

# Literary Recipes from the Lewis and Clark *Journals*: The Epic Design and Wilderness Tastes of Early National Nature Writing

Thomas Hallock

We usually are drawn, as literary critics and historians, to the points where language snaps. A rhetorical shift, the erosion of a narrative strategy, a stutter or elision can locate the crux of a text. Such cruxes can speak to an attentive reader (the symptom matters less here than its implications). A seam or momentary fragmentation discloses the limits of rhetoric in a particular context; it suggests where ideology is revealed or questioned—what the author could not pull off; it indicates the intended work of language. Yet such attentiveness to breaking-points, the bread-and-butter of contemporary scholarship, creates a problem for a second cultural project, opening the literary canon. The problem is circular, and rarely articulated perhaps because its logic is so obvious. Recognition implies fluency. The very notion of a rhetorical slip presumes some footing from the outset: critics can locate a given tension, semantic spur, gap—whatever one chooses to call the symptom—through prior familiarity with authors who wrote in the same vein. A process from presumption to inquiry and reaffirmation results; a cycle that rarely sheds light on figures already outside the accepted reading lists. The present-day fixation on narrative glitches, in itself, will not revive less familiar works. Some reconstruction of genre must precede our recovery efforts, lest an overlooked author remain so.

The *Journals* of the Lewis and Clark expedition sits uneasily within this paradox. In spite of recent attempts to establish a tradition of environmental

writing in the United States, the first descriptions of America, usually from exploration accounts, rarely qualify as “ecological” because of the antiquated (thus unrecognizable) tenets about nature they present. Our reluctance to include the *Journals* is particularly surprising, given the sensitivity of its authors to the belletristic standards of their day. Republican sponsors and supporters launched Lewis and Clark with high expectations, and described the 1804-06 journey accordingly—as an epic. Thomas Jefferson referred to the “literary” venture on several occasions, and Lewis would cast his “tour” with an exacting concern for language.<sup>1</sup> This massive survey, moreover, sprang from a political and intellectual culture that often perceived literary output as a product of the land.

As Jefferson’s protégé, Lewis absorbed a somewhat rigid protocol for keeping an expeditionary journal. The two Virginians shared family histories, a link strengthened with Lewis’s 1801 appointment as personal secretary to the President. When plans for the trek materialized in 1803, he was shuttled to Philadelphia bearing letters of introduction to leading figures of the American enlightenment. The naturalist and ethnographer Benjamin Smith Barton was asked to “single out whatever presents itself new” in geography, botany, and “Indian history.” Benjamin Rush (a physician and signer of the Declaration of Independence), the astronomer Andrew Ellicott, Robert Patterson and Caspar Wistar (who taught mathematics and anatomy at the University of Pennsylvania, respectively) heard similar petitions. A two-year run of the White House, plus private tutorials, outfitted Lewis as cartographer, scientist, diplomat and *author*. The training profoundly informed the shape of his account. He described the Louisiana Territory within the framing expectations of his mentors. The optimism that he inherited from them would not hold against the realities of the western terrain, however, complicating the narrative modes that Lewis so eagerly acquired back East. As critics John Seelye and Robert Lawson-Peebles have argued, Lewis followed the rules of an enlightened travelogue, only to arrive at a kind of textual crux: the “ordering devices” of his prose collapsed.<sup>2</sup> How do critics fit this narrative crisis into a literary history of the United States? What would classify the *Journals* as environmental writing?

Given its concern with the links between nature and national culture, ecological, or “green” criticism offers a possible niche for scholarship on exploration. Yet several landmark studies almost dismiss this vast literature—particularly the earlier figures. *The Norton Book of Nature Writing* includes three authors from the eighteenth century. Although the editors acknowledge the politically-edged travels, they prefer a more benign tradition, one “that grows out of the entrancing letters of Gilbert White” (not an explorer, and a peripheral figure to neo-classical science). In *The Environmental Imagination*, Lawrence Buell titles an appendix to pre-romantic nature writing, “Environmental Nonfiction at the Time of Thoreau’s Emergence.” *The Ecocriticism Reader* cites works before *Walden* primarily for their “earliness.” One contributor notes that “national identity would be enacted” through natural history, yet casts the important names (William Bartram, Jefferson, Alexander Wilson) in a future subjunctive—as

harbingers of a tradition that would flower later. Another emphasizes a myth-ritual in the early travels, a journey from the “habitual existence left behind” to “the vivid life of discovery,” but chides the indifference of writers before 1800 (except Bartram) to their surroundings. Even the rare discussion of Lewis and Clark as naturalists must acknowledge the familiar canon: having set the expedition in the context of eighteenth-century botany, Frank Bergon closes a review essay of the *Journals* with nods to Thoreau, Burroughs and Muir.<sup>3</sup> This tendency to look forward can shackle our readings of authors like Lewis and Clark. We might better address these narratives within their historical period; more specifically, by reconstructing colonial and Revolutionary attitudes towards the land.<sup>4</sup>

Recent work in environmental history suggests how exploration literature could be read in this light. Most significantly, William Cronon argues that scholars examine the thin line between nature and civilization. Rather than isolating a pristine or Edenic wilderness, Cronon argues, environmentalists also should address matters of contested terrain; we should ask “whose nature?” Richard White applies a similar thesis in *The Organic Machine*. This short history of the Columbia River frames the waterway as an energy source (caloric, hydroelectric, etc.), then demonstrates how competing plans to channel its energy fall along political lines. The Columbia appears as both a natural space and a social space.<sup>5</sup> This model provides a vantage point from which literary ecologists might address eighteenth-century writing, without sacrificing a contemporary, critical perspective. Just as different groups vie to harvest White’s Columbia watershed, the backcountry provided the resources to support overlapping economies in Revolutionary America. Early national policy makers saw the frontier as the future site of a civilization. In Myra Jehlen’s words, the “founding conceptions of America and of the American” were “the physical facts of the continent.”<sup>6</sup> This view obviously would set republican authors in uneasy tension with competing claims and uses for the land. Early national nature writing, then, can provide the trace for an evolving environmental history, as changes in the land were challenged, imagined and modified within a geographic space.

An environmental politics, one that saw land as part of the future republic, shaped the scientific and literary culture of late eighteenth-century America. Framers of the new government perceived the union *vis-a-vis* place, mingling their hopes with descriptions of the backcountry, working from what historian Robert Berkhofer would call an “ideological geography.”<sup>7</sup> The *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, first published in 1771, sets civilization on a matrix of time and space. “The tract of country now possessed by the English in North America is large and very extensive,” a preface penned by Benjamin Franklin announces; the papers included in that volume respond by planning improvements to this “large and extensive” tract.<sup>8</sup> Belletristic authors responded to this geographic history in verse: two long poems of the period—Joel Barlow’s *Vision of Columbus* and Timothy Dwight’s *Greenfield Hill*—define America through the vehicle of a survey. Barlow’s 1787 epic finds a woebegone Christopher Columbus, consoled by the prospect of an evolving new world. The seven-

part *Greenfield Hill* (dedicated in 1794 to John Adams) moves from a panorama of Dwight's Connecticut parish, to the Puritan and Yankee histories there, to a prophecy for greatness in New England and the United States.

