

THEME 6: THOW IN THE VIRGINS! (apotropaism)

April 23

****Your Adopt-a-volcano dossier is due via email by midnight on April 23. The project handout is posted at the top of your 'past weekly themes' link on the class wiki. While you may choose another style for your dossier that you find more suited to your material, one option could be to follow the model of the Smithsonian's Global Volcanism Program. As you know, it lists headings and data, includes a photo, and then contains a blurb of written text that provides further information. Rather than containing just the details in the Global Volcanism listing, however, be certain to include the descriptive words you chose for the 'personality' (scientific and social) of your volcano. Please feel free – and encouraged – to include as many images as you would like in your document. There is no specified length for your text; please feel free to write as much as you need to convey what you learned about your volcano and what makes it unique in your own words. I would like for you to provide a short (~5 min) presentation in class, as well, of any changes in volcanic activity since you gave your descriptions of the 'scientific' side of your adopted volcano as well as any new information you might have found about its 'social' side since your class presentation. Have you changed any of the descriptive words you chose in your prior presentations or do you still feel that the ones you chose were most appropriate? Feel free to bring any new images you'd like to share on your own laptop for the presentation; I will also bring a Mac laptop to hook up to the monitor should you prefer to bring a flash/external.

The theme for our next meeting proceeds from past themes such as unpredictability and metaphor and links into our discussions of superstition and 'taming' of chance. *Apotropaism* entails the use of magic or ritual to prevent evil, and as we discussed in the case of the volcanologist who regularly offered rum to the volcano or in Italian villagers in the 20th century parading saints in front of lava flows to curb them, it is by no means a 'vestigial' (to use Ian Hacking's description of the way superstition was viewed in the Age of Reason) or non-western trait. Perhaps, as Bruno Latour (1991) states, we have never been modern?

Rather than putting these into alphabetical order, I am putting them in one suggested order of reading the articles....

Readings (and non-readings)

Latour, Bruno. 1991. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

*This is frequently cited contribution to the discussions of nature and modern ways of thinking; it also highlights the concept of the 'hybrid' forms of nature and culture (e.g., test-tube babies, the ozone hole) in which nature and culture are very messily combined rather than entirely separate entities. These issues have been very much in play in our discussion of volcanoes this semester. Focus upon these main elements in the chapter ; I don't expect you to do a close reading for detail.

Nakamura, Carolyn. 2004. Dedicating magic: Neo-Assyrian apotropaic figurines and the protection of Assur. *World Archaeology* 36 (1):11-25.

*I am having you read this as a mental sorbet of sorts (to cleanse the brain's palate through reading about a non-volcanic context) and to see how apotropaism can be viewed archaeologically. Try to take some of the theoretical constructs from the Neo-Assyrian context and play with them intellectually regarding how they could apply to an actively volcanic landscape such as the one that Plunket and Uruñuela (2008) describe in this week's readings.

**Plunket, P., and G. Uruñuela. 2008. Mountain of sustenance, mountain of destruction: The prehispanic experience with Popocatepetl Volcano. *Journal of Volcanology and Geothermal Research* 170 (1-2):111-120.

*I especially want you to focus on/think about the volcano effigies that were incorporated into domestic architecture in relation to the discussions in Nakamura (2004) and in relation to the 'mimesis' of the volcano.

**Elson, Mark, Michael Ort, Jerome Hesse, and Wendell Duffield. 2002. Lava, corn, and ritual in the northern Southwest. *American Antiquity* 67:119-135.

*these 'corn rocks' are one of my favorite apocryphal, potentially apotropaic artifacts!

**Holmberg, Karen. 2005. "The voices of stones: unthinkable materiality in the volcanic context of western Panamá," in *Archaeologies of Materiality*. Edited by L. Meskell, pp. 190-211: Blackwell Publishing.

*Focus on the interwoven bits about warnings of danger and relationships to deities that play into this week's theme and the overweighting of eruption to the exclusion of considerations of non-eruptive phases of volcanoes.

Lowry, Malcolm. 2000 [1947]. *Under the Volcano*. New York: Harper.

*per your request at the beginning of the semester (or at least the beginning of the stealth version of the class), I am including some excerpts of this influential 20th century novel so that you can read it first-hand rather than just read analysis of it. Feel free to return to the introduction of the novel that we read for our Feb 19 (metaphor) meeting if you need to refresh your memory of it. Lowry fits into this week's theme in the sense that he was attempting to ward off the threat that the volcano symbolizes metaphorically in the book through vast amounts of alcohol. Note that I am giving you a few pages from the beginning and then just a sample of the explicit references to volcanoes, though the implicit symbolism of foreign-ness or

danger runs throughout the novel. The excerpts are often only a page or two so keep that in mind as you read

Simone, Nina. 1965. "Sinnerman ": (song from the album 'Pastel Blues'), Philips Records.

<http://popup.lala.com/popup/432627077918579324>

*I'm assuming you already know this song, the lyrics for which are below. While I love Nina Simone in general, I've always found this song extremely interesting for the descriptions of what very well could be volcanic phenomena.

*While I do not necessarily espouse the opinions and certainly don't condone the snideness of the presenter in this YouTube clip, what he is getting at is linked to belief, apotropaism, and the centrality of a volcano and so I find it interesting: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xtl-ISvS028>

If you did not do so already, please watch Joe Versus the Volcano (1990); it is not on streaming Netflix, but it is available at http://tvshack.net/movies/Joe_Versus_the_Volcano_1990/. How are American working life, nature/culture, and volcanic islands portrayed in relation to one another? Note how apotropaism is portrayed in reference to the volcano.

SINNERMAN

Sinnerman where you gunna
run to
Sinnerman where you gunna
run to
Where you gunna run to
All on that day

Well I run to the rock
Please hide me I run to the rock
Please hide me I run to the rock
Please hide me lord
All on that day

Well the rock cried out
I cant hide you the rock cried
out
I cant hide you the rock cried
out
I aint gunna hide you god
All on that day

I said rock whats a matter with
you rock
Dont you see I need you rock
Dont let down
All on that day

So I run to the river

It was bleedin I run to the sea
It was bleedin I run to the sea
It was bleedin all on that day

So I run to the river it was boilin
I run to the sea it was boilin

I run to the sea it was boilin
All on that day

So I run to the lord
Please help me lord
Dont you see me prayin
Dont you see me down here
prayin

But the lord said
Go to the devil
The lord said
Go to the devil
He said go to the devil
All on that day

So I ran to the devil
He was waiting
I ran to the devil he was waiting
I ran to the devil he was waiting
All on that day

Oh yeah

Oh I run to the river
It was boilin I run to the sea
It was boilin I run to the sea
It was boilin all on that day

So I ran to the lord
I said lord hide me
Please hide me
Please help me
All on that day

Said God where were you
When you are old and prayin

Lord lord hear me prayin
Lord lord hear me prayin
Lord lord hear me prayin
All on that day

Sinnerman you oughta be
prayin
Oughta be prayin sinnerman
Oughta be prayin all on that day