

FOLKLORE 575

ENVIRONMENTAL IMAGINARIES

Fall 2007

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3619 Locust Walk, Room 404

Wednesday 2-4

Office hours: Thursday 11-1 and by appointment

"Environmental imaginaries" names the contending discourses that order society around processes of development and change. Behind public controversies over development, its subjects, objects, and technologies, are an array of collectively wrought fictions that relate people to their material surroundings. Related to the notion of the "social imaginary," the term "environmental imaginaries" was coined by social geographers Michael Watts and Richard Peet to highlight the interrelations of nature and society across a spectrum of time-spaces that humanize nature and socialize humanity.

We will be especially attentive to the persistence of post-Cartesian fictions that allow the separation of culture from environment. How are these fictions produced, enacted, and materialized in such diverse sites as Appalachian strip mines and Sea World, nature centers and permit hearings? In contrast, what kind of environmental imaginary sustains the notion that human destiny is not the accumulation of wealth but of a wisdom that "sits in places"? How are alternative ways of knowing and being sustained through naming practices, narratives, and other speech genres, as well as yardscapes, protest rallies, spontaneous shrines and other forms of public display? Traversing the border between humanities and social sciences we will ask how is Mikhail Bakhtin's law of placement essential for urban planners? Why is Gregory Bateson's notion of the thinking system vital for environmental writers? What are the implications of Edith Cobb's study of "bioaesthetic striving" in children, or John Dewey's "aesthetic ecologies" for vitiating the institutionally entrenched dualisms that continue to shape our world?

Moving from theories of world making, multiple realities, and aesthetic ecologies through case studies on the

interplay of culture and environment, and into your own experience, observation, and written reflections, this seminar will explore the production of environmental imaginaries across a range of modern discourses and practices. At stake is nothing less than place, identity, and the nature of human being.

Required texts:

Charles Taylor. *Modern Social Imaginaries*.
Edith Cobb. *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood*.
Raymond Williams. *Keywords*
Mary Hufford. *Chaseworld*

Copies of Taylor's book can be purchased from me (\$15 each), and the other three books have been ordered through Penn Book Center, near Samson and 34th Streets. All other readings will be downloadable from the course blackboard site. Films and hard copies of the readings will be on reserve in the Rosengarten reading room and in the Folklore Archive, Room 404, 3619 Locust Walk. You will need to contact me or Joyce Roselle jroselle@sas.upenn.edu in advance if you wish to use the Folklore Archive.

Work for the Course:

1) Participation: Do all of the readings and post short written exercises, as assigned, to the blackboard discussion page. Written exercises will take the form of responses to prompts I will post in advance. Please post each week by Monday at midnight. Participate actively in class discussion.

2) Gleanings from everyday life: Each week bring in an "exhibit" encountered in the course of your everyday life and relate this to anything in any of the readings or discussions. The "exhibit" can be a newspaper clipping, an artifact or a photograph of one, a story you heard, or anything else. Be prepared to connect your exhibit to class discussion.

3) Term Project: - Explore a modern environmental imaginary, through a study of one genre of production. This genre could be public art, cinema, a novel, a landscape element, a contested space such as the Barnes Gallery, a spontaneous public display, or the imaginary of an organization such as Spiral Q, Scribe Video, Philadelphia Mural Arts, or narrative in such modern spaces as nature

centers and community planning meetings, architecture, landscapes and so forth. You will need at least three events or "texts" demonstrating both variation and consistency across productions. Using analytical tools and concepts from the course readings, describe the imaginary that is conjured and relate it to the modern social imaginaries described by Charles Taylor. Guidelines for the proposal (due October 19) and the paper will be posted to the course blackboard by September 26. Please see me by Friday, October 12 to discuss your topic.

Submit electronically, either as a word document attached to an e-mail, or, if multi-media are used and the file is larger than 10 megabytes, on a cd or dvd in my mailbox.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

1) September 5: Introduction

2) September 12: Refiguring Nature and Society

Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*

Watts and Peet, "Conclusion: Towards a Theory of Liberation Ecology," *Liberation Ecologies*

Merchant, "Introduction," *Ecology: Key Concepts in Critical Theory*, pp. 1-25

Film: *Saltmen of Tibet*

3) September 19: Disembedding as Historical Process

Merchant, "Domination over Nature." *The Death of Nature*, Pp. 164-190.

Thomas, "Natural History and Vulgar Errors," in *Man and the Natural World*, pp. 51-91.

Williams, "Enclosures, Commons, and Communities" in *The County and the City*. Pp. 96-107.

Cantwell, "Enclosures, Gardens, and the Festival Market: The Ogre in the Tale." *Ethnomimesis* Pp. 32-48.

Davis, "The Park and the City." *Spectacular Nature*, Pp. 40-76.

Film: *The Gleaners and I*

4) September 26: Phenomenological Moorings

Schutz, "Transcendences and Multiple Realities," in *On Phenomenology and Social Relations*, pp. 245-262.

Langer, "Merleau-Ponty and Deep Ecology." In *Ontology and Alterity in Merleau-Ponty*. pp. 115-129.

Appadurai, "The Production of Locality." In *Modernity At Large*, pp. 178-204.

Hufford, "Introduction," "The World of the Chase," and "Ritual Moorings," in *Chaseworld*, pp. 1-78

METATOPIAS/HETEROTOPIAS

5) October 3: Critical Regionalism

Herr, Cheryl, "Introduction." *Critical Regionalism and Cultural Studies*. Pp. 1-26.

Taylor, Betsy, "Public Folklore, Nation-Building, and Regional Others." *Indian Folklore Research Journal*. 1 (2): 1-27.