Republican policy makers and propagandists launched the expedition in this spirit of historical geography. One of the first to toast the Corps of Discovery upon its return was Joel Barlow.<sup>9</sup> Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* could be read as a blueprint for the *Journals*: chapters on terrain, climate and natural history are followed by disquisitions on law and economics. Benjamin Rush's well-known essay on the frontier poses ecological change as a category of philosophical inquiry: "Whatever tends to unfold *facts* in the history of the human species must be interesting to a curious observer." Barton considered his ethnographies and natural histories the early entries to a growing library of books about America. Apologizing for the gaps in his work, he reserves the privilege for "some future American" to mark "the footsteps of civilization throughout the continent." Jedediah Morse exploits this spatialized history to become the nation's first geographer. The preface to his *American Geography* chafes under Europeans who misconstrued the continent, and declares that "since the United States have become an independent nation . . . the rest of the world would have a right now to expect authentic information." The link between patriotism and knowledge about the land was a conceit of the period. Barton promises a complete tableau with each partial volume; Jefferson and Rush wrote in the name of American science; Morse advertises new maps with every coming edition.<sup>10</sup> The need for "authentic information" weighed heavily upon the leaders of the Corps of Discovery; the "footsteps of civilization" were their own.

Steeped in a republican plan for the continent, Meriwether Lewis would describe his encounter with the Louisiana Territory as the beginning of a new history. He all but imagined himself crossing landscapes that Barlow, Morse and Jefferson had imaginatively mapped. The *Journals* were to integrate ideology and the terrain; the pressures to do so make Lewis's account an excellent window into the "ecological politics" of the early republic. His tour followed the efforts of legislators and authors to integrate patriotism and place. To borrow from Jehlen once more but out of context, the "continent that was the modern spirit's flesh was also its word."<sup>11</sup> Jefferson believed all too sincerely that the efforts of his student literalized the progress of civilization within a physical area. This oddly neo-classical, historical view of geography proved complicated business, however, when Lewis realized that the terrain did not match the President's expectations. We are left with an instructive loss for words. The carefully groomed explorer stopped writing when the Rocky Mountains overwhelmed his initial optimism, and the fate of Lewis as an author—bound in the far West to a system initiated back East—illustrates the business of nature writing in the new nation. The role that Jefferson assigned to the *Journals* rested upon still untested assumptions: that American culture would evolve through an incorporation of ideology and the land; that the foundations of a new nation and its literature would be environmen-

### HUNTING A PASTORAL

The instructions that Jefferson issued to Lewis in 1803 put strong emphasis on writing: “Your observations are to be taken with great pains & accuracy, to be entered distinctly & intelligibly for others as well as yourself.” Following this prompt, Lewis and Clark returned with over thirty notebooks, with over one million words and five thousand pages about the Missouri and Columbia watersheds. A definitive edition of the *Journals* (which includes diaries of the enlisted men) now swells to ten volumes.<sup>12</sup> This masterpiece of literary exploration would redraw the map of the continent. It contains exhaustive details about the geography, topography and natural history of the West; it is a mine for ethnographers; it remains one of the best wilderness accounts produced in the United States. Donald Jackson called Lewis and Clark “the writingest explorers of their time;” seeking parallels in our modern astronauts, William Least Heat Moon would ask, who “has written anything to compare in significance or force of language” to Lewis and Clark?<sup>13</sup>

Although easy to overstate, the prose in the *Journals* carries a strong personal stamp of the author. Clark kept a log out of duty. He recorded daily events with little rhetorical flourish, noting the party’s progress upstream in terse, fractured sentences:

5th September 1804 Wednesday, Set out early the wind blew hard from the South as it has for Some Days past, We Set up a jury mast & Sailed, I saw a large gangue of Turkeys, also Grouse Seen Passed a large Island of about 3 miles long in the Middle of the river opposit the head of this Island the Poncarre River Coms in to the Missourei on the L. S. . . .<sup>14</sup>

Such entries form the bulk of the *Journals*. They cover Jefferson’s instructions, remarking upon the wildlife, the river and terrain (mapped later with uncommon intelligence), but they serve primarily as reportage. The task of curling this tour into literature fell upon Lewis. He often enters the narrative with grand sweeps (after puzzling absences), and stylizes the tour with a clear awareness of eighteenth-century decorum. Although a less reliable diarist than Clark, Lewis considered the *Journals* his domain, his narrative. He sought to make his mark as an author.<sup>15</sup> If Clark wrote out of obligation, Lewis saw his commission as part literary venture.

During the Spring of 1805, as the expedition pulled from its North Dakota winter quarters into the uncharted upper Missouri, Lewis’s journal would reach an epic pitch. He had been missing from the daily log since the previous May, but at this point, avidly undertakes the role of expedition chronicler.<sup>16</sup> A 7 April entry trumpets the party’s departure from Fort Mandan, with a ceremonious review of the ranks and a comparison between his “fleet” and those of Columbus and Cook. The following months provide some of Lewis’s most effusive and deliberately

crafted prose. The high plains, rich in game, seem like a garden. “I had a most delighfull view of the country,” he writes on 22 April, with “Buffaloe, Elk, deer, & Antelopes feeding in one common and boundless pasture;” the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers meet on 25 April to form “a most pleasing view,” meandering “for many miles in their passage through delighfull tracts of country.” As the party heads further West, these picturesque landscapes appear to prelude the explorer’s coming heroics. He describes the looming mountains with nervous delight: “I felt a secret pleasure,” he notes on 26 May, “in finding myself so near the head of the heretofore conceived boundless Missouri;” on 12 August, he depicts a hunter straddling the same “heretofore deemed endless Missori” like a Collusus of Rhodes. The prose strains occasionally as Lewis labors for words to equal his excitement. On 4 June, birds become the “numerous progeny of the feathered creation.”

Nowhere is this enthusiasm for the expedition more evident than in Lewis’s descriptions of food. The party brought a heavy load of staples West, but trusted the chase primarily for provisions.<sup>17</sup> The travellers worked hard, and the calories that fueled them upriver—whether from buffalo, salmon, roots, dog or horse—receive daily note in the *Journals*. As Lewis crossed a garden landscape, he often would pause to expatiate upon the particularly rich meals it provided. Few areas could match the Missouri and Yellowstone valleys (present-day Montana) for their supply of red meat: “saw a great quantity of game of every species common here,” he remarks on 6 May, “It is now only amusement for Capt. C. and myself to kill as much meat as the party can consum.” And the very abundance apparently gives Lewis license to cast a discriminating eye at food. An 8 May description of the “white apple,” or breadroot, notes “I have no doubt but our epicures would admire this root very much . . . in their ragouts and gravies in stead of the truffles morella.” Comments like these pepper the *Journals*, equating a well-fed party with the larger success of the expedition, and with his own literary ambitions.

On 9 May 1805, Lewis authors a particularly memorable entry that describes how buffalo could be dressed. Toissant Charbonneau— itinerant trapper, companion of Sacagawea and here, talented camp chef—prepares a treat unique to the plains. This “wriighthand cook” saves the “necessary materials” for making “the *boudin blanc*,” an exquisite white sausage. The dish enraptures Lewis: “we all esteem [it] one of the greatest delacies of the forrest.” So observing that “it may not be amiss therefore to give [this recipe] a place” in the *Journals*, Lewis records each detail:

About 6 feet of the lower extremity of the large gut of the Buffaloe is the first mosel that the cook makes love to, this he holds fast at one end with the right hand, while with the forefinger and thumb of the left he gently compresses it, and discharges what he says *is not good to eat* . . . the mustle lying underneath the shoulder blade next to the back, and the fillets are next sought, these are needed up very fine with a good

portion of kidney suit; to this composition is then added a just proportion of pepper and small quantity of flower.

