

A SYNTHESIS BETWEEN PHENOMENOLOGICAL AND NATURALISTIC APPROACH IN INTERPRETING HOME: A HOME BUBBLE THEORY

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Abstrak

Penafsiran rumah secara fenomenologis yang cenderung berkonotasi romantik, membuat rumah menjadi sumber keamanan, kenyamanan, dan keselamatan. Kesimpulan mengenai rumah ini bermasalah, mengingat apabila ketiga aspek tersebut sudah tidak ada di tempat yang kita nobatkan sebagai sumber privasi maksimal. Maka, rumah akan menghilang. Penelitian yang dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode interpretasi peleburan cakrawala ini melihat bagaimana rumah dapat dicermati melalui pemahaman fenomenologis dan naturalisme, sebuah pendekatan baru yang mempertimbangkan hukum alam dalam penghayatan manusia terhadap ruangwaktu tertentu. Melalui pendekatan ini, rumah terbentuk melalui hubungan positif antara seorang subjek dengan sebuah tempat di ruangwaktu tertentu. Memori dan pengalaman subjek terhadap tempat memperbolehkan gelembung rumah yang selalu dibawa oleh manusia melebur dengan gelembung yang ada di lingkungan. Semakin banyaknya peleburan gelembung yang terjadi, subjek akan memiliki akses ke waktu yang lebih variatif. Dengan itu, melalui perspektif fenomeno-naturalis ini, rumah dilihat sebagai sebuah gelembung yang bersifat dinamis, transformatif, serta memiliki kemampuan untuk merumahkan keberadaan fisik maupun metafisik.

Kata kunci: Gelembung rumah, fenomeno-naturalis, hubungan, ruangwaktu, tempat.

Abstract

A phenomenological interpretation of home is usually done romantically, in which the home is thought to be a source of safety, comfort, and security. This conclusion about home is problematic, considering that if all of these components do not exist in a certain place, the home will dissipate. This research, which was conducted by using the synthesis of horizon method, aims to see if the concept of home can be understood through a new approach that weighs in natural law in human perception towards a certain spacetime. Through this method, home is formed along with the positive connection between a subject with a certain place in a certain spacetime. The memories and experiences of a subject towards a place allow their home bubble that is always carried by them to merge with the bubbles in the environment. The more frequently this merger happens, the subject will have access to more varieties of time. Hence, through this phenomeno-naturalistic perspective, home is defined as a bubble that is dynamic, transformative, and has the ability to be physical and metaphysical entities.

Keywords: *Home bubble, phenomeno-naturalistic, connection, spacetime, place.*

INTRODUCTION

The thesis of this research is to maintain the notion that home can be understood from a synthesis between phenomenological and naturalistic perspectives. Home from this combined method is seen as a bubble that is always carried by a subject. This bubble is thought of as existing in both the physical and metaphysical realms in which it is a part of either the subject or its environment. The bubble itself encapsulated the totality of its being.

Home has been generally accepted as a place of comfort, security, and privacy (Tuedio, 2009; Després, 1991). This romantic, phenomenological interpretation of home is problematic, considering that what is deemed as a home (*e.g.* house or nation) does not always provide us with those criteria. Tuedio (2009) mentioned that this common tendency of resorting to these ideal concepts of home can be potentially dangerous. If a place can not

provide comfort, security, or privacy, the concept of home will crumble. These ideals also assume a permanent space constitutes a home. This conception is denied by Marshal (2013) who argues that a house is not necessarily a home. Traditional nomads and modern American truck drivers are always on the move. Does it mean that they do not have a home? The problem with only using a phenomenological perspective in interpreting home is that it relies heavily on just human perception, especially the type of perception that is romanticized in modern culture. Instead, what we are proposing is a post-phenomenological understanding of home, where we apply the rules of nature to help us understand this concept of home. Hence, this research focuses on exploring the ontological existence of the home with the help of phenomenology and naturalism. This paper is structured as follows.

