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Home Economics: Investing in the Home

In 'House and Home: Feminist Variations on a Theme', Iris Marion Young argues that 'Preservation makes and remakes home as a support for personal identity without accumulation, certainty or fixity'. This paper uses Young's statement as a starting point for addressing the increasing importance of domesticity and home life as a site for strategies that are deliberately and consciously focused on the accumulation and expansion of *value*. While the telos of these strategies is always continual growth and further profit, the returns are not necessarily always financial. Rather the investment rationality that is at work here, and which is always aiming for improvement and betterment, incorporates every dimension of home life, from the social relations within the household to the house itself as a cultural-economic agent. It therefore infuses both the spatial and temporal dimensions of home, positioning the home in a constant future-oriented movement of productive becoming over being. To illustrate the home's reconfigured role as a site for yielding value (use, exchange and life value), we explore a number of examples from housing, domestic consumption and lifestyle media (e.g. equity release and makeover TV).