

University of Pennsylvania
Institute for Environmental Studies
presents



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Design (Ownership) with Nature
Critical Ecology and the Commodification of Thirst

Everything connects.

"Land, in the legal signification comprehendeth any ground, soil or earth whatsoever, as meadows, pastures, woods, moores, waters, marshes, turfs and besides the earth doth furnish man with many other necessaries for his life, as it is replenished with hidden treasures, namely with gold, silver, brasse, iron, tynne, leade and other mettels and also with great varietie of precious stones and many other things for profit, ornament and pleasure. And lastly the earth hath in law a great extent upwards, not only of water, as hath been said, but of ayre and all other things up to heaven, for *cujus est solum ejus est usque ad coelum....*"

Coke Upon Littleton

"The shaping of land for human use ought to be based on an understanding of natural processes."
Ian McHarg

I am not an environmental scientist, and I am not an ecologist by training; however, I believe that your field's central insight – everything connects is the most powerful organizing principle for theory and practice, regardless of one's field.

In this talk, I will try to commit fully to this insight in two ways. First, we will consider several contemporary phenomena, including Coca-Cola's globalized conception of thirst, aquifer depletion in India and the United States, water commodification in the post-fordist era, and a recent statement by President George W. Bush ["The oil of Iraq belongs to the people of Iraq."]. Secondly, we will examine a system of ownership that is inspired by McHarg's "layer cake." Can we design a system of ownership that is not utopian (because we want it to exist), that is not socialist (because public ownership is increasingly not viable in the current political context), that is to some extent privatized and market-based (because it must be to be accepted), but that is also grounded in environmental science, in democratic and egalitarian principles, and in a universal commitment to life?

Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2003
Time: NOON - 1:30 pm
Place: Carolyn Hoff Lynch Auditorium
On the Penn campus Chemistry Building
34th & Spruce Street (entrance on 34th Street)

NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED
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