We will first introduce the common concepts concerning home to give a brief understanding of the current standpoint regarding the general knowledge surrounding the concept of a home. This section is just a summary of what is known of home presented through a multidisciplinary lens. The bulk of the paper will mainly discuss four main points. *First*, we will highlight how naturalistic concepts can help us define home in a newer fashion. *Second*, entailing from the last point, we then discuss how a phenomeno-naturalistic interpretation of home is possible. This part will cover topics such as the phenomenology of spacetime, time perception, and space demarcations. *Third*, this passage will be devoted to explaining the home bubble theory, our biggest contribution to the discourse regarding home. *Fourth*, we conclude this research with some considerations about the concept of non-home to give you.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE DISCOURSE OF HOME

A common meditation for us humans is to find meaning in life. Our love for discovering what it means to be alive, to have something to protect, and to fight for some values, pushes us to answer big questions. Home is one of those questions. What does one mean when he or she says home? Why is it always synonymous

with coming back, and not going forward? Why do we jump to a sense of security and safety when we speak of home? So where do we start?

The common pathway to ask through a philosophical lens is to simply ask its underlying arguments from the perspective of ontology, epistemology, and axiology—the three pillars of philosophy. However, that would take too long to unravel. Instead, we chose a different approach. Firstly, we have to understand the “metaconcept” of concepts themselves. According to Penrose (1989), there is a shred of luck that anything comes into existence. If we support the idea that anything starts from the big bang, then we would argue that it is a sequence of things being in the right time and place that life can come into existence. Thus, the notion of *a concept* can be born. The string of events needs to be present in order for a concept to come to materialize. This applies to home as well. Thus, this paper works under the assumption that there is a presuppositional criterion in which the concept of a home can possibly exist. Hence, home itself can become the core value of humans.

Després (1991) has compiled a literature review of the meaning of home based on various multidiscipline interpretations. One phenomenological interpretation that was filed explains home is a process that can only be experienced as time progresses. These experiences do not exist in a vacuum, where the state of home is developed through routine and becomes dialectic in nature (Després, 1991: 102). The process of home-making thus consisted of continuous work and investment in a certain place, enabling humans to take things for granted without actually thinking about their actions. This also assumes that home is then metaphysically constructed through our memories and experience. Then, does this also entail the notion that home is socially constructed?

Somerville (1997) claimed that home is socially constructed, with emphasis on the dialectical discourse between realist phenomenology and culturalist sociology. It is a thought that home is just a product of sociocultural need, where society produces the

concept of home to complement their needs for safety and comfort. This is probably due to the fact that humans need protection from the natural environment (e.g. from storms, plague, wild animals, etc.). This led Peterson (2018) to criticize our obsession with romanticizing the environment, as it provides humans with both security and destruction, in the sense that the notion that humans need to live in the natural environment is not as sustainable as one might think. Our inability to inhabit nature as freely as possible leads to the need for building (literally and figuratively), which in Heideggerian terms is the same as living per se (Heidegger, 1993: 350). Building buildings that can sustain life is one of the main reasons for their existence. This leads us to the building of homes and other structures to live in.

We decided to use Heideggerian phenomenology as the phenomenological basis of this theory due to the phenomenology of time that Heidegger elaborated on in his book *Being and Time* (1962). In this book, the concept of temporality is introduced as a way of explaining a *being* way of seeing and experiencing time. Temporality temporalises itself, allowing a *being* to have either an authentic or inauthentic life (Heidegger, 1962: 377). This non-entity, as Heidegger put it, allows humans to experience the past, present, and future at the same certain point in time. Heidegger also explained that interpreting *being* as *being-at-home* equates with living in everydayness and familiarity. Thus, it logically entails that a *being-not-at-home* is the same as not being familiar with what is happening around him or her, and living every day in a cloud of mystery where anxiety peaks.

HOW NATURALISM CAN HELP US INTERPRET HOME

It has been established that the current discourse surrounding a home, especially in the philosophical sphere, predominantly revolves around phenomenological conversation on how a home is conceptualised. It is when we dwell in the world of science that we find the ontological translation of home. Després (1991) highlights this in her compilation as well, where the meaning of home can be

understood from a territorial perspective. This entails the notion that a home is physical by nature. But, this is not our current position regarding naturalism. To start this part, we will explain what it means when we say that naturalism can help us in understanding home.

Naturalism is not as straightforward as it may seem. We need to distinguish between a cosmological position and an ontological position in terms of naturalism. Naturalism is not always synonymous with materialism, where naturalism usually is regarded as a cosmological position as opposed to an ontological one (Sellars, 1927: 217). Naturalism in the cosmological context sees supernaturalism as its opposition, while materialism has idealism as its counterpart.

