

'The Home in Modern History and Culture' workshop, Nottingham, 27 Jan 2020 – all abstracts

Panel 1: Homes and Materiality

1.1 Marianne Groep-Foncke, University of Amsterdam: 'Between Mine and Yours: Shifting Boundaries in Seventeenth-Century Holland'

Where does your neighbour's property end and your own home start? Ideas about this subject were evolving in early-modern Europe. This lecture is about the seventeenth-century cities of Holland, the wealthiest province of the Dutch Republic. Economy was booming and immigrants flocked to the towns, resulting in population growth up to 270% within fifty years. To accommodate settlers, built-up areas both spread and densified. By negotiating the use of walls, yards and alleys, the city-dwellers' conception of 'home' and its boundaries changed in two ways. By 1600, petrification was well on its way in urban Holland. Half-timbered houses with thatched roofs had given way to bricks and tiles. Nevertheless, most buildings retained a so-called eavesdrop: an unbuild strip where rainwater dripped freely, without damaging vulnerable structures. The use of less perishable materials enabled people to exploit their eavesdrop, by constructing lean-to buildings or utilizing them as alleyways like Vermeer's Little Street. Boundaries gained importance. Still, surplus water had to be drained off. Neighbours went to the notary to record who should capture the water, by what means and who would pay for it. Others put down testimonies about neighbours breaching the contract – intruding on one's domesticity by dripping over boundaries or soaking walls, for instance. To meet the demand for houses, city-dwellers gradually built over their back yards. They parcelled out their plots and took in boarders. Consequently, they had to share formerly private areas, like kitchens, privies and eavesdrops-turned-alleys. These can be seen as the inception of the slums with shared facilities that Florence Nightingale would have recognised. I will show that the transition from literally home-bound yards to communal areas did not always go unchallenged.

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1.2 Thomas McGrath, University of Manchester: 'Extraordinary Discoveries: The Miser's Home, c.1840- 1910'

'Hoarding' is a term, which we would associate more with the twenty-first century home, rather than the nineteenth century home. Indeed, with the fashion for cluttered and crowded interiors in the late-nineteenth century, it can be difficult to identify when the relationship between a person and their possessions reached the extremity of societal norms.

The purpose of this paper is to identify the ways in which 'hoarding' was present in the nineteenth century home and how this present in the public imagination, normally was related through the press. This paper draws upon a comprehensive range of newspaper articles from the 1840s to the 1910s to examine various examples of the 'miser's home' within British culture. The term was used by the press as a 'catch-all' phrase to describe the homes of those who lived on limited incomes or in frugal conditions despite having secreted away substantial wealth.

The descriptions of various misers' homes often paint vivid descriptions of squalid domestic properties, some with an abundance and seemingly abnormal amount of possessions inside. This in turn was highlighted in popular media outlets of the era beyond the popular press and the miser's home was used as an extraordinary and sensational setting in novels and plays. This paper seeks show how the miser's home represented a subverted version of homeliness across the century.

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1.3 Apolline Malevez, Queen's University Belfast: 'Men at Home. Domesticity in Belgian Architecture (1890- 1914)'

My paper retraces men's involvement with the domestic by studying Belgian interior design and architecture magazines (*L'Émulation*, *Le Home*, *Le Cottage*). They show that homes were at the heart of lively societal debates, in which men participated. It contradicts both the facts that the public and the private realms were distinct and that men were almost exclusively involved with the public sphere. However, these magazines also reveal a specific perspective on domesticity which largely ignores the messiness of 'mundane' housekeeping. The labour necessary in producing and maintaining the illusion of a flawless domesticity is rendered invisible. Furthermore, I consider how domesticity is staged in the interior photographs published in these magazines, through an emphasis on the visual qualities of interior spaces. Domestic interiors become spaces to look at rather than to live in, challenging traditional ideas of 'homeliness'. While it turns out that much of men's involvement with the domestic was at odds with values traditionally associated with domesticity (comfort, privacy, separation from the workplace and focus on the family) [Reed, 1996], it did not make the home a space of a lesser importance. Having established the relevance of considering men and domesticity in nineteenth-century debates, I turn to an example of how a progressive domestic environment could also support innovative artistic creation. By doing so, I intend to further question the association between domesticity and conformity [Fraiman, 2017]. For example, comfort does not necessarily become a capitalist bourgeois value but can be tied to the struggle for women's emancipation. Besides, the domestic environment can be an ideal space for artistic experimentation, because of the freedom and privacy it enables. These considerations help to enrich the meanings of domesticity, as a notion that can encompass staging, ambivalence and artificiality, but also artistic innovation.