I am interested in what would deserve “a place” in a belletristic account of the wilderness. The subject here is cooking but the nod to an implied reader acknowledges a second craft, kneading out the daily grind of experience through narrative. The occasion of writing sets the tone for this passage almost as much as the events described. Lewis trims and edits to make a more palatable version of his tour. After Charbonneau, the process of writing “gently compresses . . . and discharges what is *not good*.” The “mosels that the cook makes love to” cease to be guts, once prepared by an authorial hand. The skill of a chef at transforming native material prompts the author to consider his own handiwork.

As the emphasis on ritual increases, the prose becomes even more heightened. “[T]hus far advanced,” Lewis continues, “our skilfull opporater C-o seizes his recepticle, which has never once touched the water, for that would intirely distroy the regular order of the whole procedure.” By “stuffing and compressing,” Charbonneau turns his material inside out. The trapper works the casing and,

soon distends the recepticle to the utmost limmits of it’s power of expansion . . . [skillfully exchanging] the outer for the iner, and all is compleatly filled with something good to eat, it is tyed at the other end, but not any cut off, for that would make the pattern too scant; it is then baptised in the missouri with two dips and a flirt, and bobbed into the kettle; from whence after it be well boiled it is taken and fryed with bears oil untill it becomes brown, when it is ready to esswage the pangs of a keen appetite or such as travelers in the wilderness are seldom at a loss for.

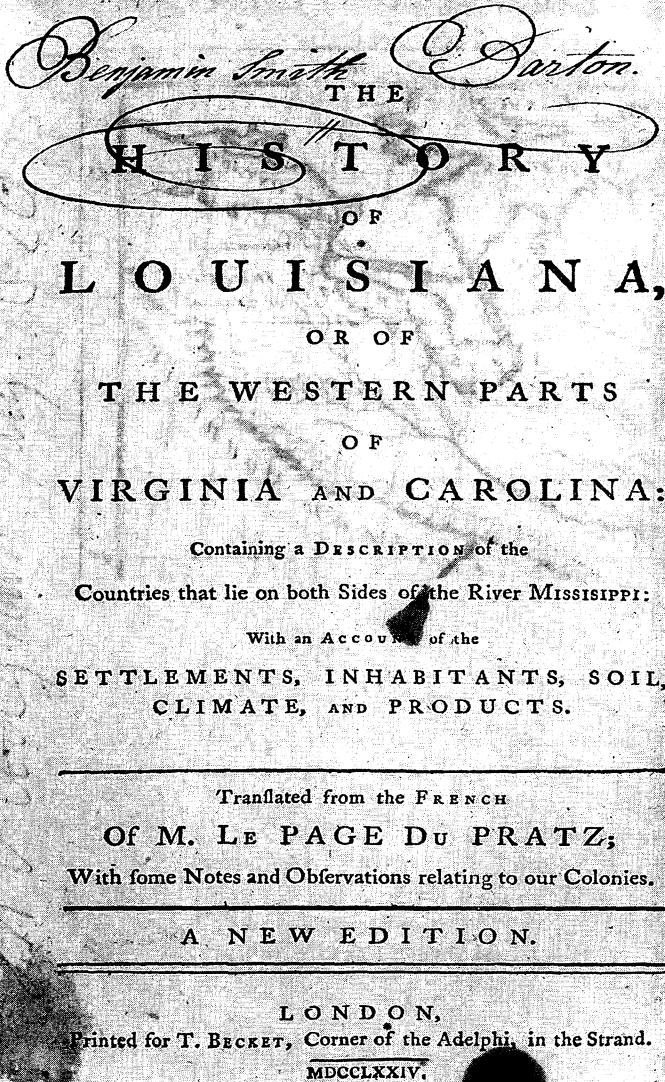
The pleasure of this passage derives from its author’s intoned communion with his surroundings, a serendipity that occurs through the agency of letters. Charbonneau tames game, then seals it. Cooking internalizes the external; an edible synecdoche results. The author creates within his text a celebration of craftsmanship and the final product (ordered and enclosed, grounded in nature) testifies to the ability of indefatigable writers to shape the wilderness into usable and pleasing form. The 9 May passage leaps off the pages of the *Journals* because its subject, dressing game, overlaps with the reasons for keeping a notebook.

Lewis was hunting a pastoral: stalking the wilderness for experience he could work into literature. The setting of his narrative is both textual and topographical. Schooled for this journey, Lewis would show an intent to add his travels to an existing body of literature. The words used in the 9 May passage reveal such pretensions. A “forest” conjures romantic, fictive landscapes, not a treeless prairie: James Thomson muses of “the forest glade” where “wild dear trip;” the “forest primeval” is the setting for Longfellow’s *Evangeline*.<sup>18</sup> On more local

ground, a good meal was a staple in early national literature, used conventionally to mark the degree of civility in a remote place. William Bartram's "weary traveller" beats back hungry "crocodiles" to find his camp, where he "regales cheerfully" on broiled fish, stewed rice and "excellent oranges." The monologue that closes Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* can be reconstructed from the narrator's rumbling belly. Indian war-whoops interrupt family meals; the decision to head West turns on whether the frontier man's children "eat well-made pastry or pounded à la grichés;" abandoning the idyllic middle-landscape means that his wife shall cook "the nasaumpt, the ninchickè, and other preparations of corn as are customary among these people."<sup>19</sup> The "excellent oranges" deliver Bartram from a dangerous swamp, while the frontier man must swallow maize to survive. Meals connect the author to a safer nest. They offer him protection or respite from a frightening backcountry. Readers of early American and eighteenth-century literature might easily supply their own examples, for the allusive reach of a literary repast was widespread—widespread enough, in fact, for Lewis to insert the recipe for sausages into a government report. His notebook entries look both to the Pacific and toward the stacks of an American library.

Even with such widely-ranging precedents available, however, I might suggest an immediate source for the 9 May passage. Prior to the expedition, Benjamin Smith Barton loaned Lewis a copy of *The History of Louisiana* (1758), by Antoine Le Page du Pratz. Du Pratz was an engineer and sixteen-year resident of Louisiana. Having sailed the Mississippi at least to the French post at Natchez, he knew Louisiana reasonably well—well enough for his account to pass as a definitive source on the upper territory. Lewis carried Barton's copy of du Pratz to the Pacific Ocean and back, giving this montage of travelogue, natural history, ethnography and promotional tract the odd distinction of having covered more ground than its actual author (see figure 1). In addition to its perceived value as a geographic source, the book would provide Lewis with a model for rendering the wilderness.<sup>20</sup> His landscapes bear a suspicious resemblance to du Pratz's. *The History of Louisiana* also contains the obligatory hunting episode, told with a panache and emphasis on civility that would have pleased Lewis. Du Pratz sights a bull from a scene straight out of a Claude Lorrain canvas, and drops his target with one shot. He then gives the Indians a lesson in backwoods cooking. Although his Natchez companions maintain that cows provide the better beef, the Frenchman proves otherwise—with the help of a little preparation, of course. He has the "chines," or back "cut out," grills them over open coals, then passes around a sample. The pleasantly surprised Natchez agree "the meat was juicy, and of an exquisite flavour." Not content with the barbecue, du Pratz next boils "the marrow bones of this buffalo to make maiz-gruel." The dish "surpasse[s] the best dish in France," and with the chines, "would have graced the table of a prince."<sup>21</sup> According to du Pratz, a good camp meal could provide the momentary flourish of civilization in a wilderness. Lewis follows this narrative to the letter. His description of the *boudin blanc* closes with a typical smack of the lips: Charbonneau settles the "keen appetite" that "travelers in the wilderness are seldom at a loss for."





