
A Heideggerian Reading of Jack's Homelessness in Marilynne Robinson's *Home*

Fatima Zahra Bessedik

Abstract

In Marilynne Robinson's *Home*, though Jack revisits his childhood place, he is unable to find a sense of being at home. Using Martin Heidegger's theory of 'being' and 'dwelling', this article analyses the notion of 'homelessness', as reflected in Jack. While this article projects the significance of physical dwelling through the notion of 'homecoming', it highlights the vital importance of psychological dwelling in achieving the meaning of home. The article uses Martin Heidegger's conception of homelessness as a key theory to maintain that Jack's homelessness is a result of his incoherent being with the space he came to revisit. It also uses theories of psychology and space as sub-theories to enrich the discussion.

Keywords: dwelling, Martin Heidegger, home, homelessness, Marilynne Robinson

At home. But the soul finds its own home if it has a home at all.
—Marilynne Robinson, *Home*

In Marilynne Robinson's *Home* (2008), Jack, the principal character of the story, goes back to his dwelling place after twenty years of absence. By highlighting this motif of 'homecoming', Robinson reveals the essence of 'home' in her novel. However, although Jack re-inhabits his childhood place, he is unable to achieve a sense of dwelling in the house. Although he is literally sheltered, he experiences a quest to find home. In this novel, Robinson portrays the house as a locus of confinement for Jack who endeavours to re-define himself as its insider. While the house shelters the character Jack, his memories and sentiments, it also



shelters his homelessness as represented in his increasingly eroding and estranging self.

This article ponders Robinson's epistemology of 'homelessness' in *Home*. The topic of homelessness in Robinson's narratives has received wide attention from many researchers.¹ However, few studies seriously discuss 'homelessness' in *Home*, even though it is clearly projected in the story. While illustrating the significance of family values in *Home*, Laura E. Tanner talks about Glory's inability to inhabit the house of the Boughtons.² The present article, however, explores how Robinson conceptualizes the notion of homelessness as epitomized in Jack. As shown in the epigraph above, Robinson understands 'homelessness' as a metaphysical term identified with spiritual and psychological meanings. Jack's anxiety about being homeless inside his old house, his literal assertion that he 'create[s] a kind of displacement around [him] self', invites us to delve into his private relationship with the house he revisits.³

To achieve this task, my analysis will be anchored in Martin Heidegger's conception of homelessness in his existential discourse on 'being' (or 'Dasein'). Heidegger's philosophy of existential phenomenology and his focus on the issue of 'being' provide a keen insight into the nature of homelessness in contemporary western culture. In analysing the meaning of 'being', Heidegger refers to 'space' as an essential feature that determines existence, claiming that being is 'being-in-the-world'.⁴ From this 'spatialization' of 'being', Heidegger maintains that being is dwelling, which is 'to reside alongside' or 'to be familiar with'⁵ a place. Therefore, according to Heidegger, homelessness is founded not only on the absence of physical dwelling, but also on the loss of 'being' itself. As he states, homelessness is the result of 'the oblivion of being'.⁶ Such a phenomenologist understanding of 'dwelling' provides a key principle to understand Jack's homeless spirit in *Home*. Following this Heideggerian concept of homelessness and dwelling, I show that dwelling not only requires physical living in a place, but also needs a coherent 'being' in its inside, which is a more abstract phenomenon. While I analyse the notion of 'homecoming' and its significance in achieving a meaning of home, I show that Jack's homelessness is a homelessness of his being.

Set in Gilead (Iowa) in 1956 and known to be a companion to Robinson's previous novel *Gilead* (2004), *Home* tells the story of the Boughton family household headed by the old father, Reverend Robert Boughton. After his wife dies and most of his sons and daughters

abandon the house, the father is left to be cared for by his daughter, Glory, who remains at home after leaving her unfaithful husband. The story generally revolves around Jack Boughton, who is considered by his community to be 'the black sheep' of his family for his alcoholism, thievishness and lack of spirituality. After leaving his family house and not returning for twenty years, he suddenly goes back home to ask for forgiveness. The father, who is a well-known religious man in Iowa, forgives Jack and welcomes him home. However, Jack, although confessing his faults to the church, cannot forget his wrongdoings and remains in a spiritual struggle.

