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THE WILDERNESS CONDITION: ESSAYS ON ENVIRONMENT AND CIVILIZATION. Edited by Max Oelschlaeger. Washington, D.C. and Covelo, CA: Island Press, c.1992. 345 pp. US\$16.00 paper ISBN: 1-55963-190-2. Recycled, acid-free paper.

First presented at an interdisciplinary conference on wilderness and civilization in Colorado during 1989, this collection of essays is intended to reach a general audience.

In one of these essays, "The Etiquette of Freedom", the poet Gary Snyder, author of *TURTLE ISLAND* and other books, presents, with exquisite sensitivity to language, the many meanings of "wild," "wilderness," "nature," and "natural," along with the positive and negative feelings these terms evoke. This essay is one of the best in the collection.

Max Oelschlaeger, in "Wilderness, Civilization and Language", writes perceptively about Snyder, Aldo Leopold, John Muir, and Thoreau, especially in contrast with Emerson. Thoreau and Muir found wilderness inherently valuable and developed in the nineteenth century the kind of viewpoint that has recently come to be called ecocentrism or deep ecological consciousness. This is in extreme contrast with the views of Gifford Pinchot, founder of the U. S. Forest Service, who saw trees and forests only as resources to be exploited.

George Sessions, in "Ecocentrism, Wilderness and Global Ecosystem Protection," outlines these differences and then distinguishes eleven reasons for protecting wilderness and wild species. He goes on to discuss radical ecosystem protection zoning proposals made by such people as David Brower, Eugene Odum, Arne Naess, Paul Shepard and others. The most extreme of these proposals would restore central North America to a wilderness condition. The likelihood of this happening would seem to be near the vanishing point of probability, of course, but the political aspects are not discussed here.

Aldo Leopold represents a middle view--or a developing range of views in a constant state of tension. He developed a conservation ethic which, as Curt Meine shows in his careful and interesting analysis, proposed conservation of wildlife for human use. However, Leopold also, increasingly, proposed and defended the preservation of nature in its wild state for its own sake.

The most personal essay in the collection, by Michael Peter Cohen, centers on a mountain climbing expedition in the Grand Tetons. Dolores LaChapelle contributes an interesting account of the Chinese concept of "Li" or "pattern in nature," which contrasts with the Western notion of "laws of nature," and which apparently does not attempt to serve as an explanation of these patterns. Michael Zimmerman, in "The Blessing of Otherness: Wilderness and the Human Condition," outlines some views of Heidegger, Susan Griffin and Hans Peter Duerr. Pete A.Y. Gunter discusses Descartes' view of human selfhood as separate from the human body and as apart from nature, which is seen as without value. Erazim Kohak contrasts conceptions of value with perceptions of value. Paul Shepard writes about "A Post-Historic Primitivism."

In comparison with those in another collection, *LEARNING TO LISTEN TO THE LAND*, edited by Bill Willers and published by this same nonprofit press, the essays in *THE WILDERNESS CONDITION* make strong demands on the reader. In particular, the layperson may find some of the essays by philosophers heavy going. However, as a group they clarify fundamental viewpoints insightfully and most of them are quite accessible to the serious lay reader. Thus the book can be recommended for public libraries and strongly recommended for academic collections.