

CALL FOR PAPERS

TRANSITIONS IN ENERGY LANDSCAPES AND EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES:

A Workshop organized by the Material Cultures of Energy Project and the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society

Venue: Kerschensteiner Kolleg / Deutsches Museum
Munich, Germany

Date: Thurs 27 April-Sat 29 April 2017

Overview & Aims

This workshop will explore the co-evolution of energy landscapes and everyday lives over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Energy landscapes are environments defined by energy-related processes and infrastructures of extraction, generation, transmission, distribution and consumption. These environments have changed dramatically in the last two centuries. Systems based around local extraction of wood to fuel open fires have been gradually, though not completely or uniformly, replaced by centralized generating plants, gas pipelines, pylons and wires delivering energy direct to homes. Changes in material and spatial energy formations have coincided with major social transformations of consumer cultures and urban/rural ways of life. But how energy transformed everyday lives and how people engaged with energy and other infrastructures of modernity was, and still is, highly differentiated by political, cultural and social contexts.

We invite proposals for papers that will conceptualize and explore the transformative relations between emerging spatial formations of energy and consumers' encounters with new energies. Papers should address the two core workshop questions: **(1)** How have human-environment encounters with material energies and infrastructures varied and challenged conceptualizations of energy as a universal, modernizing force acting upon nature and society? **(2)** How have changing energy landscapes shaped, and been shaped by, the agency and resilience of people in their roles as consumers, citizens and environmentalists? Through the evaluation of past intersections of material energies, local environments and everyday lives, we also ask participants to consider connections to debates about sustainable energy formations today.

Themes & Case Studies

Speakers from diverse disciplines, including the arts, humanities, social and environmental sciences, are invited to contribute papers that illuminate changing energy landscapes and consumer interactions in diverse geographical contexts (global North and South) over the past two centuries.

Possible themes of interest include:

- *Material transitions* from wood to different fossil fuels; developments in nuclear or renewable sources; and the reshaping of consumer imaginaries (e.g. natural or artificial, hazardous or benign, familiar or unknown, intrusive or invisible, stable or unstable); interactions with new energy forms.
- *Spatial transformations* of urban and rural energy landscapes, including the intersection between local community visions of electrified space and those of governments, regulators and energy network developers, as well as encounters with the physical restructuring of nature and new manifestations of infrastructure.
- *Everyday encounters* with energy related to the domestic reordering of space/household infrastructure and shifting temporalities and sensibilities of demand, such as requirements for new load flexibilities or for redefinitions of comfort.

Cases studies will highlight energy-consumer intersections at different scales – such as micro-encounters with energy in the home, public associations with remote sites of production, or consumer connections to distribution grids. Other possible lines of enquiry include: studies of the enduring effects of older, more localized energy forms, alongside new centralized, modernized sources or infrastructural arrangements; a focus on specific technological elements (e.g. storage tanks, transformers, wires) or material qualities (solid, viscous, inert, combustible, renewable) to provide in-depth insights into changing human-energy-environment relations. Where case studies are connected to current debates about sustainable energy formations, we invite consideration of key patterns and processes of resistance and acceptance that have shaped resilient energy spaces and practices.

The use of visual materials (photographs, supply maps, grid diagrams, models) to illustrate different dimensions of the emerging relationship between places and forms of power is encouraged. The workshop will also be linked to an Energy Transitions exhibition running concurrently at the Deutsches Museum, Munich. It will be held in English.

Outcomes

The final session of the workshop will address conceptual, methodological and empirical insights arising from the event and their value for informing contemporary debates about sustainable energy configurations. It will explore the implications for conceptualizations of energy as a universal, modernizing and transformative force, for patterns of social resistance or acceptance, for consumer agency or vulnerability, and for debates over changing energy scales – from local sources and micro-grids to complex distribution chains.

Abstract Submission

If you are interested in presenting a paper at the workshop, please email the following

- abstract (maximum 500 words)
- short 1-2 page CV

to V.J.Taylor@greenwich.ac.uk by Tues 31 May 2016.

Notification of selection of papers will be emailed in July 2016.

Practicalities

Accommodation and travel expenses (economy air/second class train travel) for invited participants will be covered by the workshop organizers. The workshop will be held at the Kerschensteiner Kolleg of the Deutsches Museum, Munich, Germany.

Papers & Publications

Invited speakers will be asked to prepare a short discussion paper for pre-circulation, summarizing their key conceptual, methodological and empirical contributions to the overall workshop goals and one (or more) of the workshop's core themes (approx. 4,000-6,000 words including footnotes, on topics not being considered for publication elsewhere).

We plan to publish abridged versions of workshop papers in a special issue of *Rachel Carson Center Perspectives*. Selected workshop papers will form the basis of an environmental humanities journal special issue or an edited book.

Material Cultures of Energy Organizers in collaboration with the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society and Deutsches Museum:

Dr Vanessa Taylor and Dr Heather Chappells.

If you have any questions about this Call for Papers, please contact us at V.J.Taylor@greenwich.ac.uk.

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