When we speak of naturalism in this research, we mostly subscribe to the ontological position, though we do not necessarily agree with materialism (physical realism) or idealism (metaphysical realism) dichotomies. Instead, we propose a hybrid between materialism and idealism, where existence is made up of both physical and metaphysical properties. This concept is inspired by Newton's universal gravity theory which states that gravity depended on the mass of the object. This also entails that every mass has its gravitational force. Gomez (2013) asks whether this gravitational force is physical or metaphysical in nature. He proposed the idea that the notion of gravity is either physical or metaphysical and it relates highly to the underlying scientific consensus on the concept of spacetime. If we accept the substantivalism position, then spacetime is reduced to the assumption that it is purely a materialistic phenomenon, making every physical existence a mere change in the fabric of spacetime. Meanwhile, relationalism assumes that everything is nothing. Regardless, it can be somewhat accepted that reality consists of both physical and metaphysical components, but what is usually set aside is the idea that both exist at the same time, making both materialism and idealism part of having one another.

Following from the point of spacetime, we took a look at Einstein's general relativity (GR). Considered to be an addition to Newtonian physics, Einstein pondered on the idea that gravity itself is the curvature of spacetime, a four-dimensional plane (Norton, 2020). Under the influence of gravity, an object will experience slower time due to the curving of the four dimensions, making time and space itself relative. A real-life example is that our body, due to this gravitational difference on different earth's levels (*i.e.* measured from a reference point to the centre of the earth), makes our legs age faster than our head because it experiences more gravity than our heads (Chou *et al.*, 2010), assuming that the human is standing up most of the time. This difference in aging is passable if observed by the naked eye, but their findings prove Einstein's theory to be correct. In summary of this section, we concluded that we can apply a modified ontological-naturalism position which is inspired by both Newtonian physics and Einstein's general relativity.

A Phenomeno-naturalistic Approach in Interpreting Home

Entailing from Einstein's GR, one of the key concepts that needed to be addressed is our understanding of spacetime *per se*. We previously thought that space and time are two different sets of dimensions, where space and time are independent of one another. Whilst, Einstein proved was that space and time can not be separated. Thus, we have to start familiarising the term spacetime as an indicator of spatial and time information. Now, what we need to dive into more is the difference between spacetime and place. The more common question regarding home is the difference between a house and a home, but we proposed the idea that a more fundamental question should revolve around the discourse of spacetime and place.

It is acceptable to say that a person's connection to a memory is built through various layers of information, one of which is of course the spacetime in which a memory is created. A memory, therefore, is always present in the past. When we want to relive that past, somehow the memory has the power to make us feel fulfilled

when we want to remember them (Tuan, 1977: 141). With regards to the memories of home, this correlates with what Tuedio (2009) claimed that the entity of home has this power that compels humans to protect and go back to it. The act of preserving a home becomes a naturalistic mechanism to protect one's identity (Després, 1991: 101 - 102), both the metaphysical one (Tuan, 1977: 163) and physical one (Tuedeio, 2009: 9 - 10; Jung, 1983: 271). Thereupon, what does this have to do with spacetime and place?

We proposed the idea that a positive connection between a subject and a specific spacetime will constitute a phenomenology of place, which will result in the formation of a home. Spacetime becomes the crucial aspect in this system due to the fact that place is formed through constant relation between a subject and a certain spacetime (Tuan, 1977: 179), making each experience of that place an authentic one (Heidegger, 1962: 377).

INTRODUCTION TO THE HOME BUBBLE THEORY

So far, we have discussed how phenomenology and naturalism can go hand-in-hand in helping us interpret home. From this point on, we will elaborate more on our contribution to the discourse of home, as we intend to introduce an alternative approach to understanding home per se. Firstly, why a bubble? There is one particular reason why we chose bubbles as a clear representation of our theory. This is due to one of a bubble's physical properties is that it tries to retain its existence by minimising its surface area to the bare minimum where the surface tension is still acceptable. We can see this when a bubble is freely flowing in the air. It remains spherical because that is the lowest surface area it could maintain (*i.e.* the area of the air inside of the bubble). With this characteristic in mind, the idea is then developed to the notion that the physical existence of something is the same materialistic size as it is perceived by humans, but it also has a metaphysical extension that occupies a certain spacetime. In a sense, existence is composed of both physical and metaphysical components, which can also be

understood by using the mass-gravity-time explanation discussed earlier where a mass will indefinitely have gravity surrounding it.