The novel revolves around the idea of forgiveness. Jack's inability to forgive himself remains an obstacle in achieving the meaning of dwelling. This theme echoes the protestant idea that the relation between man and God does not need an intermedia, as epitomized in Jack's father in the novel. Unlike Robinson's first novel *Housekeeping* (1980)⁷, *Home* deals with the concept of dwelling as more closely related to theology. a feature that leads some to rightly describe the novel as a truly Christian book. The novel's religious tone is what makes the concept of home a moral phenomenon in its own right, a feature that urges the modern man to reconsider his spirituality in relation to existence.

Jack's homecoming: the significance of 'being' at home

The theme of homecoming in literature resonates when the hero embarks on a journey in order to achieve a goal and finally returns home after a succession of struggles. The long adventure of Ulysses, for instance, is motivated by a desire to find home and ends when he goes back to Ithaca, to the place where his family resides. In the case of Jack in *Home*, it is appropriate to ask whether he represents such an archetypal hero. The answer to this question opens up a space to revise the motive of Jack's exile. Since his childhood, Jack was known to his neighbours and family as the prodigal son, 'the boy thief, the boy drunkard!'.⁸ Glory's memories reveal him as a pathetic person, who yearns to feel at home in the place he inhabits. After twenty years, he reveals: 'When I was a kid I used to wish I lived here. I used to wish I could just walk in the door like the rest of you did and, you know, sit down at the table and do my homework or something'.⁹ This shows that Jack's decision to leave the house is rooted in homelessness itself. The so-called 'journey' that Jack undergoes as a result of his homelessness ends in a return to the place of his past homelessness. Following Heidegger's definition

of dwelling as 'the basic character of Being',¹⁰ it can be argued that Jack's inability to dwell in the world reflects his fundamental character of 'being' as nihilistic, as Jack confirms: 'I really am nothing ... nothing with a body'.¹¹ This 'ambiguous' quest that ends in despair reveals that Jack's way of being on earth falls into oblivion. Differently from Ulysses who experiences physical homelessness throughout his journey, Jack experiences an inner state of homelessness. He proves to be an existential character whose journey consists in questioning of the meaning of existence.

Robinson sets the motif of 'homecoming' at the forefront of Jack's story. Highlighting the idea of homecoming is sufficiently important to portray Jack's internal struggle with the question of his being. In the same way, for Heidegger, the notion of homecoming represents a fundamental insight into his understanding of 'being'. In his reading of Hölderlin's hymnal poetry, Heidegger elucidates the idea of homecoming as follows:

coming to be at home in one's own in itself entails that human beings are initially, and for a long time, and sometimes forever, not at home. And this in turn entails that human beings fail to recognize, that they deny, and perhaps even have to deny and flee what belongs to the home. Coming to be at home is thus a passage through the foreign.¹²

Reading Heidegger's idea of 'coming to be at home' gives rise to several interpretations of Jack's 'being' that require attention. Heidegger's definition of 'coming to be at home' as 'a passage through the foreign' reveals that the essence of home, before being revisited, represents a space of a previously ignored reality, including thoughts, feelings and memories, in one's consciousness. Talking about Jack, it is fitting to state that his coming home is a coming back to a space to explore his consciousness as it was experienced subjectively in the past.¹³ It is through encountering the meanings of the objects of the house that Jack tries to maintain his being-in-the-world. In her 'Landscape of Memory', Justina Strong observes that Robinson combines place with memory in order to revise the past.¹⁴ It is in this way, by connecting history with place, that Robinson dramatizes Jack's desire to revise the reality of his being. For Heidegger, it is through this process that an individual overcomes homelessness and achieves a relatively authentic 'being'.

In line with this thought, Heidegger considers 'nostalgia'¹⁵ a key element to overcome homelessness. Robinson's motif of homecoming overtly expresses this Heideggerian observation of subverting homelessness. She draws on the element of homecoming in order to

emphasize the unhealed psychic anxiety from which Jack has been suffering. She suggests that the legacy of Jack's 'being' requires a remembering of the history of his being.

