

The American Nature Writing Newsletter

Fall 1989, Vol. 1, No. 2

From the editors

The response to the first issue was most gratifying, indicating that the newsletter provides a needed forum. We would like to thank everyone who wrote to encourage us in this venture and to offer their suggestions and help.

Starting in 1990, the Fall issues will be devoted to special topics. The topic for Fall 1990 is Ecocriticism. We welcome suggestions for future issues. Starting with the Spring 1990 issue, the Newsletter will include a column on Environmental Ethics by Joan Whitman Hoff, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Bentley College. The topic for Spring 1990 is the Alaska Oil Spill.

We are soliciting course descriptions, rationales, etc., for Classroom Notes. We would like contributions from people teaching environmental studies as well as courses in literary naturalism. Forward items of interest to: Thomas L. Stuckert, Findlay University, Findlay, OH 45840-3695.

We would like to hear from readers about their work. Please fill out the enclosed form to aid us in reporting the year's activities.

Several people have suggested that we might try to get together at the Modern Language Association (MLA) in Washington, DC. A good meeting point might be the College English Association Program on Nature Writing arranged by Betsy Hilbert--especially since Betsy is hoping that the discussion will continue beyond the formal session. The session is scheduled for Friday, December 29, 1989 at 3:30 p.m. in the Colorado Suite at the Sheraton.

Thank you, Alicia Nitecki and Cheryl Burgess

The American Nature Writing Newsletter is published twice a year and contains brief essays, book reviews, classroom notes, and disseminates information about activities relating to the study of writing on nature and the environment. Items of interest, including news about conferences, forthcoming publications, and work in progress are welcome. Copies are free.

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Assistant Editor: Cheryl Burgess, Cornell University
Editor of Classroom Notes: Thomas L. Stuckert, Findlay University
Editor of Annual Bibliography: Vernon Owen Grumbly, Jr., University of New England

Review

Sea-Brothers: The Tradition of American Sea Fiction from Moby-Dick to the Present. By Bert Bender. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988.

The term "nature writing" refers not only to literary non-fiction about the natural world, but also to the examination of nature and its human significance in other literary genres, including fiction. Bert Bender's ambitious, loving (i.e., written without the usual academic dispassion) survey of the "tradition" of American fiction featuring sailors, ships, and the sea picks up where Thomas Philbrick's *James Fenimore Cooper and the Development of American Sea Fiction* (1961) left off. Philbrick's attention ranges from Philip Freneau to Herman Melville, but concentrates on Cooper's role in the genre's development, noting the latter's elevation of the "sea novel" to a literary form in which both the sea and sailing "become the symbolic ground for the dramatic conflict of ideas and attitudes having universal significance". Bender resoundingly agrees with this assessment of the genre, tracing the fruitful pairing of meditation and water from *Moby-Dick* (1851) to Peter Matthiessen's *Far Tortuga* (1975); however, he rejects Philbrick's claim that the inland frontier came to supersede the influence of the sea on American literature after 1805. In arguing that *Moby-Dick* merely signaled a new phase in American sea fiction, not its extinction as a vital tradition, Bender echoes what Philbrick himself called the "heretical proposition" of Jeanne-Marie Santraud's *La mer et le roman americain dans la premiere moitie du dix-neuvieme siecle* (1972). According to Bender, Melville was "the first writer to give such profound emphasis to the sea itself," and in the cetological passages of his masterwork he demonstrated his particular interest in the

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life forms and life processes of the sea; after Melville, "all writers in the tradition of American sea fiction [...] have been guided by biological thought, but from the cataclysmic new point of view that was created by the Origin of Species [1859]".

Melville's pre-Darwinian natural theology and relative unconcern for "nautical realism" distinguish him from his successors in the tradition, but he nonetheless anticipated the Darwinian revolution with his abundant images of "man immersed in the biological order of life" (Bender emphasizes the example of the chapter "A Squeeze of the Hand" from *Moby-Dick* with its suggestions of the shipmates physically merging with each other and with the essence of the whale). The spread of Darwin's ideas brought with it a darker, less comforting vision of man's place in the universe than had been possible during Melville's theological phase; yet Bender finds that writers of sea fiction since Melville nearly always, at one time or another, demonstrate a Jamesian "will to believe" in their preservation of "the ideal brotherhood" despite "the reality of discord necessitated by the Darwinian view of warring nature and the Spencerian idea of survival of the fittest". This faith in human brotherhood is most prominent in Melville and Crane (Chapter 5 is entitled "The Experience of Brotherhood in 'The Open Boat'"). In his chapters on London, Hemingway, and ten less widely known writers who marked the transition "from sail to steam" between 1860 and the early decades of this century, Bender notes the shared concern for nautical verisimilitude and, particularly, for the daily reality of the common sailor (many of these writers, like Bender himself to a certain extent, staked their evaluations of sea fiction on its rootedness in the actual experience of working sailors, reflection the sway of literary naturalism around the turn of the century). But these writers also have in common their attentiveness to "the essential biological struggle" -indeed, in extreme cases, to "the primordial sea-animalness of man," as Bender notes with regard to Jack London's character Wolf Larsen.