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Panel 2: Literary Homes

2.1 Marc Smeets, Radboud University: 'The Notion of "Home" in Nineteenth-Century French Literature'

It is said that Madame de Staël first introduced the English word "home" in French literature. In *Corinne ou l'Italie* (1807), the former "émigrée" tells the story of an English poetess and a Scottish aristocrat, lord Nelvil. At a given point in the novel, they go aboard on a naval vessel in the port of Naples. The fact that the boat sails under English flag and that Oswald immediately feels as if he were back on native soil, gives way to a variety of (stereotypical) reflections formulated by the narrator, for instance: a boat, for

the English, is a second fatherland; the English always long for their “home”, etc. Strikingly enough, the French “chez soi” in the text is exoticized by the juxtaposition of the English word “home”: “Si vous interrogez des Anglais voguant sur un vaisseau à l’extrémité du monde, et que vous leur demandiez où ils vont, ils vous répondront : – chez nous – (*home*), si c’est en Angleterre qu’ils retournent”. As if “home” had a slightly different connotation than “chez soi”. But which one(s)? This presentation will provide an overview of 19th-century French literary texts that all use the English word “home” in different (specific French) contexts, and I will demonstrate how this word fills up a semantic gap in the native French vocabulary.

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2.2 Mathilde Vialard, University of Nottingham: ‘Home and Mental Suffering: A Gendered Perception of Idleness at Home in 19th Century Fiction’

The mid-nineteenth century literary genre of Sensation Novels primarily revolved around the depiction of crime and mystery in the domestic setting of upper-class Victorian families, and often involved the actions of a ‘mad’ character. Madness is nevertheless not the only form of mental illness depicted in sensation novels. Many characters are said to suffer from obsessive disorders, melancholia or nervousness, and these ailments are very much connected to the sufferer’s home environment. As these novels often portrayed members of the Upper Class or aristocracy, many characters are presented as idlers living at home, enjoying the indolent lifestyle their wealth offers them and their idleness is introduced as a leading cause for the development of mental illnesses.

This paper will examine how the characters of sensation novels are trapped, because of their unemployment, inside their home, and the consequence of this seclusion on their mental health. Whereas male characters find themselves in this situation because of their lack of industriousness and their refusal to leave the house to enter the work sphere, unlike most nineteenth-century men who were increasingly work-driven at the time, women are kept in house because of the social expectations and limitations of their time. M. E. Braddon’s main female character in *The Doctor’s Wife* (1864) is the perfect example of such a feeling of entrapment, as she proclaims that ‘for Mrs. Gilbert “home” meant a square-built house in a dusty lane, and was never likely to mean anything better or brighter’ (p.237). Though nineteenth-century physicians tended to recommend home—and even bed—rest for nervous sufferers, sensation writers seemed to argue against this ideology of homeliness as a cure for mental health issues, and rather promoted action and work.

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2.3 Linda Mahood, University of Guelph: “‘What Will People Say:” Multiple Homes of Lucy Maud Montgomery’

Much of Lucy Maud Montgomery’s adult life was spent keeping up an untarnished reputation as world-renowned author of *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), mother, clergyman’s wife and homemaker. For this

project, we draw on Maud's private journals, which narrate her life-long struggle; from orphan granddaughter, student, school mistress and spinster on Prince Edward Island, to minister's wife in three homes in Ontario; to find 'a home' that belonged to her, rather than to other people. For most of her life, as Maud passed through many homes, she purchased domestic objects that were central to her sense of home and belonging. These possessions; homecrafts, decorations, books, and furniture (proudly paid for from royalties); held deep emotional and psychological meaning, and conjured memories of the past, present, and future homes she'd lost, as well as those she hoped to have. Her material possessions also reflect an idealized version of the intimate loving family, which inhabited the public imagination, whereas Maud's own domestic life was often disappointing, suffocating, and conflict-ridden. This paper is part of a larger research partnership to curate a house museum at the Presbyterian manse where Montgomery lived with her husband, Reverend Ewan McDonald, and her sons in Norval, Ontario from 1926 to 1935. At the workshop we would like to explore the physical and psychological tensions between domestic objects and personal possession and family values, how they pass from home to home and become subjects of neighborhood gossip, jealousy and rumours, and, how they may also reveal and conceal family secrets.

