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HUNTING AND FISHING IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

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By

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This dissertation focuses on contemporary American fiction that, in dealing with the theme of hunting and fishing, reflects the basic currents of American nature writing. I demonstrate the evolution of the subject of fishing and hunting in American literature, and relate that evolution to the changes occurring in American perceptions of nature. Consequently, a large portion of this work is devoted to the ecological perspectives of authors ranging from Thoreau and Aldo Leopold to Edward Abbey and Joseph Wood Krutch. Mainly, however, I concentrate on the contemporary writers for whom hunting and fishing provide a basic theme, or a recurrent motif: Jim Harrison, Thomas McGuane, Gary Snyder, Barry Lopez, and Richard Nelson.

Harrison's and McGuane's fiction is my main subject. I discuss their works in the context of American fiction (specifically, Faulkner and Hemingway), sport literature, and American nature writing. The dissertation demonstrates that even though the works of Harrison and McGuane appear to be the continuation of sport journalism and the sporting myth in fiction, they share the strongest affinity with

the works of Nelson, Lopez, and Snyder and, in more general terms, with the American nature writing tradition. That affinity consists of a biocentric outlook on nature and a search for environmental ethics, which differentiates them from the anthropocentric and utilitarian attitudes apparent in earlier nature-oriented literature.

Although an outlook on the human position in nature is the common denominator for these five authors and American nature writers, their choice of hunting and fishing as a subject matter differentiates them from the major figures in the history of ecological thinking. This difference is further magnified by their belief that hunting and fishing are an important component in creating human respect for nature because, until recently, these activities, described as "wanton murder" in Thoreau's diction, were considered by American nature writers incompatible with the principle of biocentric equality and coexistence.

Harrison, McGuane, Lopez, Snyder, and Nelson reconcile the idea of hunting and fishing with a biocentric and ethical environmental outlook. They accomplish this by adhering to a primitive (native and prehistoric) perception of the hunt, rather than to an arbitrary and anthropocentric "sporting code." As a result, the hunting and fishing they depict becomes an expression of reverence for nature and a sense of belonging. Their works demonstrate that these elements, missing in the Western perception of nature, have been the cause of the contemporary ecological crisis. In synthesizing a primitive outlook, recent ecological philosophy, and the subject of hunting and fishing, these authors add an important new element to American literary tradition.

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CHAPTER I

THE NEW TRADITION

The subject of hunting and fishing is well established in American literature. It recurs in fiction, journalism, and American nature writing. Its most prominent role in fiction is as a symbol of the human quest for self-realization, exemplified by Melville's Moby Dick, Hemingway's The Old Man and the Sea, and Faulkner's "The Bear." In this respect, hunting and fishing serve as a mythical context for the human interaction with nature and the transition from innocence to experience. As Umphlett (1975) claims in The Sporting Myth and the American Experience, hunting and fishing tales reenact American history in their recurrent patterns--the departure beyond corrupt civilization, the contest with wilderness, and the triumph of human will over nature (even at the risk of destruction). The common denominator for the treatment of this subject in American fiction is the symbolic significance of the hunt, which overshadows the particulars of the actual process of killing.

Descriptions of the "right way" to hunt and fish are the focus of sport literature--essays, articles, and manuals. This genre constitutes a different way of documenting the hunting and fishing tradition in America, due to its prescriptive

and specific, rather than descriptive and universal, treatment of the subject. According to John F. Reiger (1975), this type of literature, exemplified by magazines such as American Sportsman and Forest and Stream, is directly responsible for the birth of conservation and environmental protection in the post-Civil War United States. This purpose was accomplished by means of a direct campaign for conservation of resources, as well as by formulating a strict and detailed sportsman code that separated "proper" and "reprehensible" kinds of hunting.

A perception that all hunting is reprehensible is reflected in American nature writing. Peter Fritzell (1990) and Joseph Wood Krutch (1958) trace the origins of this genre to Thoreau and his belief in the basic kinship of all life forms. Even though American nature writers rarely describe hunting and fishing as a means of interaction with nature, this genre provides an important supplement to the preceding two literary treatments of the subject because one of its main concerns is the human attitude toward the environment. Thoreau and his followers have concentrated on observing nature and minimizing the degree of their own intrusion, rather than on "experiencing" nature through killing animals. Traditionally, American nature writers have spoken against "blood" sport as a leisure activity. Contemporary public criticism of hunting and fishing is often rooted in this tradition, even though the less immediate aspects of violating the sense of kinship with nature often escape public attention.

In this study, hunting and fishing in literature are discussed on the basis of the works of five authors who represent a new approach to this subject. Even though their individual works can be perceived in terms of the traditions outlined above, the common characteristics of their outlook escape the limitations of established ways of writing about these activities. These authors attempt to integrate a traditional subject with an unorthodox outlook upon the relations between humanity and nature. They write about hunting and fishing from the point of view of biocentric equality.

The affinity among the works of Jim Harrison, Thomas McGuane, Gary Snyder, Richard Nelson, and Barry Lopez is not obvious at first glance. These contemporary authors work within different literary genres, and even though immediate parallels can be drawn between Harrison and McGuane (as writers of novels and essays on sport), as well as Nelson and Lopez (as authors of anthropological studies of northern hunting societies), the common denominator for all of their works is not immediately visible. The affinity exists on the level of their philosophical outlook on human position in nature. These authors employ diverse techniques to express their views, yet their conclusions are similar. All of them perceive contemporary America in terms of a spiritual and ecological crisis. Their preoccupation with hunting and fishing links them to the tradition of Melville, Cooper, Hemingway, and Faulkner, as well as to the tradition of sport journalism. Their approach to the subject evokes the principles underlying the Thoreauvian form of nature writing. Their uniqueness lies in the belief that

hunting and fishing can lead to the development of an ecological conscience, an indispensable supplement to science in the time of environmental crisis and the Age of Ecology.

Harrison, McGuane, Lopez, Snyder, and Nelson approach the subject of hunting and fishing from a variety of angles. Harrison and McGuane devote a considerable part of their essays and novels to the portrayal of both destructive and redemptive aspects of outdoor sports. The destructive aspects of sport in their work are usually linked to thoughtless transgressions against nature, perceived not only in terms of violations of "the sporting code" but also in terms of the anthropocentric sporting code itself. Whereas McGuane devotes most of his energies to tracing and ridiculing this aspect of human interaction with nature, Harrison more often concentrates on the individual search for a more valid approach. As a result, the two authors supplement each other's views on contemporary hunting and fishing because their works respectively concentrate on the two sides of the issue. A common feature of both authors is their belief that the valid ethical objections against contemporary hunting and fishing, as well as the complications faced by their protagonists searching for redemption in nature, stem from the differences between contemporary hunting and fishing and the original mode of subsistence. Their treatment of the subject can be understood best in the context of the works of Snyder, Nelson, and Lopez, who provide additional insight into primitive hunting and the affinity of the primitive world view with contemporary ecological philosophy. Consequently, the unique

treatment of hunting and fishing in the works of these authors is further reinforced by the inspiration they derive from the prehistoric and native experience, an unprecedented attempt in both American literature and environmental philosophy.

As stated before, hunting and fishing as an expression of human feelings about nature puts Harrison, McGuane, Nelson, Snyder, and Lopez at the crossroads of various literary traditions. The subject of this study is the evaluation of the parallels between these traditions and the authors' treatment of the subject. The aim of this evaluation is to demonstrate that even though a certain affinity exists between these authors and the traditional treatment of hunting and fishing in fiction and journalism, the deepest similarity can be traced to American nature writing, and even in this area Harrison, McGuane, Snyder, Lopez, and Nelson contribute new insight into the issue of human interaction with nature. In this chapter, the writer concentrates on American sport literature and nature writing, while earlier American fiction (especially Hemingway's) and contemporary literature of hunting and fishing are compared in the conclusion to this dissertation.

Hunting and fishing in contemporary America is the subject of constant debate, as Matt Cartmill (1993) and John F. Reiger (1975) demonstrate in their works. In American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation, Reiger provides an important overview of the sports literature, not only due to its detailed account of the development of outdoor sports, but also because the author's approach to

the subject is characteristic of the arguments commonly used in defense of hunting and fishing today.

