

ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSES

Spring 1999
Cobb 201
T 6-9 PM

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"Think globally and act locally." How have environmentalists made "global" and "local" scales politically important? What practices--of science, subsistence, place-making, policy, advocacy, or administration--bring these scales into being?

'Who speaks for the earth?' In what ways do non-humans participate in creating history? What models for the interaction of varied kinds of humans and non-humans can throw light on the formation of historically and culturally specific subjects?

"Is 'nature' exported from the West?" What disturbances and contradictions are created as ideas and practices of nature-making travel from place to place, and particularly from metropolitan centers to neocolonial peripheries? Are environmental movements--and even "environments"--the same thing in rural Indonesia and New York? If not, in what ways do they overlap, travel, translate, and inflect each other?

Environmentalism has been a major route to thinking about global process. It allows us to ask: What is nature and what is politics at the turn of this century? This course examines mutual shapings of nature and politics in environmental debates and dilemmas. At the confluence of science studies, political ecology, and cultural anthropology, new analytic questions and approaches have emerged to consider the formation of environmental agents that are able to "make a difference" in our times, whether rainforests, wastes, global climate, or environmental advocates themselves. In this course, we develop these questions through concerns about scale, agency, and trajectory: What are the spatial coordinates of nature and politics? What subjects and objects are making history? How do environmental ideas and programs travel?

Required Books

The following required books are available at the University of Chicao bookstore:

- Basso, Keith. 1996. Wisdom Sits in Places. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Latour, Bruno. 1996. Araniis, or the Love of Technology. trans Catherine Porter. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Thongchai Winichatkul. 1994. Siam Mapped. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Abraham, Itty. 1998. The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb. London: Zed Press.
- Kuletz, Valery. 1998. The Tainted Desert. New York: Routledge.
- Keck, Margaret and Katherine Sikkink. 1998. Activists Beyond Borders. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Ong, Aihwa. 1999. Flexible Citizenship. Durham: Duke University Press.

The following recommended book is also available at the bookstore:

- Grove, Richard. 1995. Green Imperialism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Articles and chapters will be available for students to copy in the Anthropology Department office.

Course Requirements:

1. All class members must come to class, do the readings on time, and participate in class discussion.
2. Reading response papers (approximately one page, typed) are due every week in the envelope outside my office door by Tuesday 11 AM. You must turn in six out of eight reading response papers. Please make four copies to facilitate reading by other class members. All class members should read everyone's response papers before class.
3. Class members will form teams to present the readings and lead class discussion. The teams should take into account the response papers in forming the agenda they set.
4. A 15 page (typed, double-spaced) research paper that speaks to the issues discussed in this class is due on June 3. A prospectus introducing the issues of the paper is due April 27. A preliminary bibliography, listing at least three sources with annotations as to their relevance to the research paper topic and the class, is due May 1.
5. Graduate students will present short talks on their research papers on June 1. We will form panels with discussants and offer relatively formal presentations, with a format to be discussed in class.

Schedule

Readings are listed after the date on which they must be completed.

March 30. **Introduction**

Reading: Anna Tsing, "Nature in the Making"

SCALES

April 6. **Globalisms**

Reading: Grove, Richard. forthcoming. "The East India Company, the Australians and the El Nino: Colonial Scientists and the Discourse of Climatic Change and Teleconnections between 1770 and 1930," In Paul Greenough and Anna Tsing, eds. Environment in Action.

Grove, Richard. 1995. Green Imperialism. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 6,7 (pages 264-379).

Demeritt, David. n.d. "Global Climate Change and the Cultural Politics of Science."

Taylor, Peter J. and F.H. Buttell. 1992. 'How do we know we have global environmental problems? Science and the globalization of environmental discourse,' Geoforum, 23:405-16.

Rich, Bruce. 1994. Mortgaging the Earth. Beacon Press. Chapter 9 (pages 242-280).

April 13 **Localisms**

Reading: Basso, Keith. 1996. Wisdom Sits in Places. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Raffles, Hugh. forthcoming. "Local Theory': Nature and the Making of an Amazonian Place," Cultural Anthropolgy.

Tsing, Anna. 1999. "Becoming a Tribal Elder, and Other Green Development Fantasies," In Tania Li, ed. Transforming the Indonesian Uplands. Harwood Academic Press.

Darlington, Susan. forthcoming. "Practical Spirituality and Community Forests: Monks, Ritual and Radical Conservatism in Thailand," in Paul Greenough and Anna Tsing, eds. Environmentalism in Action.

AGENTS

April 20 Collaborative subjects

Reading: Latour, Bruno. 1996. Aramis, or the Love of Technology. trans Catherine Porter. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Tsing, Anna. n.d. "Notes on Culture and Natural Resource Management."

April 27 Landscapes and territories

Paper prospectus due.

Reading: Thongchai Winichatukul. 1994. Siam Mapped. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Arnold, David. 1996. The Problem of Nature. Blackwell. Chapter 8 (pages 141-168).

Peluso, Nancy. 1995. 'Whose Woods are These? Counter-Mapping Forest Territories in Kalimantan, Indonesia,' Antipode. 27(4):383-406.

May 4 Expertise

Reading: Abraham, Itty. 1998. The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb. Zed Press.

Kuletz, Valery. 1998. The Tainted Desert Routledge. Selected chapters (to be

announced) Masco, Joseph. n.d. "Resistance and Purity: Pueblo Nations and Nuclear Colonialism."

TRAJECTORIES

May 11 Movements

Preliminary bibliography due.

Reading: Keck, Margaret and Katherine Sikkink. 1998. Activists Beyond Borders. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Tsing, Anna. 1997. "Transitions as Translations," In Joan Scott, Cora Kaplan, and Debra Keates, ed. Transitions, Environments-Translations. Routledge. pages 253-72.

May 18 Legacies

Reading: Peters, Pauline. 1987. "Embedded Systems and Rooted Models: The Grazing Lands of Botswana and the Commons Debate,' In Bonnie McKay and James Acheson, ed. The Question of the Commons. University of Arizona Press. pages 171-94.

Neumann, Roderick. 1998. Imposing Wilderness. University of California Press.

Chapters 4,5 (pages 122-173).

Beinart, William and Peter Coates. 1995. "Hunting and Animals: From Game to Wildlife," In Environment and History. London: Routledge: pp. 17-33.