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Panel 3: Working and Earning at Home

3.1 Matt Pawelski, University of Lancaster: 'The Changing Place of Home and Family in Early-Modern and Modern Working Life: the Case of a Derbyshire Lead Mining Household, c.1789-1792'

This paper will examine the evolving forms and functions of the early-modern and modern "home" and "family" through the close study of a lead mining household and the evidence drawn from a diary kept by its male head, John Naylor, for the period 1789 to 1792. The diary covers a critical period of transition in the way that both home and family were conceived, as new forms and structures of work began to shift the locus of productive and economic endeavour away from the home and increasingly toward the workplace. Through the experiences of the Naylor household, and their daily efforts to earn a living in the local lead trade, the paper will endeavour to explore this process of transition and assess to what extent the more traditional role of home and family in everyday working life, epitomised by the Naylor, changed with the introduction of new forms and modes of production and labour organisation, as demonstrated by the neighbouring cotton industry of Derbyshire. Analysis will be placed in the context of broader debates surrounding the notion of 'separate spheres' and the changing gendered and age division of labour both within the household economy and at the industrial workplace.

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3.2 Molly-Claire Gillet, Concordia University: 'Lacemaking "By the Turf Fire": Gendered Labour in the Late Nineteenth Century Irish Home'

The cottage lace industry flowered in mid-19th century Ireland as a philanthropic venture, securing a livelihood for rural women affected by famine and poverty. These women's homes became inextricably

tied to the production of 'Irish lace,' even across the Atlantic. For example, the Irish Industries Association's display at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago featured nimble-fingered maidens—one of whom "talks real Irish"—making lace in stage-set cottages, "by the turf fire over which the potato-pot is hanging." The Association also commissioned an illustrated account of their founder's travels throughout the Irish countryside to visit workers' homes, greeted by red-cheeked women at their 'cabin doors,' lace in hand. But at the same time that this narrative of production in charming rural cottages was leveraged for commercial purposes, industry experts such as the South Kensington Museum's textile curator Alan S. Cole (1846-1934) expressed discomfort with the home as a locus for lace production. His articles and reports from the 1880's and 1890's reveal anxieties about what home-production meant for regulation, education and the monitoring of lace quality, and of the lace makers themselves. In this presentation, I will explore these conflicting imaginings of Irish lace makers and their homes, suggesting that they reflect not only the tension between sentimentalized marketing campaigns and the materiality actuality of craft work, but also the deeply symbolic and, ultimately, political nature of the domestic space as it intersects with issues of gender, labour, and imperialism. These discussions of Irish lacemaking grant a glimpse into how 19th-century Irish women's homes were evaluated, controlled, and represented, and reveal just some of the ways in which craft and design—even of something so decorative and insubstantial—are implicated in the complex structures of power.

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3.3 Kristina Molin Cherneski, University of Alberta: "Condemned to Open Her Doors to the World": The Landlady, Privacy and the Meaning of Home in Nineteenth-Century England'

"There are a number of stock subjects, which writers of fiction...consider themselves at liberty to draw upon in emergencies. Among these not the least remarkable, or to the gentlemen of the quill the least useful, is the Lodging-house Keeper—the lone woman whom misfortune has condemned to open her doors to all the world, and to postpone her own ideas of convenience or comfort to those of whomsoever fate may quarter upon her hospitality." *The Little World of London*, Charles Manby Smith (1857)

The landlady, as Charles Manby Smith pointed out in 1857, was a common trope in mid-19th-century writing, used frequently to explore issues that were of concern to Victorians. Sympathetic discussions like Manby Smith's were few and far between, however—much more common were attacks on character and unflattering caricature. Though living in common was an everyday occurrence in growing and often overcrowded towns and cities in 19th-century Britain, it aroused no end of concern from middle-class commentators and reformers. Not only did the commentary on landladies call into question the irrespectability and their suitability as heads of households, where they "ruled" over the men that rented domestic space from them, it also demonstrates the complicated nature of the private sphere and its relationship to privacy, and the ways that the realities of living in common contested those ideas. The inability to keep things from one's landlady, whether personal property like gin, or one's comings and goings and ways of living, drew out not only concerns about privacy, but the nature of gendered power and ideas of home. The realities of non-family based living situations were in tension with understandings

of “home” and “respectability” that were tied to the pervasive middle-class idea of proper domesticity, and thus called into question the realities of the private sphere.

