

Session 1: Materializing Memory in the Home

Daniela Petrelli (Information Studies) *Objects of memory in the home: An ethnographic study of families with young children*

Little is known about the processes by which people identify and manage mementos - objects which are directly meaningful to their memories. Among the millions of objects people come across in a lifetime, few become reminders of people, places or events. An ethnographic study has been set up to investigate the role of mementos in the family home. 14 families participated in the study. Each of the 17 participants gave us a tour of their homes describing how and why particular objects become mementos. A total of 163 objects were discussed and their stories collected. Mementos were of different kind: photos, artworks, everyday objects, and idiosyncratic objects. Collections of memorabilia were also popular.

The reasons for a memento to be important were several: reminder of people, events and places; symbols of relationship (with friends, partner, children, parents and ancestors); objects of reminiscing. Mementos were not only displayed and shared, but also integrated into everyday activities. Some objects were on display, others concealed and rarely opened; however the emotions felt by participants while reopening containers of memorabilia was evident. A limited number of mementos referred to the far past while more evident was today life of the family and their more recent memories.

Finally there were complex relations between house location and memento type. We discuss the theoretical and technical implications of our work.

Nissa Ramsay (Geography) *Tourist souvenirs, refraction and the relational spatialities of the home*

This paper explores how souvenir-objects work within and constitute the home. To do so it draws upon thirteen in-depth interviews with participants in their homes. This was part of a wider project based in both Swaziland (Southern Africa) and the UK during 2006-7. This adopted a research process known as 'follow the thing', using ethnographic and interviewing methods to construct biographies for these objects from their production to their consumption. Part of this involved accompanying tourists whilst they purchased objects in Swaziland and conducting follow-up interviews with them upon return to the UK.

This paper adopts the notion of refraction as a way of articulating how souvenir objects partially connect with other places and times through mundane interactions. Everyday practices such as dusting, de-cluttering, framing and displaying objects highlight the time, difficulty and awkwardness involved in relating to these objects. The role of souvenir-objects and the memories they represent are then continually negotiated. The notion of refraction then recognises how the relationships between people, objects and the home work simultaneously through attachment and estrangement, significance and insignificance. The home is then no longer a bounded entity but is constituted through various convoluted and disjointed relations with these objects, their spatialities and mundane interactions surrounding them.

Jenny Hockey (Sociological Studies) *Materializing Absence. The Return of the Dead?*

Although there is a considerable body of anthropological work on death ritual, its focus is often the more public or collective events surrounding and including a funeral. Public memorialisation has also been a focus for sociologists and cultural historians. When it comes to the private sphere, the focus is more likely to be upon the 'inner' and often psychologised world of grief, rather than the social practices we call mourning. This presentation makes the home and home life a focus for discussing both mourning and grief and argues that the term *ritualisation* (Seremetakis, 1990) more effectively encompasses the diversity of processes which ensue around and after the time of a bereavement. It presents data on the shifting meanings of objects and spaces within homes where there has been a recent death and considers the implications of the growing practice of providing human ashes with a temporary or permanent destination in domestic space (the retention of ashes by family and friends has grown from 12% of all cremations to around 60% since the 1970s). Time, space and relationships with the dead are useful analytic themes when exploring these materials.

Session 2: Homing in on the Dinner Table

Julie Banham (History) *Consuming Politeness*

This research in progress uses an exploration of the material culture related to sociable eating and drinking to argue that the perception of eighteenth-century Sheffield as rough, impolite, industrial and plebeian is largely based upon limited sources and outdated methodologies. The approach of the region's leading C19th historians, Joseph Hunter, Revd Alfred Gatty and R. E. Leader, have dominated perceptions of the region, yet they are permeated with metropolitan ideals and dichotomous analogies which left little space to acknowledge the presence of an socially and culturally active middling society.

Examining the ownership of new goods such as those related to the drinking of tea and coffee or use of china and cutlery and the provision of new spaces separating food preparation from food consumption and relating these findings to views expressed in contemporary writings, it becomes possible to argue for a polite and middling society who readily engaged in new associations to transcend the parochial and traditional.

