



John McPhee (United States Authors Series)

Michael Pearson

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In this first full-length study of McPhee, Michael Pearson argues that the writer successfully employs the techniques of fiction writing in his journalistic art while honoring his obligation to fact. In exceptionally lucid and entertaining prose, Pearson approaches his subject thematically, examining McPhee's lifework in the realms of personal profiles, sense of place, science and technology, and nature. In a comprehensive biographical chapter, Pearson traces the chief influences shaping McPhee's works, including his virtually lifelong residence in Princeton, New Jersey, his 30-plus years as a staff writer for the New Yorker, and his experiences as camper and later counselor at Keewaydin, a boys' camp in Vermont. Separate chapters examine the development of literary nonfiction as a genre and the techniques that distinguish McPhee's writing from other journalists'. Informing the discussions throughout are quotations from personal interviews Pearson conducted with the writer; of special interest is "The Shape of the Future," a concluding chapter in which Pearson synthesizes the comments of other literary journalists interviewed for their insights into McPhee's works. Highly accessible to students yet of distinct appeal to scholars, John McPhee provides a valuable supplement for journalism classes and courses in advanced expository writing.

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