



Reconnecting with John Muir: Essays in Post-Pastoral Practice

Terry Gifford

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Advancing for the first time the concept of "post-pastoral practice," *Reconnecting with John Muir* springs from Terry Gifford's understanding of the great naturalist as an exemplar of integrated, environmentally conscious knowing and writing. Just as the discourses of science and the arts were closer in Muir's day--in part, arguably, because of Muir--it is time we learned from ecology to recognize how integrated our own lives are as readers, students, scholars, teachers, and writers.

When we defy the institutional separations, purposely straying from narrow career tracks, the activities of reading, scholarship, teaching, and writing can inform each other in a holistic "post-pastoral" professional practice. Healing the separations of culture and nature represents the next way forward from the current crossroads in the now established field of ecocriticism.

The mountain environment provides a common ground for the diverse modes of engagement and mediation Gifford discusses. By attempting to understand the meaning of Muir's assertion that "going to the mountains is going home," Gifford points us toward a practice of integrated reading, scholarship, teaching, and writing that is adequate to our environmental crisis.

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