



THOMAS “FUNCTIONS OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND OUTHOUSE”

FOLK 211 – Atlantic Canadian Folklore

2011-03-02



WHAT DID YOU THINK?

[A YouTube clip, for which I bear no responsibility](#)



Outhouses

- Recent enough to be part of the childhood of Thomas's students, 1970s-1980s.
- Part of the cultural landscape of NL
- Not quite at the cusp of nostalgia



Types

- Single-seat
 - Later, double-seat, double-occupancy
- Waterproofed
- “Insulated” or decorated with papers
- May have painted exterior



Location

- Away from house (smell)
- Close enough (ease of access)
- Over water, hole, cliff (excavation)
 - If over hole, moved frequently



Décor

- Catalogue pages for wallpaper / makeshift toilet paper
- Status “Pride of place” maintenance, amenities such as windows, screens, etc.
 - Contra little maintenance, etc.
- Privacy, cleanliness




Functions: licit

- As disposal
 - Bodily functions
 - Garbage disposal
 - Ash-pan disposal
- As structure
 - Sociability & conversation
 - Playhouse



Functions: illicit

- Observation of others in delicate positions
 - Smoking
 - Sex talk
 - Sex
 - Targets for bonfires
- 



Functions: inspirational

- Touchstone for semi-nostalgia



Go away now

- For next class, Bauman's "Belsnickling"