

CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS IN ARTS AND SCIENCES

Stockton University, February 17-20 2020

A SELECT READING LIST FROM GAYLORD SCHANILEC:

Gathering Moss, Robin Wall Kimmerer
A Rough Ride to the Future, James Lovelock
The Log from the Sea of Cortez, John Steinbeck
Desert Solitaire, Edward Abbey
Grass Roots, Paul Gruchow
Walden Pond, Henry David Thoreau
This Changes Everything, Naomi Klein
Sapiens, Yuval Noah Harai
Lakota Woman, Mary Crow Dog
Back Elk Speaks, John Neihardt
Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place, Terry Tempest Williams

WITH EACH NEW BOOK project I work on, I grow a new section of my library. It seems impossible these days to work creatively with science without addressing the fundamental issue of climate change. As a result much of my reading lately has gravitated in that direction.

A recent work, *My Mighty Journey*, involves 12,000 years of human history as seen from the perspective of Saint Anthony Falls, the only major waterfall on the Mississippi River. Louis Hennepin, who viewed the falls in 1680, was the first European to do so. Native people were present for the whole 12,000 years, making an effort to represent in some way the Native perspective essential. While working on *My Mighty Journey* I was also involved in a collaborative project *Oracle Bones* in the Utah desert with writer and environmental activist Terry Tempest Williams, who has worked in close association with the Navajo Nation. I think it interesting how Native lands, and philosophy, have become an important counterpoint to the extraction industry—circular thinking vs. linear thinking.

Given the subject of our forum, if you read only one of these books I recommend *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* by John Steinbeck. It documents, in a most beautiful and insightful way, a scientific expedition on which Steinbeck joined his biologist friend Ed Ricketts. The book to me exhibits the value of creative thinking in the process of scientific investigation. From the book:

In the little Bay of San Carlos, where there were many schools of a number of species, there was even a feeling (and “feeling” is used advisedly) of a larger unit which was the inter-relation of species with their interdependence for food, even though that food be each other. A smoothly working larger animal surviving within itself—larval shrimp to little fish to larger fish to giant fish—one operating mechanism. And perhaps this unit of survival may key into the larger animal which is the life of all the sea, and this into the larger world.