

An annotated table of contents of *The Great New Wilderness Debate*

by Michael P. Nelson

READERS OF *WILD EARTH*, especially those interested in the theme of the issue in hand, will be pleased to learn that a scholarly anthology on the current debate surrounding the concept of wilderness will soon be available. Baird Callicott and I, like you, genuinely feel that this debate merits serious attention and consideration since the protection and defense of designated Wilderness Areas would seem to be contingent, at least in part, upon a proper conceptualization of "wilderness." To paraphrase Plato's Socrates, *for no light matter is at stake; the question concerns the very status and future of those "wild" places we so revere.*

Our anthology is divided into four parts. In Part I, "The Received Wilderness Idea," we present essays by those early thinkers and writers whose works so thoroughly determined our collective Western portraiture of wilderness. The anthology begins with selections from New England Puritan teacher/preacher Jonathan Edwards. In "Images or Shadows of Divine Things" and "Christian Doctrine of Original Sin," Edwards holds wilderness up as an object of worship, the purest representation of work by the hand of God—a view that not only ran counter to the dominant strain of thought about wilderness at the time, but that anticipated the Transcendentalist school of thought, which most agree was the wellspring of our current received view of wilderness. Next, we have included selections by those influential transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and John Muir. Chapter one of Emerson's piece "Nature," selections from Thoreau's honored essay "Walking" and little-known essay "Huckleberries," and large excerpts from Muir's "The Wild Parks and Forest Reservations of the West" and "The American Forests" serve to give the reader a hearty taste of the shift in thinking about the value of Nature from negative to positive occurring in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Theodore Roosevelt's "The American Wilderness: Wilderness Hunters and Wilderness Game" and Sigurd Olson's "Why Wilderness" are included to represent the origins of a prevalent aspect of the received view—namely, the masculinist idea of wilderness as big and fierce, a proving ground for one's manhood and virility. "Wilderness as a Form of Land Use" by Aldo Leopold and "The Problem of Wilderness" by Robert Marshall served as precursors to the legion of works in the 20th century providing arguments for the preservation of designated wilderness areas. "An Amalgamation of Wilderness Preservation Arguments," an original essay by Michael Nelson, is an attempt to collect in one place all of those rationales for the preservation of wilderness presented over the last three-quarters of a century. Finally, we have included the text of the single most important piece of wilderness legislation ever, "The Wilderness Act of 1964," as well as an original essay and philosophical analysis of the Wilderness Act of 1964 by Mark Woods, "Federal Wilderness Areas: The Preservation of Wilderness?"



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Spotted Coral Root by Etan Cantor

In Part 2, "The Wilderness Idea Criticized and Defended," the idea of wilderness handed down from the likes of Muir, Thoreau, Olson, Leopold, Marshall, and Roosevelt is both challenged and supported. The section begins with three essays now widely held to be the philosophical exchange that broke open the floodgates of the current controversy surrounding the received concept of wilderness. In "The Wilderness Idea Revisited: The Sustainable Development Alternative," Baird Callicott attacks the received wilderness idea for being inappropriately dualistic, ethnocentric, ecologically naive, and a poor basis for a successful global conservation philosophy. In "The Wilderness Idea Reaffirmed," Holmes Rolston III defends the received view of wilderness against Callicott's diatribe. Callicott briefly responds to Rolston in "That Good Old-Time Wilderness Religion." Reed Noss ("Sustainability and Wilderness") and Dave Foreman ("Wilderness Areas For Real," original contribution) throw in with Rolston as defenders of "Big Wilderness." William Denevan ("The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492") and William Cronon ("The Trouble with Wilderness, or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature"), on the other hand, sign on to Team Callicott as critics of the received view. Tom Birch's sophisticated but ambiguous essay, "The Incarceration of Wilderness: Wilderness Areas as Prisons," both serves as a defense of and expresses a discomfort with the wilderness idea in its North American context. Part 2 is rounded out by Marvin Henberg's "Wilderness, Myth, and American Character"—an essay recognizing the supposed shortcomings of the received view while at the same time arguing for the preservation of wilderness as a necessary condition of a rich cultural human existence.

Part 3, "The Third and Fourth World Perspectives," centers on the debate about, and the growing concern over, the implications of the received view of wilderness in the Third and Fourth Worlds. To open, Roderick Nash traces the history of the received view as it was transplanted outside America, in chapter sixteen, "The International Perspective," of his classic work, *Wilderness and the American Mind*. In "Cultural Diversity, Human Subsistence, and the National Park Ideal," David Harmon explores the ethical implications of globally applying the world's most widely used category of protected area—the national park—especially in an African context. Next is Ramachandra Guha's "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique." In this oft-cited essay, written from a South Asian perspective, Guha critiques the Deep Ecology movement and its focus on wilderness preservation as being relevant only to an American con-

text and, hence, inappropriate when applied to the Third World. Arne Naess ("The Third World, Wilderness, and Deep Ecology") and David Johns ("The Relevance of Deep Ecology to the Third World: Some Preliminary Comments") attempt to defend the Deep Ecology movement and wilderness preservation against Guha's stinging charges. In "Taming the Wilderness Myth," Arturo Gómez-Pampa and Andrea Kaus offer a Latin American critique of the received view of wilderness; in "Overturning the Doctrine: Indigenous People and Wilderness—Being Aboriginal in the Environmental Movement," Fabienne Bayet provides the Fourth World perspective of an Australian Aboriginal woman in critiquing the Australian version of the received view; and in "The Wilderness Narrative and the Cultural Logic of Capitalism," another original contribution, Carl Talbot puts forth a neo-Marxist analysis and critique of the wilderness idea.

Part 4, "Beyond the Wilderness Idea," offers positive, forward-looking suggestions on how to get beyond the received view and its critiques. Two themes dominate this section: more expansive rationales for preserving wilderness than those above; and reinhabitation, or learning how to combine the preservation of the ecological health and integrity with the human use of a place. Aldo Leopold's little known essay "Threatened Species," Reed Noss's "Wilderness Recovery: Thinking big in Restoration Ecology," Baird Callicott's "Should Wilderness Areas Become Biodiversity Reserves?," Jack Turner's "In Wilderness is the Preservation of the World," and Dave Foreman's "Wilderness: From Scenery to Nature" all loosely fit into the first category. Essays grouped with the reinhabitation theme include "Wilderness" by Aldo Leopold, "Getting Back to the Right Nature: A Reply to Cronon's 'The Trouble with Wilderness'" by Don Waller, "Cultural Parallax in Viewing North American Habitats" by Gary Nabhan, and "The Rediscovery of Turtle Island" by guru of the reinhabitation ideal, Gary Snyder. Ed Grumbine's essay "Wildness, Wise Use, and Sustainable Development" grapples with both themes of part four. The collection is capped with an original essay by Australian ecofeminist philosopher Val Plumwood. In "Wilderness Scepticism and Wilderness Dualism," Plumwood offers a critique of the reinhabitation proposals, insisting instead on a combination of the cultural world of that which is human with the natural world of that which is wilderness without simply collapsing one into the other. ■

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