Despite asserting that Hemingway's belief in the eternal, inviolable pristinity of the sea appears dated in light of our current awareness of the earth's fragile ecology, Bender does allow that Hemingway glimpsed the unity, the interconnectedness, of this planet's many species. But what Hemingway "celebrate[d]," according to Bender, was "the bloody brotherhood in which all life is joined," a union forged out of violent conflict rather than respect and ecological awareness. A more complete and respectful notion of pan-organic "brotherhood" (though still in the context of biological competition) emerges in the work of Peter Matthiessen, both in his sea fiction and in such works of nonfiction as *Men's Lives* (1986). Matthiessen goes so far in *Far Tortuga* as to create a common language--a mutual echoing of gasps and sighs--which reveals "the primordial kinship between these seamen and sea creatures, the hunters and the hunted". Yet even for Matthiessen the vision of man's relationship with the natural world is a dual one, half bright and half bleak: the fishermen in *Far Tortuga* (which Bender hyperbolically praises as "one of the greatest sea novels of all time, in any language") are

"at home in raw element nature," but have been "stripped of human pretense" in the bargain.

Bender's book succeeds in its effort to trace the abiding patterns in American sea fiction. The repeated delineation of traditional elements in the works of the fifteen writers considered in *Sea-Brothers* (five of whom--Melville, Crane, London, Hemingway, and Matthiessen--receive at least an entire chapter's worth of attention from the critic) creates a sense that these writers have indeed participated in a genuine tradition, and a vital one at that. Sometimes, though this must be written off as a pitfall of the project's impressive breadth, Bender's sketches of specific fictional characters and "minor" authors or texts come across as cursory, stiff, and even redundant: this occurs especially in the quick assessments of Melville's later tales, in the catalogues of transitional writers from Morgan Robertson to Archi Binns, and in such "afterthought" chapters as "Hemingway's Sea Men" (in the latter case, perhaps it is the preceding chapter, an intriguing but slender summary entitled "Hemingway: Coming to the Stream," that is wobbly on its own). Also, in his valid, eloquent, and yet occasionally shrill argument about the importance of these individual authors and their coherence as a "tradition," Bender tends to make sweeping, emotional judgments, some of which would be difficult to defend without providing more evidence and more sustained argumentation than he has room for in *Sea-Brothers*; one example is his concluding claim that *Far Tortuga* is "more purely a sea novel than any in our literature, a bold, beguiling notion which calls for explanation beyond what Bender offers in his lyrical final paragraph. In fairness, I should mention that the critic himself laments, in the last note of the book, the impossibility of fully "comprehend[ing]" *Far Tortuga* and "other great works in its tradition...in mere essays such as this" and thus justifies his decision to limit himself to detecting the "most significant traditional elements". Despite its reasonableness, this approach often leaves the reader hungering for more. I do admire Bender's willingness to acknowledge and meditate on the various authors' apparent use of the fictional medium to represent their own "deeply emotional and mysterious experiences[s]" at sea. And Tony Angell's fifteen drawings, which explicitly illustrated day scenes in the fiction, hauntingly complement Bender's sympathetic commentary.

One final note: the conspicuously masculine title of this book is no accident. "Sea-Brothers" (a phrase coined in an 1849 letter from Melville to Richard Henry Dana, Jr.) refers not only to the communities of sailors (and eventually the communities of both seamen and sea creatures) presented in the fiction, but to the fraternity of sea writers. Bender notes that women became frequent passengers on ships in the late nineteenth century, and that female characters even played an obligatory role in the new wave of sea fiction which began in the 1890s; but women writers seem not to have contributed to the genre of sea fiction, at least not as Bender defines it. This may well result from the exclusion of women--even today--from seafaring occupations, such as fishing, commerce, and exploration; and I ultimately fault Bender not for omitting women writers from his book, but for

neglecting to comment on the strangely absolute masculinity of his subject matter. One of the next steps for scholars interested in American sea fiction will be to investigate whether any of the women who have gone to sea in the past century have produced interesting fiction, too.

Scott Slovic, Brown University

Classroom Notes

I have been teaching a course on the nature essay at Lehman College, CUNY, located in the Bronx, off and on for fifteen years. Over that time it has necessarily grown, changed, even mutated, but has maintained a constant focus: the interpenetration in one's experience of nature of the external, physical world and the internal, psychological/emotional one.

In its most recent shape (Spring 1987), it bore the title "Nature and the American Land." The course explored a variety of attitudes towards nature and land in fiction, poetry, the essay, and the students' own experiences and writing. The aim was to enable students to see how their (and others') preconceptions affected the way they saw the natural world, experienced it, and wrote about it. The question under which we worked was, simply, "How much of IT is I?"