Reiger claims that anti-hunting sentiments result from the misguided assumption that sportsmen are perpetuating environmental destruction:

> Sportsmen, those who supposedly "kill for the sake of killing," have become handy scapegoats for Americans unhappy with the declining populations of many wildlife species and the deterioration of the environment generally. The real causes for this wildlife reduction, "development," pesticide contamination, water pollution, etc., are generalized, amorphous phenomena, that seem incapable of being controlled, while the hunter is a specific group that can be focused on and attacked. (p. 16)

Reiger dismisses the validity of this argument against sportsmen on the basis of their active role in the American conservationist campaign:

> The appearance of a new monthly newspaper, the American Sportsman, in October, 1871, marks a watershed in environmental history. For this was the country's first national periodical to make the interrelated subjects of hunting, fishing, natural history and conservation its primary concerns, and the enthusiastic response the journal received proves that a segment of the American public was ready for its teachings. (p. 25)

Reiger ascribes the appeal of the journal to a change in the American outlook on hunting and fishing. "Before the Civil War, most Americans viewed these activities as acceptable only when necessary or helpful to the maintenance of a livelihood" (p. 25), yet the environmental changes apparent in the postwar period turned the public against the commercial aspects of interaction with nature. The development of a more favorable outlook on the sport of hunting and fishing was related, Reiger claims, to the recurrent emphasis on the "proper" sporting code in sportsmen's publications:

> With the appearance of national periodicals like American Sportsman (1871), Forest and Stream (1873), Field and Stream (1874), and American Angler (1881), a new impetus was given to the sportsmen's struggle against commercial exploitation of wildlife. While the nation as a whole remained indifferent, these journals, in issue after issue, poured forth a steady stream of propaganda against the market men. Besides enumerating specific offenses, the main technique used was to teach the American public the ethics and responsibilities of sportsmanship. (p. 28)

The tendency to draw a clear division between sport and commercial hunting and to define precisely the rules of sport culminated in the establishment of the Boone and Crockett Club in 1887. Its purpose was "the encouragement of big-game hunting, but the character of the hunter was the real object of concern" (Nash, 1967, p. 152). Reiger (1975) points out that the establishment of the club illustrated a considerable development in nineteenth-century environmental ethics because "the emphasis the club's constitution placed on 'fair chase' meant that the reform potential in . . . 'the code of the sportsman' was at last going to be fully realized" (p. 118).

Besides outlining the sporting code, magazines like Forest and Stream led the campaign for wildlife preservation. Reiger stresses that the campaign was not only representative of the sportsmen's interest in protecting the population of the game species, but it was also concerned with the welfare of all wildlife. This aspect of the sportsmen's activity is illustrated by the establishment of the Audubon Society by George Bird Grinnell in 1886:

> Grinnell's association . . . was solely for the preservation of the non-game species, a category of wildlife all but ignored up to that time. Once again, sportsmen-naturalists took the initiative in filling the void by public indifference. Personal involvement with the natural world on a nonutilitarian basis and adoption of the aesthetic component in the code

> of the sportsman caused many sportsmen-naturalists to be almost as concerned with the destruction of non-game birds as with those traditionally pursued for sport. (Reiger, 1975, p. 66)

The campaign for wildlife protection was only the first step in the national awakening to environmental concerns. Reiger (1975) ascribes the next steps, forest conservation and the development of national parks, to the combined efforts of sporting magazines, especially Forest and Stream, and the environmentally conscious government of the hunting president, Theodore Roosevelt. The system for managing both national parks and forest reserves was created early by members of the Boone and Crockett Club. Thus, Reiger concludes, American sportsmen should be credited with the birth of environmental awareness, rather than criticized for the environmental crisis, which they always have been trying to avert.

Even though this summary of Reiger's work provides only a simplified version of the author's argument, the thesis remains clear. The author attributes the birth of American environmentalism solely to the efforts of outspoken sportsmen. The more general sphere of influence, for instance the legacy of Romanticism and subsequent "wilderness cult" discussed in the same context by Nash (1967) in Wilderness and the American Mind, is discredited in Reiger's work: "Fortunately for the history of the Adirondacks, sportsmen did more than engage in Romantic fantasies of sanctuaries where the Indian and his game would remain forever in a primitive state of suspended animation" (p. 91). Reiger

also disregards the environmental contributions of those nineteenth-century naturalists who opposed sport–for instance, Thoreau and John Muir:

> In reality, Muir's concrete contributions to conservation have been exaggerated, while the achievements of sportsmen like George Bird Grinnell and Charles Sheldon are simply mentioned in passing, if at all, by the journalists, commentators, and historians who cater to current fashion in environmental writing. (p. 18)

Reiger's discussion of the interaction between outdoor sports and the birth of conservation is extensively documented and convincing; however, its strengths are also its limitations. Reiger's claim that hunting promoted conservation of national resources undermines rather than supports the thesis that sportsmen contributed to the development of an ethical perception of the natural environment. Recent history demonstrates that conservation itself has not been able to prevent the ecological crisis, mainly due to its deficiency in environmental ethics. Regardless of the author's efforts to demonstrate that the interaction between conservation and the sportsman's code created an ecological conscience in nineteenth-century Americans, a hundred years later the ethical restraints in relation to nature are still only an emergent concept. As subsequent discussion demonstrates, the development of ecological ethics is more indebted to the heritage of American nature writing than to the authors promoting conservation and the sportsman's code.

Reiger's claim that nineteenth-century sportsmen constituted the vanguard of the environmental movement seems to mirror my claim that the contemporary writers who use the subject of fishing and hunting search for a valid mode of

human behavior toward the natural environment. The similarity, however, is superficial. Harrison and McGuane are wary of the terms "conservation" and "sport" when they depict hunting and fishing. Even though their literary goals appear similar to "Frank Forester's" (William Herbert's) attempts to present hunting and fishing in ethical terms, they approach the task differently. As Reiger (1975) points out, "'conservationist,' not 'ecologist,' is the more precise term for the American pioneer of environmental concern" (p. 19), and "American sportsmen, those who hunted and fished for pleasure rather than commerce or necessity, were the real spearhead of conservation" (p. 21). True as this claim may be, it bears little relevance to the authors dealing with contemporary hunting and fishing. Their treatment of the subject is influenced by ecological rather than conservationist considerations, and they view direct dependence on nature rather than recreational use as the stable basis for developing an ethical perception of land.

Reiger (1975) defines the difference between conservation and ecology in the introduction to his work: "Historically, conservation has not been a science like ecology but a reform movement using political and legal methods to obtain what Theodore Roosevelt called 'wise use' of resources" (p. 20). Reiger's definition of ecology as a science is too narrow to account for the environmental outlook in contemporary literature of hunting and fishing. It is more accurate to trace the roots of the contemporary treatment of hunting and fishing to the "deep ecological" perspective, which begins with science, yet progresses beyond it in

the direction of a philosophical system. In The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology, Max Oelschlaeger (1991) demonstrates that conservation (resourcism) and the conservationist application of ecology (shallow ecology) differ from "deep ecology" as far as the degree of an ethical involvement is concerned:

> Deep or foundational ecology (also called radical environmentalism) presents an idea of wilderness contradictory to resourcism . . . since it moves beyond any appeal to instrumental values as a ground for guiding human action. . . . Unlike shallow ecology, which considers only questions of the means to achieve the established ends of advanced industrial societies, deep ecology questions ends; in other words, foundational ecology moves beyond purely functional inquiry to entertain explicitly ethical questions. (pp. 301-302)

Hunting and fishing depicted in the works of Harrison, McGuane, Snyder, Lopez, and Nelson reflect the search for an ethical relation to nature rather than conservationist or purely scientific considerations. These authors display a distrust of conservationism as the way to environmental protection because they are all influenced by Aldo Leopold's concept of "land ethic" as a necessary supplement to land science and land use.

In his introduction, Reiger (1975) mentions Leopold, the leading conservationist after the Gifford Pinchot and Theodore Roosevelt era, as an example of an environmentally conscious sportsman. Leopold is introduced as the "'father of scientific management,' the 'father of ecology' and the 'father of American land ethics'" (p. 18). Reiger, simultaneously crediting Leopold with these triple progeny, fails to acknowledge the transformation in Leopold's views that led him to renounce conservation as a desirable mode of relating to the

environment. Leopold's Game Management, published in 1933, indeed provides a basis for Reiger's claim that hunting and fishing as sport give rise to conservationist impulses. As Donald Worster (1977) points out in Nature's Economy:

> In Game Management, Leopold further articulated this view of nature as "resources"--a world to be reorganized and managed to meet social demands. . . . Leopold, it must be added, did not calculate the value of game animals in dollars and cents alone; they also represented for him a primitive, pioneering past with which he hoped the average citizen, through hunting, could keep faith. (pp. 272-273)

What Reiger fails to note, however, is that hunting and fishing also led Leopold to revolutionize conservationist beliefs. This occurred after Leopold witnessed and participated in an environmentally disastrous predator-control campaign in the Kaibab Forest area of Arizona, which "has stood for a half-century as the classic example of businesslike mismanagement of resources and of ecological ignorance on the part of productivity-minded conservationists" (Worster, 1977, p. 270).

Leopold documents his involvement in the campaign and subsequent "conversion" to ethical rather than economical perception of land in "Thinking Like a Mountain." This essay was published in A Sand County Almanac (1949/1974), and the book, promoting the concept of "land ethic," subsequently became the cornerstone of American nature writing and an emerging deep ecology. Reiger's oversimplification in linking Leopold's conservationist and land-ethical approaches exemplifies the rest of the oversimplifications involved in his thesis.

