Core 1: Weekly Response Week #

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Due in hard copy and/or on turnitin.com the first discussion section class following lecture.

Name: Majok Ring Date: 3/15/15

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Lecturer: Tom Hothem

Lecture Title: “Some Snapshots from the Literature of California”

Lecture’s Central Argument: As humans, we have a great impact on the world around us through things such as our carbon footprint and overuse of resources which can lead to deforestation and habitat loss. It is not our job to simply focus on protecting the obvious tourist attractions such as Yosemite and Yellowstone, but every area around us which is home to life. If we start to view these areas as beautiful as well, we might be able to become more concerned with our effects on that system.

Lecture’s Supporting Evidence/Examples:

Tom makes note of the languages used to describe national parks and compares it to that of our immediate surroundings. These parks are known for their beauty, vastness, calm atmospheres, while our surroundings are not viewed with such respect. Tom mentions how his mother planned for them to go on a trip to ‘nature’ and when Tom mentioned a 30 minute trip up to the mountains and she lambasted him for not knowing what true nature was. Tom also went into depth about how our landscapes can change through perception as many move to areas in which can provide them with entertaining trips. Tom showed us images of landscapes up to 200 years ago in which we did not even recognize popular cities such as Los Angeles as it used to be a very flat area which was sparsely populated. Ex. Integration of Highway 99. He also made note of organizations such as the Geography of Hope in which would serve to teach important messages of our impact on our environment/landscapes and how we can stop the disruption of local ecosystems.

Three questions you have with respect to this lecture:

Other Core 1 subjects to which the lecture might be related: Magic the Brain, how our perception can alter our reality. Change your focus in order to cover a greater scope and make things more manageable for preservation and improvement.

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Within this week’s lecture “Some Snapshots from the Literature of California” by Tom Hothem, we primarily concerned ourselves with how our actions people/consumers ultimately affect the environment around us and change landscapes over time. We also focused on the ideas that we protect only what we deem is valuable and question why we flock to national parks such as Yosemite and Yellowstone, while we have nature all around us in varying forms. Perception remains a key element as our views on how we came to be and our status does affect the happenings around us. Take this quotation from Didion’s “Notes from a Native Daughter”, “This is a story my generation knows; I doubt that the next will know it, the children of the aerospace engineers. Who will tell it to them?” (Didion 185). This exemplifies Joan’s fear of the fast changing environment as the contemporaries who are around to experience it will only know more through personal experience, sight, sounds, touch while the future generation may be robbed of this experience as we are undergoing too many changes and are not putting much emphasis on preservation of our environments. This relates back again to the past readings of Martinez-Conde & Macknik, “Magic and the Brain” where we stress the impact of perception and how it can change the outcome. This means that if we only narrow our vision and focus on very few things such as increasing our output and the impacts of growing consumerism, we are essentially blinded to the consequences which are presented to us such as growing amounts of smog, deforestation within the Amazon, and even things such as hydraulic fracturing (fracking) which can disrupt the wildlife and release large amounts of methane gas into the atmosphere. This concept is best represented through Berger’s “Ways of Seeing”, “Yet when an image is presented as a work of art, the way people look at it is affected by a whole series of learnt assumptions about art” (Berger 11), here Berger states that as change our view of certain things and put them into a more artistic perspective, we are ultimately changing the value and purpose. When you try to see the beauty in the areas around you and understand it’s inherent value, you are more prone to viewing the larger picture and can then focus on things such as effects on the environment, its inner workings, and focus on efforts in terms of preservation.

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Weekly Responses are graded according to the following rubric (on a scale of 0 to 5):

“5” Response: Specifies the focus of lecture/readings. Engages thoughtfully and accurately with the particulars of the lecture/readings. Fills the page with insightful observations that demonstrate inventive, connective processing of ideas.

“3” Response: Sketches the focus of lecture/readings. Engages lecture/readings, although may do so incompletely or partially. Fills much of the page with useful observations suggestive of emergent ideas.

“1” Response: Vaguely addresses the focus of the lecture/readings. Includes insufficient or inaccurate particulars of the lecture/readings. Fills little of the page, exhibiting thoughts that suggest incomplete processing of ideas.

“0” Response: no submission