Heidegger states that 'nostalgia is the aching for home, homesickness'.¹⁶ Using Nietzsche's notion of 'the will to power', Heidegger further explains the meaning of 'aching' or 'suffering' as a 'will to live'.¹⁷ This Heideggerian insight of 'aching' is openly declared in Jack. He states: 'I just wanted to come home. Even if I couldn't stay. I wanted to see the place'.¹⁸ In applying Heidegger's concept of 'homesickness' to the novel, it might be suggested that Jack's return home can be understood as an existential element, an acknowledgement of his will to live.

In this sense, Jack can be described as 'convalescent', a term that Heidegger equates with 'homecoming' (or '*nostos*'). He describes 'convalescent' as 'the man who collects himself to return home, that is to turn in, into his own destiny'.¹⁹ He continues: 'the convalescent is *on the road to himself*, so that he can say to himself who he is'.²⁰ One is tempted to state here that Jack's homecoming represents a journey to encounter his 'self'.

Inside home-space, the objects of the house help Jack to (re)member his 'being' as inscribed in the place he used to inhabit. The old books he finds still in the rooms, the garden and the old car all make him redefine himself as an entity integral to the house. Like a wanderer, Jack finds in the house uncanny images that lead him to re-member his past.

And it was interesting to watch how this man, gone so long, noticed one thing and another, as if mildly startled, even a little affronted, by all the utter sameness. She [Glory] saw him put his hand on the shoulder of their mother's chair, touch the fringe on a lampshade, as if to confirm for himself that the uncanny persistence of half-forgotten objects, in all their old places, was not some trick of the mind.²¹

The above excerpt shows that the house is not a meaningless place for Jack. Visiting the old house and its 'half-forgotten objects' can be further argued as a re-remembering of Jack's 'being'.²² This method of revisionism embodied in Jack's homecoming can be regarded as an expression of what Robinson describes as an 'old romance with the self'.²³ For her, the self 'is to be refined by exposure to things'.²⁴ In this sense, Jack's return to his old house is an articulation of his will to revise his existential situation at home, maintaining his 'being' as 'ever learning to dwell'²⁵ in the house both physically and metaphysically. Following this conclusion, it can be argued that Robinson declares the

Heideggerian understanding of 'being' as phenomenal, an embedded entity with the objects of the world.

Heidegger's existential understanding of place offers interesting explanations for Jack's being at home. For Heidegger, space and time are neither objects nor objective phenomena. He believes that they bear forms of representation with which human beings grasp them in relation to sequences of events.²⁶ For Jack, the poetic representation of the house of the Boughtons is first declared in his spatial and temporal grasping of the house as his childhood place. It is, then, precisely this relation between place and psyche that helps Jack redefine his being at home. His uncanny vision of the objects in the house shows that his subject is profoundly connected to, or even produced by, the place he used to inhabit. This shows that the house and its elements represent a reservoir of metaphors about Jack's being-in-the-world.

As shown in the quotation above, the chair, for Jack, is an element of maternal identity. This means that his return home represents a return to the 'mother'. According to Carl Jung, the archetype of the mother is associated with fertility.²⁷ This feature meets the space of the orchard, which 'was too young to produce much', as Jack says.²⁸ Such a description implies that the orchard, like the body of the mother, is a reproductive space. For the father, also, the house embodies 'an old wife ... too tall for the neighborhood, with a flat face and a flattened roof and peaked brows over the windows'.²⁹ What is important to state in relation to the body of the house as reproductive is that Jack's return home articulates a desire for rebirth; it is a will to return to 'the body of the mother', so to speak. To take this idea a step further, this gesture of going back to the mother-space indicates what Gaston Bachelard labels 'the phenomenology of roundness'.³⁰ Drawing upon the notion '*das Dasein ist rund*' or 'being is round',³¹ Bachelard maintains that images of full roundness help an individual to collect and constitute himself; it permits him to be 'intimately, inside'.³² Jack's return to his mother-place, therefore, draws the roundness of his being.

