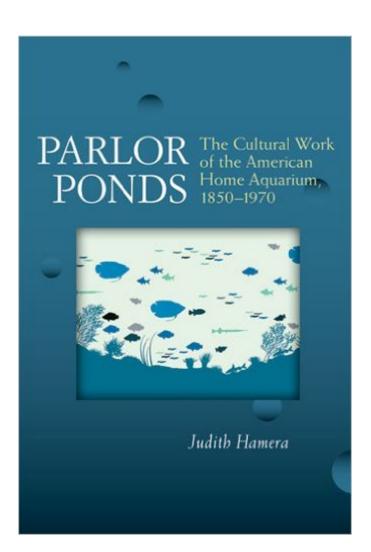
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# Parlor Ponds: The Cultural Work Of The American Home Aquarium, 1850 - 1970





### Synopsis

Parlor Ponds: The Cultural Work of the American Home Aquarium, 1850â "1970 examines the myriad cultural meanings of the American home aquarium during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and argues that the home aquarium provided its enthusiasts with a potent tool for managing the challenges of historical change, from urbanization to globalization. The tank could be a window to an alien world, a theater for domestic melodrama, or a vehicle in a fantastical undersea journey. Its residents were seen as inscrutable and wholly disposable â œits,â • as deeply loved and charismatic individuals, and as alter egos by aquarists themselves. Parlor Ponds fills a gap in the growing field of animal studies by showing that the tank is an emblematic product of modernity, one using elements of exploration, technology, science, and a commitment to rigorous observation to contain anxieties spawned by industrialization, urbanization, changing gender roles, and imperial entanglements. Judith Hamera engages advertisements, images, memoirs, public aquarium programs, and enthusiast publications to show how the history of the aquarium illuminates complex cultural attitudes toward nature and domestication, science and religion, gender and alterity, and national conquest and environmental stewardship with an emphasis on the ways it illuminates American public discourse on colonial and postcolonial expansion.

#### **Book Information**

Paperback: 280 pages Publisher: University of Michigan Press (January 16, 2012) Language: English ISBN-10: 0472051660 ISBN-13: 978-0472051663 Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 0.9 x 8.9 inches Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies) Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars Â See all reviews (3 customer reviews) Best Sellers Rank: #670,809 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #181 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Pets & Animal Care > Fish & Aquariums #3457 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Pop Culture > General #30301 in Books > History > Americas > United States

#### **Customer Reviews**

The following is taken from the introduction to Hameraâ <sup>™</sup>s book:â œMy interest in the home aquarium was spawned by deprivation. My parents would not let me have one, and the reason for this deprivation was excess. The aquarium was too much: too much mess, money, space and time.

It was too watery, too chemically, too much a potential replication of too many flushy good-byes to bleached and bloated goldfish found belly-up in countless bowls. It was too much like the microscope, the telescope, the chemistry set, the specimens for dissection bobbing in their formaldehyde-filled baggies - enthusiastically enjoyed until they werenâ <sup>™</sup>t any longer, demanding storage space, posing disposal problems. And my parents were right.â •Dr. Hamera, a professor of Performance Studies (read art and music), presents nothing in this book that shows that she has ever owned so much as a goldfish.Hamera uses book endnotes for her sources and explanations. However, to read these book endnotes one has to know the Chapter number since that is how they are arranged at the end of the book. However, the real problem with book endnotes is that they more often than not replace a true bibliography and this is the case with this book. There is no bibliography.The main job of an author is to make sure the readers understand what is being said. Unfortunately Hameraâ <sup>™</sup>s writing is rife with so much socio-babble that upon comparison, Beowulf is much easier reading. Examples:â œThese affinities inserted the tank, its residents, and its viewers into preexisting logics of perception and consumption, along with their embedded narrative logics, organizing what and how to see, as well as why.

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