**Figure 1:** Barton's copy of *The History of Louisiana*, which Lewis carried west. On the flyleaf, Lewis wrote ceremoniously: "Dr. Benjamin Smith Barton was so obliging to lend me this copy of Mons<sup>r</sup>. Du Pratz's history of Louisiana in June 1803. It has been since conveyed by me to the Pacific Ocean through the interior of the Continent of North America by my late tour thither and is now returned to its proprietor by his/ Friend and Obd<sup>r</sup>. Servt. Meriwether Lewis/ Philadelphia May 9 1807." (The image appears courtesy of The Library Company of Philadelphia.)

The effete tone of the 9 May passage suggests larger literary ambitions for Meriwether Lewis. Although descriptions of food comprise only a fraction of the *Journals*, similar cases can be made about his derivative Barbizon landscapes, his references to earlier heroes like Columbus to Cook, or to the role of geography in republican letters. For Lewis, the notebooks served as the early draft of a national epic, and allusion would provide him with the means to elevate his experience, to portray the tour in proper style. His contributions during this stretch of the *Journals* gleefully honor precedent: the echoes of existing publications, the poetic vocabulary, the very openness of his prose to conventional exegesis, place the account on literary ground. The occasion of a meal, moreover, replicated the project of republican authors to incorporate culture and place. Such intimacy with one's surroundings sustained the vision of a new nation to the far reaches of the upper-Missouri, of a garden continent, of a political order—enacted through writing—nurtured by the very environs over which this new world was conceived. The question that an attentive reading of the *Journals* raises is not whether the explorer held authorial ambitions (he did), but what exactly belletristic descriptions of the country meant to the early United States.

### BISON, NATURE AND NATIONALISM

Any attempt to show the environmental roots of eighteenth-century American literature, then, would have to reconstruct how these authors saw nature. The plot to transform wilderness (evident in Lewis's sausage recipe) has its basis in republican plans for the continent. The popular image of the Corps of Discovery, as wilderness adventurers, is deceiving in this regard: it overlooks the degree that Lewis and Clark carried accepted methods of surveying the country to a new place. Although they covered territory that Anglo-Americans had not yet described, their accounts were based upon instructions penned in Philadelphia and Washington. The *Journals* would retain some residual bias from the existing literature. Awaiting a full report of the Louisiana Territory from the Atlantic Coast, policy-makers and scientists, notably Jefferson, had already conceived the West in theory. They saw the land in terms of its improvement; such optimism, however, begs to be complicated. (To get ahead of the story slightly, Lewis's early enthusiasm was tempered by the terrain, considerably more rugged than anyone expected.) The instructions nonetheless would pattern the kind of report he would issue. An abiding sense of audience shaped how he would write about the upper Missouri. In order to make meaning of the textual crises that would follow in the *Journals*, therefore, we need to establish how the circle that trained Lewis regarded American nature.

But most contemporary ecocriticism, as I suggested earlier, rarely considers archaic forms of environmentalism. The study of literary ecology usually seeks its roots in a "green" tradition that strangely "post-dates" Lewis and Clark. Within the major critical surveys and anthologies, authors before the nineteenth century appear (if at all) as the antecedent of later, "mature" writers. We need to adjust our

perspective in order to provide some historical grounding for concepts like “wilderness.” To cite a familiar example, Leo Marx opens *Machine in the Garden* with romanticism as its reference point. The first chapter finds Nathaniel Hawthorne rhapsodizing over a peaceful landscape, when a locomotive intrudes upon the scene. Modernity clashes with the pastoral, creating a uniquely American dilemma.<sup>22</sup> This broken idyll sounds the keynote for the chapters that follow: Marx moves from *The Tempest* and Jefferson, back to Hawthorne’s contemporaries, then onto the industrial age, to trace a long-standing ambivalence in America toward the physical environment. The structure of this elegant argument allows Marx to survey the periods before his defining moment, “Sleepy Hollow, 1844,” without losing himself to Renaissance or neo-classical attitudes towards nature. His motif of the broken idyll, not surprisingly, better applies to nineteenth-century, than to eighteenth-century authors. To figures like Jefferson and Lewis, the machine does not enter the garden; the machine had always been there. In Cecelia Tichi’s words, they “put faith in that engine.”<sup>23</sup> The locomotive does not destroy nature in republican landscapes because those landscapes were formulated with the presumption of human intervention. The failure of neo-classical writing about place to recognize the consequences of a changed land, no doubt, has contributed to the indifference among literary ecologists toward this literature (hence one might chide the inattention of the “early” travellers to the environment). But such judgements recall William Cronon’s ironic warning, that Lewis would describe “the wrong nature.”

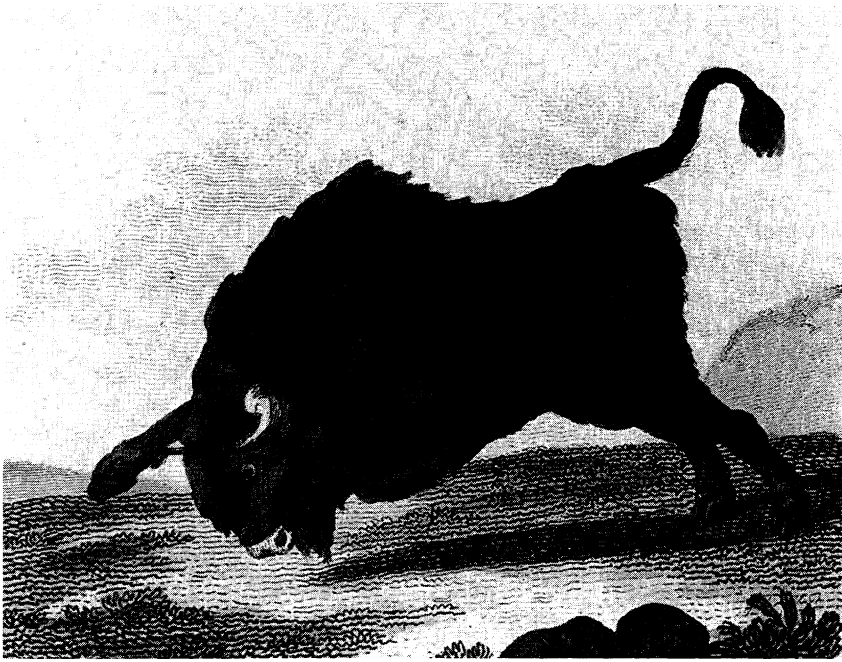
For the Revolutionaries were keenly aware of their surroundings—if in a somewhat topical and destructive way. Nature was bound with the prospects for a new nation, and nature was a major sticking point as the Revolutionaries sought to demonstrate how American civilization could equal Europe. One school of largely French naturalists had claimed that all forms of life, whether organic and civil, degenerated in the new world. This allegation came into vogue with the *Histoire naturelle* (begun 1749), by Georges Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon. Buffon reasons, to make a long argument short, that “there must be something in the combination of the elements, and some other physical causes, which opposed the aggrandizement of animated nature.” Due largely to the stature of its author, the hypothesis remained influential through the mid-eighteenth century. Cornelius de Pauw’s 1768 *Recherches philosophique sur les Américains* extended the theory to the “savage,” who “living in the state of nature can only be a brute, incapable of progress.” The Abbé Raynal framed his sweeping history of European colonies, the *Histoire des deux Indes*, around the idea of unequal climes. To make matters worse for the emerging United States, all of these writers enjoyed considerable popularity. Buffon and de Pauw were translated into several languages; Raynal reportedly went through 37 editions between 1770 and 1820. Quite understandably, American authors grew defensive about their environs, and their descriptions of the continent would acquire a patriotic edge.<sup>24</sup>

