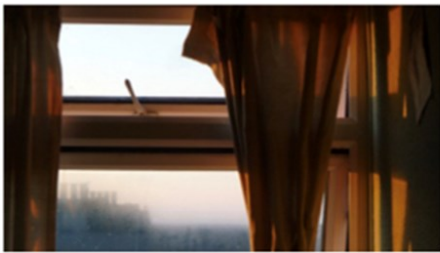
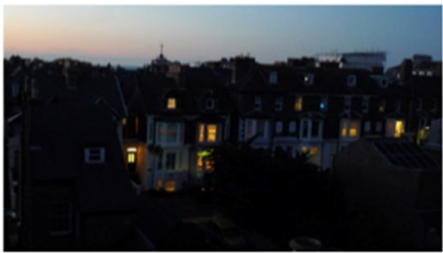


I left the UK for Paris in the summer, and am still here, in my second Paris home in less than three months. The photos give you views from my lockdown spaces. Fleckney, Leicestershire—where I was Feb-April, dog-sitting for friends on holiday when the pandemic hit the UK. I stayed on when they quarantined on return. I was also Covid fighting, which really kicked in, when I had no place to stay home in the UK. Finally, I found a house-sit in North London. Not many photos taken there, as I really lost the plot and was quite low for three months. In mid-July, I had to move on and so to the Kent coast at Deal. This time the loan of a friend's empty attic flat, five floors up overlooking Deal Castle and the Channel. It had views from the back which I had never seen, and from which I would not have identified Deal as my old hometown. I was too tired to walk beside the sea, but it was good to know it was so close.

What tie these things together is that they all represent a clear intention. It is things that has been perceived as useful, maybe not right now but in some unnamed

future, things that are found too interesting or fun to be thrown out and things that are going somewhere else and has to be dealt with later. They have been kept because there has been an intention of getting back to them at some point. They are things with a potential, with a plan, with a future—independent of whether anything will actually happen with them or not. Therefore, it would be a mistake to think of these kinds of assemblages simply as 'mess'.

And then, by luck, a place to stay in Paris. My first *chambre-de-bonne* in the 6th arrondissement, six storeys up, with the pigeons, and no elevator, so that was daily motivation. No room to swing a cat, but creative freedom, and the start of recovery. And now on the 7th floor in the 15^{eme}, another *chambre-de-bonne* with elevator part way. Here I have been experiencing strict 'confinement' since the end of October 2021. It is due to end early December. As with the first Paris lockdown, we are only allowed to go out an hour a day, within a one km limit, and with signed attestation of purpose for leaving home—an irony given my Deal project was based on deliberations around leaving home.



Instead, the assemblages should be perceived as fundamental—and maybe even unavoidable—elements of a home as they add a specific temporality to it that point both back and forth in time. Most of the objects have a history related to the lives of the inhabitants which serves to give the dwelling a feeling of continuity and duration. In the same way, the ‘everyday clutter’ could also be seen as adding a temporality that is oriented toward the future due to the accumulated potential and unreleased intentions they represent. Their presence implies that the place will endure into the future and obligates me to come back and engage with them. The indirect reminder of the past combined with the assurance of a future has a direct effect on the experience of the home. Even though, the actual assemblage will change and never stay the same for a very long time, the effect of the assemblage—or ‘sedimentation’ – is to present the dwelling as a permanent and more or less eternal place—as a home.

Up till this weekend, I had been finding confinement OK, thankful for wifi, and my first Netflix subscription, and while I'm not a great fan of video meet-ups, curious about technology to socialise. Today, I realised how much I miss conversation, and my usual explorations on buses, and getting lost on pedestrian meanderings. The limited area means I am properly exploring my quartier, but I can feel unexpected limits. Still the weather is beau-

tiful just now—so hot I can sun bake my lunch!—and today it felt miserable to have to stay indoors. My one km gets me to the Seine at least. With the piscines closed, I don't feel that healthy, so grateful to have the seven-flight stair option. I am still not over Covid, so I sleep with the window wide open.

That been said I am aware that ‘cluttering’ can grow out of hand and create the opposite feeling—a feeling of not being at home—if it is not maintained and kept under control. I am also aware that my clutter will probably only be meaningful to me, whereas it will be without meaning to any other person and vice versa. It is a very personal thing—and can in that sense easily be perceived as ‘matter-out-of-place’ if the context is not known. Maybe that is the reason why in mainstream Western culture, clutter is mostly perceived as a problem that needs to be ‘diminished’, ‘fought’ and ‘conquered’. And an endless number of courses, home pages, tv-shows, glossy magazines, home consultants—with Marie Kondo as probably the most well-known example—promote the benefits of ‘de-cluttering’ your home. But what if we are, in this very process, removing something elemental to the feeling of home?

I sleep with the window wide open, and wake to the sound of starlings; I am content.

