

## Folklore 650

### FOLKLORE AND CRITICAL REGIONALISM

Fall 2003

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Wednesday 1-3 p.m.  
Logan 312  
Office Hours: Wednesday 3-4 and by appt.

### Introduction

The aim of this seminar is to examine critically the concept of region as it has been used in folklore studies and to open up a space for folklore and ethnography in an emerging discourse on critical regionalism in the social sciences. Such a space is suggested by anthropologist Betsy Taylor, who argues that a distinct role for public folklore is the recognition of regional publics. The association between folklore and the idea of region takes us deeply into the history of the discipline, its roots in romantic nationalism, and the continuing relationship between public folklore and the project of shaping a democratic public sphere. It also invites us to take up questions of folklore's bearing on emerging questions in social and critical theory.

How does the study and presentation of folklore bear on the production of space? Drawing on the writings of Edward Soja, Michel Foucault, and Mikhail Bakhtin we will examine the way in which folklorists and anthropologists have studied the interplay of space, time, and society. We will then scrutinize the call for critical regionalism as issued by writers in architectural theory, cultural studies, geography, and political science. What are the lineaments of a critically regionalist folklore and ethnography? The works of folklorists and anthropologists will guide us through various ensembles of space and time (heterotopias, heterochronies, chronotopes, space-times) and their grounding in diverse social imaginaries. Recurring tropes in these imaginaries wend their way through the readings for this seminar: the role of the social imaginary in the production of space, performances that articulate the recurring encounter between a dominant process of geographic development that regionalizes from above and vernacular regionalisms that respond from below, the recurring performances and "structures of feeling" (R. Williams) that sustain or undermine the geographic and civic commons (Reid and Taylor), an oppositional dynamic between the country and city, other dynamics of a productive tension between "insiders and outsiders" (Herr), the role of public institutions and intellectuals in fostering both civic professionalism and critical regionalism. On what foundations can we build a critically regionalist folklore and ethnography? What are the intellectual tasks and practical applications for folklore as a discipline in an emerging civics of region and globe?

Please note: This course is designed as a prequel to the practicum (Folklore 702) which will be offered in Spring 2004. The practicum this year will provide students with an opportunity to do research and fieldwork for a project along the New River Gorge National River and the Gauley River National Recreation area. Those interested may work on assignments for this course in anticipation of that project, or another project for the practicum.

**Readings:**

Required readings will be drawn from the following texts on reserve at Van Pelt and in the Folklore Archive (Logan 312):

- Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*  
Bausinger, Hermann. *Folk Culture in a World of Technology*  
Becker, Jane. *Selling Tradition: Appalachia and the Construction of an American Folk*  
Briggs, Charles. *Competence in Performance: The Creativity of Tradition in Mexicano Verbal Art*  
Davis, Susan. *Spectacular Nature: Corporate Culture and the Sea World Experience*  
Dorst, John. *Looking West*  
Herr, Cheryl. *Critical Regionalism and Cultural Studies: From Ireland to the American Midwest*  
Hufford, Mary. *Conserving Culture: A New Discourse on Heritage*  
Soja, Edward. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*

**Work for the Course:** Each week post a brief comment or question based on the readings to the course listserv. This can take the form of a response to a prior post. In addition there are three written assignments: 1) Report to the class on a regional folklife/ethnographic study (a number are listed in the bibliography), evaluating its strengths and weaknesses in terms of critical regionalism (sign up by October 1). A written version is due the week after oral delivery. 2) In consultation with me, prepare questions for discussion for one class session and help to lead the discussion for that session, incorporating a) your take on the readings; b) comments and questions from the course listserv; c) relevant current events. 3) Write a double-spaced paper, not to exceed 30 pages, in which you describe the role of folklore in producing a particular public space. A separate handout with guidelines for this assignment will be handed out during the third session.

You should be prepared to identify your topic by October 17. An oral presentation of your research is due December 10. The written version (20-30 pages, double-spaced, including bibliography) is due December 17.

**Grading** will be based on participation in online and class discussion and on the quality and timeliness of oral and written reports.

## Schedule of Topics and Readings

### September 3: Introduction

### September 10: Views from the Turn of the Millennium

Reid and Taylor, "Appalachia as a Global Region: Critical Regionalism and Civic Professionalism"

Hufford, Mary. "Interrupting the Monologue: Folklore, Ethnography, and Critical Regionalism."

Baron, Robert. "Postwar Public Folklore and the Professionalization of Folklore Studies." In *Public Folklore*

McCarl, Robert. "The Pattern that Connects." In *Public Folklore*

Rec: Reid and Taylor, "John Dewey's Aesthetic Ecology of Public Intelligence and the Grounding of Civic Environmentalism."

### September 17: Folklore/Region/ Nation

Abrahams, Roger. "Phantoms of Romantic Nationalism in Folkloristics." *Journal of American Folklore* 106:3-37.

Bronner, Simon. *Folk Nation: Folklore in the Creation of American Tradition*. Excerpts.

Taylor, Betsy. "Public Folklore, Nation-Building, and Regional Others." In *Journal of Indian Folklore Research*

Wilson, William. 1989. "Herder, Folklore and Romantic Nationalism." In Elliott Oring, Ed. *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: A Reader*. Pp. 21-37.

