This dissertation is a critique of economics as a form of thought. It approaches this science as a cultural inheritance that is heavily invested in geometric scalability. My analysis is provoked by the premise of Xenophon’s play, Oeconomicus, in which Socrates asks if household management is like other arts where its knowledge is applicable generally. In other words, if I know how to manage my house do I not know how to manage another’s? Taken together with another theme of this play- that the excellence of economics is to “grow the household”- I understand contemporary economic philosophy, such as neoliberalism or capitalism, as consonant with some of the earliest concepts of our term economics.

Where our word economics comes to us from the Greek oikos-nomos, meaning home management, it is clear that our contemporary usage of this term is highly abstract. The operative presuppositions are that the whole of society is family and that the nation is home. This is true for capitalists and their detractors alike. Engaging economic theory purports knowledge of how others should manage their homes. I argue that the preoccupation with other homes obscures the way particular homes are folded into the political. I build my case by showing how geometric thinking is reflected in social, domestic and subjective experience. In so doing, I draw out a contrast between home and politics in which the former is a realm of inexhaustible difference and the latter is a social will to sameness, artificial equality, or at the very least, minimal difference.

This analysis makes a philosophical argument against ontological sameness. As far as that argument succeeds, it follows that demographic politics, policy and thought are all fundamentally violent. I then proceed to theorize homemaking using non-geometric philosophies of difference. I draw from Confucianism, phenomenology, poststructuralism and biology to argue against an epistemological embrace of perceiving sameness. At the same time, I attempt to portray home, not only as a point of access for all things political, but also, as the scale of life in which sovereignty is contiguous to agency.