Call For Papers

*Society for Novel Studies* Conference at the University of Utah

April 4-6, 2014

Organizers: Vincent Pecora, Scott Black, Jeremy Rosen

Land and the Novel

The history of the novel is in some ways a history of how populations left the land, and their political-theological connection to it, behind—or at least tried to. The novel never really left its chthonic roots behind, however. Like the ancient Greek tragedies, novels from Defoe and Scott on continually recalled those putatively archaic ties to land—both the soil itself and sovereign territory—even as they became the surest signs of an urban and urbane modernity. Instead, it is the critical tradition that seems to have overlooked these traces in the dust, with the consequence that the novel has become increasingly portrayed as the purely secular instrument of efficient nation-state governmentality. The fact that governmentality and the chthonic consciousness actually came to reinforce one another in a Nazi sympathizer such as Knut Hamsun no longer gets any attention at all. This conference is designed to promote a re-thinking of the novel in its relation to the land (again, both as soil and territory). It aims at something like a reconstruction of the entire nexus of land and the novel from the ground up, including broader considerations of political theology and conflict, the cosmopolitan and indigenous. The panel topics are intentionally diverse, ranging from specific historical-geographical moments (that is, using a somewhat different figuration of Bakhtin’s *chronotope*) to broader considerations of the lands in and of the novel.

Panel Topics

1. Land, Territory, Nation, Empire
2. Genres of Land: Saga, Pastoral, Georgic and the Novel
3. Land, Law, and Property
4. Working the Land
5. Blood and Soil/Race and Land/Autochthony and Strangers
6. Country and City, Redux
7. Manifest Destinies
8. Promised Lands, Sacred Lands, and Political Theology
9. Homelands, Real and Imaginary
10. Here Be Dragons: Off the Map (and Off the Planet)
11. Land versus Place
12. Ecological Disaster and Post-Apocalyptic Territory
13. Macondo and Other “Lands”
14. Transnational Novels
15. The Novel Beyond the Nation
16. Territory and the Extra-territorial
17. Geology, Geological Time, and the Novel
18. FantasyLand, Virtuality, and Speculative Geography
19. Borderlands and Disputed Lands
20. Marco? Polo! Travel, Wandering, Peripeteia and the Novel
21. Sexing the Land
22. Gaia
23. The New Indigeneity in the Americas
24. Deep Ecology

Proposals for papers to be delivered at the conference should include the following information:

1. Panel for which proposal is designed.
2. Brief description of no more than 250 words.
3. Final papers should be no longer than 2500 words.

Proposals should be sent to: [v.pecora@utah.edu](mailto:v.pecora@utah.edu) no later than December 1, 2013. You will be notified as to whether or not your paper is accepted by December 20, 2013.

Information on how to join the SNS and register for the conference available at novel.trinity.duke.edu.