

Jamaica Kincaid, "Alien Soil":

the character of the English people... leads them to obsessively order and shape their landscape

garden as control?!

Yes. Because plants in gardens don't grow the ~~same~~ same way in "nature"

gardens in which only flowers were grown made it apparent that they had some money... outside space was devoted... to sheer beauty

to "garden" - people connect to nature
Kincaid's idea of beauty inverse
"beauty" here is subjective

- relationship between gardening & wealth -

Implying that flowers are beautiful but essentially useless?

what is it?

is there one?
IMPERMANENCE
- is there something wrong with ordering & shaping landscape

can it ever be permanent or is it only ever temporary

She says (on another sheet) that what's wrong w/ it is that "someone is humbled" to do this work; someone has to do someone else's shit work

Do poor people have time to garden?
I would say, no. They are too busy working and trying to survive. If they have a garden, (and to have leisure time) they probably use it to provide food for themselves. You also need money to buy gardening things. Money is time.

So even the topics: ² not native species, but all in vasines

Jamaica Kincaid, "Alien Soil" (continued):

What did the botanical life of Antigua consist of at the time... Christopher Columbus first saw it? To see a garden in Antigua now will not supply a clue... Antigua is also empty of much wildlife natural to it...

there is a relationship between gardening and wealth... the people of Antigua have a relationship to agriculture that does not please them at all... they (we) were brought to this island from Africa... for the free labor they could provide in the fields... a wretched historical relationship to growing things

Makes me think of Michael Pollan & his discussion of weeds as being a man-influenced phenomenon, growing where man has disrupted soil → same way as in Antigua, man-induced growing & trowel bringing flowers/weeds/plants non-native plants to the soil

Also the idea that comfort from gardening may be a concept dissimilar across classes → opens up how nature may not always be comforting, or that the initial comfort could be violated somehow

This links up Evelyn White's essay: her deep culture fear of being inside

Jamaica Kincaid, "Alien Soil" (continued some more):

contrasting lawns and massed ornamental beds are a sign...that someone...has been humbled

...what if the people living in the tropics...are contented with their surroundings, are happy to observe an invisible hand at work...what if these people are not spiritually feverish (restless) and full of envy?

but how can we ever know how they truly feel, whether they are satisfied or hungry? what causes a person to feel these things

↳ ask them?

This is a critique of colonization:
The English were restless: left home & reshaped another (many other!) countries on the model of their own —

In the wake of the English, people of cultures were left to continue w/ the English way. Again, the past casts a shadow. The fact that someone else dictated their present is bound to have some effect - can you think of an instance when colonization didn't create divisions?

Evelyn White, "Black Women and the Wilderness":

I didn't want to get closer. I was certain that if I ventured outside...I'd be taunted, attacked, raped, maybe even murdered.

I believe the fear I experience in the outdoors is shared by many African-American women and that it limits the way we move through the world...

Fear is an important motivator in many situations.

race + gender = limits to movement

fear = limits to movement

who else is afraid? who else is limited?

The experiences we have in regard to our race + gender motivate ~~certain~~ fears. Is it our fear that limits our movement or our racial + gender experience?

↑
I think it's a combination

Even if not personally experienced, the experiences felt by members of the same cultural/ethnic/gender classes still generates a fear which can survive and become part of the cultural identity

Evelyn White, "Black Women and the Wilderness" (continued):

I imagine myself in the country as my forebears were--exposed, vulnerable, and unprotected--a target of cruelty and hate.

"Never be the only one, except, possibly, in your own house."

Similarities between the social environment & the natural one; are you really only safe alone?

The basic idea of shelter/safety as it applies not only to the environment but to our social structures

- members of the non-dominating demographics must seek shelter from ^{social} threats as a small animal must from a predator

Why? I don't get the second half of this quote. Why be alone at home? I think this says something about our uncomfortability and mistrust, yet absolute ~~depend~~ necessity, of other people.

What I thought about when reading the second half of the quote is that ~~to~~ our houses are built around us, a shelter to protect. This goal is not always realized as both we as humans & our homes can be violated. Being alone can be dangerous, but I suppose only if you aren't truly alone.