As far as the maternal element is concerned, there is still a pending issue to notice when considering the mother as a dead character in the novel. Both in *Housekeeping* and *Home*, Robinson presents the mother as bodily absent. In relation to this idea, it can be said that Robinson uses the image of the dead mother to reflect dwelling more than physically meaningful. Although Jack is motherless, Robinson still stresses the importance of homecoming for the redemption of his oppressed 'self'.

As she highlights the meaning of home, Robinson brings out the issues of spirituality that Jack needs to reconsider in relation to his 'being'. The house of the Boughtons, which is ruled by the father, a 'man of God',³³ is filled with the spirit of the church. Events like reading the Bible, saying prayers and playing religious hymns on the piano are repeated domestic rituals in the house. The language Robinson uses to describe the domestic experience of the Boughtons, such as 'heaven', 'blessedness',³⁴ 'forgiveness',³⁵ 'confession' and 'mercy',³⁶ reflects the identity of the house as religious. This suggests that Jack's homecoming also means a desire to return to God, which says that the actual homelessness of his 'being' is deeply rooted in his 'dark soul'. In this sense, Robinson seeks to interpret man's being as being 'towards God'.³⁷

The homeless Jack

So far, it has been explained that the physical presence of Jack in his old house is a return to the history of his 'being'. Jack recognizes the house and its objects as a mirror of his identity. However, the plight of Jack's homecoming lays in the question of whether he succeeds in overcoming homelessness. While the significance of physical dwelling was stressed above, it is now necessary to investigate Jack's psychic dwelling, whether he is able to reconstruct a coherent state of 'being'. Although he is inside home-space, Jack is inwardly homeless. In the novel, terms like 'loneliness',³⁸ 'hiding',³⁹ 'estrangement',⁴⁰ 'stranger',⁴¹ and 'isolation',⁴² are omnipresent in describing Jack's state of homelessness in the house. Because he is unable to forgive himself for the sins he committed, he sees the house as a place of the melancholy of his 'being'. Revisiting the room of Lucke and Teddy reminds him with of his past way of being, identified by his weak relationship with his brothers. Within the place where he perceives voices of shame and regret, Jack struggles to achieve meaningful wholeness within his being.

As we learn from Bachelard, 'the house images move in both directions: they are in us as much as we are in them'.⁴³ In this way, the interior of the house, the furniture, the curtains and the rooms are all articulated in Jack's being. Because of the stillness of the house's physical character, Jack is unable to find his psychic well-being. He faces the same objects in the positions after twenty years. Glory says that the dining room 'is oppressive in ways that could easily have been changed'.⁴⁴ The same carpet, curtains, and dishes, for Jack, still bear the spirit of his difficult childhood. The fact that the design of the

house remains the same after so many years suggests the house as conservative to the ideals of the father. The old materials of the house operate as a metaphor for the father's speech at a time when Jack was disobedient. Although the father has forgiven him, these objects are like haunting scenes reminding him of his guilt.

Jack's return to his old house can be read as an 'eternal return of the same'⁴⁵ sins. For Jack, it is in this way that the spirit of the house⁴⁶ embodies the phenomenology of his being as nihilistic. He says: 'My question is, are there people who are simply born evil, live evil lives, and then go to hell?'.⁴⁷ To put this in Freudian terms, Jack's memories, which are cast in his unconscious, are brought back into being in his consciousness to remind him of his sins as constituents of his identity. One might claim that the house creates a form of violence in Jack's state of mind, which contributes to his anxiety. Laura E. Tanner, in her 'Uncomfortable Furniture', considers the house of *Home* as cast from the phenomenological world because of its useless kept objects.⁴⁸ Building upon this claim, it can be added that Jack's being, as the house's being, is also cast from the phenomenological world. This is precisely what characterizes Jack as a homeless character in the novel. His inability to reconstruct the unity of his being with the dwelling place is what leads to the 'placelessness' of his being.

