

Correspondence with “Home Ecologies” Paper Session, SAA 2017-Atlanta

Organizers: Jen Munroe, University of North Carolina at Charlotte; Mary Trull, St. Olaf College

Dear seminar participants,

Welcome to the Home Ecologies seminar! We are delighted to gather this excellent group of scholars together to consider the early modern home as a site of ecological exchanges.

Please take a moment right away to look at the attached list of participants and reply to this email confirming that you are planning to participate and letting us know if your contact information should be changed. Also, let us know right away if you won't be able to keep to the schedule or attend the SAA meeting in Atlanta, because there is a wait list.

Here is an expanded seminar description for you to consider as you plan your papers:

What happens when we reorient our study of “ecologies” from sweeping landscapes (terrestrial or oceanic) to the more localized material environment of the home/the household? While the field of ecology began by addressing the interaction of organisms within physical environments, “ecology” now includes more figurative, even broadly social, relations and networks between entities. Its root, *oikos*, has always evoked these possible multiple meanings by conjuring the home/household as a system of exchanges. Early modern texts often follow Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus* by according gender a central role in defining these systems. We are especially interested in how gender intersects with material relationships between the home/household and its environs. Drawing upon scholarship on early modern households and their material practices by authors including Wendy Wall and Natasha Korda, this seminar revisits our notion of “ecology” by maintaining the emphasis on material bodies and objects but including how physical environments, living and non-living, human and non-human, inform our understanding of multiple exchanges in and related to the home/household. Papers are encouraged that consider these issues as they relate to early modern texts as well as those that are comparative in focus.

Questions might include:

How does a focus on material exchange and the home give us new ways to understand agency as distributive or co-creative?

How can intersections among living organisms, their physical environments, and their participation in economic exchanges inform our readings of early modern texts?

How do plays and other literary texts travel networks of exchange formed through homes or households?

How do home ecologies relate to the material ecologies of the theater?

In order to start our conversation, we would like you to post a short paragraph on the google doc at the following link **by Nov. 1**, explaining what interests bring you to this seminar.

We will be sending out two short background readings later in November, and will ask you to submit an abstract of your paper in December. The readings will be chosen to provoke ideas and foster dialogue -- don't feel obliged to address them in your abstracts or papers. Once we have received your papers in February, we will create groups of 3-4 participants and ask you to share written feedback within your groups. Below is a list of deadlines for the seminar.

Nov. 1 - Reply to confirm and correct your contact information; post a paragraph on the google doc (150-word maximum)

Nov. 15 - Background readings circulated by seminar leaders

Dec. 10 - Abstracts due (300-word maximum)

Feb. 10 - Completed papers due (10-12 pages)

Feb. 24 - Small groups assigned by seminar leaders

Mar. 17 - Responses to group members' papers due

Please let us know if you have any questions; we are looking forward to what promises to be a lively and important conversation.

Best regards,

Jen Munroe, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Mary Trull, St. Olaf College

Dear seminar participants,

We suspect that many of you are feeling professionally and politically swamped right now, and we hope that the prospect of our SAA seminar in April is a bright and beckoning one for you, as it is for us. However, before we get there, essays must be circulated, so we are writing to remind you that your essays are due to be uploaded to our shared DropBox by **Friday, Feb. 10. Remember that this is a firm deadline**; we are obligated to provide SAA with a final list of participants soon. Once we have received your papers, we will create groups of 3-4 participants and ask you to share written feedback within your groups.

By the way, the SAA website notes that rooms at the conference hotel, the Hyatt Regency, are starting to sell out, so book now.

Also, please **save the time directly following our seminar** for a post-seminar social gathering, i.e. Friday evening for early drinks/dinner, if you can.

- DropBox
 - The **background readings** by Stacy Alaimo and Natasha Korda are still available here.
 - Please submit **revised abstracts** to DropBox as well; that will allow us to provide seminar auditors with a handout.

Schedule

Feb. 10 - Completed papers due (10-12 pages) - **upload to DropBox, and revise your abstract**

Feb. 24 - Small groups assigned by seminar leaders

Mar. 17 - Responses to group members' papers due

Fri., April 7: "Home Ecologies" seminar takes place, 3:30-5:30 pm; 5:30 drinks/dinner

[seminar description omitted here]

Best regards,

Jen Munroe, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Mary Trull, St. Olaf College

Dear Fabulous Seminararians,

We've now had the opportunity to read and think about your papers, how they intersect in both anticipated and surprising ways. With this in mind, we've arranged them in groupings that we believe will produce lively and engaged responses now as well as offer principles that apply across groups and that will generate exciting conversation in Atlanta when we are together.

As notions of "exchange" and "transcorporeality" framed this seminar, we created groups governed by dynamism, represented here by verbs rather than nouns; the present progressive verb tense that (for now) declares the organizing principle of each group should be taken as a starting place to understand our areas of intersection, the various strategies of intervention each of your papers endeavored to begin, and that, as a group in Atlanta, we hope to further.

With this in mind, we give you your groups and some thoughts about how/why we have organized you thusly.

Transforming: Claire Duncan, Shannon Kelley, Rebecca Laroche, Amy Tigner

Each paper in this group takes up the topic of materials in flux, transformed and transformative in their material human and nonhuman relations, through and across different bodies and spaces. For these papers, ecologies of "home" necessarily involved transformation in ways that defy various boundaries.

Regulating: Kent Lenhoff, Jeff Theis, David Goldstein, Lalita Hogan

Each paper in this group questions the effectiveness of attempts to regulate communities, bodies, and spaces; and each demonstrated how the “household” and the bodies that inhabit it/move within and outside its environs are the collective product(ion) related to evolving social and material forces, individual and collective, and marking both insistence and resistance.

Traversing: Sara Morrison, Gitanjali Shahani, Hillary Nunn, Rob Wakeman

Each paper in this group engages ways that “things” traverse space as well as bodily boundaries, challenging demarcations of what constitutes “home”; and each paper meditates (albeit in different ways) on the connective tissue (or liquid body) that renders the boundaries between “self” and (ecological, raced, and gendered) Other.

Reconfiguring: Ben Bertram, Christine Hoffmann, Debapriya Sarkar, Sallie Anglin

Each paper in this group considers how notions of “home” and “ecology” converge and reconfigure spaces and bodies that seemingly belong “elsewhere” or that function as “excess” material. These papers challenge the seeming limits of space, time, and bodily boundaries as they take up the “waste” and seemingly inert (or “dead”) spaces and material that are instead as indeterminate as they are charged with life.

If you thought we were supposed to get back to you last week, you are absolutely right; we apologize for the change of plan, and we are moving your next deadline back accordingly. Your next task is to write a (1-2 page single-spaced) response to the other members of your group, building perhaps on associations we have imposed on you by grouping you as we have, and expanding on our associations to generate new ones. By **MARCH 21st**, please send a copy of your response to each group member, and cc us when you do.

We would also like to invite you all to **join us for a Happy Hour celebration** and to continue our conversation immediately after our seminar (with the “Shakespeare in the Anthropocene” Seminar (lead by Craig Dionne and Lowell Duckert). Details TBA.

Mary will soon be sending out a merged .pdf version of all your papers with through page numbering and a table of contents so that, during the seminar, we can all readily reference the papers. She first has to recover from an unfortunate incident involving a bottle of kombucha and her laptop, so send your healing-of-electronics spells her way.

Thank you for your wonderful papers! We are eager to start the conversation.

Best wishes to all,

Jen and Mary