

Fisher Fellowship Awards for 2003-2004

Two awards given for 2003-2004.

Barbara Steinson, Professor of History - (Fall) Preparation of American Women's Activism in World War I (revised second edition)

Abstract:

I seek the Fisher Fellowship for the Fall semester 2003 in order to conduct additional research, review relevant secondary literature, and substantively revise Barbara J. Steinson American Women's Activism in World War I (1982) for a second edition to be published by the University of Illinois Press. The second edition will be part of the prestigious "Women in American History" series, edited by Nancy Hewitt, Anne F. Scott, and Stephanie Shaw. Included with this application is my correspondence with Joan Catapano, Editor-in-Chief at the University of Illinois Press, and the contract I signed with the press in May 2002. Under the terms of the contract, a completed manuscript is to be delivered to the University of Illinois Press in January 2004.

Steve Timm, Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences - (Spring) Monologues from the Wilderness: Isolation, Solitude, and the Creative Process

Abstract:

In the last several years, I've spent a significant amount of time in the wildernesses of southern Utah, the back country of Yellowstone, the mountains of northern New Mexico, a remote wilderness island in Lake Superior, and in my own back yard-the Charles Deam Wilderness Area, a thirteen thousand acre parcel just south of Lake Monroe. During these extended periods of immersion, and now extending to most of the time when I'm not hiking, I've considered the wilderness as both a place and as a concept. On one hand it invites the urge to participate: to traverse, to conquer, to relish and celebrate, perhaps exploit, perhaps preserve; on the other, it represents something dark, unapproachable, and unknowable-a mythological place to be feared and avoided-perhaps because it reveals something about the natural forces at work on earth, or worse, it conceals information about that world and even about ourselves. I suspect that somewhere in the marriage of place and concept lies my creative impulses. I'm attracted to both sides: I want presence and I want to participate, and I seek connection to that which is both concealed and revealed. And I want to interpret. To participate and explore at this level requires not only physical endurance and clarity of thought, but a level of both perception and reception-a heightened awareness-with eyes and ears and soul wide open, looking, searching for meaning that can only exist in the here and in the now. In some ways, my physical and mental exploration of these areas parallels Ralph Waldo Emerson's transcendentalist notion that "Particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts."(1) Margaret M. Brulatour references Emerson while explaining Thoreau's lifetime devotion to a "close scrutiny of the natural facts in order to perceive their spiritual message."(2) Yet even Thoreau the wilderness advocate, who in his essay "Walking"

purports to "speak a word for nature, for absolute Freedom and Wildness,"(3) found himself "unnerved to the core"(4) when confronted with the true wilderness of Mount Katahdin-currently the northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail. Thoreau described that wilderness as "savage and awful though beautiful...a place for heathenism and superstitious rites...to be inhabited by men nearer of kind to the rocks and to wild animals than we."(5) I don't necessarily seek the spiritual connection through natural symbols, nor do I seek to imitate those non-fiction writers who have ventured into the wilderness and recorded their experiences: John Wesley Powell, John Muir, Edward Abby, Aldo Leopold. I do seek participation; I seek the human connectedness-or "old knowledge" as I call it in the Isle Royale monologue-to the natural world. I seek to create various interpretations of the wilderness experience through that medium in which I am most studied: the imitation and revelation of human thought and action through language. This project proposal entails creating a series of site specific and site inspired dramatic monologues that are generated from experiences in remote and isolated wilderness areas. Specifically, I propose to spend between eight and ten weeks during the spring 2004 semester at three locations: the Shawnee National Forest (River to River Trail) in southern Illinois during February, the southern sections of the Appalachian Trail in Georgia and North Carolina during March and April, and Isle Royale National Park (Greenstone/Minong Ridge Trail) during late April and early May. Each of the sites are within a days travel of Putnam County, each represents a diverse geological/human/biological history, and while on each trail I intend to create dramatic, improvised monologues first on video (mini Digital Video) and then subsequently refine those monologues into a performance text for production at DePauw University. Ultimately, I see this artistic project as a complete effort in and of itself. Still, I plan to use this project as a precursor for a sabbatical project where I hope to perform live, improvised webcasts via digital satellite technology from remote locations along the Appalachian Trail.

(1)<www.eserver.org/Thoreau/emerson1.html>

(2)<www.eserver.org/thoreau/walking.html>

(3)<www.ucu.edu/engweb/transcendalism/authors/thoreau/walking/>

(4)Bryson, Bill. *A Walk in the Woods*, Broadway Books, NY, 1998, pg.45.