Students were required to keep a journal of one place in nature which they could return to all semester. Their final task was to write an essay based on their observations: the model, of course, was that of any experienced essayist of any subject. Throughout the term students were asked to allow me and their classmates to share the journal entries and let our discussions shape their vision.

Field trips to parks in and around New York helped the class gel and provided students with "hands-on" (eyes-on?) experiences. And a trip to the New York Historical Society to view their holdings of Audubon paintings and the work of the Hudson River painters afforded a visual dimension of ways in which conventions (conventional attitudes) influence seeing, thinking, and writing. This stage can be replaced with slide shows if museums are not available.

We read the following works that Spring: Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*; Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*; Loren Eiseley, *The Immense Journey*; Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea*; Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*; John McPhee, *The Pine Barrens*; and Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden*. These texts were supplemented by articles on various ecological issues which happily (or unhappily, as the case may be) kept appearing in the *New York Times*.

The course began, I should say, with my collecting several lists of twenty-five words or phrases from the students on what came immediately to mind when I mentioned "nature," "America," "land." These were a storehouse of preconceptions which I refused to let the class see until the end of the term. When we finally did explore them, the students "re-

discovered" old mental maps and were able to compare them to their newer, more "geodetic" understanding of the "landscape!"

Our guiding light throughout the term was Gary Snyder's "Smokey the Bear Sutra." Whether my students won "HIGHEST PERFECT ENLIGHTENMENT" in three months I wouldn't hazard a guess. I hope, however, that they started (or continued) along the way to learn Smokey the Bear's mantra: "I dedicate myself to the universal diamond/Be this raging fury destroyed!"

Jack Kligerman, Lehman College, CUNY

Joseph W. Meeker, a Tribute

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately," proclaimed Thoreau in "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For." To live deliberately seems to be the binding force that unifies Joseph Meeker's migratory peregrinations, many professions, and manifold publications. A modern day, rustic, renaissance man, Meeker is a human ecologist with a Ph.D. in comparative literature, and postdoctoral studies in wildlife ecology and ethology. He has lived in Alaska, California, Oregon, and Washington, and has held positions ranging from assistant professor of languages and literature, to chair of an English department, to fellow in comparative literature, to professor of environmental studies, to interdisciplinary professor, to visiting professor of ethics--all of the above at different institutions--to director of The Strong Center for Environmental Values in Berkeley, to chair of the doctoral studies program in New Natural Philosophy at International College, Los Angeles, to director of Graduate Studies in Whole Systems Design, Antioch University, Seattle. He has been a technical editor and writer, a seasonal ranger, a radio announcer, a narrator for educational films, executive producer and host of a weekly 30-minute national radio series, "Minding the Earth." At the time of this writing, he is in Alaska, helping to plan a major conference on the Exxon oil spill.

Meeker's prodigious publications list extends for six vitae pages; it includes six books, sixteen contributions to books, forty-one journal articles, nineteen book reviews for newspapers, and five for academic journals. In addition to *The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology*, reviewed below, he has written an introductory text on ecology (*Spheres of Life*), a multi-media self-study course entitled *Ancient Roots of the Modern World*, a series of three volumes under the title *Modern Consciousness*, and a collection of meditative essays on humanity's place in nature (*Minding the Earth*). Appearing frequently in *North American Review*, his journal articles tend to be interdisciplinary in conception, exploring connections among science, philosophy, and art, between ecology and aesthetics.

What is the thread of deliberation that knits together the diverse strands of Meeker's tapestry? He shared with me the following answer. "Somewhere near the center of what most of my writing is about is an attempt to change percep-

tions about the natural environment. My work doesn't touch politics much, or activism, or causes, or dangers, or strategies. Rather, I think the quickest way to change things is to find a new way of seeing and feeling our relationships to one another and to all other creatures. Those are the doors I try to open when I write."

Although Meeker's work has not gone unnoticed—he was an invited observer at the 1973 Nobel Prize ceremonies and was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1974—his most interesting book from the standpoint of literary studies is rarely cited and deserves special mention. As its title suggests, The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology (Foreword by Konrad Lorenz. New York: Scribner's, 1972, 217 pp.; rpt. Los Angeles: Guild of Tutors Press, 1980.) considers the interrelationship of literature and ecology. Postulating that "human culture and environmental crisis are intimately and causally interrelated" and that "life imitates art at least as much as art imitates life," the book evaluates several literary genres on the basis of whether or not the modes of human behavior and systems of human values they identify are consistent with a diverse and stable natural ecology and with the goal of global survival. Tragedy, for example, is found to be a maladaptive pattern of human behavior in that it rests upon a philosophy which elevates humanity above nature and values the individual over the community. Comedy, in contrast, earns a high ecological rating for its endorsement of diversity, accommodation and reconciliation. Similarly, the pastoral tradition with its escapist longings is an ecologically less wise survival strategy than the picaresque with its premium on adaptation. A chapter on ecological aesthetics addresses such topics as the biology of beauty, and time as a bioesthetic structure. A product of the seventies, The Comedy of Survival is a cache of original ideas and profound insight, quietly waiting to be rediscovered in the 1980s. And Meeker himself, with his brimming creativity answering to his unity of vision, inspires both gratitude and emulation.