1. The Nature of The Home Bubble

This part and the next part will focus on the discussion of the home bubble itself and how it affects the subject. We will explore the nature of the home bubble in this part as well as elaborate on how to visualise a home bubble. For this reason, we need to assume that there are three types of metaphysical layers; the inner layer (L_0), the middle (or inner) layer (L_n), and the outer layer (L_{n+1}). These types of layers are not real in the sense that it is just mathematical notation that can help us in explaining the nature of the home bubble because we need to think about these metaphysical layers in categorical terms.

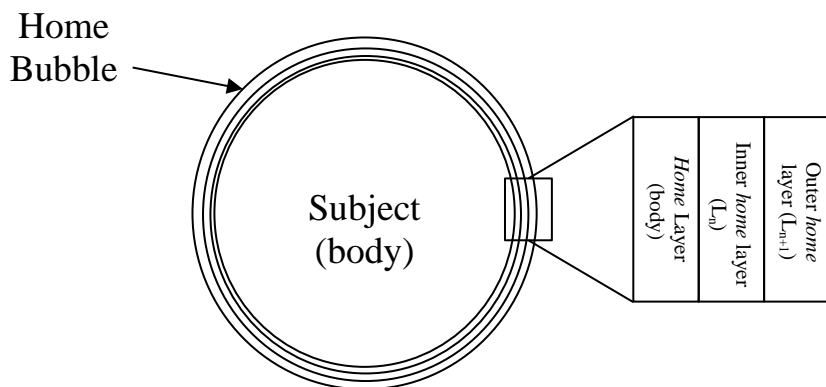


Fig. 1. The Metaphysical Layes of Home Structure

The inner layer is categorised as the Home (with the capital H) bubble. This is due to the fact that it encompasses just the body part of human existence. The concept of body-as-home is proposed by Meeks (2012) as a place of dwelling for the mind, body, and soul. The body houses microorganisms, our identities, and the totality of our being. It can be accepted that the body is the ultimate last line of physical defence in maintaining our existence. This Home bubble will always be carried by the subject, regardless of their position in spacetime. This characteristic makes the Home bubble exclusive as compared to the outer layers, as it follows the subject location.

The middle layer and outer layer do not differ that much. They are a representation of the multiple layers that a home bubble has. It does show, however, how the home bubble interacts with the bubble of the environment. As stated earlier, the formation of the home can only be done through a positive relationship between a subject and a place. We divide two different aspects of this relationship, namely the frequency and intimacy of those relationships. Both aspects are inseparable, in a sense, the formation of the home bubble is influenced by both aspects, where both modes of relationship are interplayed by nature.

The level of sense of place a subject has is what determines the intimacy of a subject's relationship with space-time. A princess born into a castle might not consider their palace as home. Meanwhile, a kid living with only his family under a bridge might. This is the case of not having a sense of place where the connection between the subject and spacetime is non-existent. The sense of home is constituted through a sense of place (Tuan, 1977: 137), which when complemented with a sense of time, constitutes a sense of belonging to that place (Jackson, 1995: 26). Marshal (2013) demonstrated this perfectly when she showed that even a tiny space of her new truck can be transformed into a home to have an intimate relationship with spacetime. By subjecting a place, one asserts ownership and full authority over it to both themselves and the external world (Waldron, 1991: 29).

The aforementioned can not stand alone. Though intimacy is key, frequency is also a necessity. However, we realised that frequency is different for every subject. Some subjects do not need the same amount of experience as another subject, but we concluded that frequency plays a part in forming the home bubble. We start from the assumption that in order for a subject and a place to have a connection, they will need to be in that spacetime at least once. Thus, it is plausible to claim that a person without a connection to a certain place will be able to form a proper home bubble. As a subject interacts more and more with a place, their bubble with the bubbles of the environment will be able to merge. This is shown in the way

Indonesian do a yearly ritual of *pulang kampung* during the Eid al-Fitr (Soebyakto, 2011: 61) and how international migrants still travel back to their country of origin or keep traveling, to sustain the notion of home in a certain place in spacetime (Olwig, 2002; Hertzman, 2017). The transformation process needs to be sustained frequently and constant re-experience in order for the home bubble to easily merge with the bubbles of the environment.

In contrast to a successful merger, a home bubble might shrink as well. This is due to the hostile environment the subject is in, indicating that the subject has a negative relation with the place. When this happens, the home bubble would occupy the most minimal amount of spacetime, and only L_0 will be present.

