

Statement Regarding the 2004 Piedmont Project
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As I wrote in my evaluative response to the Piedmont Project for Maria Carrion, I was challenged by the Project in several ways; the richness of the interdisciplinary conversation and the bracing breadth of the topic was decidedly refreshing, yet I often felt I was playing an inward game of catch-up, since I had done comparatively little investigation of local or general ecological studies before attending, and wasn't always confident of the assumptions upon which we were all operating.

This lack did make me hasten to catch up on basic reading, so since the project I've busied myself with some very fundamental texts, including Meeker's *Comedy of Survival* and a new strain of historical writings that integrate human and natural history (e.g., Fernandez-Armesto's *Civilizations*). These come into my analysis at a time when I am already engaged in re-addressing my general topic, theater history, through urban cultural studies, a rather unusual departure in the field; the implications of building on the Project's inspiration by further re-examining such cultural and urban history through the additional dimensions of landscape, seasonal variation and leisure patterns, food scarcity and harvest cycles, water and waste, disease cycles, population migrations, and the like, adds up to a huge undertaking, but one that may well enliven a new period of research for me, potentially re-writing theater history at least up to the European neoclassical period. This is a large-scale ambition, but I am at least underway on it.

Another, medium-term, project that may reflect the Piedmont Project's inspiration is my investigation, through contact with theatrical literary managers throughout the country, into the possibility of editing an anthology of American plays with ecological themes.

Other applications of Piedmont Project lessons are either more vague or downright specific: on the general scale, I continue to be interested in studying aesthetic schemes that may provide an alternative to Western aesthetics and allow for a different valuation of the local, the material, the accidental, all of which might be elaborated into a ecologically integrated aesthetic (so far I'm reading about Zen aesthetics and ritual and Native American ritual too); specifically, I am developing a ritual project for Theater Emory for this coming February which I intend to offer as a celebration of the plant ecology of the Emory campus (specifically Baker Woods). To this end, I'll be auditing the Ecology of Emory course this fall. My plan for this Baker Woods Project I shall send as a separate attachment.