The examples of conflict between the interests of sportsmen and ecological balance were clearly visible at the end of the nineteenth century. In the Complete Sportsman: A Manual of Scientific and Practical Knowledge Designed for the Instruction and Information of All Votaries of the Gun, Howland Gaspar (1893) advocates the introduction of the foreign game species to American ecosystems:

> The closing years of the century have witnessed notable achievements in the introduction of exotic species of game birds--achievements of which the benefits have already been reaped in gratifying measure, and which are full of promise of a yet richer fruition in the future. With all his apparent heedlessness of keeping up the indigenous game supply, the American sportsman of the present day is showing himself to be large-minded, endowed with sagacity and forethought, and given to enterprises which, in their beneficent purposes, concern less the present than the future. . . . We most warmly commend to every shooting individual and club, for their careful and thoughtful consideration, this subject of foreign game bird importation, suggesting that such liberal efforts and expenditures be made as may promise to increase the abundance and variety of our game fauna, and thereby augment the pleasure and satisfaction of a day's recreation with the dog and gun afield. (p. 269)

The argument for introducing foreign species to American ecosystems for the "pleasure and satisfaction" of the sportsman, presented in the "manual of scientific knowledge," illustrates the anthropocentrism and ecological ignorance of a nineteenth-century sportsman. This type of proposal is not likely to be reiterated in a contemporary fishing and hunting publication because at present these publications are more concerned with alleviating ecological imbalance resulting from such an outlook. On the other hand, a consideration of the "pleasure and satisfaction" of the sportsman continues to be a serious bias, even in contemporary publications. The feature article in the August 1994 issue of

Alaska: The Magazine of Life on the Last Frontier (Capps, 1994) is devoted to the controversy over the government plan to trim considerably the population of wolves. The reason behind the proposed campaign is not the ecological imbalance between the caribou and the wolf population, but the fact that this balance does not leave enough space for human--both native and tourist--caribou hunting. As a result, even contemporary environmental decisions that affect hunters, regardless of the documented failures of the conservationist utilitarian agenda, are influenced by the welfare of sportsmen rather than the welfare of nature.

Contemporary authors like Harrison and McGuane react to similar instances of the inconsistency between the theory and practice of hunting by disassociating themselves from the notion of sport. Instead of the arbitrary "sporting code," they search for a consistent set of rules created by a biocentric rather than an anthropocentric ethical system. Hunting, as Harrison, McGuane, Snyder, Lopez, and Nelson depict it, is much less spectacular than that described in Roosevelt's Good Hunting or The Wilderness Hunter. Instead of striving for success in terms of "the style, the dash, the handsome way of doing what is to be done" (Forester, 1892), their hunters concentrate on the pursuit and often give up killing at the last moment of the hunt. Their ultimate purpose is to establish, and verify, the sense of belonging in nature on an equal basis. This priority links Harrison, McGuane, Lopez, Snyder, and Nelson to the American nature writing tradition. The subsequent discussion of the development of a deep ecological

philosophy in American nature writing will be followed by comparisons of these authors' views on hunting and fishing and the philosophical precepts of this genre. The conclusions will demonstrate that, even though hunting and fishing (as a search for, and expression of, the biocentric perspective) are incompatible with the evolutionary stages of the deep ecological outlook, the most recent developments in this outlook validate hunting and fishing as an expression of biocentric equality.

According to Joseph Wood Krutch and Peter Fritzell, nature writing is a unique and relatively recent form of literary expression of human attitudes toward nature. Its immediate origins can be traced to Thoreau, in terms of both form and content. Krutch defines the most important characteristics of nature writing as the sense of oneness, intimacy, and equality with nature. Thoreau developed and applied these concepts in Walden, in disregard of the predominant, orthodox Christian ideas of human superiority and uniqueness (Krutch, 1958). Krutch differentiates nature writing from writing of nature appreciation (the literature of travel and adventure, poetry, and "other traditional forms of belles-lettres") on the basis of their outlook on the human role in nature. Fritzell (1990) stresses the same aspect of the genre: "America's best nature writers . . . have had great difficulty with the notion that the human species is somehow unnatural or outside nature--great difficulty accepting the notion that humankind has (or can) somehow leave nature behind" (p. 14). The fundamental difference between nature writing

and any other form of nature-related literature is the contrast between the biocentric and the anthropocentric perspective.

The manifestation of the conflict between the anthropocentric and the materializing biocentric perspectives in American environmental legislation can be traced to the dispute between the conservationist and preservationist movements.

> The schism ran between those who defined conservation as the wise or planned development of resources and those who have been termed preservationists, with their rejection of utilitarianism and advocacy of nature unaltered by man. Juxtaposing the needs of civilization with the spiritual and aesthetic value of wilderness, the conservation issue extended the old dialogue between pioneers and romantics. (Nash, 1967, p. 129).

Nash illustrates the conflict between the conservationist and preservationist agenda with the Hetch-Hetchy controversy (1905 to 1913) over the issue of building a dam in Yosemite National Park in order to generate hydroelectric power for San Francisco. The failure of the preservationist campaign, which recognized the intrinsic, nonutilitarian value of wilderness, illustrates the initial lack of appeal of the new perspective.

However revolutionary in its disregard of the utilitarian view of nature, the preservationist movement, represented in the Hetch-Hetchy controversy by John Muir and the Sierra Club, cannot be viewed as a full expression of the biocentric view of nature. As Oelschlaeger (1991) points out in The Idea of Wilderness From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology:

> By abandoning the view that nature is no more than an ecomachine or a stockpile of resources to fuel the human project, preservationists tend not

> to be bulls in an ecological china shop. They typically reject a strictly economic approach to valuing wilderness, and entertain other considerations such as rarity, species diversity, and beauty. And by adopting a holistic view, preservationists are attentive to the pervasive linkages and interactions essential to any concept of a wilderness ecosystem. Yet from an ecocentric or biocentric perspective, preservationism remains anthropocentric, since human interests are the ultimate arbiters of value. (p. 292)

Regardless of the incompleteness of preservationism as an expression of the deep ecological philosophy, Oelschlaeger considers John Muir a "seminal deep ecologist" (p. 301). The same definition applies to Leopold, whose concept of "land ethic" formulated in A Sand County Almanac "advances from Muir's premise that all creation has rights" (p. 194). The issue that unites these two writers (and differentiates them from the conservationist outlook) is summed up by Holmes Rolston (cited by Oelschlaeger, 1991), a wilderness philosopher: "'Can there be an environmental ethic in a primary, naturalistic sense, one where natural things are morally considered in their own right?' Further, ought nature in some sense be followed? 'Can it be a tutor of human conduct?'" (p. 194). In "Thinking Like a Mountain," Leopold believes that it can and should, in order for humans to learn how to behave toward the environment:

> The natural history essays of this period (collected in A Sand County Almanac) are remarkable statements--Thoreauvian in their literary quality and much of their underlying philosophy. "Thinking Like a Mountain" (1944) is representative of the changes in Leopold's outlook: a confession that through his own shortsightedness and human centeredness he had sinned against nature. . . . Leopold's intuition was grounded in a personal relation to the mountain itself (rather than philosophical commitment to vitalism), a mountain which recognized in the cry of a wolf a "deeper meaning, known only to the mountain itself. Only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively to the howl of the wolf." This statement metaphorically endows the mountain with sentience--the basis of an

> interconnectedness between the massif and the timber and animals that inhabit its slopes. What in imperial ecology would be a mechanical equilibrium of the ecosystem had been animated and metaphorically personified, but not anthropomorphized. Crucially, the mountain has lived through the longeurs of geological and biological time: long enough to be free of the prejudice that taints human perception of the wolf. (Oelschlaeger, 1991, p. 233)

Leopold advocates learning from nature the principles of coexistence. In order to do so, one has to abandon the anthropocentric perspective and view humans as biotic "citizens," whose actions must be limited by ethical considerations toward other members of the same community. In formulating this outlook as a basis for a "land ethic," Leopold contributes to the evolution of the biocentric perspective. His change of perspective is accomplished by the realization that nature (for instance, a mountain) is "aware" of human actions. This discovery influences subsequent nature writers. In Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, Annie Dillard (1974) not only observes nature, but also enjoys the sense of being seen by "the tree with the lights in it," God in nature (p. 35). Even though for Leopold and Dillard the awareness of nature is still metaphorical rather than literal, their views resemble the primitive belief in sentient and enspirited mountains, wolves, and trees. The importance of acknowledging nature's awareness is crucial for the development of an ecological ethic because the sensation of being seen fortifies the ethical constraints. The perception of nature as a sentient entity eliminates the traditional philosophical and religious divisions between the human and nonhuman world; it also provides a basis for the

discovery of an alliance between the deep ecological and the primitive view of the environment, explored fully by Snyder, Lopez, and Nelson.

