

Al Garduno 2010

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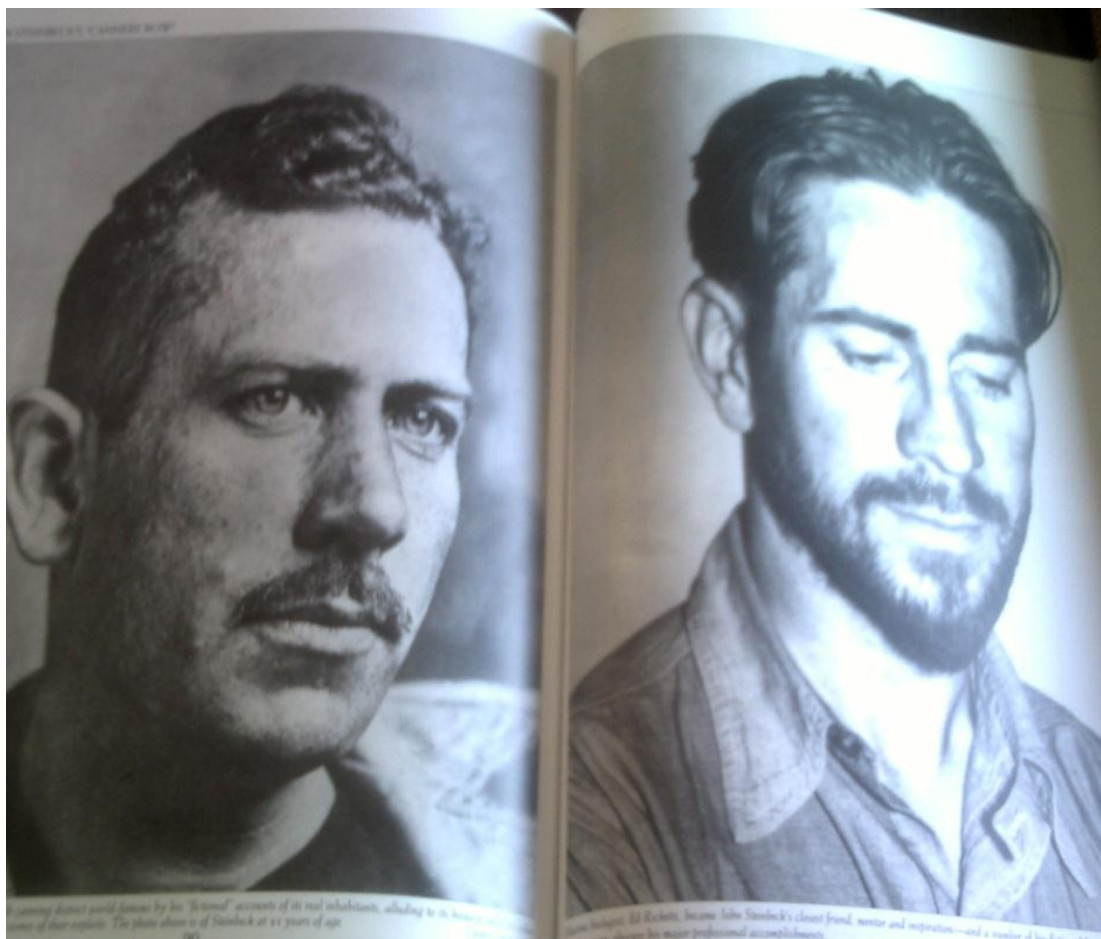
I have learned something about myself recently; I love ecology and my daughter Angie apparently knew this about myself before I did. On my birthday I was gone a few days and when I returned she had cleaned and rearranged my bedroom and put up a huge poster of the ocean's sea floor. It looked great and gave my room a cool look. This happened in January before I even knew about oceanography. Then I took a summer class which led me to learn about oceanography and nature.



Poster of the ocean floor west wall of my room



Joseph Campbell, The great mythologist 1932



John Steinbeck on left Ed Ricketts on right about 1932



My dance awards for first place, west wall



Ship poster on my north wall

I remember in the 1960s I used to go to cannery row in Monterey, Ca. before it was turned into a tourist attraction. I went because I had read many of John Steinbeck's books. Then years later in the 1980s I was taking classes in humanities when I had a chance to talk to Joseph Campbell the great mythologist, author of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, who was giving lectures at Sonoma State University. We had a very nice conversation and he answered all my questions. I wish then I had known about his relationship with John Steinbeck and his wife Carol. It would have made for a very much more interesting conversation. As an aside I also saw bodega bay in 1962 when it was still funky with fishing boats and a fishery where you could watch the fishermen at work

Campbell moved to Monterey in 1932 where he met Ricketts and Steinbeck. Campbell accompanied Ricketts on a 1932 scientific specimen gathering expedition to British Columbia and Alaska. Campbell later wrote to Ricketts from Sarah Lawrence College about his joy and transformation at doing science. "Campbell wrote to Ricketts "Every time I see a rocky coast, I think of you in your boots." (August 22, 1939) He was interested in Ricketts's biological inquiries and quickly recognized the deep philosophies at the heart of his ecological vision." Katharine Rodger