Richard Jenkins (Sociological Studies) *The Nation that Eats Together*

This paper looks at the ways in which the Danish nation, and national identity are materialised around Danish dining tables and at festive occasions that involve eating. First, there are the ways in which the Danish flag is used. Second, there is the etiquette of everyday eating, located in notions of Danish ways of doing things (specifically interpersonal reciprocity) and the procedures for celebration (such as singing Danish songs). Third, there are the occasions on which special festivities are held, some of which are 'national' occasions. The argument will be that a range of marked and unmarked references to Denmark and 'Danishness' punctuate the experience of eating together for many Danes. These will be located within formal

and informal socialisation. Some of the implications of this for the project of the 'integration' of immigrants will be considered in closing.

Lunch Presentation

Clare Risbeth (Landscape) *Brief Introduction to the 'The Walking Voices' Project*

The Walking Voices project investigated perceptions and values of neighbourhoods as described by first generation migrants. The research explored how experience of place contributes to settlement processes and cultural identity, how migrants conceptualise, re-create and re-invent normality within a very different environment. Their experience of place reflects their transnational links and contrasting (and changing) cultural identities; affiliations with their own ethnic communities and overlapping interactions with other social spheres.

We aimed to combine a focus on 'everyday landscapes' and 'near-home' locations with a methodology that reflected the immediacy of multi-sensory, temporal, physical and emotional experience of place. Eleven participants (all first generation migrants representing five different countries of birth) were loaned minidisk recorders from late summer to early winter 2006, and given training by BBC Radio Sheffield. Their brief was to regularly record live commentaries during walks; talking about observations, thoughts and choices prompted by the changing scene.

Finding aspects of commonality with their previous lives reflected aspects of loss but were generally restorative and contributed to a creative engagement with the new place. New landscapes and experiences were compared both positively and negatively to those in the home country. Views, social practices and activities could signify a break with the past or a means of continuing an identity. The research found that migrants were creative in the means in which they re-interpreted activities that they enjoyed in the past, adapting locations of walking, driving or socialising to a new context. This active engagement with past connections appears to support acculturation and settlement in the new country.

The project was funded by the ESRC. Audio clips and further information on the research can be found at www.walkingvoices.group.shef.ac.uk

Session 3: Home and Homeland

Kate Pahl (School of Education) *The case of the disappearing object: Translating objects in homes and in museums*

This presentation will describe an AHRC funded project on narratives of migration and objects in the Pakistani communities of Rotherham. The aim of the research project was to create an exhibition of these artefacts. However, when it came to creating the exhibition, most of the objects described in the family's narratives were lost, disappeared, or had to be replicated through existing museum collections. While a focus on objects and their settled material nature is now a large part of material cultural studies (eg Miller 2001, 2005) and a focus on the object in the cultural spaces

of Pakistan has also been investigated (eg Werbner 2002) a new interest has also developed that looks at the role of objects within narratives, and their sometimes ephemeral quality (Shankar 2006). In this paper we attempt to explore how museum practices both settle objects, requiring provenance and historical ambiance, and also provide a mystic aura that surrounds objects. By contrast, objects found in home context often are lost, moved, might be on the cellar steps, are given away, and circulate on beyond the confines of the home. Therefore, while it is a new and exciting practice to consider the continuities between homes and museums, in this presentation we look at how home cultures are often less focused on objects than narratives, particularly in the case of diaspora communities.

References

- Miller, D (ed.) 2001 *Home Possessions: Material Culture Behind Closed Doors*, London: Berg
- Shankar, S. (2006) Metaconsumptive practices and the circulation of objectifications. *Journal of Material Culture* Vol 11 (3)293-317
- Werbner, P. 2002 *The Migration Process: Capital, Gifts and Offerings Among British Pakistanis*, London; Berg.

Elizabeth Carnegie (Management School) ‘Made out of necessity and imagination’: Interpreting the material culture of everyday life within ‘the besieged city’ that was Sarajevo

SARA: Here are a few items from what once was Sarajevo.

A skull, a family album, a rug, two bits of mortar, a coffee cup.

STEFANOVSKI: How did they fit together? How do they fit together?

What was it like before it wasn't? What did it look like before it didn't?

Sarajevo: (Tales from a City) (May 1994)

The aims of this paper are twofold: to consider the material culture of everyday life during the siege of Sarajevo (1992-95) as it can be evidenced and understood today; and to determine how such everyday objects served extra-ordinary propose in the fight for survival. I will initially explore who is doing the remembering, (and potentially why), and crucially, where these memories, fragments of ruptured domestic life are being located within the different contexts of the Government run museum, private exhibitions, in street displays and in the scarred landscape.