As a result of his inability to handle forgiveness, Jack chooses ways of escape from the spirit of his dwelling place. The sameness of the domestic objects, which are not forgetful of his past, is what stresses his anxious state of being.⁴⁹ His unbalanced being is shown in the intimacy which he finds outside rather than inside the house. He finds in the barn, which Glory perceives as his home, a suitable place for solitude. She says:

Dear God in heaven. And then that hiding place he [Jack] had made, comforting himself in concealment as he had always done. Or hiding his loneliness, or making his estrangement literal, visible. It was something a boy might do, that old game of hiding in the loft. He had done it as a boy and remembered, and maybe it made him feel at home.⁵⁰

Inside the house, Jack 'fears light and loves darkness'.⁵¹ His inability to unite his being with the house makes him inhabit a forgotten place, like the attic. Robinson's manipulation of the attic space seems to deviate from the terms in which Bachelard defines the attic. According to Bachelard, the attic represents the house's rationality; it is a metaphor for the clarity of its mind.⁵² Following this view, it can be said that all

the consciousness of the house seems to be in the attic, echoing the house's *raison d'être*.

However, Robinson has Jack set a tent in the attic so as to bring a protective maternal space to the house. In his moments of isolation, Jack, like a nomad, rests in a tent that he constructs in the attic out of a tarp and a clothesline.⁵³ For Jack, who struggles with the unity of his being inside home-space, a tent would create for him a shielding protective space of isolation from the consciousness of the attic. While in her novel *Housekeeping*, the term 'house' was a strong motif of dwelling for Ruth, here, for Jack, it ceases to resonate in favour of 'tent'. Settled in the darkest place of the house, the tent articulates a strong metaphor for Jack's tormented being. The tent, being temporal, cannot provide Jack with a meaning of stability. Rather, it reflects the mess of his being, his desperation: 'there was a floor of newspapers, a rumpled blanket and a pillow'.⁵⁴ He had set a 'wooden box on its side as a table and as a shelf'.⁵⁵ This place – dark, isolated and disordered – epitomizes Jack's unauthentic being, unable to be resurrected.

None of the places of the house provides Jack with a sense of home. As a result, he seeks to escape from the consciousness of the phenomenological world. He tends to find in alcohol a way of escape from his struggling being and from the place he inhabits. The image of the bottles left in his room and the strong smell of whiskey in the attic is a powerful illustration of Jack's tragic existential homelessness. His decision to drink alcohol means that he consciously wishes to negate his essence of being from the reality of the world. In psychoanalytic terms, alcohol here works to prevent the conscious from its psychic activity in favour of the unconscious. Following Heidegger's insight on being and dwelling as always involving thinking,⁵⁶ it can be deduced that Jack's unconsciousness renders him a placeless being among the house and the things of the world. Hence, like the tent in the attic, alcohol is a locale of isolation from the consciousness of the house.

Another way of escape for Jack is his preoccupation with his physical appearance. Yearning to be perceived as respectable in the eyes of his family and community, Jack always shaves and wears a suit, even at home. Tanner maintains that the characters in *Home* find themselves on a stage, 'participating in the rituals of the family life'.⁵⁷ In taking this idea, I might add that the house of the Boughtons represents a 'theatre' for Jack's mannerisms as a result of his failure to achieve unity with his being. Repeatedly polishing his shoes and ironing his shirts shows the discrepancy between his being and the place he inhabits. This care for

the body signals a feature of the contemporary man as empty-spirited and obsessed with the physical world. This suggests that Robinson, in setting Jack as such, condemns the ideals of modern society; she alludes to the idea that dwelling necessitates a harmony between the 'soul' and the 'body'. The same thought applies to the body of the house. In the novel, Jack helps Glory mop and wax the kitchen floor.⁵⁸ Here, housekeeping signifies a care for the physicality of the house, but still it is not enough to define the space of the house as homely for Jack, since he is psychologically homeless inside its space.

Jack's care for physicality means that his dwelling is superficial. Even when considering his relationship with his father, he displays an escape from the reality of his past. By addressing his father as 'sir',⁵⁹ Jack acknowledges himself a stranger in the house. For him, family relations fail to make him feel at home; instead, they make him question: 'why am I here?'.⁶⁰ This statement is not a result of his choice to go back to his old house, but a result of his inability to remain coherent with it. Because he cannot forgive himself, the totality of the dwelling place becomes, for him, a space of anxiety.