Ed Ricketts, Campbell and Steinbeck were all interested in ecology. “Few understand the role Ricketts played in inspiring Steinbeck to underpin his writing with the science of ecology...a fact that is overlooked or grossly understated by many literary critics and scholars even today.” Eric Enno Tamm

It was after meeting Ricketts that Steinbeck wrote his great masterpieces. And, in 1957, when it was suggested that the cannery row be turned into a tourist attraction, Steinbeck said it should be torn down. “Man’s greed killed off the fish. Now they’ve got to kill off some tourists to make up for it,” he said. To Steinbeck, tearing down the old canneries and returning Monterey Bay to its pristine state would have been a fitting end of an era – the burial of the industrial monster that had devoured the ocean’s bounty and killed off the fish, and thus it too must die. The ocean is humanities’ last frontier.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean- roll!
 Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
 Man marks the earth with ruin-his control
 Stops with the shore.

Lord Byron 1820

Ruin indeed. In the past four centuries, humans have exterminated 750 animal species worldwide.”People can in fact, ruin the sea as surely as they can ruin the land”

International fisheries scientists

Ed Ricketts was one of the first to understand this. On December 27, 1938, Ricketts wrote a letter to his friend Torsten Gisler, a Swedish zoologist: “Now it is warm and sunny; the canneries are going strong – they will extract every single sardine out of the ocean if legislation doesn’t restrain them; already the signs of depletion are serious. Funny how Americans can’t learn the lesson that the north European countries have known for a century.”

Katharine Rodger

In 1940 Ricketts and Steinbeck came across a Japanese fishing fleet with a 10,000 ton factory ship. They were scooping up everything in the ocean, and scraping the seafloor clean. They threw the unwanted fish overboard, keeping only the shrimp. Since 1948, massive industrial fleets of seine boats, factory ships and bottom trawlers have been built. Researchers are now realizing that the very structure of marine food webs in the ocean are changing. Fishing down Marine food webs, published in the journal Science in 1998, showed that since 1950 global catches have shifted from tuna, swordfish and cod, to species lower on the food web, such as anchovies and shrimp. Large predatory fish such as the giant blue marlin have declined by 90 percent since 1950. Having depleted the ocean, we are now trying to domesticate it by farming fish. Salmon farming has soared from 15,500 tons in 1990 to 89,000 tons in 2002, while wild salmon catches plummeted.

Wild fisheries are being privatized. Tenant fishermen, not unlike the tenant farmers depicted in The Grapes of Wrath, pay rents up to 70 percent of the revenue from their catches to the quota owners. We are industrializing, domesticating and ultimately privatizing the oceans, the same way we settled the Great Plains. Steinbeck first lashed out against this system in The Grapes of Wrath and later in the Sea of Cortez. The waste and overexploitation of the sea was, they thought, “a true crime against nature and against...the eventual welfare of the whole human species.”

Sea of Cortez, by Ed Ricketts and John Steinbeck

I remember not too long ago the world's tallest tree was found, so a push was made for a national park to preserve it, but the lumber co. hurriedly cut it down before it could be saved. There was one wild wolf left alive in New Mexico in 1890, and some cattle men hired an expert exterminator to kill the lone wolf. It took this man several years before he could poison the wolf (El Lobo). The man then regretted what he had done and became a conservationist. After all the wild wolves were dead of course. Even today The Japanese are trying to exterminate the whales. After all, they say we kill Bambi, which is true of

course. Just the other day several Oakland policemen executed a baby male deer in someone's back yard in Oakland. The Chinese exterminate rhinos to make aphrodisiacs from their horns (this just makes you want to laugh its so stupid). We clear-cut forests and burn the tropics to make more room for people. Teddy Roosevelt heard that the bison were going extinct so he hurried to kill one before they were all gone.

This is the problem; there are too many people on earth. And, people are too smart, mean, cruel and greedy. But, people are also stupid. They think they have dominion over nature because a sky god told them so. They also think a higher power will save them from their problems, and some people don't even care because they think they are going to heaven soon! What does it matter that they leave a mess behind; it will all be destroyed soon in a final battle of good and evil. The majorities of people are apathetic and leave it to the few rationalists to solve all the problems. Hopefully this can be done.

When I began this paper, I meant to write about cannery row in Monterey and its role in the disappearance of sardines off the coast of California, and too, of the role Ed Ricketts played in trying to prevent the exploitation and over fishing of the sardines. I very soon became aware of the much larger theme; mankind always over-exploits natural resources when left unchecked. It has always been only a very few individuals who fight to maintain an ecological balance and sustainable ecosystem. I have been, I think, energized to follow in their footsteps at least in a small way.

A partial list of references

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