Leopold's contributions to American nature writing mark the point where this genre and contemporary treatment of hunting and fishing in literature begin to converge. The earlier nature writers treated these activities as incompatible with the principle of kinship with nature. Thoreau (1854/1985) proclaimed in Walden that "no humane being past the thoughtless age of boyhood, will wantonly murder any creature which holds its life by the same tenure as he does" (p. 492). Muir's attitude was even more adamant: "The murder business and sport by saint and sinner alike has been pushed ruthlessly, merrily on, until at last protective measures are being called for, partly, I suppose because the pleasure of killing is in danger of being lost from there being little or nothing left to kill." Even Leopold himself, as Sherman Paul (1992) demonstrates in For the Love of the World, has grown to distrust hunting:

> Leopold's enthusiasm for hunting (he had hunted from boyhood in Iowa, coming to nature study in this way, and the shack was purchased as a base camp), this enthusiasm, and the very enterprise of game management, have always disturbed me. I share Muir's view of both, that hunting is "murder business" and that protective measures such as game management arise because "the pleasure of killing is in danger of being lost from there being little or nothing left to kill." Leopold's defense of hunting as an ethical discipline as against the wantonness of sport doesn't convince me. So I was happy to find that Leopold, after twenty years, admits that the predator control he fostered was "ecological murder." He participated, he says, in "the extinguishment of the grizzly bear," in his mind the wilderness itself; he was "accessory to the extermination of the lobo wolf" and rationalized it by "calling it deer management." Having done this he contributed to the "erasing [of] the wilderness" practiced in the name of range conservation, for once a wilderness area has been proclaimed and the predators killed to increase the game, logic (of a

> bureaucratic kind) requires roads to enable the hunters to "harvest" the game, and access destroys the wilderness. (p. 41)

For Leopold (and even some of his followers, including Joseph Wood Krutch and Paul himself), the logical outcome of "thinking like a mountain" is to abandon hunting. For some contemporary writers, however, this logic is too straightforward. Contemporary nature writing increasingly relies on anthropological studies, in order to explore other than Western attitudes toward nature. The works of Lopez, Nelson, and Snyder (even though not always conforming to the limits of the genre) illustrate this tendency. These studies reveal striking parallels between the primitive (both native and prehistoric) perception of nature and the deep ecological outlook, especially as far as the concept of sentient and enspirited nature is concerned. The affinity between the primitive and the deep ecological perspectives affects the perception of hunting and fishing. These activities for the primitive peoples were the basic modes of relating to the environment, and as anthropology suggests, their environmental attitude was, if not perfect, more sound than that still prevailing in our time. Superficially, the imitation of the primitive ideal resembles Roosevelt's belief in the "strenuous life" as an antidote to "overcivilization" (Nash, 1967, p. 150), yet the contemporary advocates of hunting concentrate more on the primitive environmental outlook than on self-sufficiency and endurance. Contemporary treatments of the subject focus on attempts to re-create primitive rituals, rather than on creating the sporting code. Harrison, McGuane, Snyder, Lopez, and Nelson discuss hunting and fishing in terms of an ancient art rather than sport.

The rules that guide their protagonists are of a moral, not conservationist, nature; they are dictated by respect for animals rather than by respect for fair play. Most often their hunting and fishing is inconclusive in terms of the kill, as will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters of this dissertation. The killing, however, as a direct expression of participating in the natural order, does not contradict the principle of biocentric equality. The anthropological evidence concerning the role of primitive myths and rituals in preserving environmental stability validates the role of hunting and fishing in realizing the interdependence of life.

Commenting on contemporary objections to conservationist rationales for hunting, Matt Cartmill (1993) quotes Cleveland Amory, the animal rights activist: "When some of these Fish and Wildlife people get to heaven--if they ever do, which I doubt--they're going to be awfully surprised if they find out that God is a Deer" (p. 160). However exaggerated, this statement illustrates the division between the traditional sportsmen and the hunters described by Harrison, McGuane, Lopez, Nelson, and Snyder. Whereas for Theodore Roosevelt this prospect might have been appalling, the hunters depicted by these authors willingly entertain such a notion because, in the course of their hunting and fishing, they concentrate on overcoming the traditional religious and philosophical concepts separating humans from nature.

CHAPTER II

JIM HARRISON: HUNTING AS EDUCATION

> It took me twenty years to see a timber wolf in the wild. I could have foreshortened this time period by going to Isle Royale or Canada but I wanted to see the wolf as a part of a day rather than novelty. (Harrison, 1978)

The Midwest, more specifically northern Michigan, is the setting of most of Jim Harrison's novels. "Growing up in northern Michigan, . . . naturally I fished and hunted" claims the author, implying the link between himself, the location, and most of his protagonists' preoccupation. This type of connection should not be taken for granted in any critical essay, however, because "critics have an enormous difficulty separating the attitudes of your characters from your attitudes as a writer. You have to explain to them: I am not all the men in my novels" ("The Art of Fiction," p. 71). Still, among the various kinds of fishermen and hunters depicted by Harrison, and among the various attitudes toward nature they display, there are some recurring patterns by which the reader can gain insight into the position of the author. Moreover, if these patterns are not a sufficient basis for establishing Harrison's attitude toward hunting and fishing, his essays collected in Just Before Dark provide additional insight into the issue.

Consequently, this chapter deals with both the author's and his protagonists' perceptions of hunting and fishing presented against the background of mainstream attitudes toward nature and outdoor sports.

Harrison's essays and novels do not glorify modern-day hunting, nor do they try to justify it: "There is no apologia now for hunting except that the desire is in us. Some are born hunting and rarely in our time out of need" ("La Venerie Francaise," in Just Before Dark, p. 96). Instead, they exemplify the complexity of motives that draw Americans to nature, as well as the complexity of responses nature evokes in them. It would be an oversimplification to claim that Harrison's protagonists are engaged in the sport of fishing and hunting; rather, they perceive hunting and fishing as an art of insight into nature and themselves.

> Few of us shoot ourselves during an evening hatch. Fishing makes us less the hostages of making a living. In some Jungian (Carl, late of Switzerland) sense it returns us to the aesthetics of the ancient art of gathering and hunting our own food. It is a time warp we may step in for a little peace. That's why there are so many churls and knaves in competitive forms of fishing. They don't know this. Most of them should be fishing bull gar with grenades. ("A Plaster Trout in Worm Heaven," in Silent Seasons, p. 148)

This passage makes a distinction that is present in most of Jim Harrison's works dealing with hunting and fishing. It points to the difference between hunting and fishing viewed as sport and hunting and fishing as an ancient art. The object of the former is to "teach nature a lesson"; the latter aims at deriving a lesson from it. The first form of hunting and fishing implies human dominance over nature and endows the outdoors with a clearly utilitarian value. Hunting as an art, in contrast, assumes the independence of nature from human needs and

demands and requires from a hunter ability to abandon an anthropocentric perspective. Harrison considers the sport of hunting to be characteristic of the destructiveness of contemporary civilization, whereas hunting performed with the discipline and purity of art implies the possibility of redemption.

Harrison presents wilderness as a refuge from civilization, not the field of its further glorification. In the Thoreauvian tradition, the author stresses that the vanishing of wilderness threatens the chances of human survival. Hunting sportsmen cannot abuse nature indefinitely: their sense of privilege is not consistent with the ecological laws. Nature, according to Harrison, is not obliged to serve; if abused, it will retaliate. Its indifference, its refusal to accommodate the escalated demands of the ecologically ignorant assertion of supremacy, will be the chief means of such retaliation. The destructive agent will eventually create impossible living conditions for his kind, while nature will still exist, however temporarily thrown off balance.

Harrison's antidote calls for the humility of acknowledging the interdependence and the need for coexistence between humans and nature. These notions are the core of deep ecological philosophy, which marks a new turn in American perception of nature. This philosophy in Harrison's works surfaces as the notion of "aesthetics of the ancient art of hunting and gathering our food," which endows the human relationship with nature with a ritualistic and spiritual dimension. Such hunting and fishing radically differ from the competitive sport of shooting game.

An ecological attitude toward hunting is based on the assumption that nature is far less dependent on humans than humans are on nature. This sense evokes respect toward the outdoors and its resources. Hunting as art concentrates on the process rather than on the immediate results. Consequently, a nonacquisitive, primarily spiritual experience of hunting counts most as far as the reestablishment of the bonds with nature is concerned. Harrison writes of hunting as an attempt to get as close as possible to nature in order to observe and learn because nature is not obliged to give the hunter any instant gratification, except for an education as to its powers and his limitations. Machine-gun slaughter is not educational in this respect; a solitary pursuit is, even if the hunter's bag remains empty. Such hunting brings one back to the alienated instincts. Awakened to nature within, the hunter is more likely to respect nature outside and abandon any mistaken notions of human supremacy.