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Panel 4

4.1 Hugh Small – Florence Nightingale and the Public Health Act

Soon after Florence Nightingale returned to Britain at the end of the Crimean War in 1856, she became active in the campaign for public investment in household sanitation: sewers, piped water, and reduced overcrowding. Edwin Chadwick had identified these in 1842 as urgent, but had failed to persuade Parliament to act and had left the Civil Service in 1854. National average life expectancy at birth remained static at only 40 years from 1840 until the 1870s. Then, after the passage of the 1875 Public Health Act, life expectancy rose sharply, increasing by half over the next 60 years. Simon Szreter in 1988 attributed the improvement mainly to the steady expansion of mains drainage, driven by the newly-devolved enforcement and financing powers. Until now it has not been recognised that Nightingale drafted the key clause of the Act. With Chadwick, she persuaded the government to devolve responsibility for enforcement. Her interventions relaunched Chadwick’s stalled sanitarian movement under a gentler and more scientific style of leadership.

The presentation included screening of parts of the short video After Scutari which is online at: <https://youtu.be/lxipM-YCtjE/> www.hugh-small.co.uk

4.2 Nina Harkrader - Florence Nightingale and the Development of the Nurses’ Home at St. Thomas’s Hospital, London, 1865-1871.

“Had we ‘led the Governor to look upon the Probationers as children of their own,’...they would have been placed in the two attics or the cellar.” Florence Nightingale and the development of the Nurses’ Home at St. Thomas’s Hospital, London(1865-1871).The contrast between Dickens’s drunken “Sairey Gamp” and the trained nurse emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, and was cited by Florence Nightingale herself in her efforts to create a profession populated by trained female nurses.¹While much has been written about Nightingale’s life, philosophy, and contribution to modern nursing, her profound interest in buildings and the role they played in the physical and moral health of nurses has not been fully explored by historians. How, where, and under what physical conditions her trainee and professional nurses should live was an abiding interest to Nightingale. Documentary and built evidence shows that her input was actively sought, and her influence felt throughout Britain and across the United States. Before Nightingale, nurses were housed in ad hoc spaces in hospital wards or attics; Nightingale insisted they be provided with separate accommodation—explicitly termed ‘homes’—designed specifically for them. Beginning with the design and construction of the new St. Thomas’s Hospital in London (1865-71), Nightingale played an active role in all aspects of the living quarters for her nurses, including the specifics of site, plan, and interior furnishings. In addition, she heavily influenced housing provision at other

prominent hospitals, such as the Royal London Hospital, and elsewhere. Of particular significance is the Nightingale uses the term in a May 1869 letter to Caroline Stephens. Qtd in McDonald L(ed.). Florence Nightingale on women, medicine, midwifery and prostitution. (Waterloo, ON: 2005, Wilfrid Laurier University Press): 47.

fact that these new nurses' homes, beginning with that for Probationer Nurses at St. Thomas's, reproduced the Victorian middle-class home in form, floor plans, and interiors. The complex inter-connections between perceptions of domesticity, professionalism, and female moral and physical health became embodied at St. Thomas's, and had a lasting impact on nurses' accommodation on both sides of the Atlantic.

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4.3 Jonathan Stafford, University of Nottingham: 'Home on the Waves: Domesticity and Discomfort Aboard the Nineteenth-Century Colonial Steamship'

In 1842, the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, or P&O, inaugurated the first regular steamship service to India and the Far East via Egypt. The introduction of steam propulsion to colonial shipping brought about revolutionary changes in global mobility, not least in the long sea-voyage to India: an unpredictable and uncomfortable journey by sailing ship of up to six months was supplemented by a rapid steam route which promised all the luxuries and comforts of modern travel. This paper will investigate this revolution in maritime transportation, exploring the introduction of steam into imperial shipping through the experiences of the passengers on board these ships. Passenger narratives of journeys made by this service describe an idiosyncratic domesticity which evokes a distinctive attempt to discursively frame steamship mobility as a safe, comfortable, normalised experience of a journey which was often anything but. This blasé attitude emphasises the role of bourgeois material and social practices as a means for the historical agents of globalisation to come to terms with steamship travel, extrapolated through ideas of domesticity which mutate and develop through their relation to the sea and the flux of mobility. This process of normalisation centres in travel narratives upon a preoccupation with the notion of comfort. The historical constitution of comfort is articulated through the body's constitution as a site of struggle, revealing that the mobility of steamships was predicated upon the violence not just of speed but the suffering of subaltern labour which reproduced the problematic social relations of empire.

