



Domestic temporalities: Nature times in the house-as-home

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 29 July 2008

Received in revised form 13 July 2009

Keywords:

More-than-human geographies

More-than-human agency

Homemaking

Nature

Temporality

Common brushtail possum

Companion animals

Decay

ABSTRACT

Studies of domestic temporalities have emphasised the timing of social activities and interactions in the home, including how family members negotiate their use of home spaces and technologies, the impact of flexible work practices on home, and the organisation of care and mothering activities. But home is also shaped by the rhythms and times of nonhumans that inhabit, travel through and are part of the house-as-home; it is further shaped by the environment outside home. Drawing inspiration from recent discussions of nature times the paper explores the more-than-human temporalities of domestic space. It charts the ageing and decay of house structures, the disruption caused by nocturnal animals, and the seasonal cycles of sunlight and plant growth that immediately surround the home, attending to the ways that these events shape everyday experiences of home and homemaking. These times and rhythms are examined through interviews undertaken with people living with uninvited brushtail possums in the ceilings of their homes, interviews completed by new dog owners, interviews with gardeners, and analysis of popular Australian homemaking magazines. These stories emphasise the dynamic and unfolding nature of the house-as-home as a hybrid timespace produced through an ongoing entwinement of human and nonhuman, living and non-living, culture and nature.

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1. Introduction

Studies of home and homemaking demonstrate the complexity and multiplicity of domestic times which are shaped by social and material relations within and beyond the house-as-home (e.g. Brannen, 2005; Gregson, 2007; Jarvis, 2005; Jarvis and Pratt, 2006; Heaton, 2001). Yet the impact of 'nature'-times on home and homemaking remains largely unconsidered. This is a notable absence in light of recent accounts that highlight home's material and spatial imbrication with nature, nonhumans and the 'outside' (Kaika, 2004; Power, 2007), and is drawn into sharper relief by research that shows that nature-times and rhythms are bound up in the production and transformation of place (e.g. Jones and Cloke, 2002; Macnaghten and Urry, 1998). In this paper I address this absence, opening up three particular ways that home and homemaking are shaped by more-than-human times, rhythms and temporalities. I examine classes between diurnal and nocturnal rhythms, the significance of seasonal cycles, and processes of ageing and decay in homemaking. These themes develop from the accounts of people who have lived with uninvited native Australian common brushtail possums (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) in the ceiling cavities of their homes, interviews and diaries completed by new dog owners, interviews with gardeners, and articles and advertisements in contemporary Australian home magazines. Through this analysis I foreground the dynamic and unfolding nature of the

house-as-home as a hybrid timespace produced through ongoing entwinements of human and nonhuman, living and non-living, culture and nature, and speak to broader debates about the continuing significance of nature-times in a contemporary context that is often assumed to be dominated by 'clock' and 'instantaneous' time (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998). In particular I consider how feelings of homeyness, of being at home in the house-as-home, are shaped, structured and ruptured by more-than-human times. I start with a discussion of how time and temporality have been understood in the house-as-home.

2. Time and temporality in the home

Time is a relational construct that is performed and experienced in relation to space and the embodied social and material relations that people are embedded in. It is not a neutral or linear construct, but rather reflects and is made through diverse and intertwining relations: for example, bodily rhythms combine with the times of nonhuman natures and the rhythms of the clock, home and work to create everyday life as an 'intricate tapestry' (Adam, 1995) of intersecting and sometimes discordant times, rhythms and temporal regimes that are always more-than-human (see for example Davies, 2001; Schwanen, 2007; Shove and Southerton, 2000). These diverse times and rhythms shape the ways that people encounter and experience place, for example, they can be experienced as being in-tune with place, but can also jar and be experienced as producing a discordant and arrhythmic sense of place

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(see Edensor and Holloway, 2008; Kärrholm, 2009). The times and rhythms of places also impact on and are performed through the body, for example through feelings of boredom, excitement and even tiredness (e.g. Anderson, 2004; Edensor and Holloway, 2008; Widerberg, 2006).

Recent research about homemaking demonstrates this relational sense of time, revealing the house-as-home as a complex timespace made through multiple temporal regimes that are produced through practices including the performance of homemaking, household social relations and paid employment. Homemaking activities are performed across temporalities that range from the everyday through to decades, and include routine, habitual relations like cleaning, as well as more exceptional events like moving house and renovating (Gregson, 2007; see also Miller, 2001). Domestic technologies bring their own temporal structures and demands to these relations requiring that homemakers perform in ways that mesh with their programmed capacities (e.g. Gregson, 2007; Shove and Southerton, 2000), while household social relations add further complexity through increasingly individualised and fractured timetables. This is exemplified in the trend towards 'eating on the go' and the use of 'time zoning' as a way of managing conflicts over the use of home spaces (Daly, 1996; Munro and Madigan, 1999). Activities relating to paid employment, including the time spent getting to work (Jarvis, 2005; Jarvis and Pratt, 2006), flexible work practices that allow paid work to take place in the home, and extended work hours (Jarvis and Pratt, 2006; Kaufman-Scarborough, 2006; Schwanen and Kwan, 2008; Tietze and Musson, 2002), bring further complexity as they connect home to the temporal structure and demands of the workplace (Brannen, 2005). The biological rhythms of family members, particularly babies and young children, permeate these routines and bring additional challenges to the temporal organisation of home life (Everingham, 2002).