2. Subject Connection with the Home Bubble

We have established the nature of the home bubble in the previous section as an imitation of a mass with gravitational force, referring mostly to Newtonian physics. What happens, then, to the subject while they are covered in these bubbles of home? In this part, we start to consider more of Einstein's GR, specifically time dilation. Different from SR, Einstein postulated the idea that time dilates when an object moves at the speed of light, and GR emphasises more on the gravitational impact in relation to time (Unnikrishnan, 2020). As stated earlier, an object (mass), that is under the influence of heavy gravitational pull, experiences a slower time. Taking inspiration from this fact, we then translate it to how a subject (or mass) will be affected under the influence of the home bubble. From the previous section, we have also established that the home bubble has metaphysical layers that can be divided into three main parts. This demarcation is not real, but it serves the purpose of explaining the relationship between the home bubble and how it affects the subject. We will use the mathematical notation from the previous section to explore the effects of the home bubble for a subject.

Let us again start at the three metaphysical layers of the home bubble. During a period where only L_0 is present, the accessible time available for the subject is the only time that moves slower than the

objective time. This correlates with the GR theory which states that the closer an object is to gravity, the slower the time moves. This happens not without a reason. As we subscribe to Darwinian natural selection and Nashian game theory, we concluded that an act of preserving one's existence is a basic and naturalistic value that is present in almost all living sentient (Hamilton, 2019), supporting the idea that naturalism is crucial in interpreting home. Coming back to the perceptive time, the preservation mechanism explains why a subject can only have access to time moving slower than objective time. When someone is in a dire situation, we need time to "move" slower so that we can assess the situation better, preparing us for any outcomes and turning on our fight-or-flight mode (Dawson & Sleek, 2018).

When indeed a subject has multiple layers of home surrounding them (*i.e.* L_n and L_{n+1}), only then they will have access to multiple modes of time (*i.e.* the time that moves slower, in sync, and faster than objective time). This is also the result of GR theory, where someone is further away from a source of gravity, time would move faster, relatively speaking of course. This accessibility of different modes of time is then translated into comfort and security, as we often claim that time moves faster when we are having fun. This is due to the fact that we have access to more places at a certain point of spacetime when our home bubble successfully merges with the bubbles of the environment.

3. A Non-home: Journey to the Unknown

The entirety of this paper has focused on explaining what a home is. This final part is left out to give a stepping stone for future research, both in the realm of science and philosophy: the non-home. Why is this concept put so far behind? Simply because we find it incredibly hard to conceptualise it. From the previous explanations, it has been maintained that humans are never truly not-at-home, as the home bubble is always carried by the subject. If we use a purely phenomenological approach, a non-home could mean being out of our routine, being mindful of what we are doing,

or being in distress and a state of anxiety (Heidegger, 1962: 233), but that claim is shallow. We can be in those states and be at home on earth, as the theory has explained. If we use a negative definition of the romantic phenomenological approach, we might be able to accept notions such as a place unsafe, lack of privacy, and uncomfoting, but again, this definition does not fully suffice, as we have elaborated that even those criteria could still constitute a home. We do not have a definitive explanation that we can offer to the readers, but we have two hypotheses as to what a non-home might be. The first estimation is an extraterrestrial one. We consider black holes and the edge of the known universe to be a non-home. Meanwhile, the second estimation revolves around the subject, where we consider the medical anomalies of the subject. We will start with the second estimation.

Humans are not created equal. For the majority of us, we can live a relatively normal life, but some of our friends might not have the same condition as most of us, medically speaking [World Health Organization (WHO), 2022]. We as mammals are slow learners and need time to develop our sense of space and time (Tuan, 1997: 19 - 21). People with dyschronometria or autism can not perceive time or space the same way as people with normal medical conditions. Dyschronometria is defined as a brain complication caused by heavy trauma, genetic, or external reasoning, which causes patients unable to perceive time (Brown, 2016: 13). Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability caused by differences in the brain [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2022], which can hinders individuals development regarding spatial awareness (Seladi-Schulman, 2020). This raises some key points.

The home bubble theory entails that the phenomenological experience of a subject towards the place in a specific spacetime is crucial in the home-making process. With the negation of the phenomenological aspect, it is logical to say that a subject will not be able to form their home bubble. Hence, home in itself becomes a mysterious concept for these subjects. This is unclear, of course, due to our lack of understanding of other people's minds and this have

to be proven scientifically, supporting that this explanation is merely our hypothesis of what a non-home might constitute. This example is also partly the inspiration for the second hypothesis.