Cheryll Burgess, Cornell University

JOSEPH W. MEEKER

PUBLICATIONS

Books

1. The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology. Foreword by Konrad Lorenz. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975, 256 pages. Nominated for 1974 Pulitzer Prize. Japanese translation published by Bunka Hoso Publishing Company, Tokyo, 1975. Paperbound edition by Guild of Tutors Press, Los Angeles, Spring 1980. Second Japanese edition: Tokyo, Hansei University Press, 1989.

2. Spheres of Life: An Introduction to World Ecology. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975. Japanese translation published by Bunka Hoso, Tokyo, 1976.

3. Ancient Roots of the Modern World, a multi-media self-study course on ancient origins of modern ideas. Twenty-seven 30-minute videotapes, twenty-seven radio broadcasts, and 1,000 pages of illustrated text published by Athabasca University, 1974-75.

4. Modern Consciousness (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press)

Vol. 1 Anxiety (1976)

Vol. 2 Hopes and Expectations (1977)

Vol. 3 Habits and Hang-ups (1978)

5. Minding the Earth: Thinly Disguised Essays on Human Ecology, Alameda, CA, The Latham Foundation, 1988.

6. The Epistles of Joseph (work in progress)

Contributions to Books

1. Interdisciplinary Workshop on the Interrelationships between Science and Technology, and Ethics and Values, W. Blanpied and W. Weisman-Dermer, eds. Washington, D.C. AASS Miscellaneous Publication 75-8, September, 1975. Symposium reports by J. Meeker: "Comic and Tragic Modes in the Practice of Science" (page 96) and "Means for Establishing National Energy Priorities" (page 106).

2. Northern Change, Arctic Institute of North America, 1976, "Summation: Northern Change in Perspective," pp. 125-132.

3. Progress As If Survival Mattered, San Francisco, Friends of the Earth, 1978, "Science Serves Humanity: Humanity Returns the Serve," pp. 160-163.

4. The Search for Absolute Values in Changing World. New York International Cultural Foundation Press, 1977, 2 volumes. "Fields of Danger and The Wilderness of Wisdom," Volume 1, pp. 63-69.

5. Minus 31 and the Wind Blowing, Anchorage, Alaska Humanities Forum and APU Press, 1980. Chapter 7 by J. Meeker, "Alaska's Indigenous Lifestyle."

6. Mammals in the Seas, Rome, United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, 4 Vols., 1978-1979. J. Meeker, "Dolphins Do: Dugongs Don't," Vol. 3, p. 3.

7. The Humanities and Ecological Consciousness, New York, University Press of America, 1981. Chapter Five by J. Meeker, "Toward a New Natural Philosophy."

8. The Age of Wisdom, Berkeley, Ross Books, 1981. Chapter Five by J. Meeker, "Wisdom and Wilderness."

9. Absolute Values and the Search for the Peace of Mankind, New York, International Cultural Foundation Press, 1982, Vol. LL, p. 1111. J. Meeker, "Comic Alternatives to Aggression."

10. Humanity and Deep Ecology, San Diego, Avant Books, 1982. Introductory Chapter by J. Meeker, "Minding the Earth: Toward a New Natural Philosophy."

11. Delivery of Services to Families, New York, University Press, 1982, p. 218. J. Meeker, "Comedy in the Nuclear Age and the Nuclear Family."

12. The Human/Whale Connection, Washington, International Whaling Commission, 1982. Chapter by J. Meeker, "Cetaceans and the Hunting Ethic."

13. Modernization: The Humanist Response to its Promise and Problems, Washington, Paragon House Press, 1982. Chapter 3 by J. Meeker, "Fields of Danger and the Wilderness of Wisdom."

14. Dynamic Relationships: The Human-Animal Bond, Alameda, CA, The Latham Foundation, 1985. Chapter 3 by J. Meeker, "Who Needs Animals?" Reprinted as The Loving Bond, Saratoga, CA, R & E Publishers, 1988.

15. Winterburning, poems by Patricia Monaghan, Fairbanks, Fireweed Press, 1985. Introduction by Joseph Meeker.

16. Wolf, poems by Edgar Carter, Lewiston, NY, Edwin Mellon Press, 1988. Forward by Joseph W. Meeker.

Journal Articles

1. "The Biology of Human Ethics," Proceedings of the Nebraska Academy of Sciences, April 1969.