The multiple times, rhythms and temporalities that flow through home co-exist, interact, entwine, coincide and conflict, producing home as a complex and sometimes fragmented timespace. They are not always, or readily, synchronised, but rather are negotiated, 'juggled' and mediated. These negotiations occur around and through the spaces of home, and the material and social relations that people participate in (Everingham, 2002; Kaufman-Scarborough, 2006; Tietze and Musson, 2002). They are negotiated through dominant values of home, including views of home as a safe, comfortable, family space that is spatially and temporally distinct from paid work (Blunt and Dowling, 2006).¹ The materiality of home, including house design and layout, also plays a role in the negotiation of home times, for example by allowing time away, or facilitating multi-tasking. The latter is highlighted by a respondent to Dowling (2008, p. 543) who explains that open-plan living allows her "to see everyone and everything going on at one time". Complex home times are also practically negotiated through strategies including 'juggling' responsibilities (Daly, 1996; Everingham, 2002; Rutherford, 2001) and using paid home help (Jarvis, 2005). However, management of home's multiple temporal regimes is gendered. Women are most often responsible for mediating conflicting or coinciding temporal regimes, experiencing a polychronic sense of time "that is patterned by a set of simultaneous interactions, focused on the present, and shaped by the involvement of people in transactions" (Daly, 1996, p. 148). These

¹ People undertaking paid work in the home illustrate the complexities of combining the temporalities associated with these conceptually separate spaces. Many emphasise the fragmentation of work time by the needs of children and domestic tasks. Where some workers try and maintain a separation between paid work and domestic tasks through strategies that include dressing in work clothes and working in a separate space like an office, for others paid work occurs around the temporality of domestic and family demands, including the biological rhythms of children (Tietze and Musson, 2002).

examples highlight the relational nature of temporal negotiations in home, which occur through social, spatial and material interactions.

Despite knowledge that home is materially and spatially imbricated with nature, nonhumans and the 'outside' (Kaika, 2004; Power, 2007), the times and temporalities that are associated with these spaces, materials and entities are absent in research about the temporal organisation of domestic life. A more-than-human perspective on domestic times, as explored in this paper, can extend this literature by focusing on the "more clearly independent agencies" (Hitchings, 2004, p. 181) embodied by plants, nonhuman animals, weather patterns, seasons, diurnal cycles and some parts of the house itself. These entities and rhythms play an active and transformative role in their relations with people and in place-making (see Gregson, 2007, pp. 144–151; Hinchliffe and Whatmore, 2006; Hitchings, 2003; Jones and Cloke, 2002; Power, 2005), including within the home (Gregson, 2007, pp. 152–155; Power, 2007; Smith, 2003), and provide an opportunity for thinking about the ways that domestic times and temporalities are constitutively more-than-human.

A limited amount of research undertaken outside the house-as-home supports this approach, showing that more-than-human times and rhythms are bound up in the ways that places are made and imagined. Where the "immensely long, imperceptibly changing, evolutionary or glacial time", associated with processes like plate tectonics and evolution, contribute a sense of continuity or stability in landscape (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998, p. 147; see also Jones and Cloke, 2002; Massey, 2006), the more readily observable (from the perspective of a human lifetime) 'ecological' times associated with seasonal changes, diurnal rhythms and the growth patterns and movements associated with some plants and animals, bring a comparative sense of dynamism and change (see especially Jones and Cloke, 2002, pp. 222–225; and also Cloke and Jones, 2001, 2004). For example, trees entwine with social timescales as they are planted for the future, to symbolically mark the present, to establish permanence and to protect or honour the past (Jones and Cloke, 2002, p. 223). While some individual, mature trees constitute an imposing presence in place (see Jones and Cloke, 2002, pp. 189–211), others assist in the transformation of place through their capacity for rapid, opportunistic growth (Cloke and Jones, 2004).

I bring these insights to geographies of home, drawing more-than-human geographies together with relational studies of time to explore how domestic times and temporalities are performed in relation to space and the embodied social and material relations that people are embedded in. As this section showed, the 'social' dimensions of these relations have been subject to a range of research. In this paper I broaden this view, arguing that domestic times and temporalities are never simply social but rather reflect, are shaped by, and produced through relations that are always more-than-human. I particularly explore how these more-than-human times and temporalities intersect and entwine with human residents feelings of homeyness in the house-as-home. I use the term 'homey' to discuss residents' feelings of being-at-home, particularly their affective engagements with home as a safe, secure and comfortable space (e.g. Dowling, 2008; McCracken, 1989). I particularly explore the role of the body in these relations, expanding Noble's (2002, p. 57) assertion that

for the home to feel homely it must be a place where the use of our bodies is relatively free of external determination and constraint, where there is a 'fit' between the affective and sensory experience of the body and the material and social environment.

Through this discussion I extend previous studies that show how homeyness is made through "the careful selection and management of objects, textures, and colours" (Dowling, 2008, p. 540; and see for example Gorman-Murray, 2007; Miller, 2002; Noble, 2002; Rose,

2003) by exploring the temporal components of these choices and relations and explicating the role of the body in shaping these feelings of belonging.

3. Methodologies

My investigation of nature-times in the home draws on four distinct, but related case studies that use interviews, diary activities and magazine analysis to explore homemaking cultures in suburban Sydney, Australia. Issues of time and temporality were not initial themes in these projects, but emerged as key themes during analysis. The chosen case studies were not the only examples of nonhuman times in homemaking, instead they were chosen as examples of key times and rhythms that significantly shaped residents' experiences of home. They were also selected to provide diverse and distinct examples of more-than-human rhythms in the house-as-home that elicited a spectrum of practices and behaviours from human residents. The order of the case studies reflects this diversity, progressing from the more everyday rhythms introduced by common brushtail possums, to seasonal rhythms and finally the longer-term rhythms of ageing and decay.