What Marilynne Robinson underlines, in relation to the dissolution of Jack's soul, is that his essence of being needs to fix itself in 'God', which is an intrinsic feature the modern man ignores. In the house, while most of Glory's free time is spent in reading the Bible, Jack is found reading newspapers or political books.⁶¹ Jung's reply to Mr William G. Wilson's letter in 1961 presents a good explanation for Jack's alcoholism in the novel. Jung equates alcoholism with spiritual thirst, with the inability to unite with God.⁶² What is stressed is that Jack needs a space for God in his being in order to regain his self-evidence. Being uncomfortable with the religious spirit of the house is specifically what creates in him a sense of homelessness. By making Jack a character in which both features of 'spiritual hunger'⁶³ and homelessness meet, Robinson overtly declares the necessity of religious devotion in accomplishing dwelling. For this reason, before leaving home-space and after returning, Jack remains the same – dislocated, because of his poorly fed soul with the meaning of God. In the novel, the phenomenological concept of dwelling cannot be fulfilled for Jack since the Divine is not yet called to be sheltered in his soul.

In the context of Robinson's essay 'The Death of Adam', it can be said that Jack epitomizes the state of the contemporary society which has lost its spirit of humanity. Jack's loss of the essence of integration inside his dwelling place leads him to deny the nucleus of his being in

the world. He says: 'I really am nothing ... Nothing, with a body. I create a kind of displacement around myself as I pass through the world, which can fairly be called trouble'.⁶⁴ Instead of conceiving the character of the world as a meaningful totality with himself, he conceives it as an object of homelessness.

Conclusion

On the whole, Robinson transcends Jack's feeling of homelessness in his house. Mentally tormented, Jack reflects what Robert Langbaum calls in his *The Mysteries of Identity*, 'loneliness in the prisonhouse of self'.⁶⁵ As he fails to relate himself to his dwelling place, I argue, Jack's exile from his home-space twenty years before is not purposeless. By leaving the place in which he feels alienated, 'exile' does not mean abandonment, but rather, a quest for the sense of home. In this respect, Jack's struggle with his being mirrors an ideal of the contemporary hero whose main feat is to reconstruct and understand his life. Similar to many postmodern homeless heroes like Philip Roth's Nathan Zuckerman in *The Human Stain*,⁶⁶ Jack tries to escape the shell of his identity to create a new one freed from the past. It is in this sense that Jack can be said to have left the house to reunite with his divided 'self'. Since Jack is unable to accomplish his task, he is well aware of the loss of his being in the world, although we also need to think of his homelessness as a form of existential despair.

It has been shown that Jack's dwelling at home means more than having a place in which to reside. Jack's coming home reflects only the idea of physical dwelling, which Robinson sees as important, but inadequate for anyone far from home. What has enacted homelessness in the novel is Jack's inability to define a coherent relationship between space and being. The house of the Boughtons fails to designate the meaning of home because it is a symbol of past life. This has illustrated that Robinson understands dwelling as anchored in conservative ideals of family and spirituality. Finally, it has been demonstrated that Jack's lack of psychological dwelling leads to the breaking down of the totality of his dwelling in the house.

Fatima Zahra Bessedik is a lecturer of English Literature and Criticism in the Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Oran 2 (Algeria). She is interested in investigating and instructing the literature that reflects a

variety of contemporary topics, from mundane everyday topics, such as family relations, marriage, homelessness, death and so on, to 'serious' topics in literature that deal with the ideological world projecting large political and cultural phenomena, such as war, terrorism, religious pluralism, media violence and postmodern technology. In doing so, she deals with critical theory, with principles and philosophical concepts that give significant insight to understanding literary texts.

