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Editorial: Ecological Visionaries and the Politics of Conservation

Environmental history and the history of ecology might appear to be natural companions, but in practice the overlap and cross-fertilisation of these fields has been quite limited. This special issue of *Environment and History* stems from a series of conference sessions that attempted to address this important gap. The sessions, on *The Politics of Conservation*, were co-organised by us, along with Gregg Mitman, at the 1995 meetings of the International Society for the History, Philosophy and Social Studies of Biology.

The sessions examined a host of issues. Among them were:

- The relationship between ecology and resource management and the role of ecological science in ‘coercive conservation’, a term for domestic and colonial projects of control over territory, resources and peoples under the deceptively benevolent banner of conservation;
- The relationship between ecology and environmentalism, and the nature of the interactions between amateurs and professionals and between scientific ecology and various ‘environmentalist’ philosophies and ideologies; and
- The social location of nature and the environment – questions such as ‘Do places not on nature reserves, such as farms, roadsides, and greenhouses, count as nature worth conserving?’; ‘What are the boundaries, cross-references, and conflicts between conservation and aesthetics?’; and ‘What established and what transgresses the nature-culture divide?’

Issues such as these are signposts into a terrain that warrants more detailed mapping and exploration. In choosing the following five papers for publication we did not expect to find all these issues addressed, let alone resolved. Indeed all the authors emerge more from the side of history of science and of ideas than from environmental history. Nevertheless, readers interested in the cross-fertilisation project outlined above will find a great deal of stimulating material concerning wilderness and modern industrialised society, the complexity of ecological and social systems, social critique, and social agency. In turn, readers will probably identify ways to supplement and complicate the paper’s themes when analysing specific, materially grounded social and environmental change. To this end, these papers are followed by two commentaries. The first, by Peter Taylor, is a reflective essay teasing out some of the central theoretical concerns in each of these pieces. The second, by Ravi Rajan, is a broad survey of different traditions of environmental history that raises some critical questions for future work.

We gratefully acknowledge the help of a number of people. Among them are the editorial staff of *Environment History*, especially Andrew Johnson and

Richard Grove; the organising committee of the ISHPSSB, 1995, especially Linda Caporael and Elihu Gerson; the contributors to this collection; and several scholars who contributed by participating, commenting or refereeing, including Santos Casado, Mark Cioc, Jos Dekker, Maarten Heyboer, Judith Homeshaw, Patrick Matagne, Rebecca McLain, Gregg Mitman, Juliana Mulroy, Libby Robin and A. Samuel.

S. Ravi Rajan and Peter Taylor.

Environmentalism in Landscape Architecture

Call for papers

Studies in Landscape Architecture at Dumbarton Oaks will hold its 1998 symposium on the topic 'Environmentalism in Landscape Architecture'.

The years since Earth Day (1970) have witnessed a proliferation of environmental debates. Numerous practices, including landscape architecture, have been transformed as the environmental movement has diffused socially and geographically. Environmentalism, however, is neither recent nor easily defined. The current version rests on a number of tenets, the most prominent of which is ecology. Symposium participants will not be advocates for or against landscape architecture's environmental turn but analysts of it. Questions to be addressed will include, for example: Under what historical and geographical conditions did landscape architecture become environmentalist? To what degree has landscape architecture adopted ecological principles? What benefits and harms have resulted from an environmental landscape architecture? Do environmental landscape architectures differ between cultures and/or social-political systems? What have been the links between the environmentalism in landscape architecture and economic forces like tourism? Ideal presentations will work from specific studies of individuals, texts, landscapes, environments, and/or designs toward the question of links between environmentalism and landscape architecture.

The symposium will be held at Dumbarton Oaks on May 15 and 16, 1998. Those interested in presenting a paper should request more detailed information from: Director of Studies in Landscape Architecture, Dumbarton Oaks, 1703 32nd St. NW, Washington, DC 20007 (tel: 202-339-6460; fax: 202-625-0432; e-mail: landscape@doaks.org). Abstracts of no more than three pages describing the scope of the work and its significance for the symposium theme must be received by July 31, 1997.