With mystery being the central part of these estimations, from a naturalistic point of view, the frontier in science is the understanding of what is on the other side of a black hole as well as the edge of the universe. We will not separate black holes and the edge of the universe as separate entities in this case, as both serve a common characteristic as to why both can be considered to be non-home. Blackholes are defined as a byproduct of a dying star that results in a stronger gravitational pull than say a normal sun (Stierwalt, 2015). Contrary to popular belief, a blackhole does not suck objects like is portrayed in the movies. On the other end, the observable universe is only 46 billion lightyears from earth (Siegel, 2018), with 85% of existing particles remaining unknown to mankind (Siegel, 2020). From a scientific point of view, this is truly a mystery. In the case of black holes, they are good at absorbing materialistic matter, but most importantly, mathematical, metaphysical information. Weaver (1953) explains that information is the freedom in choosing which explanations, where information per se does not be conveyed to exist.

Both nonsensical and perfect explanations of something are credible information. These pieces of information *sucked* by a black hole are gone. Its literal existence disappears into the abyss, without us knowing what happens to them. Adding to that, in relation to the time dilation phenomenon, some scientists have estimated that as we get closer to the event horizon of the blackhole objective time itself might stop [National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), 2009], destroying the notion of home with regards to this bubble theory where the phenomenology of spacetime is impossible to achieve.

Now, it has been explained that the concept of home is borne out of luck, based on the prediction Penrose (1989) provided regarding the sheer amount of luck that life can exist in this universe. This explanation entails that the existence of a home needs

to comply with one crucial aspect, that it allows living things, especially humans, to live. A black hole, and probably the edge of the universe, lacks this criterion. We realised that what we offer is somewhat out of the ballpark, but it does give us an idea of the complexity of non-home. It is not so easily reduced to an unsafe or uncomfortable place. We proposed the idea that a non-home is somewhere where the concept of home itself can not exist. We also noticed that there is a possibility of both hypotheses combining, creating the ultimate non-home, but we are going to leave that for future research, done by scientists and philosophers.

CONCLUSION

This research has found that indeed home can be interpreted through a synthesis of phenomenological and naturalistic perspectives. Through this view, home is defined as a bubble that surrounds and encapsulates a subject. This metaphysical bubble exists as an extension of the physical existence of the human body and can interact, either merge or shrink, with the bubbles of the environment. The process that interacts with the home bubble is highly dependent on the type and intensity of the subject's experience of a certain place in a certain spacetime. Merging will only happen if and only if the subject has a positive experience with that place, while the reverse will result in the shrinking of the home bubble, forming a Home (with the capital H) bubble. In this state, the subject will be in survival, fight-or-flight mode. This is due to the naturalistic instinct of the subject in trying to sustain their life, while from the bubble's point of view, it tries to maintain its existence by shrinking, maximising its chances of being there by constraining it to the least volume.

Furthering that, as the home bubble collects more layers to interact with, the subject would have more access to perceived time. The type of perceived time is not set in stone, but it can be understood that the type of perceived time that is accessible by a subject consists of: a time slower than objective time, a time consistent with the objective time, and a time faster than objective

time. During a period where only the Home bubble is present, that subject will only have access to a time slower than objective time. This helps the subject in trying to survive as long as possible. This concept aligns with the rule of gravity, where if one is close to the influence of gravity, one will experience a slower time. Thus, the presence of the Home bubble is the same condition as someone who is under the force of very heavy gravity.

From this principle, it is also hypothesised that a non-home can exist in two (or both) situations. *First*, when a subject's medical condition prevents them from having phenomenological relation to space-time. *Second*, black holes beyond the edge of the known universe. The fundamental question when considering a non-home, in relation to the home bubble theory, is if the bubble can be formed in these situations. As both of them are rough estimates of what a non-home might be, it is acceptable that a non-home could not react with the subject's bubble compared to the bubbles in the environment.

The overarching conclusion to this research is that through a phenomeno-naturalistic approach in conceptualising home, both phenomenology and naturalism need to go hand-in-hand. The home idealised by this theory can be accepted universally as it uses a semi-rigorous perspective, where the formation of the home bubble is an inevitability. This also applies to human perception and memory-making. This new way of seeing home is seen through a physical and metaphysical standpoint, where both existences exist. Reality is not purely materialistic or idealistic. Instead, through the concept of mass and gravity, reality consists of both physical and metaphysical extensions. In the end, this leads us to believe that home will have its physical and metaphysical components, and to us, it gives us an argument to maintain that the home bubble theory has an edge over the other ways of interpreting home.

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