Harrison's criticism of the contemporary distortions of outdoor sports goes beyond the instances of competitive trophy hunting and ignorant slaughter. He relates the unrestricted predatory instincts of competitive hunters to the voracity of human relation to nature in general, especially as far as the American wilderness is concerned: "I reflect on the pioneer spirit and how it made our country what it is, and the odious Bumppoism that emerges from the events like the National Trout Festival" ("Passacaglia on Getting Lost," hereafter "PGL," p. 232). The "odious Bumppoism" in this respect seems to personify the bulk of romantic and nationalistic notions imposed on the American wilderness, as well

as the institutionalized love for it, matched with a total disregard of its essence. These sentiments persist, regardless of the changes in the American environment: "I think it was Edward Abbey who coined the phrase 'cowboy consciousness' to describe that peculiar set of attitudes many Americans still hold: the land is endless, unspoiled, mysterious, still remaining to be overcome and finally won" ("The Violators," in Just Before Dark, p. 68). It is that duality of affection and arrogance that leads to a massive intrusion which gradually destroys the balance of nature. On the basis of such shortsighted enthusiasm and largely ignorant behavior, Harrison predicts the transformation of the American wilderness into yet another urban complex:

> There is clearly not enough wilderness left for the rising number of people who say they desire it. It is not wilderness anyway if it exists by our stewardship and permission. We have become Europe and each, with a sense of privacy and tact, must secure our own wildness. ("PGL," p. 232)

Harrison maintains here the accuracy of Thoreau's recipe for salvation: wildness means not only wilderness of nature but also the natural instincts of an individual. Harrison relates the disappearance of American nature both in terms of the urbanization of the country and inner alienation of people. Both processes result from greed: "It was greed that discovered the country, greed that murdered the Indians, greed that daily shits on the heads of those who love nature" ("PGL," p. 233). Hunting in its competitive, otherwise pointless, variation is characteristic of the general absurdity of an alienated civilization, whose motivation aims at exceeding needs.

Harrison's ecological outlook, his criticism of anthropocentrism and concern for vanishing wilderness, link the author to the ideas traditionally expressed in American nature writing. Although the overall tone of his search for the lost wildness is Thoreauvian, the specific observations and comments relate him more closely to the more recent representatives of this genre, Edward Abbey and Aldo Leopold. The affinity with the latter applies most closely to Harrison's vision of hunting and fishing and will be discussed later in this chapter. The links with Edward Abbey provide an illustration of Harrison's views of wilderness and the degree of human intrusion.

Edward Abbey's fascination with the desert is matched by Harrison's declaration concerning the Upper Peninsula: "I prefer places valued by no one else" ("PGL," p. 232). Both authors are aware of the inevitable process where these places, so far preserved in their natural state due to their incompatibility with the mainstream aesthetic and utilitarian ideas, disappear. In relation to such locations, as well as in relation to over-advertised wilderness areas such as Yellowstone, Harrison directly acknowledges the validity of Abbey's solutions:

> It is the radical, visionary ecologist Edward Abbey who seems to have the best idea to insure that our children's children will have places of beauty left to them: close the parks to public motor traffic. Let people walk or ride bicycles and horses. A few buses will be available for the elderly and infirm. Park personnel in trucks can carry the camping equipment on ahead to the different sites. A quiet park without gas fumes or horns. A true retreat into natural wonder. And by this relatively simple act you enlarge the boundaries tenfold, for distance and space are functions of speed and time. . . . Surely the quantity of the visitors will drop, but the quality of the experience will increase immeasurably. ("Old Faithful and Mysterious Yellowstone," p. 79)

Harrison's and Abbey's views converge in more areas than the question of wilderness preservation. Indeed, both authors seem to resent the very fact that conservationist rules became necessary for safeguarding the wilderness from humans' destructive intrusion. Harrison's doubts concerning the incompatibility of the idea of wilderness and stewardship are mirrored by Abbey's (1984) skepticism concerning desirability--from nature's point of view--of any conscious human attempts to interfere with its order:

> How difficult to imagine this place without a human presence, how necessary. I am almost prepared to believe that this sweet virginal primitive land will be grateful for my departure and the absence of the tourists, will breathe metaphorically a sigh of relief--like a whisper of wind--when we are all and finally gone and the place and its creations can return to their ancient procedures unobserved and undisturbed by the busy, anxious, brooding consciousness of mankind. (p. 77)

This misanthropic view of humanity is shared by two authors whose distrust of civilization and its effect on human nature, as well as on the nonhuman environment, is a predominant motif in their works. Both authors are skeptical about the possibility of a nationwide awakening to the grim psychological and environmental reality, even though they both insist on the implementation of strict rules that would make the ideas of civilization, conservation, and wilderness compatible: "Enough balancing has been done at this point to last out this century and all of the next if there is to be one; now we need to go overboard in the direction of hardline checks" ("Old Faithful and Mysterious Yellowstone," p. 74). Along with the "hardline checks" proposal, both authors stress the necessity for a change of perspective to take place on the individual level, a change of

personal attitude toward nature accomplished through direct exposure to its powers and human limitations. This conversion can occur as a result of a continuous interaction with nature, provided that it takes place in a setting where technological conveniences such as cars and sophisticated camping equipment do not obliterate the actual balance of power. The same principle applies to Harrison's vision of hunting and fishing, which constitutes another link between the two authors.

Abbey rarely mentions hunting itself in his works; it is fishing that recurs in his description of hiking or rafting trips. There is, however, a description of hunting in Desert Solitaire (1968) whose affinities with Harrison's vision are striking. Even though throughout his six months' stay in the desert Abbey relies on grocery supplies from the store rather than on his hunting skills, his venture into primitive life demands a test of whether he could actually, self-sufficiently "belong" there. Consequently, his attempt to kill a rabbit with a stone is a "scientific" experiment in determining his degree of self-sufficiency, as well as in experiencing the atrophied instincts of the original hunters: "Well, I am a scientist not a sportsman and we've got an important experiment underway here, for which rabbit has volunteered" (p. 34). This proclamation is characteristic of the affinity with Harrison's hunting, both in the disassociation from sport (whose intent would be to secure a trophy) as well as in the primitive notion of the prey's consent. Abbey's hunt, performed without any technological aid, turns out to be successful, as far as both the immediate results and the psychological implications are

concerned: "No longer do I feel so isolated from the sparse and furtive life around me, a stranger in another world. I have entered into this one. We are kindred all of us, killer and victim, predator and prey" (p. 35). The primitive kind of hunting is a meaningful experience, not a pointless slaughter. The sense of elation that results is not free of guilt--otherwise, the hunt would lack the psychologically indispensable element of atonement ritualized in primitive cultures: "For a moment I am shocked by my deed; I stare at the quiet rabbit, his glazed eyes, his blood drying in the dust. Something vital is lacking" (p. 34). The only difference between the two authors is that none of Harrison's heroes would have abandoned the prey, as Abbey does, to return to the predictable dinner of chili beans. Harrison's protagonists most often share the author's interest in cooking the game after a successful hunt, in adherence to the principle that to waste game is the ultimate crime. This inconsistency, however, should not overshadow the underlying similarity in both authors' motivations for hunting--namely, that to establish one's awareness of nature is to participate in the natural order. To liberate the primitive instincts and to experience real hunting, the act of killing should be limited by simple means as well as by the awareness of guilt and gratitude toward nature. Even though a death of an animal is the price that nature pays for the birth of awareness in the hunter, it is a fair exchange because one such experience may put limitations on the ethically unexamined urges of potential sportsmen whose sophisticated equipment usually reduces the sense of personal involvement and responsibility.

In Harrison's view, the absurdity of hunting as sport and the theme of the vanishing wilderness are linked. Hunting becomes absurd when deprived of its original context and motivation. There is hardly any wilderness left, there is little economical need for hunting, and, finally, there is less and less wilderness "within" because the primitive hunting instincts are impaired and obscured. The disappearance of the intuitive ability to coexist--because the primitive hunting denoted coexistence and reciprocity rather than conquest--is apparent in Harrison's protagonists, even those who love nature and resort to it. This is the case of Swanson in Wolf, who feels vulnerable and inadequate while encountering nature on its own terms. More generally, it is characteristic of the whole human race, whose overpopulation and greed will result in "suffocation by chintz, not apocalypse. Too many rats in the grain bin and many are becoming enfevered and will die from stress, death of mind first, the body goes more slowly" (Wolf, p. 159). Hunting promoted by the feverish majority is deprived of its original meaning and spiritual sense, just as a competitive hunter is alienated from the ancient hunter's attitude of awe inspired by nature. The result is a pointless slaughter illustrated by Harrison with fox hunting: "They run fox to exhaustion with snowmobiles, then club them to death" (Wolf, p. 44). This event is also recalled in Harrison's essay "The Violators":

> I have met and talked at length with men who harry and club to death both fox and coyote from snowmobiles. It should not seem necessary to pass laws against so base and resolutely mindless a practice, but it is necessary. I suppose that in simplistic terms our acquisitive and competitive urges have been transferred directly to sport--one can win

> over fish or beast but, unlike what happens in other forms of sport, the violator disregards all the rules. (Just Before Dark, p. 67)

A similar absurdity of sport recurs in an account of bear hunting in Wolf: a woman shoots a sleeping grizzly with a .375 Magnum. There is no hunter, no pursuit, no confrontation--there is no point. On the other hand, because only the directness of experience is capable of satisfying the dulled senses, superficially primitive hunting becomes fashionable. The absurdity of employing modern-primitive techniques, such as bow and arrow hunting, lies in the fact that it lacks the essence of primitive hunting, which is a respect for and knowledge of the prey. Carelessness still prevails, regardless of the weapon employed: "After shooting over thirty arrows into the beast from fairly close range, the buffalo failed to die and resembled a giant, sparsely quilled porcupine" (Wolf, p. 140). Superficial primitivization is not enough to change modern hunting from sport into an ancient art. To restore the original dimension of hunting, Harrison advocates basic deep-ecological principles of coexistence with nature, the extension of ethics, and the extension of awareness.