This dispute over “American” nature coopted, among other things, the buffalo. As the most logical representatives of their habitat, large quadrupeds

could mark the relative fertility of a region. Buffon writes that of “the infinite number of objects that offer themselves to our view, [quadrupeds] hold their first rank both on account of their formation, and their evident superiority over vegetables and other matters.” Bison accordingly would “tag” the health of what we might today call an ecosystem. A convoluted taxonomy in the *Histoire naturelle* compares the “European buffalo” and “American bison” to show how once identical species developed (or devolved) with their surroundings. A plate from an English edition of Buffon illustrates neatly the difference between the two animals: the European “buffalo” stares tamely at the reader, while the American “bison” charges the ground (see figure 2). The “only difference between the bisons of Europe and those of America,” Buffon claims, is “that the latter are less.”<sup>25</sup> These allegations had extraordinary staying power in popular texts. An 1803 edition of William Robertson’s *History of America* reports that the “bison of America is manifestly of the same species with the horned cattle of the other hemisphere.” (Robertson blames the “savage,” who wastes, destroys and “knows not how to multiply or govern” the bison, therefore keeping the animal on a lower rung of creation). An 1814 translation of Felix de Beaujour’s *Sketch of the United States* maintains that in America, “not a single species is there more beautiful or perfect than in the old continent.”<sup>26</sup> Harsh words for a nation of former colonists.

Yet these attacks on the new world environment would continue, without the authority of a Buffon, into a period when Americans began to think better of themselves. As the credibility of the *querelle d’Amérique* began to fade in scientific circles, European perceptions of the emerging United States would improve. The success of colonists (particularly Franklin) in Paris and fervor over the Stamp Act repeal changed the tide of speculation from dismissal to near euphoria. Buffon renounced de Pauw during the War for Independence, and Raynal revised the *Histoire des deux Indes* soon after. The degenerative hypothesis had lost its serious supporters by the 1780s, as the United States had become a *cause célèbre*.<sup>27</sup> From English radicals like Richard Price and Thomas Paine to the Abbé Mably and the Marquis de Condorcet, commentators would present the republic as an example to mankind. At their prompting, the former colonists would refute Buffon (despite his recantation) as an assertion of the national ego. The discredited theory thus provided Revolutionary authors with a case to make about the new world—a case easily won.

Jefferson’s reaction to the *Histoire naturelle* is famous. To prove the size of American mammals, he shipped the skeleton, skin and horns of a Vermont moose to Paris. Query VI of the *Notes* would end the argument forever. Charts and tabulations of indigenous and imported quadrupeds, an ornithological catalogue, the examples of George Washington, Franklin and David Rittenhouse, belabor the natural and civil achievements that America had produced.<sup>28</sup> This obsessive cataloguing attempted to turn the liability, nature, into a source of nationalism; attacking an hypothesis that first-tier naturalists had not advanced in almost twenty years, however, the catalogues of American quadrupeds were about



**Figure 2:** Juxtaposition of the old World “Buffalo” (above) and American “Bison” (below), from *Barr’s Buffon*, an English edition of the *Histoire naturelle*. (The image appears courtesy of Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania.)

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nature only as nature served the ends of a boasting and still insecure culture. Jefferson sought indicators: animals, whose size portended the future of a republic that was rooted in its place.

Writing in the shadow of his mentor, Meriwether Lewis would learn to taxonomize with a patriotic fervor. In the aftermath of the *querelle d’Amérique*, Frank Bergon notes, Lewis and Clark would use description as “both scientific and patriotic weapons.”<sup>29</sup> For the Louisiana Purchase had given new life to the tired attacks on Buffon. Staking a claim for the continent, the South Carolinian David Ramsay would brag: “Her operations are remarkable for their appropriate grandeur and magnificence.” This grandeur shows in the scale of natural wonders, he continues. Citing the Great Lakes and Niagara, he asks if the citizens “of a country so eminently distinguished by the Author of Nature, are destined to form political associations of a large size, and that these will enjoy an uncommon portion of happiness?”<sup>30</sup> Such rhetoric borrows from a familiar formula: rich environment, great republic. That Lewis had not read Ramsay’s pamphlet matters little, for similar sentiments from Barton, Jefferson, Rush would have taught him how a geographic survey could portend the nation’s future. The *Journals* would

continue a literary movement, documenting the spread of an empire across North America.

After two years in Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia, Lewis looked at the backcountry in light of its potential, for while the explorer understood the value of scientific facts, early national science could not disentangle those facts from expectations about place. He would accordingly squeeze “what was not good” from Louisiana until ideology—as much as Louisiana itself—composed the *Journals*. Preconceptions about the West and towards writing do not just color Lewis’s account of the territory, they facilitate his topographical description. Discourse does not reflect reality, as Peter Hulme argues, “discourse constitutes signification.” The premise, or “institutionalized statement” that defines the travelogue, imagines a republic expanding across space: since the Revolution, commentators on both sides of the Atlantic speculated about the future of the United States in a form of geographic history.<sup>31</sup> The progress towards a more perfect continent was the source of philosophical debate, and the concerns of this literature, to which Lewis should contribute a new volume, mediated his account. With each tug, paddle and push into uncharted waters that the Corps of Discovery took, the compass of scientific knowledge widened. An epic sense would provide a basis for the early legs of Lewis’s narrative.

### SAUSAGES, OR WHAT REALLY SCARED MERIWETHER LEWIS

Limiting in its very ambition, however, the epic mode also would stymie his account. Lewis vanishes from the daily log between 26 August 1805 and 1 January 1806, leaving almost no record of a crucial stretch from Idaho’s Bitterroot Mountains to the Pacific Coast. Puzzled and somewhat divided about the causes of this absence, scholars offer several explanations—psychological, archival—but the most convincing of these suggests the crisis was a literary one. The conventional reading of the *Journals* plots an erosion in Lewis’s categories of description. Across the high plains, as the company would meet a difficult but negotiable waterway, the landscapes are appropriately picturesque; as the prairie turns into cliffs near the Continental Divide, the Claude-inspired scenes darken to resemble a morbid Salvatore Rosa; the sublime scenery finally would leave the self-conscious journalist on slippery footing. Lewis vanishes when the country appears to block its “discovery.”<sup>32</sup> The argument certainly is a useful one: as the independent underling in an extraordinary position, Lewis would demonstrate dutifully the purpose (and the limits) of topographical literature for the United States. He shared the vision of a nation expanding across space, and carried that baggage to the upper Missouri. The hope for a culture established over its place provided the basis for the *Journals*—and caused the work’s collapse.

A Jefferson image of Louisiana rendered the territory’s description impossible, at least within the initial conceptual framework. One major problem was the search for a Northwest Passage. In exploration literature, the allure of Cathay is a storied theme, an imperial motif that the Corps of Discovery would have to

expose as fantasy.<sup>33</sup> Jefferson's interest in a land-route to Asia began at boyhood, and continued throughout his political career. The 1801 *Voyages* of Alexander Mackenzie awakened fears that the prize would fall to the British, and the instructions to Lewis address these concerns with youthful conviction: "The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri river," Jefferson wrote, "it's course and communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean . . . [with] the most direct and practicable water communication across the continent." Widely-accepted cartographic images of the continent had supported such optimism. As John Logan Allen demonstrates, the Rocky Mountains inherited by Lewis and Clark would yield to a relatively simple crossing. Influenced by the distinctly neo-classical notion of "symmetrical geography," republican leaders believed that the east and west drainage systems of the Mississippi paralleled one another. This theory rested upon an underestimated mountain range. The Aaron Arrowsmith maps of America (foundational for the Lewis and Clark or "base map") depicts a single ridge where the Missouri and Columbia were to mingle (see figure 3).<sup>34</sup> Politics had made the earlier belief irresistible, leaving Lewis the unhappy chore of proving his mentor wrong. As the party neared a key point on the blank map, writing would become exhilarating—then impossible.

