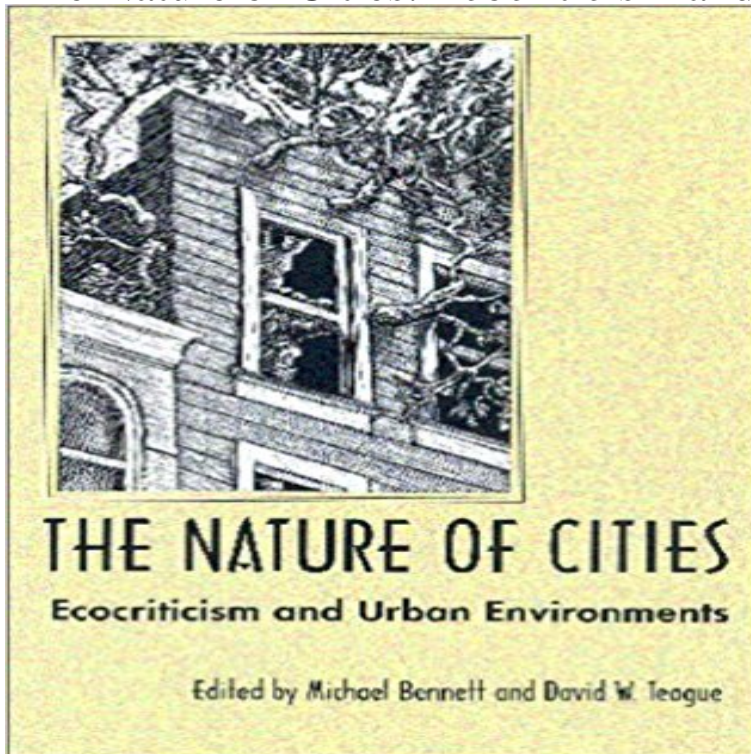


The Nature of Cities: Ecocriticism and Urban Environments



Cities are often thought to be separate from nature, but recent trends in ecocriticism demand that we consider them as part of the total environment. This new collection of essays sharpens the focus on the nature of cities by exploring the facets of an urban ecocriticism, by reminding city dwellers of their place in ecosystems, and by emphasizing the importance of this connection in understanding urban life and culture. The editors both raised in small towns but now living in major urban areas are especially concerned with the sociopolitical construction of all environments, both natural and manmade. Following an opening interview with Andrew Ross exploring the general parameters of urban ecocriticism, they present essays that explore urban nature writing, city parks, urban wilderness, ecofeminism and the city, and urban space. The volume includes contributions on topics as wide-ranging as the urban poetry of English writers from Donne to Gay, the manufactured wildness of a gambling casino, and the marketing of cosmetics to urban women by idealizing Third World naturalness. These essays seek to reconceive nature and its cultural representations in ways that contribute to understanding the contemporary cityscape. They explore the theoretical issues that arise when one attempts to adopt and adapt an environmental perspective for analyzing urban life. The Nature of Cities offers the ecological component often missing from cultural analyses of the city and the urban perspective often lacking in environmental approaches to contemporary culture. By bridging the historical gap between environmentalism, cultural studies, and urban experience, the book makes a statement of lasting importance to the development of the ecocritical movement.

CONTENTS
Part 1 The Nature of Cities
1. Urban Ecocriticism: An Introduction, Michael Bennett & David Teague
2. The

Social Claim on Urban Ecology, Andrew Ross (interviewed by Michael Bennett)Part 2Urban Nature Writing3. London Here and Now: Walking, Streets, and Urban Environments in English Poetry from Donne to Gay, Gary Roberts4. All Things Natural Are Strange: Audre Lorde, Urban Nature, and Cultural Place, Kathleen R. Wallace5. Inculcating Wildness: Ecocomposition, Nature Writing, and the Regreening of the American Suburb, Terrell DixonPart 3City Parks6. Writers and Dilettantes: Central Park and the Literary Origins of Antebellum Urban Nature, Adam W. Sweeting7. Postindustrial Park or Bourgeois Playground? Preservation and Urban Restructuring at Seattles Gas Works Park, Richard HeymanPart 4Urban Wilderness8. Boyz in the Woods: Urban Wilderness in American Cinema, Andrew Light9. Central High and the Suburban Landscape: The Ecology of White Flight, David Teague10. Manufacturing the Ghetto: Anti-urbanism and the Spatialization of Race, Michael BennettPart 5Ecofeminism and the City11. An Ecofeminist Perspective on the Urban Environment, Catherine Villanueva Gardner12. You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman: The Political Economy of Contemporary Cosmetics Discourse, Laura L. SullivanPart 6Theorizing Urban Space13. Darwins City, or Life Underground: Evolution, Progress, and the Shapes of Things to Come, Joanne Gottlieb14. Nature in the Apartment: Humans, Pets, and the Value of Incommensurability, David R. Shumway15. Cosmology in the Casino: Simulacra of Nature in the Interiorized Wilderness, Michael P. Branch

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