Hufford, "Interrupting the Monologue: Folklore, Ethnography and Critical Regionalism," pp. 62-77.
<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/folklore/faculty/mhufford/Interrupting.pdf>

Jones, "Regionalization: A Rhetorical Strategy." *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 13:105-120.

Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance." In *The Anti-Aesthetic*, ed. Foster.

Tzonis and Lefaivre. "Critical Regionalism." In *Critical Regionalism*, ed. Amourgis, pp. 3-23.

6) October 10: Chronotope and Public Space

Holloway and Kneal, "Mikhail Bakhtin: Dialogics of Space." In *Thinking Space*, ed. Crang and Thrift, pp. 71-88.

Soja, "History Geography Modernity," in *Postmodern Geographies*, pp. 157-189.

Arendt. "The Public and the Private Realm," in *The Human Condition* pp. 50-67.

Folch-Sera, "Place, Voice, Space: Mikhail Bakhtin's Dialogical Landscape," in *Environment and Planning D* 8:255-274.

S. Stewart, "The Gigantic," *On Longing*, pp. 70-103.

Hufford, "Inscribing the Stage and Its Players," "Making the Dogs," and "Inscribing the Fox," *Chaseworld*, pp. 79-144.

Please see me by the end of this week, October 12, regarding your project for the final paper.

October 17: NO CLASS - American Folklore Society Meeting in Quebec - Submit paper proposals electronically by Friday October 19.

ARTICULATIONS

October 24: Collective Embodiment and Spatialized Hierarchies

Douglas, "The Two Bodies," in *Natural Symbols*, pp. 69-87.

Gilbert, "Resurrecting the Body: Has Postmodernism had any Effect on Biology?" *Science in Context*, 8:563-578.

Poovey, "Making a Social Body," in *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation 1830-1864*.

Noyes, "Façade performance in Catalonia," *Southern Folklore* 52:97-120.

Handler, "History, Cultural Property, and the Logic of Possessive Individualism," in *The Politics of Culture* ed. Williams, pp. 63-74.

Del Negro and Berger. "Character Divination and Kinetic Sculpture in the Central Italian Passeggiata," *Journal of American Folklore*, 114: 5-19.

October 31: Regional Discursive Formations: Appalachia

Bauman, "Folklore," in *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments*, pp. 29-40.

Allen Batteau - "A Poetic for Appalachia," In *The Invention of Appalachia*, pp. 1 - 18.

K. Stewart - "Encounters," In *A Space on the Side of the Road*, pp. 117-139.

Hufford, *Waging Democracy in the Kingdom of Coal*
http://www.sas.upenn.edu/folklore/center/waging_democracy2.pdf

Nesbitt and Weiner, "Conflicting Environmental Imaginaries and the Politics of Nature in Central Appalachia," *Geoforum* 1-17.

Films: *To Save the Land and People* and *Breaking New Ground*

THE CULTIVATION OF THINKING SYSTEMS

November 7: Aesthetic Ecologies

Dewey, "Experience as Aesthetic," in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, ed. McDermott, pp. 525-572.

Cobb, *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood*

McDermott, "Deprivation and Celebration: Suggestions for an Aesthetic Ecology," in *The Culture of Experience* pp. 82-98.

Cantwell, "Bilin' Down Creation: The Landscape of Bluegrass," in *Bluegrass Breakdown*, pp. 227-248.

S.Stewart, "Ceci Tuera Cela: Graffiti as Crime and Art," *Crimes of Writing* pp. 206-233.

Film: *Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill*

November 14: Narrative, Landscape, and Cultural Ownership

Potteiger and Purinton. "Beginning" and "The Nature of

Landscape Narrative." *Landscape Narratives: Design Practices for Telling Stories* pp. 3-70.

Basso. "Wisdom Sits in Places: Notes on a Western Apache Landscape," in *Senses of Place*, ed. Feld and Basso, pp. 53-90.

Dorst, "Looking at Looking," and "Monumental Optics: The Visual Management of Devil's Tower." *Looking West*, pp. 96-116 and 191-215.

Hufford, "The Chaseworld Anchored in Stories," *Chaseworld*, pp. 145-173.

Folch-Sera, "Place, Voice, Space: Mikhail Bakhtin's Dialogical Landscape." *Environment and Planning D* 8:255-274.

November 21: Community Gardening in a Global Context

Crumley, "From Garden to Globe: Linking Time and Space with Meaning and Memory."

http://anthropology.unc.edu/french/papers/garden_to_globe.html

Hynes, "Introduction," and "Philadelphia: A City of Neighborhoods," in *A Patch of Eden*, pp. vii-xvii and 71-116.

Sciorra, "Return to the Future: Puerto Rican Vernacular Architecture in New York City," in *Re-presenting the City*, ed. King, pp. 60-90.

Hufford, "Molly Mooching on Bradley Mountain: The Aesthetic Ecology of an Appalachian Morel," *Gastronomica* 6 (2):49-56.

<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/folklore/faculty/mhufford/MollyMooching.pdf>

Link to casita website:

<http://www.italianrap.com/casitas.html>

Link to Tending the Commons:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/cmnshtml/>

November 28: No Class - American Anthropological Society Meeting in Washington, DC

December 5: Backtalking Fungibility: Public Art and Cultural Policy

Berman, "Modernism in New York," *All that is Solid Melts into Air*, pp. 287 - 348

Zeitlin, "Conserving Our Cities' Endangered Spaces," in *Conserving Culture*, pp. 215-228

Hufford and Miller, *Piecing Together the Fragments*
<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/folklore/center/fragments.pdf>

Camitta, "The Folklorist and the Highway," *The Conservation of Culture*, pp. 206-216

Film: *Crosstown*

December 12: Student presentations and class discussion (make up class)

December 19: Papers due

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