2. "Notes Toward an Ecological Esthetic," Canadian Fiction, Vol. 2, No. 6, Spring 1972.

3. "The Comedy of Survival," North American Review, Vol. 257, No. 2, Summer 1972. Reprinted in The Ecologist (England) Vol. 3, No. 6, 1973.

4. "Hamlet and the Animals," North American Review, Vol. 257, No. 3, Fall 1972.

5. "The Only Witness" (co-author Todd Newberry), North American Review, Vol. 257, No. 4, Winter 1972.

6. "The Humanities and the Environment" (editorial) North American Review, Vol. 257, No. 3, Fall 1972.

7. "Academic Fields and Other Polluted Environments," Journal of Environmental Education, Vol. 4, No. 3, Spring 1973.

8. "Nature's Constitutional Rights," North American Review, Vol. 258, No. 1, Spring 1973.

9. "Prologue to an Environmental Ethic," North American Review, Vol. 258, No. 2, Summer 1973.

10. "Red, White and Black in the National Parks," North American Review, Vol. 258, No. 3, Fall 1973.

11. "Mother Earth and Women's Lib," Journal of Environmental Education, Vol. 5, No. 1, Winter 1973.

12. Newspaper series on World Ecology, published in Edmonton Journal, Fall 1973, and collected as Spheres of Life (Scribner's, 1975). This series was reprinted in twelve Canadian newspapers during 1974-75:

1. "The Spheres of Life"
2. "The Lithosphere"
3. "The Hydrosphere"
4. "The Atmosphere"
5. "The Biosphere: Plant Life"
6. "The Biosphere: Animal Life"
7. "The Noosphere"
8. "Paths of Energy"
9. "Populations"
10. "Evolution"
11. "The Principle of Diversity"
12. "Environmental Ethics"

13. "The Preservation Viewpoint," in The Dilemma Facing Humanity, Hanford: Batelle Memorial Institute, 1974.

14. "A Pipeline in Your Lifestyle," Fairbanks, Alaska Humanities Forum, August 1975.

15. "Science Serves Humanity: Humanity Returns the Serve," North American Review, Spring 1975. Reprinted in The Advancement of Science, (London) Vol. 1, No. 1, Fall 1975.

16. "Ambidextrous Education, Or: How Universities Can Come Unskewed and Learn to Live in the Wilderness," North American Review, Vol. 260, No. 2, Summer 1975. Reprinted in Not Man Apart, Fall 1975. Reprinted by Guild Press, Los Angeles, Spring 1977.

17. "Genes and Clever Livers," North American Review, Vol. 260, No. 3, Fall 1975.

18. "Picaresque Science and Human Ecology," Human Ecology, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1977.

19. "Northern Change in Perspective," The Northern Engineer, Fall-Winter 1977.

20. "The Immanent Alliance: New Connections among Art, Science and Technology," Technology and Culture, April 1978. Also published by Alaska Humanities Forum, Anchorage, Fall 1976.

21. "Dolphins Do: Dugongs Don't" in Proceedings of U.N. Scientific Consultation on Mammals in the Seas, Bergen, Norway, 1976.

22. "Field of Danger and the Wilderness of Wisdom," Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on Unity in the Sciences, San Francisco, 1977. Reprinted in North

American Review, Spring 1978, in Vancouver Sun, May 18, 1978, and in New York News-World, October 21-22, 1978.

23. "Learning to Undepend," in Proceedings of a Town Meeting on Energy, Fairbanks, University of Alaska Institute of Water Resources Publication No. 83, October 1977.

24. "Engineering with Meaning," Colorado School of Mines, Mineral Industries Bulletin, Volume 21, No. 6, November 1978.

25. "New New Natural Philosophy," brochure published by Guild of Tutors Press, Los Angeles, 1978.

26. Evaluation of Magoroh Maruyama's article, "Mindsapes and Science Theories," in Current Anthropology, Vol. 21, No. 5, October 1980.

27. "Wisdom and Wilderness," in Landscape, Vol. 25, No. 1, January 1981. Reprinted in Athabasca Magazine, February 1985.

28. "An Approach to Survival," in Gallery, Vol. 9, No. 1, January 1981.

29. "Comic Alternatives to Aggression," in Absolute Values in the Search for Peace, New York, International Cultural Foundation Press, 1981.

30. "Reagan and Other Home Remedies," in Gallery, Vol. 9, No. 3, March 1981.

31. "Needed : A New Natural Philosophy," in Cry California, Summer 1981. Reprinted in Bulletin of the Association for Humanistic Psychology, August 1981.

32. "Nature and Other Mothers," in Between the Species, Winter 1984.

33. "Who Needs Subsistence," in Proceedings of the Alaska Native Review Commission, Anchorage, October 1984. Reprinted in The Antiochian, March 1985.