Through consideration of the small stoves for burning household objects, (burning time for jeans 2 hours), a candle in a tea cup, to the children’s ‘wish list’ drawings of ‘sweets, coco-cola, and crisps, fresh fruit and cake and (cigarettes for parents)’, such objects create an intimate portrait of daily life (and sudden intimate death). Their meanings cannot be directly inferred from the objects themselves and a case of personal objects taken from the dead is a reminder of both the inadequacy of objects to reflect us, and of the poignancy of those that are all we have to reflect life. These objects are painful, possibly unbearable, reminders of the circumstances of their using, and this paper will consider whether the public memories of this time are being relocated into the Diasporic communities and tourist trails.

Bridget Bennett (English, University of Leeds) *Home Life: Homeland: Homesteads and The Wizard of Oz*

In this paper I argue that texts that constitute *The Wizard of Oz* (both the 1900 novel and 1939 film) can be used to map out the ways in which ideas of nation, citizenship and belonging are constructed and maintained through their relationship to the conjunction of home and land. At one level this takes place literally, through the idea of the homestead, the plot of land parcelled out to settlers that enabled them to establish homes and lives on the homelands of Indians who were themselves dispossessed through the same process. I argue that both texts articulate an idea of home drawn from disparate though not discrete ideological constructions: of the domestic and of ideas of home that draw upon domestic ideology; of the homesteads associated with immigration and the U.S. frontier; of kinship networks; of a conceptually broad spatial understanding of home. Both are haunted, too, by ideas of home that they rely on but do not speak of. In a U.S. context and especially in relation to the novel, these are the homelands of Indians displaced in order to allow for the expansionist nation-building of the nineteenth century and the homesteads built to accommodate settlers to the Midwest. In a more geographically expansive context, and especially in relation to the MGM production, these are the upheavals of people in the period leading up to the 1939-45 war.

Session 4: Digest, Discussions and Where Next – Developing the Network

Polly Russell (British Library) *Commercial Food Production and the Commodification of Domesticity - Collaborative Research and the British Library 'Food: From Source to Salespoint' Collection -*

For the past eight years the University of Sheffield has collaborated with the British Library National Life Stories to collect oral histories with people involved in all aspects of food production. Over 300 recordings have been collected to date - these are accessible to the public via the British Library and have formed the basis of research looking at the politics of identity and British culinary culture. One aspect of this research has considered how the 'home' and notions of domesticity are invoked in the commercial practices of food production. Using this research as an example of collaborative practice this talk will outline some of the library's unique collections and potential opportunities for future collaborative research projects.

FURTHER ABSTRACTS

Simone Abram (Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change, Leeds Metropolitan University) *Alternate Domesticities: enacting the 'other' home.*

This paper considers an alternate version of home life, the everyday practices of the holiday home. In Scandinavia, owning a holiday home has become a norm, and it has been estimated that, for example, half of all Norwegian households own at least one holiday home. These are, on the one hand, very personal spaces where a particular form of family life is practiced, yet on the other hand, they are strongly tied into discourses of the nation. As well as the practices of occupation of these homes, the particular differentiated legal categories of ownership further reflect the complexities

of modern Norwegian kinship patterns. The paper introduces the Norwegian mountain holiday home and illustrates how nation and kinship are performed through the materiality of the home, in normalising practices of design, furnishing and decoration which are perhaps even stronger here than in the 'main residence'.

Claire Jenkins (Sociological Studies) *Straddling the scalpel of identity: a critical consideration of the social context within which transsexual people cross the gender binary.*

Transsexualism is defined medically as gender dysphoria or gender identity disorder. This medical understanding is based on a bi-gender, masculine and feminine and a bi-sex, male and female model. Social and cultural research has critiqued this understanding but there is considerable contention. On the one hand some feminists and transgender theorists argue that trans people, (the preferred term used by transsexual people), challenge these normative binary understandings whereas some radical feminists argue that trans people conform to the hegemony of these binaries. Empirical research focusing on transsexual transition is sparse but that which exists, highlights the inequalities discrimination and social exclusion experienced by trans people both at a societal level and within intimate relationships. This research proposal critically considers transition within the context of intimate relationships with family and friends. The research asks the question how trans people might best negotiate transition in order to maintain these relationships and also how the psychological and social distress experienced as a result of relationship breakdown might be diminished. Qualitative interviews based on a psycho-social understanding of subjectivity will be used to gather data from both trans people and also novelly from their friends and kin. A psycho-social understanding of subjectivity conceptualises both researcher and researched as co-producers of meaning based on their unique biographies and socially available discourses and practices. Heterosexuality with its normative cultural understandings and binaries of sex, gender and sexuality is used to illuminate the research subjects actions in relation to transition. Its utility within this context will be investigated. Access to research subjects will be through trans support and social action groups. The challenging and complex ethical issues will be articulated and addressed using the university's ethical procedures. The research will extend academic understanding of trans issues within the context of institutionalised heterosexuality and will enhance trans people's relationship outcomes during and post transition.