Table 1 overviews the methodologies used in each study. The first case study draws on interviews conducted in 2003 for a project about suburban gardening practices. Case studies two, three and four are part of a project concerned with the ways that nonhuman animals shape homemaking practices. This research was conducted in 2006–2007. All interviews took place in Sydney's northern, northwest and inner west suburbs. Participants were predominately middle class and lived in suburban locations; two interviews took place in semi-rural areas. The majority of homes visited were 'project homes', mass-designed housing that has dominated new estate development in Australia since the 1970s. Most homes in this research were at least 10 years old. The analysis below suggests that this style of housing development may affect residents' experience of some seasonal rhythms. The age of the houses was also significant, particularly in residents' experience of ageing and decay in home. Of a total 66 interviews, 60 involved women and 10 included male participants. The reason for this gender balance is not clear, however, it is significant in light of research that points to women's different experiences and responsibilities for managing domestic time (e.g. Daly, 1996; Davies, 2001, as discussed above).

The four case studies explored everyday practices of homemaking in the suburban home and garden. Guided by an interest in the role of nonhuman agency the research was conducted and analysed through an emphasis on practices and interactions between human and nonhuman actors. Interviews were conducted in participants' gardens and homes, regularly moving between the two as participants' thoughts and activities were prompted by elements of their material environment. A key benefit of this location was that some of the nonhumans discussed were present during the interviews. In the gardens case study this produced lively and mobile interviews that moved around the garden as participants demonstrated their various garden roles and activities, while in the possum case study the home-based location provided the researcher with the opportunity to witness possum sounds and damage to house structures. The presence of dogs during the companion animal research helped to develop a comfortable and familiar setting, and provided insight into participants' relations with their canine companions. Interviews focused on questions of practice and encounter, including specific gardening practices, and experiences and issues around co-habiting with dogs and possums. An interest in homemaking practices and cultures also influenced magazine selection. The three magazines reviewed in this paper are home magazines that contain stories, advertisements and images of 'ideal' homes, and provide practical advice for Do-It-Yourself home maintenance and renovation. Though these materials cannot be read as representative of everyday homemaking practice they are important because they provide a window into popular constructions of ideal homes. The emphasis on practice also informed the analysis of interviews and magazines. This method facilitated recognition of nonhuman agency, which emerged as human and nonhuman actors interacted and were changed by their relations with each other. It has been successfully employed in other research concerned with nonhuman agency (Hitchings, 2003).

Issues of time and temporality emerged during analysis as key ways that participants constructed and experienced their relations with plants, animals and the broader environment in and around their homes. In particular, the times and temporalities associated with nonhuman entities and rhythms shaped participants' homemaking practices and their feelings of homeyness. The remainder of the paper explores this through three examples. I first examine the ways that the diurnal structure of some homes was affected by

Table 1
Research methods.

Case study	Location	Methodologies
Garden practices	Sydney: Northwest suburbs	Twenty hour-long, semi-structured interviews with 22 suburban gardeners who responded to advertisements placed in a local newspaper and the newsletter of two gardening clubs. Respondents ranged from extremely committed and knowledgeable gardeners, to those who professed a more casual and sporadic interest
Living with common brushtail possums	Sydney: Northern suburbs	Twenty-four hour-long, semi-structured interviews were conducted with people who had lived with uninvited common brushtail possums in the ceiling or wall cavities of their homes in suburban Sydney. Participants had mixed and conflicting feelings about possums. Reflecting the postcolonial context and possums' status as 'native' animals, many were unsure whether possums belonged or did not belong in the suburban location of the research
Living with a new companion animal (dog)	Sydney: Northern, Northwest and Inner West suburbs	Twenty-two people who had recently acquired a new dog took part in a combination of interviews and diary activities. Thirteen completed an interview and both diary activities, six participated in one interview only, and three completed an interview and one diary activity The first interview explored participants' experience of introducing a new dog into the family and home. The diaries asked for (1) rules/guidelines for home and family living from the perspective of human and canine household members; and (2) a photographic and written diary of participants' interactions with their dogs. The diaries informed the final interview, where people re-lived and reflected on their interactions with their dog throughout the period of the research
'Pests' in homemaker magazines	N/A	The analysis draws on monthly issues of key Australian homemaking magazines: Australian House and Garden (AH&G), Australian Home Beautiful (AHB) and Better Homes and Gardens (BH&G) published between 2001 and 2005. It focused on articles and advertisements that featured house pests or discussed house structures

the nocturnal rhythms of uninvited common brushtail possums. The experiences of people cohabiting with these animals speak to the destabilising and disruptive nature of this experience. Second, participants in each study discussed seasonal rhythms through the seasonal cycles of plants and animal bodies that lived in and around their homes. I examine how these cycles became part of homemaking practice and were mobilised by some participants to enhance their feelings of homeyness in the house-as-home. Third I reflect on the ways that temporalities of decay associated with house structures and decaying animal bodies bring a distinct temporality to home and homemaking. The analysis foregrounds the ways that people encountered, experienced, managed and responded to these diverse times and temporalities through their homemaking practices. The case studies are presented as three distinct stories about time and temporality in home. They are drawn together in the context of the literature in a final concluding section.