The extension of ethics, a phrase coined by Adlo Leopold in A Sand County Almanac (1949/1974), signifies including animate and inanimate nature in a system of ethical rules that traditionally has been applied to interhuman relationships only. To acknowledge such land-ethics, two conditions have to be fulfilled: the experience of a spiritual conversion must occur as a result of a direct interaction with nature. Leopold illustrates these in his account of wolf hunting in "Thinking Like a Mountain," an essay written in 1944 and concerned with a

hunting trip undertaken at the peak of the conservationist era (1909) in Apache National Forest. Leopold's feelings after shooting a wolf are clearly incompatible with the nationwide sentiments that endowed the policy of predator control with a sense of heroic mission against useless varmint. What Leopold feels instead of elation and pride in his skill is sadness and guilt at having participated in the massive, thoughtless, and destructive campaign:

> We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then and I have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes--something known only to her and to the mountain. I was young then, and full of trigger-itch. Thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunter's paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view. (p. 138)

The realization of an interrelatedness in nature that far exceeds the simple-minded causal relation between the number of deer and the number of wolves, as well as an awareness of the far-reaching implications of every action undertaken in nature, promoted the development of Leopold's concept of land ethics, which would endow human interaction with nature with the hitherto unacknowledged moral considerations. The process of acquiring the ethical outlook toward nature begins--at least for Leopold--with the moment of conversion and then follows through the stages of realizing one's kinship with all components of nature. Logically, this process begins with the species with whom we share some basic affinities--like the mammals--and then proceeds through the final stage when one realizes the interconnectedness and kinship of all nature, including the land itself. The conversion experience and the process of

developing land ethics is visible as far as most of Harrison's protagonists are concerned; however, most directly it is exemplified by the fishermen and hunters.

Swanson in Wolf relates an experience that leads him to a realization of an affinity between a hunter and prey: "When you hang up a deer and strip its hide it looks a bit too human for my taste. I imagine there would be more vegetarians if everyone slaughtered their own meat" (p. 117). The directness of experience is juxtaposed to the alienation of a trophy hunter, as well as that of an unimaginative consumer. Whereas Swanson includes mammals in his ethical system, Joseph, the protagonist of Farmer, goes even further:

> Joseph had never looked into a bird's eye before and it had at least temporarily unnerved him. He tried to ignore how nearly human the eyes looked, but he couldn't rid his mind totally of the idea: eyes are what we hold most in common in terms of similarity to other beasts. He always cringed when he hooked a fish in the eye. (p. 103)

The eye-to-eye view of the prey in the moment of its death is the archetype of the Leopoldian conversion experience. It is supposed to leave the hunter aware of the guilt involved in every killing, the mystery of death, and the bond between the hunter and the hunted. The anthropomorphic vision of nature promotes responsibility and self-restraint in participation in the ritual. If these elements are missing, no official regulations can endow sport with ritualistic dimensions:

> Game hoggery is not the point. The issue is much larger than human greed. We have marked these creatures to be hunted and slaughtered, and destroyed all but a remnant of their natural environment. But fish and mammals must be considered part of a larger social contract, and just laws for their protection enforced with great vigor. ("The Violators," in Just Before Dark, p. 65)

The conversion experience results in the awareness of the hunter as to the mystical nature of every hunt and every death, but it also promotes the realization that nature itself participates consciously in the event, just as in Leopold's essay where a mountain observes and reflects on human actions. Thus the hunter perceives the hitherto unsuspected dimensions of nature and is less inclined to take it for granted. In The Theory and Practice of Rivers, the recurrent theme of pursuing a coyote involves the animal's awareness of participating in a game:

> I dress in camouflage and crawl
> around swamps and forest, seeing
> the bitch coyote five times but never
> before she sees me. Her look
> is curious, almost a smile.

Almost identical instance of hunting--or, rather, stalking--appear in Farmer and Wolf. The animals and inanimate nature clearly exceed the limitations imposed on them by human perception. An observant nature cannot be taken for granted. The venture into whatever wilderness is still available is based on breaking the limitations of civilized perception and seeing nature as it is.

The belief in the awareness of nature affects the perception of the hunt. It is by nature's consent that the hunter sees it, or kills it, in his hunting enterprise. The awareness of nature, and its consent, seem characteristic of the primitive hunting mythology, which justified killing as a fact of life. In the Power of Myth, Joseph Campbell (1988) discusses the ritualistic aspect of such hunting, where the animals sacrifice themselves to the hunter in perpetuating the order of life: "Killing is not simply a slaughter, it is a ritual act, as eating is when you say grace

before meals. A ritual act is a recognition of your dependency on the voluntary giving of their food to you by the animal who has given its life. The hunt is a ritual" (p. 72).

Harrison acknowledges the necessity of nature's consent in any meaningful kind of interaction. On the other hand, however, he opposes endowing it with the phantoms of our wishful thinking, instead claiming that "there is no romance in the woods" ("PGL," p. 232). The human tendency to impose meanings contaminates nature, a phenomenon referred to in "Passacaglia": "When we are lost we lose our peripheries. Our thoughts zoom outward and infect the landscape. It requires a particular kind of behavior to heal the location" ("PGL," p. 233). Nature, in Harrison's view, is indifferent and splendid in its indifference. This is where its healing powers start. Nature outside provides an insight into nature within, a luxury that civilization excludes. "When you are lost you know who you are. You are the only one out there" ("PGL," p. 234).

It is not necessarily hunting or fishing that provides the setting for the conversion experience. Quite a few of Harrison's protagonists have never hunted or fished before and only begin the long process of overcoming the alienation from nature outside and within. These are the protagonists who have spent most of their lives in the confines of the business or academic world, obliterating any connection between their instincts and their life. This group, exemplified by Nordstrom ("The Man Who Gave Up His Name"), Johnny Lundgren (Warlock), Michael (Dalva), and finally Phillip Caulkins of "Beige Dolorosa," begin their

education through walking and, most often, being lost in a relative wilderness of the unfamiliar territory. They have spent their lives suffering from the predicament identified by Dalva in relation to Michael: "Nothing was amiss except that he seemed unaware that his head was connected in any meaningful way to his body. He told me he once nearly drowned because he simply forgot to breathe" (Dalva, p. 83). In other words, a state of alienation from their instincts and senses leads them to a physical or mental breakdown. Harrison advocates walking, especially night walking, eventually getting lost, as the simplest--however painful--antidote to the alienation and self-destructiveness of a civilized life. This experience is bound to restore validity to the neglected senses because it promotes the ultimate attentiveness toward the natural environment and immediate needs of the lost protagonists. Once the situation demands that nature is no longer taken for granted, conversion can take place: the protagonists begin the process of "locating" themselves in nature, both in the metaphorical and the actual sense. The attentiveness required by a correct interaction with nature is further magnified if the interaction includes hunting or fishing--such occupations simply demand the absence of excess baggage of thoughts that infect the landscape: "Effective hunters learn to leave their selves at home, no doubt a skill that emerges from survival instincts" ("The Raw and the Cooked," p. 87).

Nature restores sanity. In Wolf it promotes Swanson's escape from destructive self-indulgence and provides a setting for his spiritual quest for a "brother-wolf." Staying close to nature implies getting over, at least temporarily,

self-destructive habits. Swanson is aware that "with whiskey he would become weeping and incompetent" (Wolf, p. 98); therefore, he forces himself into a situation that excludes alcohol. Assuming that "there is no romance in the woods," he does not expect a miracle; neither is he sure to see a wolf in the daylight, nor does he hope to get over his addictions permanently. It is a time warp, a temporary relief only, and Swanson is aware that "nature does not heal, it diverts. . . . If I stayed I would go berserk and shrink into a wooden knot" (Wolf, p. 192). In other words, he realizes that he belongs to both worlds, and although his preference lies with the natural, he is neither fit nor willing to join it permanently, no matter what he declares whenever his misanthropy takes over. This attitude provides yet another link between Harrison's encounters with nature and those described by Edward Abbey (1968), who declares that:

> Unlike Thoreau who insisted on one world at a time I am attempting to make the best of two. After six months in the desert I am volunteering for a winter of front-line combat duty--caseworker, public welfare department--in the howling streets of Megalomania, U.S.A. Mostly for the sake of private and selfish concerns, truly, but also for reasons of a more general nature. After twenty-six weeks of sunlight and stars, wind and sky and golden sand, I want to hear once more the crackle of clamshells on the floor of the bar in the Clam Broth House in Hoboken. (p. 86)

Actually, this statement does not contradict Thoreau's attitude because Thoreau (1854/1985) himself declares: "I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one" (p. 584). This philosophy underlies the lives of many of Harrison's characters who look for strength rather than permanent escape in nature.