Fortunately for readers of the *Journals* who would like to explain its gaps, Lewis experienced a burst of verbal energy just before his exit, a burst that suggests how ambition could counter his lofty optimism. The expedition had reached a crux, pausing where the Columbia should have met the Missouri, on the present-day border of Montana and Idaho. The party was preparing to portage over the mountains, and the anxiety that would soon enough silence Lewis could satisfy, for the time being, his penchant for the epic. He becomes loquacious and alludes to the Northwest Passage often. With reference to symmetrical geography, he reasons on 10 August: "if the Columbia furnishes us such another example" to the high reaching Missouri, "a communication across the continent will be practicable and safe." (A navigable tributary was weeks away.) On 12 August, he continues: "did not despair of shortly finding a passage over the mountains and of taisting the waters of the great Columbia this evening." The word "practicable," commonly used in the correspondence between Jefferson and Lewis, recognizes the President *in absentia*; yet this presence would intrude upon a second responsibility, to describe the terrain accurately.<sup>35</sup> Stylized prose, mimicry and denial ("I did not despair") could not conceal the increasingly obvious rift between speculation and geographic reality. The odds for a "practicable" route to the Pacific looked slim.

Balancing hope and unlikely success on a rhetorical high-wire, Lewis's prose again becomes self-reflective. The disappointing intelligence perversely returns his thoughts to the larger aims of the expedition, which he records in language reminiscent of the previous Spring. But what differs from before is that the heroic mode here serves to counter his dim outlook. Transferring anxiety onto concrete subjects, he presents a remarkably double-sided portrayal of the inhabitants of Bitterroots, the Shoshones. These ethnographic notes are vexed. Lewis

could depict the Shoshones only as they pertained to his mission, and the observations on their culture show little sensitivity to a tribe that basically treated him well. As James Ronda notes, the Shoshones had fallen on hard times by 1805.<sup>36</sup> They were pinned to close range by the hostile Atsinas and better-armed Blackfoot Sioux, and they lacked access to their usual hunting and fishing grounds. Hungry and understandably wary of strangers, the Shoshones nonetheless share food with the party, trade horses and provide a guide over the mountains—this during a vulnerable season. Lewis’s patronizing description of the village, meanwhile, has an effete tone. His journal barely notes their recent hardships. The prose reaches upward in style but looks down on its subject.

This double-motion frames descriptions of food. In a 16 August episode, one that holds a striking, reverse mirror to the earlier 9 May entry, a member of the expedition shoots an antelope. Lewis watches in horror as his guides tumble “over each other like a parcel of famished dogs” to devour the carcass. The Shoshones seize and tear “away a part of the intestens which had been previously thrown out.” The rest does little to settle his already uneasy stomach:

some were eating the kidnies the melt [spleen] and liver and the blood runing from the corners of their mouths, others were in a similar situation with the paunch and guts but the exuding substance in this case from their lips was of a different discription. one of the last who attacked my attention particularly had been fortunate in his allotment or reather active in the division, he had provided himself with about nine feet of the small guts one end of which he was chewing on while with his hands he was squeezing the contents out at the other.

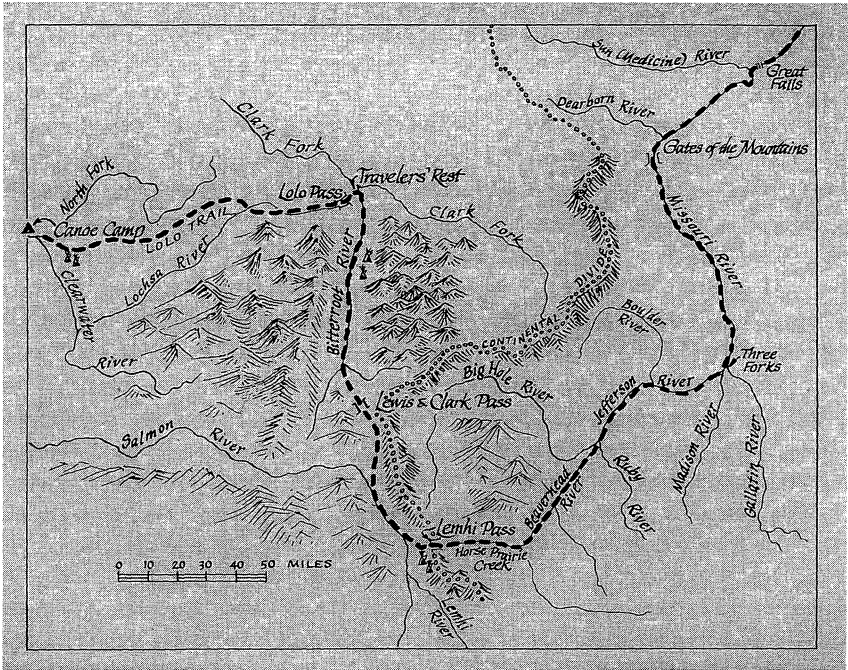
Everything and nothing had changed since the earlier account. An obsession with preparation remains, but the setting is a new one. Charbonneau, the high priest of the prairie, had civilized game through baptism (“with two dips and a flirt”); indifference to the “regular order” now shows how far man can fall. Blood (streaming “from the corners of their mouths”) forms the subject of one sentence—not the cook. Food on the trail that once intimated communion now terrifies the well-schooled explorer: “I really did not untill now think that human nature ever presented itself in a shape so nearly allyed to the brute creation.”

As before, the protocol of earlier authors prevails. A heavy-handed overture about “savage” manners was stock fare to the literature of exploration. As Bruce Greenfield notes, writing provided the means for negotiating one’s place on the frontier. John Ledyard (whom Lewis knew at least by reputation) reports in the *Journals of Captain Cook’s Last Voyage* of cannibals off the Pacific coast. This “dimmer race” glows like the moon, “from a borrowed light.” Lewis echoes Ledyard by stating that “I viewed these poor starved divils with pity and compassion.” Alexander Henry, a Hudson Bay trapper, glances toward the reader when confronted with a similar crisis. As the sole English survivor of a Chippewa





**Figure 3:** Louisiana before Lewis and Clark, from Aaron Arrowsmith’s *A New and Elegant General Atlas* (1804). The most reliable cartographer of his day, Arrowsmith contributed to the belief that the Rockies were a single ridge, and hence the belief in symmetrical geography. (The image appears courtesy of the American Philosophical Society.)



**Figure 4:** The Corps of Discovery's route from the falls of the Missouri to the forks of the Clearwater River. From John Logan Allen's *Lewis and Clark and the Image of the American Northwest*. (The image appears courtesy of John Logan Allen.)

raid, Henry gets taken hostage. The captors offer him bread moistened with the blood of his countrymen. Sickened by the memory, the author breaks from the scene. The narrative pauses: the “reader’s imagination is here distracted by the variety of our fortunes,” Henry winces, for these episodes are “more like dreams than realities, more like fiction than truth.”<sup>37</sup> The backwards glance, implicit in Henry’s nod to an implied reader, bridges his distance between Europe and the frontier, between captive and home culture. Lewis depicts himself in the same, conventionally-defined bind among the Shoshones. His condescension restores the terms of his narrative, established back East.