4. Nature-times and homemaking

4.1. Nocturnal rhythms in home

Although cycles of day and night are readily modified and blurred with technologies like electric lighting, humans continue to display a strong diurnal orientation. Desynchronisation from this rhythm, for example through shift work, is frequently associated with sickness and ill-health (Adam, 1995, pp. 45–47, 2004). Contemporary Western homes materially reproduce and reflect this diurnal rhythm in their design. Where day-time living rooms are predominately designed around large, open-planned spaces (Dowling, 2008; Munro and Madigan, 1999), bedrooms tend to be enclosed spaces that are separated from the noise and light of living areas and the outside through the use of doors and curtains. Cycles of daylight and darkness play a key role in establishing and maintaining these rhythms both in the body and home. The homes visited for this research reflected this diurnal orientation in their design and activity patterns. However, some were additionally shaped by the nocturnal rhythms of common brushtail possums (*T. vulpecula*) that lived, uninvited, in the ceilings and wall cavities. These animals have enthusiastically adapted to the benefits of suburban living and are found throughout much of suburban Sydney. A recent study undertaken in the same suburbs as this research found that 69% of people whose properties were visited by brush-tail possums reported hearing possum activity in roof cavities, while 58% reported that possums inhabited these spaces (Hill et al., 2007). The activities and vocalisations of these nocturnal visitors disrupt usual household activity and represent a disturbing presence in home (see also Hill et al., 2007; Matthews et al., 2004). In this section I show that the timing of these activities underpins their unsettling impact.

Possums bring a nocturnal rhythm to home that contrasts with the diurnal orientation of human residents. Participants experienced this overlay of conflicting rhythms as disruptive. They described hearing possums leaving the roof cavity at dusk and returning at dawn, their footsteps echoing into the house as they travelled through the ceiling cavity and across the roof. These sounds were often extremely loud: Susan described them as being “like nuclear weapons going off” and “World War III”, while Greg joked that it was “like a horse galloping across an iron roof. It obviously wasn’t a horse, but pretty close to it.” At dawn possums were heard “rattling”, “tearing things apart” (Stephanie) and “scrabbling around” in the ceiling (Anthea) before they settled to sleep. These sounds, which persisted for between five minutes and one hour, became a regular part of the nightly routine while possums re-

mained in residence and could lead to significant, regular sleep disruption as described by Judy:

I know myself when I've been working long hours and it's continuous ... I think it's the continuity of sleep deprivation that's the real danger, I think you go quite spacey, all you want to do is sleep, you become obsessed with sleep. I remember working a job where I worked eleven nights in a row really late and so it's not good to be like that, and I felt the possums deprived me of the quiet enjoyment of my place.

Judy's sleep and her usual diurnal rhythm of activity were punctuated and unsettled by the nocturnal rhythms of visiting common brushtail possums. These dissonant rhythms coincided to produce a body that was tired, grumpy and frustrated as a result of its own forced, although limited, nocturnal performance. In this way possums' nocturnal rhythms were not confined to an isolated night-time disturbance, but rather rippled out into other spaces and times that were inhabited by the tired body, contributing to strained family relations, dragging and forgotten daily routines and difficulties concentrating at work.

In addition to disrupting sleep the clash of diurnal and nocturnal rhythms disturbed and unsettled participants' feelings of homeyness, particularly their sense of comfort and security, by contributing to a feeling that the home had been invaded. The ‘thunderous loud noises’ of a possum in her ceiling reminded Andy of a burglar and prompted her husband to get out of bed and secure the house, while Samantha described being afraid when she heard a sound like a door opening while home alone one evening. Lisa explained:

every now and again they'd make some fairly spine chilling ['hissssing'] noises and you'd wake up and think oh my god! Before you realise it's possums your heart is just pounding because you *know* there's a home invasion going on downstairs.

This account highlights the significant emotional and physiological response engendered by possum sounds. Unlike the tiredness and grumpiness that colonised the body the following day as discussed above, these were short-term affects that were created and performed through the body in the immediacy of being woken from sleep. It is significant that although the vocalisations were themselves disruptive and unusual, it was their occurrence at night-time, when people were sleeping and perceived themselves as vulnerable, that made them especially unsettling. These experiences spoke to a construction of night as a ‘scary’ and unsettling time when the home was ideally closed-up, secured and quiet. Possum sounds represented a significant challenge to this view, referencing a home invasion as they penetrated throughout the darkened house.

This effect was compounded by the disembodied nature of possum sounds, which conjured feelings of a more ghostly invasion. This is exemplified in Caroline's account of her first night in a new home when, already concerned about the lack of security in the house, Caroline woke to a sound like a “big ceramic pot being dragged across the bathroom and you wake up and go [gasp]! I couldn't work out *what* the sound was.” When her husband followed the sound to the lounge room he observed a lever on the fireplace slowly moving, seemingly on its own. Although within days it emerged that a possum had taken up residence in the chimney, the disembodiment of possum sounds lent them the qualities of a haunting when heard at night-time. When occasionally heard in the day time possum sounds did not have the same unsettling effect, but rather were predominately heard as either familiar, or annoying.

Finally, in addition to disturbing bodily rhythms, efforts to manage and minimise possum incursions saw nocturnal rhythms further disturb the diurnal routines of homemaking by requiring

that residents' engage with possum timetables and take part in their own nocturnal activities. Often these activities represented a short-term effort to limit the duration of possum sounds. Anna's description of her efforts to disturb the possum by hitting against the ceiling with a broom is typical and highlights the limited efficacy, and frustration, of these short-term methods:

we'd have to get up and get the broom and go bang, bang, and sometimes you'd have to get up more than once and then I'd get up and then [my husband] would get up and we'd take turns. It wasn't a very good solution [laughs] but what could we do! [...]. And so I would do one then [my husband] would do one and it took longer to get him to stop. In the beginning you'd get him to stop with a few bangs but then after a while he'd just keep going and you'd keep banging [laughs].