34. "Earthly Speculations," 4 essays from Minding the Earth in Wilderness, Vol. 49, No. 172, Fall 1986.

35. "The People Who Read the Day: Subsistence and Durability in Alaska," in Wilderness, Vol. 50, No. 174, Fall 1986.

36. "Living Like a Glacier," in American Land Forum, Vol. VII, No. 2, Spring 1987.

37. "People and Other Misused Resources," in Resurgence (England), Fall 1987, p. 38. "It's a Resource's Life," in American Land Forum, Fall 1987.

39. "Reflections on a Digital Watch," in The Utne Reader, Sept./Oct. 1987.

40. "Assisi and the Stewards," in Wilderness, Vol. 51, No. 2, Spring 1988.

41. "Oration on the Dignity of All" in Between the Species, Vol. 4, No. 1, Winter 1988.

Book Reviews

Nineteen book reviews published in newspapers, 1962-76; Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Chronicle, Edmonton Journal.

Book reviews in academic journals

"Paul Shepard's Tender Carnivore" (Paul Shepard, The Tender Carnivore and the Sacred Game. New York: Scribner's 1973) in North American Review, Vol. 258, No. 2, Summer 1973.

"Onward to Yesterday with Rene Dubos." (A God Within by Rene Dubos, New York, Scribner's 1972) In Inquiry (Oslo, Norway) Vol. 16, No. 3, October 1973.

The Chickadees by Conrad Hyers. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974. In Not Man Apart, Vol. 4, No. 16, November 1974.

Should Trees Have Standing? by Christopher Stone. Los Altos, CA: William Kaufman, Inc. 1974. in Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, Vol. 29, No. 6 (November-December 1974).

36 Lectures in Biology by Salvador Luria. Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1975. In The American Scholar, Vol. 44, No. 4, Autumn 1975.

American Women Nature Writers

A WORKING LIST

Betsy S. Hilbert, Miami-Dade Community College

A list of every American woman writer who has taken the natural world as her subject would be long and fascinating, but it would require energies far beyond the scope of this project. The books listed here form a substantial portion of that genre known as the nature book--a book which is generated from its author's direct experience with the natural world, which has that world as its primary subject, and which reports its understandings as nonfictional literature. This list does not, therefore, include such authors as Elizabeth Gemming, Maxine Kumin, or Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, the "local color" or regional writers who portrayed mainly village or rural life, nor does it include authors whose primary interest was in the history and people of a particular area, even though many works by those writers beautifully express the landscapes and ecologies of their settings. Also omitted here are works whose spirit is primarily scientific or

technical, or those intended as field manuals, such as Elna Bakker's An Island Called California.

The writers listed here include amateur naturalists and professional scientists who worked from field observation and direct experience to describe and interpret the natural environment. These women left a heritage of understanding, an appreciation of the essential interrelationships between the human spirit and the natural environment, and a body of nonfictional literature that is unsurpassed in both craft and vision.

Works by an author are arranged in order of their original publication. Where possible, reprints have been noted.

Austin, Mary

Land of Little Rain. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1903; Anchor, 1961.

California: The Land of the Sun. 1914.

The Land of Journey's Ending. New York: AMS, 1924.

[Austin wrote over thirty books in addition to her essays, articles and poetry. Nearly all of her work emphasized her interest in the American West and in Native American life and art. The books listed above--particularly Land of Little Rain--best exemplify her work as a naturalist.]

Back, Mary

Seven Half Miles from Home. Boulder, CO: Johnson Books, 1985.

Bailey, Florence Augusta Merriam

A-Birding on a Bronco, by Florence Augusta Merriam. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1896.

[Writing under her married name, Bailey later produced extensive work in field guides and travel literature.]

Carrighar, Sally

One Day on Beetle Rock. New York: Knopf, 1943; Ballantine, 1973.

One Day at Teton Marsh. New York: Knopf, 1947. [Later made into a Walt Disney nature film.]

Icebound Summer. New York: Knopf, 1953.

Moonlight at Midday. New York: Knopf, 1958.

Wild Voice of the North. New York: Doubleday, 1959.

The Glass Dove. New York: Doubleday, 1962; Avon, 1977.

Wild Heritage. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965.

Home to the Wilderness. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973; Penguin, 1974. [autobiography]

The Twilight Seas: A Blue Whale's Journey. New York: Ballantine, 1976.

Carson, Rachel

Under the Sea Wind. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1941; Oxford University Press, 1952.

The Sea Around Us. New York: Oxford University Press, 1951, 1961.

The Edge of the Sea. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1955.

The Silent Spring. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962.

The Sense of Wonder. New York: Harper, 1965.

Caulfield, Catherine

In the Rainforest. New York: Knopf, 1985.

Cooper, Susan Fenimore

Rural Hours. 1850; Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1968.

[Though Rural Hours is essentially a picture of village life, it is included here as an influential early work on nature by an American woman.]