Evelyn White, "Black Women and the Wilderness" (continued some more):
I could no longer reconcile my silence with my mandate to my students to face their fears...

I have taken wilderness treks...in an effort to find peace in the outdoors.

→ why do we assume we will find peace in the outdoors?

Gray Snyder didn't seem to think so...
I feel like she didn't find ^{mental} peace so much
as a confrontation with a violent aspect of
nature that eventually led to her feeling
at peace from this "reconciliation"...

↳ violent aspect of nature, or violent
aspect of humans?

It does seem that the fear was of a violent
aspect of humans in nature. Alone in nature
she felt exposed, like no one would come to her
aid if someone attacked. It wasn't a fear of
nature, but a fear of what could happen there.

yes, she had attached being in the wilderness to being
unprotected & vulnerable. Exposure is a good way to
put it.

she was originally afraid of the outdoors, so I think it's more about finding peace with something that really scared her. Maybe facing this fear also showed that she was ready to face her general fear of being attacked.

Anthony and Soule, "Multicultural Approach to Ecopsychology":

Given the public invisibility and hardness of their rural experiences, it is not surprising that African Americans may have a different feeling about the land than privileged people of European heritage.

The depth of humiliation, the feeling of outrage...lead to a feeling of detachment and avoidance of emotional engagement with rural life....a psychological perspective that needs to be included in an enduring conservation ethic.

I found this quote interesting because when papers/articles/narratives etc talk about cultural connections with environments, particularly in untamed wilderness or rural zones, they're usually highlighting how certain groups of people feel a particular bond for these environments and a regret from being separated from it. This I feel is the first time I've read about a group of people having an inversion to these environments or at least less than positive views on them.

Was makes me think about how we talked about "environmentalism" as a relatively new movement. Is it really? Or is that coming from a postcolonial or post-imperialist (if that really is a word) perspective? Saying it's a new phenomenon is like saying that people have never actively cared for their environments, which is not true if one looks at many tribal uses, respectful uses of the environment.

Anthony and Soule, "Multicultural Approach to Ecopsychology" (continued):

...our response to urban realities is not divorced from our ancient fear of wild territories...the inner city [can be seen as] a wilderness...fear comes from the lethal combination of being caught in darkness in an unfamiliar world... How much...emotional reaction is an unconscious fear of retribution and guilt for ... the prodigious waste of abandoned sections of the city?

There is also the painful reminder that these are displaced people. They do not own their land, nor are they flourishing in this desolate urban habitat...urban populations by definition are people who cannot feed themselves.

I wonder how much we can really attribute to our subconscious - how much we are actually aware of guilt and potential retribution - does ~~the~~ this subconscious realization actually occur? - Choice

who is to blame for historical displacements?
(reparations)

"deep down, she was afraid of black people"

how much/important is it for us to address or confront these fears?
unconscious

how much are we willing to admit our fears.
to face our fears
to change our fears
transform

these ~~s~~
are the
reparations
that need attention

us vs. them

are they STILL displaced people.

can ANYONE ever be displaced?

Are we not all members of one planet?

I am scared of the dark.

Anthony and Soule, "Multicultural Approach to Ecopsychology" (continued, continued...):

The lessons of both social justice and ecopsychology are simple and the same. They involve living in connection. Cities clearly teach us about interdependence... Ecology can be seen as a way of life... its range of relationships includes everyone... feeling more firmly rooted in one's sense of self... holding an ongoing intention to 'stand corrected' without being subsumed... Everybody's story is vital to the integrity of the whole...

Monoculture is...deadly...inclusivity is risky, but...exciting.

how much are city dwellers actually aware of this? If you live in a city, that doesn't promise automatic clarity about your interdependence with/on someone picking radishes.

I agree with this, but feel that it implies that cities & ecology are always separate. In the west, more than the East, ecology is right there, visible & connected to the city. They are not so separate. — how is it visible?