Attempts to seal the home against further possum habitation also prompted nocturnal activity, with householders finding it necessary to synchronise their building activity with possums' nocturnal timetables. Reflecting traditional gender relations in homemaking men were most likely to perform these DIY repairs. Dianne's husband stayed up late until he heard the possum leave before sealing up the final hole it had been using to access the ceiling. Similarly a "diligent" workman who was sealing Donna's home returned at 11 o'clock one night to seal the final section. By contrast, Lana forgot about the possums until after her roof had been sealed and had to undertake the infinitely more complicated task of removing the trapped possum through the inside of her house. These interactions with possums and possum spaces brought a new and undesirable nocturnal rhythm to residents' own homemaking activities, augmenting their existing frustration and tiredness. They also found it challenging to construct quality DIY repairs in the dark. These activities pitted person against possum at a time when humans struggled to see, to undertake repairs and to catch or effectively deter possums. Perhaps unsurprisingly, possums were difficult to definitively remove with the majority of households experiencing long-term cohabitation of up to 2 years. Many also experienced re-habitation which parallels the experiences of Sydney residents in other related research (Hill et al., 2007).

These experiences of cohabitation with possums speak to a broader literature about the *place* of nature in the home (e.g. Hitchings, 2004; Kaika, 2004; Power, 2007). However, this is not a 'selective porosity' where nature is selectively purified and allowed to enter the home, as Kaika (2004) has described, but rather represents the destructive efforts of possums who frequently appeared intent on opening and inhabiting the house. Indeed previous research supports this view, suggesting that possums overwhelmingly prefer to inhabit buildings rather than tree hollows, which are imagined as their more 'natural' home (Statham and Statham, 1997). But more than this, this discussion expands previous research by broadening beyond the current research focus on the spatial and material dimensions of home–nature relations to foreground the significant ways that nonhuman animals also shape and become part of the times and rhythms of homemaking. It particularly expands understandings of homeyness, foregrounding the centrality of the body and bodily rhythms in these relations. In the examples discussed here homeyness and unhomeyness developed through the combined sensory capacities and rhythms of the body, especially its diurnal rhythms. These ideas are explored further in the following sections.

4.2. Seasonal rhythms

Alongside the diurnal (and occasional punctuating nocturnal) rhythms that structure everyday life in the house-as-home, longer-term seasonal rhythms also affect people and the environments

that they live in. Landscapes outside home reflect seasonal rhythms in diverse ways, including through seasonal weather patterns and the seasonal cycles of plants (Jones and Cloke, 2002). Human moods, emotions and activities are also affected by seasonal change (Adam, 1995; Hitchings, 2007), as is the home itself. Although contemporary Western homes are increasingly regulated by climate control technologies that modify seasonal variations (see Shove, 2003), seasonal rhythms continue to significantly influence how home is imagined and made. This is apparent in the recurrence of discussions of sunlight throughout the reviewed homemaker magazines. For example, in 2001 alone, *Better Homes and Gardens* contained three separate articles discussing ways of maximising the availability of sunlight in home (April 2001: 94–97; May 2001: 138; September 2001: 136). These articles charged sunlight with the capacity to produce a warm and comfortable home, as well as increase property value on resale.

Seasonal variations in the angle and availability of sunlight, when combined with house design, significantly affect the temperature and amount of natural light present inside homes. Houses can be designed to harmonise with this seasonality and maximise the benefits of seasonal changes, but are frequently constructed independent of this consideration, as were the majority of homes in this research. In Noble's (2002, p. 57, see above) terms these variables represented an "external determination or constraint" that limited the ways that people felt they could use their homes. This was particularly apparent in the gardening study where seasonal variations in sunlight were charged with limiting the usability of some rooms: Lydia was typical when she complained that the orientation of her home restricted the amount of natural sunlight, which meant that the back living areas and outdoor living spaces were very cold and sometimes unusable in winter. Here, the seasonal (un)availability of sunlight interweaved with a series of factors including house design, the participant's preference to limit the use of heaters during the day time, and her embodied sense of comfort and warmth, to create these back living areas as uncomfortable and unhomey spaces.

Only one home in the gardens research was designed with specific consideration of sunlight. Bridget explained:

you probably didn't notice, but the house is not running parallel to the street it's actually um 10 degrees east of due north south. And the eaves are a certain width, because we get ... it's a sort of passively effective solar house. This big tree here affects it, and it was lopped, really lopped down when we first moved in and it's grown and it covers the roof far more than we'd like it to. But you can see, for the middle of winter we get a lot of northerly sun directly in.

The environmental benefits of the design were of key concern when this home was being built, resulting in a seasonally sensitive home that selectively drew in and excluded sunlight to produce a more stable internal environment throughout the year. By contrast, like Lydia's, the majority of other homes visited for the research were mass-designed project homes that were built and then purchased by participants. Reflecting dominant building styles in Australia during the 1970s and 1980s, the design, orientation and location of these houses reflected economic concerns to maximise the number of properties built and limit design costs, rather than specifically environmental concerns (see also Wilson, 1992). In these homes the lack of design consideration to the presence and mobility of sunlight made sections of these houses seasonally uncomfortable and unusable. To re-synchronise the home, achieving comfort while conserving energy use on heating and cooling, household activities became mobile, shifting throughout the house in pursuit of sunlight and warmth during winter, and shade and coolness during summer.

The seasonal cycles of plants interweave with the seasonal cycles of sunlight and the orientation of the house, bringing further seasonality to the availability of sunlight within homes. Evergreen trees can block or limit the amount of sunlight reaching particular parts of a house, as captured in Bridget's comment above, while deciduous trees bring a seasonal variation that can complement or clash with the seasonal availability of sunlight. A Chinese Elm in Melissa's garden harmonised with the seasonality of sunlight and the house design, affording her home protection from the "northern westerly sun of an afternoon and yet I'd get the sun through in the winter when it lost its leaves". When this tree died Melissa replaced it with another with the goal that it would also "let the light and sun in [during] the winter." Boyd selected plants for similar reasons, explaining: "with these, always outside the windows I'll put a deciduous in so that in the winter you get the light in, and we like flowering ones." This instrumental approach to plant selection was common, and represented an effort to mobilise and participate in the seasonal rhythms in and around the home. These types of choices facilitated a sense of control over the home and were a way of inserting a new contrasting or complementary rhythm into the place to mediate against the limitations of the existing and less malleable house design. However, the individual growth cycles and variability of plant growth interweaved with this seasonality to produce a dynamic space that readily exceeded the control of gardeners. As Melissa explained of her new Chinese Elm when discussing its impact on the garden, "as that grows it will change the structure of the garden a bit more but it will adapt and I will adapt to it." Like the plants and gardens themselves, the seasonal impact on the home shifted and changed as plants grew, aged and died.