Cruikshank, Helen Gere

Bird Islands Down East. New York: Macmillan, 1941.

Flight into Sunshine. New York: Macmillan, 1948.

Cushman, Carol

The Shortgrass Prairie, with Stephen R. Jones. Boulder, CO: Pruett, 1988.

Davis, Julie [See the note under Douglas,

Marjorie Stoneman.]

DeBlieu, Jan

Hatteras Journal. Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 1987.

Dillard, Annie

Pilgrim at Tinker Creek. New York: Harper, 1974; Bantam, 1974.

[Dillard's essays and poetry often deal with the theme of nature; Pilgrim reports direct observation of the natural world.]

Doubleday, Nellie Blanchan

Bird Neighbors. 1897.

Birds that Hunt and are Hunted. 1898.

Nature's Garden. 1900.

How to Attract the Birds. 1903.

[Though the accuracy of Doubleday's observations has been called into question--one recent editor pointed out her probable capacity for fiction--her lavish, illustrated books made popular presentation copies of the period.]

Douglas, Gilean

Silence is my Homeland: Life on Teal River. New York: Stackpole Books, 1978.

Douglas, Marjorie Stoneman

The Everglades: River of Grass. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1947; Atlanta: Mockingbird, 1974.

Hurricane. 1958; Atlanta: Mockingbird, 1976.

[The Everglades, which was highly influential in supporting conservation efforts in South Florida, was one of the Rinehart Rivers of America series. Other books in the series by women authors--not included separately in this list because they primarily discuss the history and people of the regions the rivers flow through--include Julia Davis' The Shenandoah, 1945; Anne B. Fisher's The Salinas, 1945; Cecile Hulse Matschat's Suwanee River: Strange Green Land, 1938; and Blair Niles' The James, 1939.]

Ebert, Virginia S.

River World: Wild Life of the Mississippi. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1959.

Fisher, Anne B. [See note under Douglas, Marjory Stoneman.]

Fisk, Erma J.

The Peacocks of Baboquivari. New York: W.W. Norton, 1983.

Fuller, Margaret

Summer on the Lakes. 1844; New York: Haskell House, 1970.

[More travel piece than natural history, with a discussion of women in the West. Thoreau's biographers have indicated this was one of the models for Walden.]

Gantz, Charlotte Orr

A Naturalist in Southern Florida. Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1971.

Goin, Olive Brown

World Outside My Door. New York: Macmillan, 1955.

Griffin, Ina

Wayfaring with Birds. Santa Barbara: John Daniel, 1987.

Hancock, Lyn

Looking for the Wild. Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1986.

[Hancock has written many books about Canada; Looking for the Wild is included here as a sensitive picture of American nature in the 1980's.]

Heckman, Hazel

Island Year. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972.

[Island in the Sound, 1967, is a delightful depiction of the human inhabitants of Anderson Island, the subject of Island Year.]

Holmgren, Virginia C.

The Way of the Hummingbird: in Legend, History & Today's Gardens. Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1986.

Hoover, Helen

Longshadowed Forest. New York: Crowell, 1963.

Gift of the Deer. New York: Knopf, 1966.

A Place in the Woods. New York: Knopf, 1969.

Hubbell, Sue

A Country Year: Living the Questions. New York: Random, 1986.

Jacques, Florence Page

Canoe Country. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1938.

The Geese Fly High. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1939.

Birds Across the Sky. New York: Harper, 1942.

Snowshoe Country. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1944.

Canadian Spring. New York: Harper, 1947.

As Far as the Yukon. New York: Harper, 1951.

Johnson, Josephine

The Inland Island. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1969. [Johnson's other works are fiction and poetry, though much of her work deals with the theme of nature.]

LaBastille, Anne

Woodsman. New York: Dutton, 1976.

Assignment Wildlife. New York: Dutton, 1980.

Women and Wilderness: Women in Wilderness Professions and Lifestyles. San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1980.

Lawrence, Louis de Kiriline

The Lovely and the Wild. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968.

To Whom the Wilderness Speaks. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980.

Leister, Mary

Wildlings. Stemmer House, 1976.

Seasons of Heron Pond. Stemmer House, 1981.

Matschat, Cecile Hulse. [See note under Douglas, Marjory Stoneman.]

Millar, Margaret

The Birds and the Beasts Were There. New York: Random House, 1967.

Miller, Olive Thorne (Harriet Mann Miller)

A Bird-Lover in the West. 1894; Arno, 1970.

With the Birds in Maine. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904.

[Miller's bird books were primarily intended for children, but she was a writer who never talked down to her audience, and the books are still well worth reading. Her other works include Birdways, In Nesting Time, The First Book of Birds, Upon the Tree-tops, and The Children's Book of Birds.]

Murie, Margaret E.

