

Dredging Operations: The Old and New North/South Divide and the Politics of Location

FINA 571

Instructor: Maureen Ryan and Katherine Hacker

Fall 2001

Description

"Dredging Operations," a term borrowed from Gayatri Spivak's Critique of Post-Colonial Reason (1999), signals an underlying goal of this seminar: to juxtapose and assess recent theoretical interventions and methodological strategies in relation to the complex, asymmetrical and shifting power relations that have marked the early modern and modern periods. The class will explore a set of critical debates that have transformed the ways in which culture and representation are theorized and approached. These will be situated within the dynamic of changing global configurations where dichotomies such as 'Europe and its others', 'East and West', 'First and Third Worlds,' and 'North and South' (in fact historical constructs and overlapping categories) still resonate as ideological polemics, requiring ongoing destabilization. As the theoretical problems of knowledge, power and agency we will be investigating have had to negotiate the notions of reason, rationality and progress of the Eurocentric 'Enlightenment project,' so the class will explore the roles of visibility, viewership and the concepts of the 'look' and the 'gaze' in case studies that give particular attention to 18th, 19th and 20th century France, England and India.

In the first term, course readings will assess how competing theories of the subject and of history, space and time have played a role in problematizing categories of class, gender, ethnicity and race, and in articulating how meanings are produced and circulated for particular communities and viewers. These debates are re-investigated in the second term, where the major trajectory will be to follow post-colonial theory from its emergence in the 1980s, with its insistence on historicity and difference, as a critique of Orientalist, nationalist and evolutionary discourses. Post-colonial criticism has forced a radical re-thinking and re-formulation of forms of knowledge authored and authorized by colonialism and western domination. As well as addressing a particularly crucial cluster of recent theoretical texts, the course seeks to develop analytical skills and tools that will enable students to take up further areas of theoretical inquiry and historical research.

The seminar will be structured around sets of readings which you will be expected to have read **with care**. Over the course of each term, students will take turns facilitating class discussion. This will entail situating the reading both historically and in terms of its contribution to contemporaneous theoretical issues and debates, as well as providing a brief precis and critical assessment of the reading's arguments and strategies. The

facilitator will also be responsible for raising useful points for further class discussion. Students will be asked to develop and present a project in each term in both oral and written form. These projects will be designed to encourage students to grapple with a particular historical and visual problem in relation to the course materials.

Course Requirements for each Term

Class discussion and participation - 20% Presentation/Facilitation of Readings - 20% Term Project (oral and written) - 60%

Course Outline

Sept. 10/01 **Introduction: Goals and Aims of the Course, Requirements, Term Projects**

Sept.17/01 **Discourse, History and the Archive**

1) Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, N.Y., 1972: Ch. 1, "The Unities of Discourse," and Ch. 2: "Discursive Formations," pp. 1-39. (Reserve 539) 2) Michel Foucault, "Appendix: The Discourse on Language" (Lecture 1970) in The Archaeology of Knowledge, 1972 (Reserve: 539) 3) Nancy Fraser, Unruly Practices, Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory, 1989, pp. 1-13 ("Introduction" Apologia for Academic Radicals") and Part I "Powers Norms and Vocabularies of Contestation," pp. 17-33: "Foucault on Modern Power Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions." pp. 215-237.

Sept. 24/01 **Re-Theorizing Gender and Sexuality: the Historical Trajectory**

1) Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History, 1988; "Introduction," pp. 1-11; and Ch. 2, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," pp. 28-49 and endnotes, pp. 199-200 and 206-211. 2) Judith Butler, "Introduction," Bodies that Matter On the Discursive Limits of Sex (NY: Routledge, 1993), pp. 1-23; and "Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion," pp. 121-140, *ibid.*

September 27th, 28th, 29th **Visiting Lecturer: Lynda Nead: Guest Speaker: Victorian Studies Conference and the Department.**

Oct.1 /01 **Discourse, Gender and Sexuality: Re-Framing the Body**

1) Lynda Nead, "Theorizing the Female Nude, " in The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality (1992), pp.5-33 2) Elizabeth Grosz, Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism, 1994, selected readings; and Elizabeth Grosz, Space Time and Perversion; Essays on the Politics of Bodies, 1995, selected readings. 3) Class Presentations and Analysis. Conference and Lecture Topics. Oct. 8/01 Thanksgiving Holiday: No Class. Read: 1) Jurgen Habermas, The Transformation of the Public Sphere, Chapter

2 and Chapter 3 "Social Structures of the Public Sphere," pp. 1-88 and "Political Functions of the Public Sphere," pp. 89-129.

Oct.15/01 Debates on Public and Private: Theorizing the Bourgeois Public Sphere

1) Jurgen Habermas, The Transformation of the Public Sphere, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 "Social Structures of the Public Sphere," pp. 1-88 and "Political Functions of the Public Sphere," pp. 89-129. 2) Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," pp. 109-142 in Craig Calhoun, Habermas and the Public Sphere, MIT University Press, 1993. (You might also want to consider Nancy Fraser's analysis of Habermas, Gender and the Public Sphere, in Unruly Practices, Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory, 1989.)

Oct. 22/01 Definitions of Public and Private: Vision, Ritual and the Definition of Boundaries

1) David Scobey, "Anatomy of the Promenade: the Politics of Bourgeois Sociability in 19th Century New York," Social History, 17, no. 2, 1992 2) John Barrell, Introduction, "A Republic of Taste," in The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt: the Body of the Public, Yale University Press, 1986, pp.1-68.

Oct. 29/01 Deconstructing the Archive: Feminist and Post-colonial Histories

1) Gayatri Spivak, A Critique of Postcolonial Reason, Harvard, 1999, pp. 1-7 (Intro); and Chapter 3: "History," pp. 198-311. (on the Rani of Simur)

Nov 5/01 Social Space and Social Bodies

1) Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space, (1974) Blackwell, 1997, pp. 26-59 and selected readings.

Nov. 9/01 Reconsidering the Body, Space and Time

1) David Harvey, "The Social Construction of Space and Time," pp. 210-290, and "The Currency of Space-Time", pp. 248-290 in Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference, London: Blackwell, 1996. 2) Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," in Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory, ed Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, Columbia University Press, 1994, pp. 324-339.

Nov. 26 Destabilizing Vision

1) Jonathan Crary, Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity, MIT Press,

1991. Selected Readings 2) Kaja Silverman, The Threshold of the Visible World (Routledge:), Readings on "the Gaze," the Look," "the Screen." Pages to be announced.

Dec.3/01 **Presentation of Topics**