A further way that seasonal cycles shape home is through the bodies and activities of nonhuman animals that live in and travel through home. Participants in this and other studies (e.g. Hill et al., 2007; Matthews et al., 2004) have recognised seasonal patterns in the presence of possums in and around their homes. In this research spring and summer were identified as key possum seasons by all participants, whereas winter was associated with a comparative absence: thus spring and summer were associated with increased nocturnal activity, as discussed in the previous section. The presence of other insect 'pests' like cockroaches, flies, mosquitoes and fleas was also associated with summer and spring by some participants in the companion animals' research, while owners of dogs with shedding coats discussed the seasonal nature of this 'problem' which demanded increased cleaning and dog grooming.

Seasonal cycles of pests and dog hair were problematic and unwelcome because they challenged home's appearance as a clean and safe space, giving rise to feelings of discomfort and unhomeness and prompting a host of seasonally targeted housework activities from the traditional 'Spring Clean' (*AH&G* October 2001: 44–49; see also Beating Allergies *BH&G* October 2001: 182), to pest control against the summer threat of ants, cockroaches, dust mites, mosquitoes and fleas (e.g. *Mortein*, *AH&G* March 2002: 131; *Mosquito Magnet*, *AH&G* January 2004: 187; *Mortein odourless Zapper*, *BH&G* February 2003: 44). This seasonality was further evident in residents' own homemaking activities against pests and dog hair. For example, Jenny emphasised the magnitude of her dog's seasonal shedding in both the interviews and diary activity, providing a photograph of her son grooming the dog to illustrate the large volumes of hair that were removed every day leading up to the warmer months. However, it was clear, both in the magazines and in participants' descriptions of their homemaking practice, that these tasks were never completed but rather were cyclical and ongoing. Dog hair and dust mites, for example, were never definitively eradicated but rather were minimised and maintained at levels that were perceived as safe or comfortable. This contrib-

uted to a sense of home as an ongoing project that required a consistent, yet seasonally variable response to the many nonhuman animals that cohabited the house-as-home. In bringing a predictable seasonality to homemaking these cycles allowed residents to undertake a range of pre-emptive and responsive actions to secure the house.

4.3. Ageing and decay

In living things the temporality of decay is balanced by that of growth and renewal, with the decaying part of the interplay increasingly gaining the upper hand as we get older. (Adam, 1995, p. 18)

In addition to macro-environmental rhythms and the bodily rhythms of animals cohabiting the house-as-home, home is also temporally shaped by the seemingly inanimate objects that it is constructed from, particularly through processes of ageing and decay. The ageing and decay of house structures and other entities and materials brings a distinct temporality to home. These temporalities are highly situated, dependent on a range of variables that include the particular qualities of housing materials, local environmental conditions, the activities of residents, and the activity and presence of nonhuman animals. Processes of ageing and decay often challenge the stability and security of home, but they are also sometimes welcomed by homemakers and contribute to feelings of homeliness. Processes of ageing and decay in home can be divided into two types: chronic processes relating to long-term changes in house structures, and acute events that command the attention of home residents.

The house-as-home is subject to ongoing, chronic processes of decay as house structures gradually weather, rot, rust and otherwise deteriorate over temporalities that range from the short-term to the long-term. Some of these changes occur over periods of days, weeks, years or decades, while others take place over a longer time-span that is not as readily encountered. These different temporalities are evident in DeSilvey's (2006) account of decay in an abandoned homestead in Montana, where the ready decay of papers contrasts with the comparative durability of some farm equipment. The reviewed magazines positioned decay as inimical to home. Decaying house structures were associated with pestilent animals like cockroaches (e.g. 'Renovation reality' *AH&G* August 2001: 58; 'Beauty lesson' *AHB* December 2001: 54–55; 'Small fortune' *AHB* March 2003: 110), and depicted as the result of neglect and an absence of human homemaking activity (e.g. 'Home maintenance' *AH&G* 2003: 139–149; 'Old master' *AHB* April 2004: 108–115; 'Urban edge' *AHB* May 2004: 110–117). In these stories decrepit kitchens and run down 'heritage' cottages were the archetype of unhomey decay. Similarly dust, a product of deteriorating human bodies, home furnishings and more (Dunham, 2004), was depicted as making home unsafe and unhealthy. Its management required regular, ongoing cleaning activity (e.g. 'Spring into action', *AH&G* October 2001: 44–49; 'Health@home', *AH&G* October 2003: 188; 'Asthma attack', *BH&G* October 2004: 137–138).