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Panel 5

5.1 Catalina Andricioaei, European University Institute: “ ‘By Being Unstable [...] the Tigani Population Creates Hardships [...]’: Roma and Housing Policies in Late-Socialist Romania (1972-1989)’

In my presentation, I use the category of ‘home’ to shed light on the reconstruction of Romanian Roma as a problematic category in late-socialist Romania (1972-1989). I bring to light the specificity of a relation marked, and marred, by rootedness and non-attachment, neighbourliness and ‘parasitism’ by uncovering the interplay between the materiality of home-as-fixed-abode and the ongoing fashioning of the new socialist citizen.

By using the case study of the rehousing of ‘seminomadic and nomadic’ Roma my aim is twofold, albeit inextricably linked. In expanding the category of ‘home’ to include social practices of boundary keeping we understand how Roma were re-problematised as a social question. At the same time, I also show how social boundaries between the good and the bad socialist citizen were drawn around ideas of home as fixed abode.

The re-problematisation of the Roma came in 1977 with the crackdown on the ‘seminomadic and nomadic tiganis’ who ‘still lived a life almost like in the past’. Their advised consequent ‘stabilisation’ must be understood against a framework which privileged home both as a tool of control and the means of their enlightenment through ‘socialist cohabitation’. The allocation of state loans and state-owned flats becomes, in this light, a policy which sought to dissipate ‘seminomadic and nomadic’ Roma’s attachment towards their kin and redirect their affective loyalties to the state and the larger socialist collective.

‘Home’ as a fixed abode for the ‘seminomadic and nomadic’ Roma therefore sheds light both on the socialist state’s concern with social renovation, with defining and investigating problems and potential ‘threats’. More importantly, however, ‘home’ helps us understand how forms of deviation from a rationalised, efficient, planned socio-economic and cultural programme became criminalised.

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5.2 Claudia Soares, QMUL: ‘Understandings of Home for Child Migrants and Care Leavers from Residential Welfare Institutions, 1850-1930’

Victorian and Edwardian reformist discourse on poverty, childhood and family concluded that the home and family life of poor children was unsatisfactory: squalid cramped environments, completely lacking comfort or sense of homeliness. As such, philanthropic organizations sought to remove children from these undesirable environments, provide them with ‘a permanent environment of brightness, warmth and homeliness’, in which to effect their transformation from undomesticated savages into moral productive citizens. The migration thousands of children to overseas colonies, such as Canada and Australia, and from urban to rural locations, formed a major operation of many residential institutions in their attempts to domesticate and civilize children, and provide them with better life chances.

While my previous work examined how residential institutions could function and be perceived as a home for child inmates, this paper draws on my new research that explores how children who were moved to new environments through migration or relocation conceptualized and gave meaning to ideas of home. Using the records of major British children’s institution, and residential homes in Australia and

Canada, the paper examines children and young people's attitudes, understandings and responses towards their new surroundings. Drawing on personal correspondence written by young people, the essay examines the meanings that children and young people attached to their environments, and how these new settings shaped young people's constructions and understandings of home, belonging and identity. In doing so, the essay will shed new light on the experiences of institutionalized children in the past, their understandings of home and its role in shaping identity and belonging, and young people's relationships with space, environment and landscape.

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5.3 Elizabeth Baigent, University of Oxford: "The Places Began to Look Homelike": Octavia Hill and the Ideal of the Home in Late Victorian London'

Although Octavia Hill is remembered now primarily as one of the founders of the National Trust, in her lifetime she was known primarily as a housing reformer. Her system and the philosophy which underlay it centred on the home: the home in a physical sense, as she managed, improved, and built houses for the poorest Londoners; the home as the locus of the domestic virtues of stability, cleanliness, and sobriety; the home as the locus of family love and family pleasures. But her focus on the home went much further than this: it coloured her vision of nature which she welcomed into her tenants homes via the window box, the flower garden, or the cut flowers delivered to a poor person. She was created local parks in London which were extensions of poor people's homes and compensations for their smallness, dullness, and unattractiveness. She called these local parks 'outdoor sitting rooms' or 'summer nurseries', and they were the locus of homely scenes where women did their mending, little children played under their mothers' gaze, and men chatted over sandwiches in their work breaks. Moreover, it can be argued that the home acted as metaphor for her vision of her housing work – her middle-class housing managers acting as loving mothers to their tenants; and for her vision of the ideal earthly society – shaped by the rural parish as a patriarchal home, with squire and rector looking after their tenants; and even for the cosmological order – her Christian Socialist vision leading her to regard poor people as equal children of God in the Christian family, and to create a better earthly home in preparation for the eternal home.

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