Two in the Far North. New York: Knopf, 1962 (Ballantine, 1972; Alaska Northwest, 1978.)

Wapiti Wilderness, with Olaus Murie. New York: Knopf, 1966.

Nice, Margaret Morse

The Watcher at the Nest. New York: Macmillan, 1939.

[A pioneer in behavioral research, Nice was one of the most important ornithologists of her day. Her autobiog-

raphy Research Is a Passion with Me was published in 1979, five years after her death.]

Niles, Blair [See note under *Douglas, Marjory Stoneman*. Niles also wrote extensively about *Latin America and the Caribbean*.]

Pepin, Yvonne
Cabin Journal. Berkeley: Shameless Hussy Press: 1984.

Pettingill, Eleanor Rice
Penguin Summer. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1960.

Rich, Louise Dickinson
We Took to the Woods. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1964.
My Neck of the Woods. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1950.
The Natural World of Louise Dickinson Rich. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1962.

Riley, Laura
Guide to the National Wildlife Refuges, with William Riley. New York: Doubleday, 1979.
[The Guide is included here because it is to date Riley's only published book; her articles and photographs are worth noting.]

Ryden, Hope
America's Last Wild Horses. New York: Dutton, 1970.
God's Dog. New York: Coward, 1975.
The Little Deer of the Florida Keys. New York: Putnam, 1978. [children's]
Bobcat Year. New York: Viking, 1981.

Sanger, Marjorie Bartlett
World of the Great White Heron: A Saga of the Florida Keys. New York: Devin-Adair, 1967.
Forest in the Sand. New York: Athenaeum, 1983.

Scherman, Katharine
Spring on an Arctic Island. Boston: Little, Brown, 1956.

Schultz, Zella
On the Wings of the Wild Wind. Bellingham, WA: Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, 1986.

Steele, Mary Q.
The Living Year: An Almanac for My Survivors. New York: Quill, 1982.

Stratton-Porter, Gene
What I Have Done With Birds. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1907. Revised and enlarged version published 1917 as Friends in Feathers.
Music of the Wild. Cincinnati & New York: Jennings & Graham, 1910.
Moths of the Limberlost. Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1912.

Homing with the Birds. Garden City: Doubleday, 1919.
Wings. Garden City: Garden City Publishing Co., 1923.
[Reprints of chapters from Friends in Feathers and Homing with the Birds.]
Tales You Won't Believe. Garden City: Doubleday & Page, 1925.

Sutton, Ann
Nature on the Rampage: a Natural History of the Elements, with Myron Sutton. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1962.
Yellowstone: A Century of the Wilderness Idea, with Myron Sutton. New York: Macmillan, 1972.
The American West: A Natural History, with Myron Sutton. New York: Random House, 1979.
[Ann and Myron Sutton wrote the current Audubon Society nature guides.]

Teal, Mildred
Life and Death of the Salt Marsh, with John Teal. New York: Ballantine, 1974.

Thaxter, Celia Leighton
Among the Isles of Shoals. 1873.
An Island Garden. Boston: Houghton & Mifflin, 1894.

Vanstory, Burnette
Georgia's Land of the Golden Isles. Athens: University of Georgia Press: 1956, 1981.

Watts, May Theilgaard
Reading the Landscape of America. New York: Macmillan, 1975. [originally published as Reading the Landscape in 1957.]

Wright, Mabel Osgood
The Friendship of Nature. 1894.
Citizen Bird, with Elliott Coues. 1897.
[Wright also produced a number of field guides.]

Zwinger, Ann
Beyond the Aspen Grove. New York: Random, 1970; Harper, 1981.
Land Above the Trees, with Beatrice Willard. New York: Harper, 1972.
Run, River, Run: A Naturalist's Journey down One of the Great Rivers of the West. New York: Harper, 1975.
Wind in the Rock: A Naturalist Explores the Canyon Country of the Southwest. New York: Harper, 1978.
A Desert Country Near the Sea: A Natural History of the Cape Region of Baja California. New York: Harper, 1983.
A Conscious Stillness: Two Naturalists on Thoreau's Rivers, with Edwin Way Teale. New York: Harper, 1982; University of Massachusetts Press, 1984.

THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT WORKS OF NATURAL HISTORY, BUT ARE INTERESTING FOR THEIR EXPRESSIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN AND NATURE:

Griffin, Susan

Women and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her. New York: Harper, 1978.

Kolodny, Annette

The Image of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975.

Merchant, Carolyn

The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution. New York: Harper, 1982.

OTHER BOOKS WORTH NOTING:

Bird, Isabella

A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains. New York: Putnam's, 1879-80; University of Oklahoma Press, 1969.

[Though most of the works of the formidable British traveler Isabella Bird Bishop dealt with the Far East, her pictures of the landscapes of the Rockies are among the best works written about that time and place.]

Graber, Linda

Wilderness as a Sacred Space. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 1976.