Such strength is gained by acknowledging one's limitations rather than by the assertion of one's supremacy. The sense of inadequacy experienced by Harrison's protagonists does not undermine the validity of their encounter with nature. On the contrary, in order to make hunting meaningful, the protagonists often restrain their potential. The kind of hunting performed by Joseph, Swanson, or Strang (in the retrospective parts of Sundog) is consciously reduced to simple means and chosen species, sometimes even to a definite setting, such as seeing a wolf "as a part of the day." This kind of hunting provides a constant challenge, even at the cost of obliterating any sense of superiority. Joseph pays with irritation for the restrictions he has himself imposed in the course of extending his ethical restrictions:

> This made hunting much more difficult and his average bag dropped to the level he owned as a neophyte; he could no longer "point shoot" on instinct at the flush but he had to wait an extra split second to make sure it was the gray flush of a grouse rather than the golden brown of the woodcock. (Farmer, p. 19)

Hunting is further restricted by the criterion of edibility because "to waste game is the ultimate crime" (Farmer, p. 18). The assumption that the game hunted should be the game eaten gives natural limits to acquisitiveness and denounces trophy hunting:

> Hunger causes the purest form of acquisitiveness but our tradition always overstepped hunger into the fields of hoarding and unlimited slaughter. . . . The dolt who stands smiling before the hundred crows he shot should be forced at gun point to eat them, feathers, beaks, feet and offal. ("Sporting Life," p. 164)

To maintain the ritualistic quality of hunting, the hunters have to utilize the game instead of offending it by wastefulness. This criterion is strict; even hunger does not always provide an excuse. Swanson's hunger-ridden temptation, "maybe I'll shoot a deer and eat it all, eyes, rumen, make hoof soup out of the hoofs" (Wolf, p. 170), is counterbalanced with an even more desperate resolution: "better to eat roots and leave the deer for the necessary sportsmen" (Wolf, p. 170). In leaving the deer for the necessary sportsmen, the protagonist acknowledges collective responsibility for the whole human intrusion and resolves to minimize his own.

Giving up killing, the culmination of the hunt, is a frequent theme in Harrison's novels. Hunting as a metaphor for humans challenging nature has evolved through the stage where it is sighting that counts. The bears, for instance, are avoided by both Swanson and Strang because the encounter might result in an unnecessary death for either side. That coyote and wolves are pursued to be seen is a theme that recurs in Wolf, Farmer, "Passacaglia," and The Theory and Practice of Rivers. It is an almost obsessive pursuit, an ultimate test of attentiveness and awareness. As such, the pursuit pushes aside other obsessions and restores peace of mind to the hunter. Also, it provides an education derived from seeing oneself from the perspective of the animal whose mind the hunter tries to penetrate. This is illustrated by Joseph, who realizes that "the coyote had obviously been watching him during the week. Joseph could

almost see through the coyote's eyes as he laughed with the embarrassment of an amateur" (Farmer, p. 24).

Hunting without killing is predominantly of spiritual importance. It restores the ritualistic dimension to the predatory instinct and provides magic to heal the hunters and locations: "Magic, as opposed to the hocus pocus of miracles, is equated to the quality of attentiveness, the ultimate attentiveness" ("PGL," p. 232). Having transmitted the hunt to the spiritual dimension, the hunters make up for the heritage of the demythologized, predatory behavior of contemporary civilization. A search for the animal with whom one would like to identify brings about the notions of the primitive/Native American puberty rites, of the quest for one's totem animal, source of strength and wisdom. The kind of restraint and self-denial required by such a search is occasionally displayed by Swanson, Joseph, Strang, and Brown Dog in "The Seven-Ounce Man." The quest for one's own identity in the natural world is the main objective of Harrison's version of hunting. This quest is directed toward a symbolical merging with the pursued animal: "I've knelt down and she went into me, becoming part of my body and skeleton" (Wolf, p. 86). This event, a part of the author's actual dream ("The Art of Fiction," p. 96), recurs in most of his works, including the latest one where Brown Dog, a perennial misfit, derives his strength from the bear skin as well as bear dreams:

> He couldn't very well leave his most prized possession behind. He hadn't slept outside in it yet, as Claude had instructed, because the nights had been pretty cold. Also, he had forgotten to. He lowered the skin with the clothesline and pulley, and embraced it, his father bear. . . . There was the

> mildly troubling thought that bears can help you if you stay out in their world, but not in your own. ("The Seven-Ounce Man," in Julip, p. 174)

Despite Brown Dog's fears, the help extends to his actual life as well because "father bear" provides a psychologically valid substitute for the protagonist's unknown parents and links him in a meaningful way to his Native American heritage. Also, the bear disguise--or identity--provides an element of surprise, which saves Brown Dog from being arrested for interfering with the excavation of an ancient burial site. As in other stories, the protagonist's spiritual quest for the totem animal is reinforced by actual encounters, one with an inhabited bear den, the other one with the animal itself. In both cases, Brown Dog does not even think of shooting; instead he "couldn't remember when he felt happier" (Julip, p. 174).

In addition to the already mentioned restrictions on hunting, Harrison's protagonists share to a varying extent the physical disability of the author. The narrator of Sundog, Swanson in Wolf, and to some extent Warlock, are partially blind due to a childhood injury. Similarly, Joseph's nephew "had lost an eye in an accident and Joseph supposed that gave them some kind of kinship. They hunted and fished together" (Farmer, p. 6). Joseph's leg is twisted after a childhood accident, and Strang is reduced to crawling, if he wants to move at all. Their ventures into the wilderness demand overcoming weakness, and thus provide the possibility of regaining self-confidence. In this respect, the disabled manifest certain superiority over the fit ones, more skill and determination derived from being close to nature than the norm usually prescribes, which is a necessity

in their condition. Strang's crawling or swimming is representative of the general intensity of his life, being in touch with his true self, determining his movements in close proximity to the natural.

Hunting in Harrison's works, except for providing the link between body and mind, as well as the hunter and the animal, is also a criterion for judging interhuman relations. It involves claiming the immediate heritage, taking over one's father's occupation or his favorite pastime. Metaphorically, it also involves human heritage in general through inheriting the instincts of the primitive hunters. The close relationship between Joseph and his father, or Swanson, his sister, and their father, are described in terms of their hunting together. Joseph, Swanson, and Brown Dog are equally disoriented when deprived of the authority of their fathers. Again, in a symbolic sense this may illustrate the confused state of modern consciousness deprived of the link with the primitive past and natural life.

The bonds and alliances between the protagonists are established on the basis of shared hunting experiences and the mutual appreciation of skills. The understanding of each other's hunting obsessions implies general spiritual kinship. These relationships are capable of enduring the crises of the civilized life, a frequent theme in Farmer, illustrated by Joseph's relationships with Orin, Doctor Evans, and Catherine's father. Furthermore, the attitude toward hunting on the woman's part influences Joseph's choice of a life's companion; hence, Joseph rejects mundane Catherine, who thinks "it's stupid and brutal to go

hunting" (Farmer, p. 36), and chooses Rosealee, who views his resumed grouse hunting as a "return to normalcy" (Farmer, p. 24).

In this choice, just as in any other his protagonists make, Harrison demonstrates his preference for nature over civilization, the senses over mind, and the older over the recent. Education for Harrison is the matter of a first-hand experience. The author values instinctive knowledge, understood as Jungian collective unconscious, higher than acquired scholarship. Consequently, in an interview for The Chronicle, Harrison claims that "the people at Morrill Hall (Michigan State University) bore me. A farmer who lives with an allegiance to a 200 thousand year old agricultural cycle is infinitely more interesting to talk to. They notice things, their heads aren't so full that they can't see things" ("A Good Day for Talking," p. 16). The heroes of his novels and short stories are often portrayed in the process of exchanging the volume of abstract knowledge for the direct experience of natural phenomena, a process that is often painful, especially for the protagonist of "Beige Dolorosa" or Michael in Dalva: "I came upon a creek and recalled that the aggressive geese of the morning were dithering along the creek, but was it the same one? This was becoming a problem that a dozen years of graduate school hadn't prepared me for" (Dalva, p. 116). The preference for the first-hand knowledge recurs in poetry:

> There must be a difference between looking
> at the picture of a bird
> and the actual bird (barn swallow)
> fifteen feet from my nose on the shed.
> (Selected Poems, p. 166)

The birds are not scientifically researched, but nevertheless they are very specific. Ideally, they are also given names that replace the imperfect approximations of scientific terms. This is Phillip Caulkin's way of establishing ties with the natural world in "Beige Dolorosa," as well as Brown Dog's tribute to his heritage: "Gaagaafhirmh! I found this on my notepad I kept for Shelley. It is the word the Chips use for raven. . . . Sounds like one if you say it right, not too loud from the throat's back end" ("The Seven-Ounce Man," in Julip, p. 114).