Prue Chiles (Architecture, University of Sheffield) *Research Project on Domesticity and home making*

This project looks at ideas of 'home' as the locus of everyday life and a site of individual consumption, but also as a ground on which the jurisdiction of specialists [such as architects] is tested. The phenomenology of the home is seen to be intrinsically linked to the process of telling and remembering stories; this project questions the relationship between the structures and objects which make up a home, and the narratives that surround them, but also looks at the weaving of narratives as part of the creative process of home-making.

The following themes are currently informing our research (a brief description of the topic area and key questions follows):

1. How societal shifts have led to the re-use and re-interpretation of 19th and 20th century homes: a phenomenological approach to re-appropriating the home.
2. 'Homeliness' – controlling/mediating the 'ugly' business of living

1. How societal shifts have led to the re-use and re-interpretation of 19th and 20th century homes: a phenomenological approach to re-appropriating the Home.

Key questions

Cultural conditioning and spatial re-conditioning: What do the ways we inhabit and change houses from the 19th and 20th centuries indicate about societal/ cultural/ economic change?

- 'Putting up with' other people's ideas and ways of living from 100 years ago
- 'Putting up with' ways of living imposed by historical values
- Contrasting the 'shock of the new' with the lure of the old.

What changes to these houses are necessary to adapt them to the needs, desires and ways of living of current occupants?

Case study/anecdote

Botanical Road: Changing stories...Transformation of a house

This house was originally built for a bank manager and his 6 daughters - conjuring images of a 'Mr Bennett' figure, who, in the manner of the beleaguered male patriarch in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, finds his power in the domestic setting is often merely nominal.

As architects we helped to effect a transformation to this house [already divided into flats, and accommodating several families] by 'opening up' spaces, connecting the outside and the inside, inhabiting the landscape and un-locking the space within and around the house to allow it to reflect and accommodate the needs of the occupier/dweller.

- In effecting these changes, what are the affects on day-to-day life in the home?
- What are the implications of the domestic built form reflecting a position, story, and family completely alien/at odds with the current inhabitants?

Overview

This study looks at the building stories – the narratives inherent in domestic forms from different eras. It also considers how these 'stories' impact upon contemporary dwellers – how built form affects people's lives.

The methodology for this study will be a critical analysis of several domestic case studies; stories of 19th and 20th century houses we have been involved (as architects and also as dwellers) in altering or transforming, looking at both the stories of the built form and the stories of those who dwell (or used to dwell) in them...whose lives are shaped by them and have in turn re-shaped them.

Methods proposed include consideration of photographs, sketches, drawings, historical records, and phenomenological analysis of written and verbal accounts of, domestic environments, using familiar anecdote to both ground the study in the everyday, and also in presenting findings, to lessen the distance between the writer and reader of the study.

2. ‘Homeliness’ – controlling/mediating the ‘ugly’ business of living

Key questions

How much is the domestic/home-making instinct tied to the need to ‘control’ the messy detritus of everyday life? How do the decisions shaping our domestic spaces reflect the desire to be, or to appear to be, in control?

Overview

Looking at dwelling and home-making in more detail, this study will consider examples of both standardised and ‘extreme’ domestic settings, looking at the possibilities of ‘living as Art’ - a recognition of creating space in the domestic setting as a creative act, and also at the implicit and explicit values embodied in the act of home making, and controlling the domestic environment.

The question of ‘agency’ – who has power to change / feel ‘in control’ of domestic space – is key to an understanding of contemporary home making. Through a critical interrogation of processes in the construction and subsequent inhabitation of home environments the above questions will be used to shape and tease out answers to the wider question, who has the power to make and change domestic space? In the case of architect-designed environments, this will involve questioning the ‘users’/dwellers perception of the architect’s prerogative for control of others living space.