By contrast, some forms of chronic decay are homey and fashionable. An alternate discourse of ageing surrounds these items, with terms like 'retro', 'rustic' and 'time-worn' (e.g. 'Country revival', *BH&G* March 2002: 14–15) contributing a sense of comfort and fashion. In the same way the suggestion that "natural stone will [...] age and wear well, developing a patina" lends a sense of character, history and warmth to this material (What's afoot? *BH&G* August 2002: 42–47). One woman's account of designing and building a house that would blend into the aesthetics of the surrounding rural environment encapsulates this type of homey decay ('Building the house from Oz', *BH&G* October 2002: 128–130). According to the article, much of the Australian feel of this

house comes from the choice of exterior materials, in particular the use of unfinished corrugated iron:

More commonly corrugated iron is supplied with a Zinc-lume finish, which keeps it bright and is more effective against rust. But if it's only galvanised, as it is here, it will soften to a matt grey patina. Patrick and Catherine want it to dull down for a look that's just right for the Australian countryside.

Here decay is cast as a process of 'weathering' and 'softening' that gives an Australian feel and helps the home to "sit comfortably in the rural landscape." Yet the reader is warned that over a period of 30 years this material is likely to rust, giving "a real authentic country look!" but one that is not deemed as appropriate in a home. The design of the home facilitates the easy replacement of this now decayed exterior, maintaining a contemporary, but location appropriate look. Timber and stone were frequently promoted this way, with readers educated about the durability and weathering capacity of various 'natural' and 'man-made' products (e.g. 'Look out!' *AHB* November 2001: 143–148; 'Warming to wood' *AH&G* January 2004: 122–126; 'Go with the grain' *AH&G* February 2005: 126–132). Where 'natural' materials were prioritised for their capacity to age and weather in location specific ways, 'man-made' materials were promoted for their durability but viewed as lacking the subtlety and variety associated with locally aged and weathered materials.

As Patrick and Catherine's story exemplifies, much home maintenance and material selection navigates a temporal balance between desirable ageing and unhomey decay. Practices of home maintenance and cleaning are a way that homemakers can modify and intervene in these temporalities. The magazines posit surveillance as a way of identifying and combating unhomey decay as it occurs. Gutters and downpipes (requiring bi-annual inspections), roofing and external paintwork (requiring annual inspections) are examples of spaces listed as requiring regular inspection ('Manageable maintenance' *BH&G* March 2001: 142–143; see also 'Home advice: who ya gonna call?' *AH&G* October 2001: 217–220). Readers are also instructed how to maintain housing materials and limit or prevent the possibility of decay and deterioration through regular resealing and painting (see also 'Quick fixes for aluminium windows' *BH&G* October 2001: 208–209; 'What's afoot?' *BH&G* August 2002: 42–47; 'Go with the grain' *AH&G* February 2005: 126–132). These practices aim to intervene in the temporalities of decay, freezing or holding materials within their contemporary state.

In practice residents were often more likely to respond to observed decay, rather than undertake regular pre-emptive action. This was particularly evident in the case of hidden, out-of-reach spaces like rooves. For example, many participants in the possum research only identified sites of decay in roof structures after they had been used as access points by possums. Stephanie described how possums identified weaker, deteriorating areas under the gutters of her house and used their claws to create an opening, while Dianne explained that possums were accessing the ceiling cavity of her home through holes that had developed as a result of the previous owner's poor maintenance. Undertaking responsive rather than pre-emptive action meant that participants experienced the effects of exaggerated decay and often had to replace structures rather than simply maintain them over a period of time. This added to the cost of repair and explains why many people cohabited with possums for extended periods of up to 2 years.

Alongside the ongoing, chronic decay of housing structures and materials, the house-as-home is also a site of acute decay. I use the term 'acute' to describe both the process of sudden or rapid decay of some materials or bodies in home, and the capacity of this process to command the attention of residents. An example of this is the decay associated with some food. Although the temporality of food decay can be modified (e.g. the shelf life of some products

can be extended through refrigeration, freezing or cooking), with many foods decay is an expected and inevitable outcome. This type of decay is often removed from home as rubbish. However, an alternate view allows some decaying food to become compost, before re-entering home in a generative capacity (e.g. *Hawkins, 2006*). Three participants in the research experienced acute decay through the bodies of possums that died in inaccessible sections of their home's ceiling or wall cavities. Letitia and Bronwyn initially assumed the rotting stench lingering around their front doors was coming from 'outside', possibly poor plumbing or a blocked drain. Sally's account shows that these smells often had a significant impact on everyday life in the home:

[There was] this hideous, we knew it was something dead and with the heat of summer, it was just this *smell* that took over and it was starting to *really* annoy me because my husband's handyman, like he built this extension onto the house and he knew where things could be, but he checked everywhere, absolutely everywhere and couldn't see where this possum could be. [...] he ended up having to pull half the place apart trying to find this dead thing and then oh, the maggots, oh it was just disgusting. But then in the meantime of him trying to find out where it was and having this smell in the house was driving me *nuts*. I had to close these doors here, I had to pull the mattress down here because I'm not going up, I can't sleep in my bedroom! I was really stressed, I had to, I got cranky with everybody [...], I had to escape to Westfield [a major shopping complex] [laughs], light candles, smelly candles.

As Sally explains, the smell of decaying possum flesh shaped how the home was experienced and used. The feelings of disgust that these smells provoked were, as in this example, enough to compel residents to alter their patterns of living in the house and even to retreat from the house. The smell in Bronwyn's home lingered for a few weeks before the workman she had engaged was able to discover it. Bronwyn observed its removal, describing it as "just putrid, absolutely putrid, maggots had started eating it." Like compost this decay was also generative, but in distinctly unhomey ways.