### September 24: Regionalisms

Soja, Edward. "History: Geography: Modernity." In *Postmodern Geographies*, pp. 10-42.

Jones, Suzi, "Regionalization: A Rhetorical Strategy." *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 13:105-119.

Tzonis and Lefaivre, "Critical Regionalism," in *Critical Regionalism: The Pomona Proceedings*, pp. 1-23.

Herr, Cheryl. "Cultural Studies and Critical Regionalism." *Critical Regionalism and Cultural Studies*, pp. 1-14.

Rec. Foucault, Michel. "Space, Power, and Knowledge." In *The Cultural Studies Reader*, pp. 134-141.

Allen, Barbara. "Regional Folklore." *Encyclopedia of American Folklore* pp. 618-19.

Frampton, Kenneth. "Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance." In *The Anti-Aesthetic*, ed. Hal Foster.

## **October 1: Folklore and The Public Sphere**

Fraser, Nancy. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." In *During*, pp. 518-536.

Abrahams, Roger. 1992. "The Foundations of American Public Folklore." In *Public Folklore*, ed. Robert Baron and Nicholas R. Spitzer. Pp. 245-62.

Holloway and Kneale. "Bakhtin: Dialectics of Space."

Taylor and Reid, "John Dewey's Aesthetic Ecology of Public Intelligence"

Rec: Arendt, Hannah. "The Private and the Common."

Habermas, Jürgen. 1991. "The Public Sphere." In *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Culture Studies*.

## **October 8: No Class – American Folklore Society meets in Albuquerque**

### **October 15: Locality and Context**

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

Hufford, Mary. "Context." *JAF* 108:528-49.

Basso, Keith. "Stalking with Stories."

Foucault, "Of Other Spaces."

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

### **October 22: The Country, the City, and the Commons**

Soja, Edward. "The Historical Geography of Urban and Regional Restructuring." *Postmodern Geographies*, pp. 157-189.

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

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

Williams, Michael Ann. *Great Smoky Mountains Folklife*

Rec: Williams, Raymond. "Enclosures, Commons, and Communities." 96-107.

Jones, Eric et al. *Non-Timber Forest Products in the United States*

### **October 29: Boundaries and Horizons**

Bausinger, Hermann, *Folk Culture in a World of Technology*, esp. "Spatial Expansion," pp. 33-60, and "Temporal Expansion," pp. 61-87.

Shuman, Amy. "Dismantling Local Culture." *Western Folklore*, pp. 345-364.

## **November 5: Articulations**

Watts and Peet, "Towards a Theory of Liberation Ecology," pp. 260-269.

Becker, Jane. *Selling Tradition*, esp. Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 7.

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

Dorst, John. "Monumental Optics: The Visual Management of Devil's Tower," in *Looking West*, pp. 96-116, 119-149, and 192-215.

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

### **Discourse Practices and Regional Formations**

#### **November 12: Space, Performance, and Historical Discourse**

Briggs, Charles. "Mexicano Northern New Mexico," "Historical Discourse," and "Conclusion," in *Competence in Performance*, pp. 25-55, 59-99, and 341-376.

Brenneis, Donald. "Some Contributions of Folklore to Social Theory: Aesthetics and Politics in a Translocal World." *Western Folklore*, pp. 291-303.

**Rec:** Abrams, James. "Lost Frames of Reference: Sightings of History and Memory in Pennsylvania's Documentary Landscape." *Conserving Culture*, pp. 24-38.

#### **November 19: Writing about Landscape**

Dorst, John. "Looking at Looking: A Theoretical and Historical Excursion" and "Machines and Gardens: Two Cases of Vernacular Display."

Stewart, Kathleen.

Folch-Serra, M. 1990. "Place, Voice, Space: Mikhail Bakhtin's Dialogical Landscape." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 8: 255-74.

Hufford, "Inscribing the Stage and Its Players." In *Chaseworld*

Rec: Stewart, Susan. "The Gigantic."

Crang, P. "The Politics of Polyphony: Reconfigurations in Geographical Authority."

#### **November 26: Structures of Feeling**

Williams, Raymond. "Structures of Feeling," *Marxism and Literature*, pp. 128-135.

Stewart, Kathleen. "Nostalgia: A Polemic." *Cultural Anthropology* 3:227-241.

Nye, David. "The Sublime," and "The American Sublime," *American Technological Sublime*, pp. 1-43.

Rec: Reid, Herbert, "Global Adjustments, Throwaway Regions, Appalachian Studies: Resituating *The Kentucky Cycle* on the Postmodern Frontier," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 2:235-62.

#### **December 3: Twinned Locales and Agrarian Imaginaries**

Herr, Cheryl. "Recycling the Heartland" and "Political Economy of Consolidation," *Critical Regionalism and Cultural Studies*, pp. 81-110 and 113-14

Sciorra, Joseph. "Back to the Future: Puerto Rican Vernacular Architecture in New York City," *Re-Presenting the City*, pp. 60-92.

Rec: Appadurai, Arjun. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." *Modernity at Large*, pp. 27-47.

Rikoon, J. Sanford et al. "Cultural Conservation and the Family Farm Movement: Integrating Vision and Actions." *Conserving Culture*, pp. 184-97.

**December 10: Presentations**

**December 17: Papers Due**