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English 252, Spring 2018
Victorian Literature
Thursday 12:10-3:00
120 Voorhies

Buried Treasure: Extraction Ecologies and Literature of the Long Nineteenth Century

This class will focus on ecology and extraction – the mining of underground resources – in the literature of the long nineteenth century, with primary texts ranging from buried treasure adventure stories to realist novels to documentary non-fiction focused on mining labor and extractive zones. Industrialized extraction was a central element of the environmental and economic history of the nineteenth century, and this class will strive to think broadly about the corresponding role of extraction in literature and literary form. While the majority of our primary texts will be British or American, we will also reach beyond the Anglo-American world to conceive of extraction in terms of frontier, empire, and global capitalism. Drawing on recent theories of *extractivismo* by scholars of historical and contemporary Latin America, we will consider how the imperial powers of Britain and the United States led the world into a new stage of environmental and economic history defined by industrial extraction and extraction capitalism. Secondary readings will include work by ecocritical, postcolonial, formalist, feminist, and Marxist critics such as Jennifer Fleissner, Amitav Ghosh, Macarena Gómez-Barris, Andreas Malm, Jason Moore, Rob Nixon, and Alex Woloch. We will also read work by Nathan Hensley, who will be visiting and participating in seminar on April 19th.

Primary texts (available at the UCD bookstore):

Joseph Conrad, *Nostramo* (1904), Oxford 9780199555918
Richard Harding Davis, *Soldiers of Fortune* (1897) Broadview 9781551116792
H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) Broadview 1551114399
D.H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers* (1913) Penguin Classics 9780141441443
Frank Norris, *McTeague* (1899) Oxford 9780199554898
George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) Penguin Modern Classics 9780141185293
Mary Seacole, *The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands* (1857) 9780140439021
Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island* (1883) Oxford 9780199560356

Secondary Readings (available on Canvas):

Jennifer Fleissner, "Saving Herself: Gender, Preservation, and Futurity in *McTeague*," Chapter 5 of *Women, Compulsion, Modernity*
Amitav Ghosh, from *The Great Derangement*, "Stories"
Macarena Gómez-Barris, from *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives*, Preface and Introduction
Nathan Hensley and Philip Steer, "Signatures of the Carboniferous," Forthcoming in *Ecological Form*
Naomi Klein, from *This Changes Everything*, Chapter 5 "Beyond Extractivism"
Andreas Malm, from *Fossil Capital*, Chapter 1, "In the Heat of the Past: Towards a History of the Fossil Economy"; and Chapter 10, "'Go and Stop the Smoke': The Moment of Resistance against Steam"

Jason Moore, from *Capitalism and the Web of Life*, Chapter 5, “The Capitalization of Nature, or, the Limits of Historical Nature”

Rob Nixon, from *Slow Violence*, Introduction

Thea Riofrancos, “Extractivismo Unearthed: A Geneology of a Radical Discourse.” *Cultural Studies* 31:2-3 (2017): 277-306.

Alex Woloch from *Or Orwell*, chapter 2 “Getting to Work”

Assignments and Expectations

All students are expected to attend seminar, having completed the readings for the day, and to participate actively in discussion. Participation will figure into your course grade. The major assignments for the class will be a presentation and a seminar paper, described below.

Presentation

Each student will present on one of the secondary sources for the class. In preparation for your presentation, please identify three reviews *in scholarly journals* of the book on which you have signed up to present. You will summarize, synthesize, and analyze these reviews for the class in a 10 minute presentation that considers some or all of the following questions: How would you describe the book’s reception on the basis of these three reviews? What, according to the three reviewers, are the book’s major interventions? What are its strengths and its weaknesses? How do accounts of the book vary according to the field/discipline of the reviewing journal? (Your presentation should give just a little bit of background on each of the journals.) What are the major similarities or differences among the three reviews? Based on your own reading of the assigned secondary text for the class, how would you review the reviews? Are they accurate? Are they fair? Do they leave out important aspects of the book’s project?

Seminar Paper

Your paper should be at least 15 pages long, and will be due by Thursday June 14th. Papers should be submitted electronically via Canvas. Many of you will be familiar with the general expectations for a graduate seminar paper, but I will take the opportunity here to highlight key aspects of the assignment. The practice of writing a seminar paper should prepare you to write professional criticism in literary studies, thus your paper, like any journal article or dissertation chapter, should develop an original argument based on comprehensive research of related work in the field. (Because we are operating on 10-week quarters, you are only required to write a 15-page seminar paper for the course, but keep in mind that this is shorter than most articles and all dissertation chapters.) Ideally, a seminar paper should develop out of the critical problems and questions under investigation in the course; this means that normally your paper will focus on a literary text or texts that we studied together and will bear some relation to the major topics of the course. If you would like to write on a topic or text outside of this scope, please feel free to talk to me about it in office hours. I expect your final papers to show evidence of careful research of the issues under investigation in your essay. You may use primary and secondary sources or just secondary sources, but be sure that your argument is grounded in thorough research with reliable materials. Keep in mind that you can use the course bibliography on Canvas as a resource for your research. Your paper should make an original argument that has not been made by any critic about your particular text. It is fine to write on a topic that another article already discusses so long as your paper takes a different approach or explores different ground.

Course Bibliography

A bibliography of secondary books on the course topic is posted on Canvas. I hope this will be a useful resource for you in writing your final paper and in pursuing future research.

Calendar

- 4/5 Richard Harding Davis, *Soldiers of Fortune*
Optional background reading: Thea Riofrancos, “Extractivismo Unearthed: A Genealogy of a Radical Discourse”
- 4/12 Joseph Conrad, *Nostramo* (Parts One and Two)
Naomi Klein, Chapter 5 “Beyond Extractivism” from *This Changes Everything*
- 4/19 Joseph Conrad, *Nostramo* (Part Three)
Nathan Hensley and Philip Steer, “Signatures of the Carboniferous”
- 4/26 H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon’s Mines*
Rob Nixon, Introduction to *Slow Violence*
- 5/3 Mary Seacole, *The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*
Macarena Gómez-Barris, Preface and Introduction to *The Extractive Zone*
- 5/10 R. L. Stevenson *Treasure Island*
Amitav Ghosh, “Stories” from *The Great Derangement*
- 5/17 D.H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers* (up to Chapter 9)
Andreas Malm, Chapter 1 and Chapter 10 from *Fossil Capital*
- 5/24 D.H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers* (Chapter 9 to the end)
Jason Moore, Chapter 5 from *Capitalism and the Web of Life*
- 5/31 Frank Norris, *McTeague*
Jennifer Fleissner, “Saving Herself: Gender, Preservation, and Futurity in *McTeague*,” Chapter 5 of *Women, Compulsion, Modernity*
- 6/7 George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*
Alex Woloch, Chapter 2 from *Or Orwell*

Seminar papers due: Thursday June 14th via Canvas