

Correspondences Portfolio II: “*Genius Loci*”



Part I: The Ethnographic Essay

For this section of the portfolio, I'd like you to draw upon your observations of the world around you. Choose an environment on campus you are unfamiliar with, outside of your usual surroundings. This could be an academic department, an art gallery, a club meeting place, a cafe, or even a bus stop. The only requirement is that your place of choice must be populated by people. Observe the scene and take copious fieldnotes. Then write a two page report describing the place, the people, and their actions *so as to convey the spirit of the place and offer some insight into the impact of the place on the people*. This assignment asks you to use observation as your primary resource for writing. It is meant to be grounded in immediate, close observation, so don't rely upon a long-ago memory. Go somewhere new and open your senses - use all of them. This part of your portfolio should be two pages in length.

Part II: The Autoethnographic Essay

For this section of the portfolio, I'd like you to draw upon your self-observations in response to Part I of this portfolio assignment. Once you have completed your ethnographic essay, find a quiet place to think about the impression that the spirit of this place and its people has made on you as an observer. Once again take copious notes, being careful not to censor yourself as you write. Then write a two page report describing the affect that this observational exercise has had on you *so as to convey the spirit of the place and offer some insight into its impact on you*. This assignment asks you to use self-observation as your primary resource for writing. It is meant to ground the immediate, close observation of Part I in and through the mediating activity of self-observation and writing, and so while once again your work will not be reliant upon distant memory, it will by its very nature be an act of constituting memory of some sort. This part of your portfolio should be two pages in length.

Part III: Psychogeographic Mapping

For this section of the portfolio, I would like you to draw upon the results that you have garnered in and through Parts I & II of this portfolio. With these results in mind, please think about creative ways to represent and/or to narrate something of the spirit of the place that you have observed, as well as the personal results of your observations. With Chantal Akerman's *News from Home* and Joy Ackerman's "A Politics of Place: Reading the Signs at Walden Pond" in mind, Please propose three imaginative ways of mapping your chosen location psychogeographically. As these proposals are hypothetical at this point, feel free to make use of methods that are not currently available to you, such as film making. That said, you may also make use of any tools currently available to you in expressing your ideas, such as working images into your work. This part of your portfolio should be one to two pages in length. **Please include your "copious notes" in your Portfolio II folder.**

This assignment is due on Wednesday, April 6th 2011

My thanks to Dr. Susan Kirtley for inspiring this adaptation of her "Ethnographic Essay" assignment.