

21H968J/STS415J

NATURE, ENVIRONMENT, AND EMPIRE

Spring 2008
Tuesday 9-12

Professor Harriet Ritvo

Subject Description

An exploration of the relationship between the study of natural history, both domestic and exotic, by Europeans and Americans, and concrete exploitation of the natural world, focusing on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Books

The following books (all paperbacks) are available for purchase at the MIT Bookstore and on the internet, as well as in the MIT Library. Readings not contained in these books will be available on the class website or on reserve.

Kay Anderson, Race and the Crisis of Humanism (UCL)
Charles Darwin, Voyage of the Beagle (Modern Library)
Richard Grove, Green Imperialism (Cambridge)
Elinor Melville, Plague of Sheep (Cambridge)
E. C. Pielou, After the Ice Age (Chicago)
Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes (Routledge)
John F. Richards, The Unending Frontier (California)
Martin Rudwick, Scenes from Deep Time (Chicago)
Nancy Leys Stepan, Picturing Tropical Nature (Reaktion)
George Stocking, Victorian Anthropology (Free Press)
Sheldon Watts, Epidemics and History (Yale)

Assignments

A research paper of at least 25 pages will be due at the end of the semester. A topic proposal will be due in class on February 23 and a progress report will be due in class on April 6. All stages will be presented orally as well as in writing. In addition, each week two students will introduce the discussion of the readings.

Schedule of Classes and Readings

February 5 Introduction

February 12 Charles Darwin, Voyage of the Beagle
Frank Sulloway, [Darwin and his finches: The evolution of a legend](#),
Journal of the History of Biology 1982, 1-53
R. D. Keynes, ed., Charles Darwin's Beagle Diary, esp. 351-64

Nora Barlow, ed., "Darwin's Ornithological Notes,"
Bulletin of BM(NH) (1963), esp. 260-266

Suggested additional reading:

Janet Browne, Darwin: Voyaging, chs. 7-14

Adrian Desmond and James Moore, Darwin, chs. 8-13

- February 19 No Class (Monday Schedule)
- February 26 Pielou, After the Ice Age, especially 5-38,61-80. 99-101, 107-115, 125-128, 227-312
Rudwick, Scenes from Deep Time
Paper proposals due
- March 4 Richards, Unending Frontier
- March 11 Grove, Green Imperialism, especially 1-152, 309-486
Drayton, Nature's Government
- March 18 Melville, Plague of Sheep
Jorge Canizares-Esguerra, Iberian Colonial Science, *Isis*, 2005, 96:64-70
- March 25 NO CLASS--Spring Break
- April 1 Pratt, Imperial Eyes, 15-143
Stepan, Picturing Tropical Nature
Paper progress reports due
- April 8 Stocking, Victorian Anthropology, 46-109, 186-283
Kay Anderson, Race and the Crisis of Humanism
- April 15 Watt, Epidemics and History
J. R. McNeill, "Revolutionary Mosquitoes or the Atlantic World: Malaria and Independence in the United States of America," (in Squatriti, ed.,

Nature's Past)

- April 22 No class—Patriot's Day
- April 29 David N. Livingstone, Putting Science in Its Place: Geographies of Scientific Knowledge
 Ritvo, Animal Estate, 243-288
 M. Gadgil and R. Guha, This Fissured Land , ch. 4
- May 6 Peder Anker, Imperial Ecology, 77-156
 Michael A. Osborne, "Acclimatizing the World: A History of the Paradigmatic Colonial Science," Nature and Empire: Science and the Colonial Enterprise (*Osiris*, 2000), pp. 135-151
 Libby Robin, "Ecology: A Science of Empire?" (in Griffiths and Robin, eds., Ecology and Empire)
- May 13 Final presentations

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