Decaying possums gradually thickened the air in sections of the house that surrounded the carcass. The stench thinned towards the edges, providing a textured smellscape that residents navigated in their search for the carcass, and as they travelled through home as part of their daily activity. Whereas chronic decay could be ignored for extended periods, these types of acute decay demanded the attention of homeowners because they overtly and quite charismatically challenged any sense of home as a safe or healthy environment. Rather than intercepting or limiting the temporalities of decay, residents sought to remove the decay offsite. But decay weakened possums' structural unity, producing a leaky body that distributed and ingrained its smells, fluids and flesh into the materials of home. While Letitia engaged an industrial cleaner who chemically sterilised the area, Bronwyn and Sally burnt candles and oils in an attempt to overpower the smell. These methods had limited success. Residents of these homes instead endured the smell until the decay cycle was complete and the smell no longer noticeable. In this way the feelings of unhomeyness associated with acute decay were tied up with the temporality of decay, which was highly situated and dependent on local environmental factors like temperature, moisture and the presence of animals like maggots that participate in the decay cycle.

5. Conclusions

In this paper I have explored three ways that home and home-making are shaped by rhythms, times and temporalities that are

more-than-human. Drawn together the examples broaden current understandings of home by demonstrating, first, that 'nature' times are part of the spatiality and materiality of the house-as-home and, second, the importance of time and temporality in the embodied relations of homeyness. They also confirm the traditional gendering of work in the home, with men most likely to take responsibility for DIY repairs, though this issue could benefit from more specific research attention. These contributions are underpinned by the conceptual and methodological engagement with the particular, creative contributions that nonhuman entities and rhythms make in home. This is a novel way of exploring homemaking that goes beyond looking at the ways that nonhumans are used and mobilised to make home, which is the dominant way that homemaking practices have been investigated (see Hitchings, 2004). Rather, this approach also considers the specific qualities, capacities and properties that nonhuman entities and rhythms bring to home. As Braun (2005, p. 646) explores in another context, this approach shows that the house-as-home is "a decidedly more-than-human space, not simply because it 'mobilises' nature, but because nonhuman life continuously circulates in and through its spaces." But more than this, the paper has identified nonliving nonhumans as a further force creatively inhabiting and shaping home. Studies of home and homemaking have much to gain from this approach which offers a more dynamic engagement with home as an unfolding timespace that reflects the creative input of more-than-human, more-than-living entities. I now return to the two key contributions that this paper makes to understandings of domestic time.

First the paper demonstrates the complexity of domestic time, which is characterised by a layering of complementing, conflicting and coinciding rhythms. Despite popular assumptions that contemporary life is dominated by the rhythms of 'clock' time and the 'instantaneous' speed of computer and telecommunications technologies (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998), the paper highlights many diverse and differently paced rhythms in home. Alongside the 24 h rhythms of daylight and darkness that provide a dominant structure for everyday domestic life, the paper identified longer, slower rhythms (e.g. seasonal changes and the temporalities of ageing and decay in house structures) that shape everyday life and bring a broader structure and stimulus to homemaking activity. It also demonstrated the situated nature of time and temporal negotiations in home. The particular entities that structure the house-as-home, nonhuman animals that visit home and the broader environmental context outside home, bring different embodied times, rhythms and temporalities to home that shape the ways that people use, make and experience home. Further, factors including human-bodily rhythms, house design, the presence of nonhuman animals, climate and environmental conditions shape the ways that these times, rhythms and temporalities are experienced in home.

These nature times produce a domestic timespace that frequently and readily exceeds the influence of human homemakers. In contrast to the domestic technologies, work schedules and family social relations that also shape domestic times, nature-times represent a much more elusive, dynamic and situated set of times, rhythms and temporalities, as evidenced by the sporadic nature of possum visits, the growth patterns and longevity of trees and the varying patterns of ageing and decay that affect housing structures and materials. Particularly distinct from the more regular and quantifiable rhythms of domestic technologies like refrigerators and washing machines (e.g. Gregson, 2007; Shove and Southerton, 2000), possum times and the temporalities of ageing and decay were not readily incorporated into the background of everyday homemaking, but rather variously begged, demanded and required the attention of human residents as they shaped and (un)made home.

A second key contribution of this paper is to highlight the central role of time, rhythm and temporality in constructions of homeyness. This analysis extends relational geographies of home that show how feelings of homeyness are spatially and materially produced through decisions and practices around house design and furnishing, including through photographs, toys, colours, textures and sounds (see for example Dowling, 2008; Gorman-Murray, 2007; Gregson, 2007; Rose, 2003; Young, 2004), by explicating some ways that negotiations around time are bound up in these choices and practices. Importantly, the analysis shows that nature rhythms, times and temporalities do not simply impose on the times of homemaking, and are not simply controlled within home. Rather, homemaking practices entail a negotiation with and through nature rhythms, times and temporalities as they are embodied in the particular materials and structures of home and nonhumans animals that cohabit home.

Further, the paper has begun to explicate the role of the body in the relations of homeyness. Homeyness and unhomeyness are felt, experienced and performed through a multi-sensory and multi-rhythmic body. Feelings of comfort, discomfort, nausea, surprise and fear, for example, coursed through the body as it variously encountered the warmth of sunlight, the crashing nocturnal sounds of cohabiting possums, and the stench of their rotting and decaying bodies. In this light homeyness appears less as an achievement where objects and materials are selectively chosen and organised in the house-as-home, but instead as a distributed and processual relation in which humans and nonhumans, including animals, rhythms and objects, such as the house itself, are equally entwined. Homeyness then is as irrevocably bound to the various affordances and capacities of the materials, objects, animals and rhythms that inhabit and shape the house-as-home, as it is to the capacities, rhythms and cultures of the human resident. Geographies of homemaking have much to gain from further attention to the bodily registers and experience of being-at-home.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to Robyn Dowling for her input and advice throughout the preparation of this paper. I am especially grateful to the people who took part in this research – the gardeners, people living with new dogs, and people living with possums – for the time spent sharing their experiences and stories. I also thank the anonymous reviewers whose insights have improved the paper.

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