Inclusivity is weird for us as humans because we've used to being exclusive. Exclusivity is how we prove our worth. But that's ^{not} the way that nature works. In natural systems, all components are equally important.

ah: so it's not enough — there needs to be reflection & awareness

very important & interesting: is this something we would like to change? (how? start @ Bkme? no grades? no "summaries"?)

I don't understand what you mean. I think you are saying that cities are...

The Winona LaDuke Reader:

Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Environmental Futures

implicit in traditional ecological knowledge is a continuous inhabitation of place, and the need to maintain a balanced relation between humans and the ecosystem...

there is a conflict between the paradigms of industrial and indigenous thinking: development practices are a war on subsistence...

Our current way of living is unsustainable. We have to do something or else risk driving our own species to extinction.

how to relate this to our incessant movement & migration? Can we be "ecologically literate" if we don't continuously inhabit a place?

↳ But how can we be ecologically literate if we are constantly exploiting a place without learning everything about what it could offer?

Is it time to return to indigenous thinking? Or at least integrate positive aspects of indigenous & industrial practices for a harmonious balance.

this reminds me of E. white's mention of tribal ancestors, ancestral/genetic memory.

The Winona LaDuke Reader, continued:

Who Owns America?

we belong to the land, in a collective relationship—
this is different from the European concept of land ownership

compensation as inadequate payment: title is 'cleared' by reparations in the court of the thief, w/ thieves setting the price they will pay for what they stole

all I have to say to this is: YES! and also CRAP!
I think the compensation ~~needs~~ idea needs to recognize that compensation shouldn't just be physical reparations but reparations taking place in the minds, hearts + psyches of people in society
Don't have a better way of phrasing this...

I think of Harriet Rouse & land acquired by tricking local natives into giving away "ownership" of land to settlers even though owning land was a foreign concept to them

- European concept of land ownership has overwhelmingly negative effects on history
- An ecologically lifelike relationship to land would not involve ownership on either side, though

The Winona LaDuke Reader, continued some more:

Honor the Earth

Ojibwe is a language of verbs:

we believe most things are animate, have standing and spirit

it is important to recover this language:

cf. "forest with trees" vs. "timber resources";

beneficial use of water vs. allocation of water rights;

corn vs. "agricultural products"

cf. also our cyclical approach w/ the waste produced by a linear world view

LINEAR IS A CONSTRUCTION.
MATURE USES LINES ONLY
OUT OF NECESSITY; TIME IS NOT
LINEAR.

"A language of verbs" → the rhemode!
everything in motion & relation...

the idea of everything being animated in some form draws a
callback to the theme of consciousness in the science fiction story

Can there be a system w/ no waste...?

How can we instill a new respect (not currently present)

in our modern-day-society to these
"animate, standing, & spirited" things?

↳ is/are language/words enough?

↳ is it a matter of belief?

↳ is it a matter of perception?

↳ is it a matter of choice.

↓
how much choice do we
really have?

I think many people ~~still~~
~~think they~~ don't realize
they take a choice when
it comes to environment...

The Winona LaDuke Reader, continued even more:

Seventh Generation Amendment

American public policy reflects short-term interests, pilfering that which is collectively ours we need a seventh generation amendment, distinguishing between private and common property, and considering the impact of current decisions on the seventh generation from now:

"the right of citizens to use renewable resources shall not impair their availability for future generations...."

OK, cool. Where do we draw the line between public & private, and who holds the rules and pen?

Being aware of long-term impact as an amendment, hummm I like this idea

Reminds me of the conversations about population control: who gets to decide who gets to reproduce?

→ "nothing can be created & nothing can be destroyed - only transformed - we want to use/look for things that will transform in a positive/safe way"

What intersections do you see among these texts?

Being displaced people causes a different relationship to the environment. More specifically, being a displaced person was once owned by another. In that way you are just like the environment.

The past has a huge effect on the present, even if the past is cultural & not personal. Until something is experienced that shows that the past can be rewritten, that shadows will continue to be there.

Environments and experiences interact. Even when displaced to an entirely different location, your experiential knowledge will continue to effect you.

Doing things heightens our awareness of things that are scary.

In our era of constant movement (both forced & voluntary) how can we forge a meaningful connection with our physical place?