Call for Papers

Seminar on *House and Home in Literature and Culture*

22–23 May 2020, Institute of English Studies, Jagiellonian University in Kraków

Few ideas are as universally key, basic and primal as home. A number of crucial fields of study and significant concepts etymologically stem from “home”: economy, ecology, domination, the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*), nostalgia, and others. To state the obvious and quote the editors of *Our House: The Representation of Domestic Space in Modern Culture*, Gerry Smyth and Jo Croft, “the house is an absolutely fundamental part of our lives” (2006: 12), and since everyone has had some experience of (some kind[s] of) home, studies of this subject matter stand out from other cultural disciplines where the object of analysis may be less accessible.

The interdisciplinary field of housing studies has grown rapidly since the beginning of the 21st century and especially – certainly not by accident – in the aftermath of the bursting of the housing bubble in the US in 2007, and the ensuing global financial crisis. In *The Domestic Space Reader*, editors Chiara Briganti and Kathy Mezei write:

> From the popular to the academic and across national boundaries, the subject of domestic space has of late garnered enormous attention. Besides drawing the notice of the media (television home improvement shows, real estate programs, popular magazines, dedicated sections on the home in newspapers, Facebook, YouTube, etc.), and inviting obsessive, even erotic attention, it has become an important academic subject. (2012: 9)

In the context of “[t]he immense reach and influence of global and transnational economies,” the authors see “a contrary desire for the local and the domestic, which has increased the scrutiny of the home” (ibid., 4), as “the seemingly everyday practical space of the home offers a surprisingly rich resource to mine for the understanding of cultures, peoples, and histories” (ibid., 12). At the same time, clearly reflecting ongoing problems in many countries, such as lack of affordable housing (the housing crisis), migration and displacement, there has been a noticeable need and “desire to peel away the layered meanings of home” (ibid., 13), including “[n]ot only belonging but also exile, longing for home, homelessness, and homesickness” (ibid., 6).

As David Madden and Peter Marcuse observe in their book *In Defense of Housing: The Politics of Crisis*, “[h]ousing is always more than just housing” – one of its most important
“nonresidential roles” being that it is “an instrument for politics” (2016: 85), since “it uniquely helps to structure social life” in the sense that it “creates and reinforces connections between people, communities, and institutions, and thus it ultimately creates relationships of power” (ibid., 89). In accordance with the belief expressed by Rowland Atkinson and Keith Jacobs in their *House, Home and Society*, namely that housing studies “is by no means the preserve of sociology departments […] but is active wherever it is being practiced” (2016: 159–160), our seminar offers an opportunity to reflect on house and home in their literary and other cultural representations. We invite proposals for 20-minute papers addressing (but not limited to) the following topics:

- the motif of house and/or home in literature and other media (film, TV, visual arts)
- the house as a site of historical or cultural significance
- the domestic space as a site of power
- house and home and family (e.g. normative vs. alternative family models)
- gender relations in the domestic sphere (e.g. [non-]patriarchal roles, the housewife, the stay-at-home dad, etc.)
- house as a body / the body as home
- the haunted house motif
- the home invasion horror genre
- home ownership vs. homelessness
- (not-)at-homeness – narratives of (not) belonging and/or homesickness
- homeland, migration, the politics of home
- house and home and nostalgia
- the planet Earth as home / home beyond Earth
- …

Please send a 200-word abstract together with a short biographical note to houseandhome2020@gmail.com. The deadline for submission of abstracts is 15 February 2020. Notifications about proposal acceptance will be sent by 1 March 2020.

There is no conference fee.
Venue: Institute of English Studies, Jagiellonian University, al. Mickiewicza 9, 31-120 Kraków, Poland.

Organisers:
Dr Ewa Kowal
Dr hab. Bożena Kucała
Dr hab. Beata Piątek