As before, Lewis could cast himself only in the persona of enlightened explorer. The self-characterization bound him to a certain form of prose. With this limit to the range of his writing, the stage was set for an exit from the narrative, and ten days after his brush with blanched humanity, Lewis disappears—during the most difficult leg of the expedition. Although tributaries of the Missouri and the Columbia come remarkably close to one another, the party’s nearest west-flowing branch (the Salmon River) was impassible. The company would have to cross by land, losing a month on a grueling mountain trail to the more manageable

Clearwater River (see figure 4). The march was difficult by any standard. The once fattened Corps of Discovery would survive on horse-meat, suffering through a summer blizzard, only to find white water on the far slopes of the Bitterroots. As the dream of a “practicable” land route would fade, so does Lewis’s account—dying mid-sentence on 26 August. A long and pessimistic entry ends with an incomplete thought and an empty stomach:

I had nothing but a little parched corn to eat  
 this evining.  
 This morning Capt. C and party

A premise behind the narrative had been exhausted. Serving a function analogous to cooking, writing provided the means for incorporating place and taste. Topographical literature meant to show how the physical terrain could sustain a European civilization through some preparation (whether culinary or editorial). With a pillar of the *Journals* gone in dashed hopes for a Northwest Passage, the gap between ideological and geographic landscapes would become too wide to mend through description. A narrative crisis resulted.

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Lewis stopped writing. And the blank pages of the expedition log were never completed, a fate that epitomized the lofty effort by republican authors to transmogrify nature into nationhood through letters. After the expedition, Lewis purchased journals kept by the enlisted men, promised to edit his manuscripts, made initial arrangements for publication, but scarcely added a word to the much-awaited account. His death in 1807, probably by suicide, erased permanently the chance for a report in the first-person. An 1813 memorial by Jefferson—penned as a preface to the posthumous *History*—hints at Lewis’s authorial burden, and suggests why this great “literary” endeavor would remain a fragment. The public would miss, Jefferson writes:

the benefit of recieving from his own hand the Narrative now offered them of his sufferings & successes in endeavoring to extend for them the boundaries of science, and to present to their knowlege that vast & fertile country which their sons are destined to fill with arts, with science, with freedom & happiness.<sup>38</sup>



**Figure 5:** Engraving of Lewis, from a portrait by Charles B. J. F. Saint-Mémin (1807). The otter and ermine tippet was the gift of Cameahwait, the Shoshone chief who would provide the Corps of Discovery with horses and guides over Bitterroot Mountains. Lewis called the tippet “the most elegant piece of Indian dress I ever saw,” and displayed it later as the badge of a successful explorer. (The image appears courtesy of The Library Company of Philadelphia.)

The Plutarchan biography, a bit formally, tells the story of a nation through an individual. An untimely death sets the republican culture of letters back, leaving a gap in the ledger of North America's completion. Lewis would have recognized the tenor of this memorial, and had cast his account in an epic strain; in light of the original commission, understably the *Journals* were impossible to finish. Its primary author discovered that the progress of "knowledge" across the "vast & fertile country" would find impediments.

This peculiar and dated lesson raises some timely questions about nature and a national literature. The collapse of a certain rhetoric exposes the precepts that had been underlying republican wilderness narratives in the first place. Lewis wrote with the understanding that his observations advanced the progress of civilization on the backcountry. His account promised a glimpse into the machinery of this political and ecological transformation. To a large extent, the *Journals* were about preparation: the prominence of food in the text is no coincidence, for cooking and writing served similar functions. Early national authors like Crèvecoeur, Bartram and a host of lesser-known figures, envisioned an Anglo-American culture unfolding across the continent. Lewis considered himself the legatee of this endeavor, documenting a rising empire, and his most effusive prose partakes in a spirit of geographic history; when the realities of the terrain erode the foundation of this narrative, the heroic mode becomes impossible to sustain. The fracture here suggests how his culture believed writing (in the first place) could negotiate order (a particular order) on the backcountry. Expectations from back East did not season his view of Louisiana, they would govern the account. This role attached to writing makes the scant attention that the *Journals* receive from literary critics, particularly ecological critics, all the more surprising. For the failure of language to match the frontier illustrates quite sharply the perceived work of letters in the early republic. The literature for this new nation was grounded in a careful survey of the physical environment.

## NOTES

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1. For references to the "literary venture" see *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1783-1854* ed. Donald Jackson (Urbana, 1962), 19-20.

2. Robert Lawson-Peebles, *Landscape and Written Expression in Revolutionary America: The World Turned Upside Down* (New York, 1988), 3; John Seelye, *Beautiful Machine: Rivers and the Republican Plan* (New York, 1993), 197-201.

3. *The Norton Book of Nature Writing* ed. Robert Finch & John Elder (New York, 1990), 20; Michael Branch, "Indexing American Possibilities: The Natural History Writing of Bartram, Wilson, and Audubon," *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* ed. Cheryl Glotfelty & Harold Fromm (Athens, 1996), 284, 297; Thomas J. Lyon, "A Taxonomy of Nature Writing," *The Ecocriticism Reader*, 279-80; Frank Bergon, "Wilderness Aesthetics," *American Literary History*, 9:1 (Spring 1997), 159.

4. The sticking point probably lies in ecocriticism's concern with the ethics of nature writing. A consensus view, that early American culture was "outside" or "opposed to" nature, appears in Roderick Frazier Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven, 1982), 31. The American Revolution, Cecelia Tichi observes, "involved a necessary and destined change to be wrought upon the New World environment"—a mindset that many ecocritics could easily dismiss as "immature": see *New World, New Earth: Environmental Reform in American Literature from the Puritans through Whitman* (New Haven, 1979), 113. A criterion of what constitutes an "environmental text," with a strong emphasis on the ethical component, appears in Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, 1995), 7-8.

5. "Introduction: In Search of Nature," *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature* ed. William Cronon (New York, 1995), 51; Richard White, *The Organic Machine* (New York, 1995), 112. David Mazel suggests that ecocritics ask not only "What has come to matter?" but "Matters to whom?": see "American Literary Environmentalism as Orientalist Discourse," *The Ecocriticism Reader*, 142.

6. Myra Jehlen, *American Incarnation: the Individual, the Nation and the Continent* (Cambridge, 1986), 3.

7. I borrow the term "ideological geography" from Robert Berkhofer "Jefferson, the Ordinance of 1784, and the Origins of the American Territorial System," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series 29 (1972), 245.

8. [Benjamin Franklin] *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* (London, 1771), ii.

9. Barlow penned this silly tribute ("O're the sky-propping hills and high waters [Lewis] bends/ And gives the proud earth a new zone") while his *Columbiad* was in press: see James Woodress, *A Yankee's Odyssey: The Life of Joel Barlow* (Philadelphia, 1958), 251. Tichi documents Barlow's geographic impulse in *New World, New Earth*, 123-24.

10. Benjamin Rush, *Essays: Literary, Moral and Philosophical* ed. Michael Meranze (Schenectady, New York, 1988), 124; Benjamin Smith Barton, *Observations on Some Parts of Natural History* (London, 1787), iv; Jedediah Morse, *The American Geography; or, A View of the Present Situation of the United States of America* (Elizabeth Town, 1789), v.

11. Jehlen, *American Incarnation*, 19. On writing, exploration and the self in the Journals: see Jehlen, *Cambridge History of American Literature, Volume I: 1590-1820* ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (New York, 1994), 156-57.

12. Jefferson's instructions appear in Jackson, *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, 62. For a calendar of the journals and manuscripts, see *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition* ed. Gary E. Moulton (Lincoln, 1983), 2:549-67. (Volume 11 of the *Journals* is forthcoming).

13. Jackson, *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, v; William Least Heat Moon, *Blue Highways: A Journey into America* (Boston, 1982), 230.