Notes

1. For more references to *Home* and its implications in Robinson's fictions, see Christine Renee Wilson, "'Ever Learning to Dwell": Habitability in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century American Literature' (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 2008), 79–90; Jacqui Smyth, 'Sheltered Vagrancy in Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*', *Critique* 40 (1999), 281–291; Paula E. Geyh, 'Transience in Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*', *Contemporary Literature* 41 (2000), 117–137; and also Joan Kirkby, 'Is There a Life after Art? The Metaphysics of Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 5 (1986), 91–109.
2. Tanner, Laura E. 'Uncomfortable Furniture: Inhabiting Domestic and Narrative Space in Marilynne Robinson's *Home*', *Contemporary Women Writing* 7, no. 1 (March, 2006), pp. 35–53.
3. Marilynne Robinson, *Home* (London: Virago Press, 2008), 301.
4. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1962), 80.
5. *Ibid.*, 80.
6. Martin Heidegger, *Letter to Humanism*, trans. David Farrell Knehl (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 218.
7. Marilynne Robinson, *Housekeeping* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1980).
8. Robinson, *Home*, 12.
9. *Ibid.*, 287.
10. Martin Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 362.
11. Robinson, *Home*, 301.
12. Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 49. Emphasis in original.
13. Many writers idealize homeless heroes in view of postmodern conditions. American writers like Cormac McCarthy, Don DeLillo, Philip Roth and Toni Morrison dramatize characters who constantly transgress the boundaries of traditional domestic ethics. However, what singularizes Robinson is that she revisits tradition and idealizes the essence of home. Differently from other writers who find in homelessness a way of optimism, Robinson sees optimism in home.
14. Justina Strong, 'Landscape of Memory: The Cartography of Longing' (PhD diss., Alabama University, 2009), ii.
15. Martin Heidegger, 'Who Is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?', *Review of Metaphysics* 20 (1967), 412.
16. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 228.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Robinson, *Home*, 219–220.
19. Heidegger, 'Who Is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?', 414.

20. Ibid., 412. Emphasis added.
21. Robinson, *Home*, 54.
22. Ibid.
23. Marilynne Robinson, 'The Death of Adam', in *Essays on Modern Thought* (New York: Mariner, 1998), 8.
24. Ibid.
25. Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', 363.
26. Ibid., 46.
27. Carl Jung, *Four Archetypes* (London: Ark Paperbacks, 1969), 16.
28. Robinson, *Home*, 182.
29. Ibid., 3.
30. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1994), 6.
31. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 232.
32. Ibid., 234.
33. Robinson, *Home*, 139.
34. Ibid., 3.
35. Ibid., 53.
36. Ibid., 109.
37. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 30.
38. Robinson, *Home*, 258.
39. Ibid., 305.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., 313.
42. Ibid., 151.
43. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xxxvii.
44. Robinson, *Home*, 41.
45. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), x.
46. The expression 'spirit of place' is widely elaborated by Christian Norberg-Schulz, a Norwegian philosopher of space, to describe the identity or 'the character' of place in relation to the individual dweller. See Norberg-Schulz, *GeniusLoci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980). For more discussion on the theory of the spirit of place and its application to Robinson's novel *Housekeeping*, see Fatima Zahra Bessedik, 'Home-Space in Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*', *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies* 4.17 (2015), pp. 557–574.
47. Robinson, *Home*, 235.
48. Laura E. Tanner, 'Uncomfortable Furniture: Inhabiting Domestic and Narrative Space in Marilynne Robinson's *Home*', *Contemporary Women's Writing* 7 (2006), 38.
49. Robinson, *Home*, 189.
50. Ibid., 313.
51. Ibid., 303.
52. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 18.
53. Robinson, *Home*, 297.
54. Ibid., 297.
55. Ibid.
56. Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', 362.
57. Tanner, 'Uncomfortable Furniture', 42.
58. Robinson, *Home*, 184.
59. Ibid., 305.
60. Robinson, *Home*, 219.
61. Ibid., 107.

62. Carl Jung, 'Letter to Karl Oftinger' [1957], in *Selected Letters of C.G. Jung, 1909–1961*, ed. Gerhard Adler (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 164.
63. Robinson, *Home*, 109.
64. *Ibid.*, 301.
65. Robert Langbaum, *The Mysteries of Identity: A Theme in Modern Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982), 6.
66. Philip Roth, *The Human Stain* (London: Vintage, 2000).