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Murray, John A., ed. *WILD AFRICA : THREE CENTURIES OF NATURE WRITING FROM AFRICA*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. 318 pp. US\$25.00 hardback ISBN: 0-19-507377-0. Acid-free paper.

Oxford University Press has published two other anthologies under the editorship of University of Alaska English Professor John Murray. They are *THE ISLANDS AND THE SEA : FIVE CENTURIES OF NATURE WRITING FROM THE CARIBBEAN*, and *A REPUBLIC OF RIVERS : THREE CENTURIES OF NATURE WRITING FROM ALASKA AND THE YUKON*. As might be expected from an Oxford resource, included in this *WILD AFRICA* edition is a useful index, a more than adequate bibliography, and illustrations. In addition, there are delightful and informative biographical sketches preceding each of the approximately forty essays, riddles, and African proverb entries. As Professor Murray explains, "For every author represented here, five more whose work is also worthy of being memorialized can be found in the Bibliography"(xii).

These selections work within John Murray's three-part political structure: 1770-1885: Age of Exploration; 1886-1956: Age of Exploitation; 1957-1992: Age of Environmentalism. The context is justified, and the reader will find satisfactory explanation in Mr. Murray's preface. A map, with an easy to follow corresponding author key, adds to the reader's pleasure, and at the beginning of each book section, or political era, is an environmental, historical, political, and industrial timeline for perspective.

The editor's introduction, in reality, is one of the paragon pieces of writing in this book. It is a mini-history of Africa and a superb essay. Encyclopedic in scope, these twenty-three enjoyable pages will set the standard for a broad and comparative examination of African nature writing. Without realizing it, the reader is drawn enjoyingly into the continent's "ologies": geology, biology, and zoology. John Murray helps us understand the perspective of nature writers during each of the three historical periods. For example, he purposefully selects essays about mountain gorillas from each period, precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial, which adds a unique and enlightening perspective to this work.

In addition, a concerted effort is made to include the "ecofeminist" (16) point of view. The reader will find writings by Mary Kingsley, Isak Dinesen, Delia Owens, Cynthia Moss, and Terry Tempest, with references to several more: Amelia Edwards, Edith Wharton, Mary Akeley, Beryl Markham, Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and Cheryl Bentsen. "The writings of women often provide a distinctively different perspective on nature than the writings of men"(16). While not everyone will agree with Murray, (men are also quite capable of writing with sensitivity and respect for nature), environmentalist readers will appreciate the female writer's point of view from these essays.

*WILD AFRICA* is a potpourri of African nature and environmental writing with historic and ethnocentric perspectives. It is a reference and literary resource which can be used for academic research, or more importantly, for quiet evenings of reflective African reading.