14. Unless otherwise noted, all references to the journals will be cited internally by date, from Moulton, *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*.

15. Lewis issued a bold prospectus in 1807 that promised a three-volume, octavo narrative of his adventure; when rival editions began appearing that year, he jealously discounted their authenticity. The publication of that definitive account languished with Lewis's untimely death in 1809. See Jackson, *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, 394-97, 385.

16. The absence from May 1804 to April 1805 is important but outside the scope of this paper. Responding to suggestions that some journals have been lost, Moulton sensibly points to a pattern of laxness in Lewis's record-keeping: see his introduction to *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition*, 2:17-21. I would add that Lewis enters the narrative as the stakes of the expedition are raised.

17. Albert Furtwangler observes that as Lewis and Clark crossed ecological zones, meals and moods swung accordingly. Spirits soared on the prairie; the addition of grizzly to the staple added to a feeling of adventure on the northern plains; anxieties increased with the disappearance of game near the Continental Divide; Lewis notes his first taste of salmon with trepidation and relief; homesickness fed off the monotonous diet of elk along the Pacific Coast. Furtwangler concludes (none too delicately) that the travellers "passed through America as America was passing through them": see *Acts of Discovery: Visions of America in the Lewis and Clark Journals* (Urbana, 1993), 108.

The staples brought West include flour, "indian meal," pork, salt, sugar, corn, lard, coffee, sugar, beans, coffee and whiskey. Lewis also packed a "portable" soup in lead canisters which (thankfully) went largely unused. For details on the camp mess, see Clark's inventories on 14 April, 16 April and around 14 May 1804, and Lewis's Detachment Orders of 26 May 1804.

18. James Thomson, *The Seasons and The Castle of Indolence* ed. James Sambrook (New York, 1972), 39; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Selected Poems* ed. Lawrence Buell (New York, 1988), 3. Lewis refers to Thomson on 13 June 1805.

19. William Bartram, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida* (New York, 1981), 30; Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* ed. Albert E. Stone. (New York, 1981), 202, 213, 220.

20. Jackson, *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, 510; *Before Lewis and Clark: Documents Illustrating the History of the Missouri, 1785-1804* ed. A.P. Nasatir (Lincoln, 1990), 56; Lawson-Peebles, *Landscape and Written Expression in Revolutionary America*, 202-03.

21. Antoine Le Page du Pratz, *The History of Louisiana in the Western Parts of Virginia and Carolina* (London, 1774), 137-38.

22. Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York, 1964), 11-33. Several classics in American Studies, foundational for the contemporary ecocriticism, trace the same uneasy pastoralism in U.S. letters. On the Lewis and Clark expedition, Henry Nash Smith notes that "geographical knowledge was a necessary preliminary to economic penetration and eventual political domination": see *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, 1950), 16. Annette Kolodny maintains that violence, implicit in Freudian denial, suggests alienation from the land on the part of republican authors: see her *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill, 1975), 28.

23. Tichi, *New World, New Earth*, 146. The quote refers to Barlow.

24. Georges Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, *Buffon's Natural History* (London, 1797), 7:38; qtd. in Durand Echeverria, *Mirage in the West: A History of the French Image of American Society to 1815* (Princeton, 1957), 53; Antonello Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic, 1750-1900* transl. Jeremy Moyle (Pittsburgh, 1973), 3-22. Jehlen concisely summarizes the debate in *Cambridge History of American Literature*, 113-25. An overview of European images of America is Jack P. Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America: Exceptionalism and Identity from 1492 to 1800* (Chapel Hill, 1993). Pamela Regis discusses the rhetoric of natural history, with an emphasis on Linnaean taxonomy, in *Describing Early America: Bartram, Jefferson, Crèvecoeur and the Rhetoric of Natural History* (DeKalb, 1992), 3-39. Christopher Looby connects nature and nationalism more overtly: see "The Constitution of Nature: Taxonomy as Politics in Jefferson, Peale, and Bartram," *Early American Literature*, 22 (1987), 252-73.

25. Buffon, *Buffon's Natural History*, 7:255-56; 8:35-36; 8:22. An amusing explanation of Buffon's disdain for minutiae (he was near-sighted) appears in Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World*, 17-19.

26. William Robertson, *The History of America* (Edinburgh, 1803), 118; Le Chevalier Felix de Beaujour, *Sketch of the United States of North America* transl. William Walton (London, 1814), 82. An attack on Buffon would appear as late as 1823: see Timothy Dwight, *Travels in New England and New York* ed. Barbara Miller Solomon (Cambridge, 1969), 4:223.

27. The nineteenth-century attacks of the *Histoire naturelle* cited earlier were from late or posthumous editions: Beaujour's *Sketch* was translated because more recent information about the United States was not available; Robertson died in 1793.

28. Charles A. Miller, *Jefferson and Nature: An Interpretation* (Baltimore, 1988), 3; Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* ed. William Peden (Chapel Hill, 1955), 50-52; Echeverria, *Mirage in the West*, 65; For misadventures with the American moose, see *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* ed. Julian P. Boyd (Princeton, 1950), 12:208. Jefferson would eventually acknowledge Raynal's revisions: see *Notes on the State of Virginia*, 276n.

29. Frank Bergson, "Wilderness Aesthetics," 144. Charles Miller would call the expedition Jefferson's "culminating enterprise with America nature": see *Jefferson and Nature*, 235.

30. David Ramsay, *An Oration on the Cession of Louisiana to the United States* (Charleston, 1804), 4.

31. Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London, 1992), 84. I borrow the term "institutionalized statement" from Houston A. Baker, Jr., "Archaeology, Ideology, and African-American Discourse," *Redefining American Literary History* ed. A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff and Jerry W. Ward, Jr. (New York, 1990), 160.

32. Lawson-Peebles, *Landscape and Written Expression in Revolutionary America*, 200-19; Seelye, *Beautiful Machine*, 202-04. Myra Jehlen argues differently, that "Lewis is never far from a romantic scene," even after his lapse in the Bitterroots: see *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, 159. John Logan Allen maintains that Lewis and Clark lacked "the vocabulary to cope with the unusual and otherworldly physiography" of the Columbian Plain: see *Lewis and Clark and the Image of the American Northwest* (New York, 1991), 307.

33. Peter Hulme reconstructs the first voyage of Columbus as the conflict of two discourses, one being the passage to India: see *Colonial Encounters*, 20-22.

34. Jackson, *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, 61-7; John Logan Allen, *Lewis and Clark and the Image of the American Northwest*, 119-26, 74-83.

35. Jackson, *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, 61, 320. A first draft of Jefferson's 1806 Message to Congress would note the "important channel of communication," tellingly revised later to "interesting communication": see Jackson, 352.

36. James P. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark Among the Indians* (Lincoln, 1984), 144. Jehlen notes that Lewis's account of the Shoshones is "curiously uncharged," in *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, 154.

37. Greenfield, *Narrating Discovery: The Romantic Explorer in American Literature, 1790-1855* (New York, 1992), 65; John Ledyard, *Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage* (Chicago, 1963),

75; Alexander Henry, *Travels and Adventures* (Ann Arbor, 1966), 75. Greenfield's analysis of Canadian trapper accounts draws from Peter Hulme. On textuality, cannibalism and the Other, see Myra Jehlen, "History Before the Fact; or, Captain John Smith's Unfinished Symphony," *Critical Inquiry* 19 (1993), 677-92. Clarifications by Hulme and Jehlen appear in the next volume: see *Critical Inquiry* 20 (1994), 179-91.

38. Jackson, *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, 592.