A similar tribute to uniqueness is required by locations because nature consists of facts, not ideas. In this respect, Harrison learns from an old Chippewa who "was somehow disturbed . . . when it occurred to him that people didn't know that every single tree was different from every other single tree" ("PGL," p. 234). In relation to locations, Harrison advocates the highly personal attitude characteristic of the Native American: close knowledge of the land and its characteristics. The "puberty rites" of his protagonists are also characteristic of an attempt to learn from the native experience how to live fully and identify with one's own actions and surroundings. It is only the lifelong process of learning from nature that can provide any claim to affinity with Native American tradition. Harrison often draws attention to the difficulty of such an endeavor, a characteristic most visible in relation to Swanson and Brown Dog. However, the author treats the inevitable blunders of his protagonists gently; their attempts at living deliberately may be presented in a mock-heroic manner, yet not ridiculed. On the other hand, any superficial claims to understanding the Indians, not

supported by any efforts to share their worldview, are the target of ridicule or criticism. Brown Dog's attitude toward his archaeologist girlfriend Shelly and her colleagues, as well as Dalva's attack on Michael, exemplifies this trait:

> "Before you get too folksy why don't you admit your position is essentially feminist? You are a woman, and by some sort of dull-witted extension you identify your womanhood with these defeated people. . . ."
>
> "That's what I mean!" I interrupted so loudly I heard Andrew stumble in the kitchen. "You sit here scratching your dick under the table in a state of total unwitting identification with the victors. Your weapon is your doctorate in history which you suppose entitles you to open all doors. I don't identify with anyone. Indians are Indians." (Dalva, p. 38)

Harrison resents the shallow logic, preconceived notions, and indirect knowledge apparent in Michael's categorization of Indians, and in the course of the novel juxtaposes it with the only true claim to understanding the indigenous history--that of Northridge, whose diaries Michael studies. The distinction between the superficial and actual relationship with Native American tradition parallels that between sport and the art of hunting in relation to nature. In both cases, ignorance, alienation, and a sense of superiority are the common denominators of the former attitude, whereas awe, gratitude, and guilt characterize the latter.

As a metaphorical conclusion to the contemporary hunting, Harrison proposes another solution of Native American origin: the rituals of appeasement. The sense of guilt burdening humans in relation to nature calls for the ritual that Swanson dreams of performing: "perhaps resuscitate a few animal skins stolen from coat racks and parlor floors. Pile them in a giant mound by the thousands until I sense that there are enough for a proper funeral" (Wolf, p. 192). To

resuscitate the extinct nature, contemporary hunters have to go back to the ancient frame of mind, where interaction with the environment was sacred and had to be performed with reverence and care in order to ensure survival.

Harrison's literary heritage is a matter of frequent consideration. As far as the hunting theme is concerned, Hemingway is the obvious association, however unwelcome by Harrison himself. The author claims that "somebody tells you because you are fascinated with fishing and hunting you're like Hemingway. Well, that's nonsense" ("A Good Day for Talking," p. 20). Nevertheless, written within a similar low-brow tradition and dealing with a similar subject matter, Harrison's works do bear a close resemblance to those by Hemingway, exploring the theme of healing nature, solitude, and adventure. This, however, is the point where real similarity ends. Unfortunately, the superficial associations extend further, describing both authors as "macho" due to their preoccupation with fishing and hunting, as well as their attitude toward women. This classification is the subject of William H. Robertson's (1988) "Macho Mistake: The Mispresentation of Jim Harrison's Fiction":

> It is a well-established practice of reviewers and literary critics to place writers quickly and succinctly within critical niches, the better to control and even dilute the power of their work. And while there are certainly elements in his work that lend credence to a male-dominated view of it, to label Harrison a macho writer is a particularly myopic critical perception of his fiction. (p. 235)

In the course of his essay, Robertson analyzes several definitions of machismo applied by the critics (Jonathan Yardley, Sara Blackburn, Peter S. Prescott) to Harrison's work and demonstrates their superficiality and oversimplifications:

> Harrison's protagonists may aspire to the "tough guy" image, but for most part it is all affectation. They are characters constantly questioning themselves, their lives, their purposes. They get lost in the woods, are afraid of the dark, fumble with guns. Any pretense at macho is more an example of their own narcissism, vanity, and false pride than any reflection of male dominance. (p. 237)

By pointing out that Harrison deflates rather than glorifies the macho ideal, Robertson makes a valid point, especially as far as the hunting and fishing subject is concerned. Even though these activities traditionally imply virility and superiority over nature, they demand just the opposite attitude if they are to be presented as successful or meaningful in Harrison's novels. It is not dominance over nature but submission to it that Harrison's protagonists seek. Also, the virile attitude appears inferior to the subconscious, passive wisdom of "Mother Nature, not Father Nature." This point raised by Harrison in an interview ("A Good Day for Talking," p. 71) is characteristic of the author's criticism of contemporary culture, which, among other instances of alienation from instincts, leads a mean to "give up his twin-sister, the feminine side" ("The Art of Fiction," p. 73).

The Jungian concept of lost anima accounts often for the misunderstandings between the male protagonists and their natural surroundings, while the women are presented at being at home in nature. This theme appears most directly in Warlock, whereas both Thomas Mahler Gilligan (1984) in "Myth and Reality in Warlock" and Robertson (1988) in "Macho Mistake" point out that it is Johnny Lundgren who gets lost in the woods, while his wife Diana, an "amateur botanist, birdwatcher, butterfly catcher" (Warlock, p. 43), easily locates the car as well as inspires confidence in Warlock's dog, Hudley. The recent

works, Dalva, "Woman Lit by Fireflies," and Julip, written in female voice, mark the author's attempt to transcend the male perspective and to view male protagonists from a distance. In doing so, Harrison creates strong female characters, possibly in the hope of denouncing the accusation that women in his fiction are nothing but the sum total of macho illusions, but also to explore more aspects of modern consciousness: "As a novelist you don't want to withhold the evidence. I think that's the error in some of Hemingway's fiction, as opposed to Faulkner, who had more of a tendency to allow them to be whole human beings. Hemingway had a tendency to the ideology" ("A Good Day for Talking," p. 23).

Drawing on his personal experience, Harrison admits that the heroic male image had indeed a certain appeal: "All the mindless sins of youth committed in the haze of reading Edgar Rice Burroughs, Zane Grey, James Oliver Curwood, Jack London and Ernest Seaton; wanting to be a steely half-breed Robert Mitchum type with hatchet, revolver, cartridge belt and a long mane of hair trained with bear grease" ("The Violators," in Just Before Dark, p. 70). However, Harrison's mocking tone, and the context of his youthful hunting and fishing transgressions that follows, deflate the image and point to its potential ability to promote a destructive "cowboy consciousness." Consequently, Harrison's and Hemingway's treatments of the subject differ considerably, especially their respective visions of big-game hunting. Fishing, however, in the two writers' fiction, provides more ground for comparison, even though Hemingway's fishermen tend toward the heroic, whereas Harrison's protagonists display characteristic "goofiness." This could be the reason for the lack of critical

references to the similarity between the message of The Old Man and the Sea and Harrison's vision of humility, kinship, and gratitude as necessary components of human interaction with nature. The mature heroism of Santiago does not seem comparable with the theme of overcoming adolescent illusions in relation to nature and self that underlies most of Harrison's hunting and fishing accounts. Harrison presents his protagonists in a state of acknowledging their ignorance of nature, an initial stage of education that bears closer resemblance to the truth of contemporary human interaction with the environment than the heroics of Hemingway's hunters. Consequently, although Harrison appreciates such instances of Hemingwayan apprenticeship as those present in Islands in the Stream, he generally "finds much of his writing dated, worn to parody over time. Besides, he much prefers the dark bends and deep undercurrents of Faulkner and identifies with the southerner's evocation of place and space" (Bevier, 1988, p. 16).

The identification with Faulkner seems most apparent in the vision of a greedy and short-sighted civilization whose inevitable advance brings about the destruction of nature. Hunting as a metaphor of such process, and hunting as an obsession and spiritual quest, present in "The Bear," closely resemble Harrison's theme. Nature's superiority and awareness of participation in the hunt--however unnatural the hunt has become--also constitute strong parallels, as well as the idea of one's spiritual growth and education through hunting. In this respect, however, the setting of most of Harrison's novels is post-Faulknerian: "When

Joseph was a child there was still a bear in the swamp but someone had shot it down for reasons buried in time" (Farmer, p. 5). The motif of a shot bear recurs in Wolf, Julip, and "The Seven-Ounce Man." Harrison's protagonists live too late to participate in the kind of hunting that Faulkner presents, and too late to participate in a ritualistic transition from the wild to the civilized world. They are already faced with the reality of "diminishing wilderness around them, the truncated freedom of movement" ("The Violators," in Just Before Dark, p. 68).

Harrison's legacy goes further back than Hemingway and Faulkner. The hunting experiences of his protagonists are almost transcendental in shedding off the layers of self-consciousness and self-absorbance. Swanson, Joseph, and Strang constantly test their self-reliance and display a substantial amount of civil disobedience. The parallels with Thoreau are most evident in Swanson's case, in his attempt to live deliberately in the woods, at least for the time being.

The more recent parallels, as far as American nature writing is concerned, include, but do not end with, Aldo Leopold and Edward Abbey. The theme of the indifference of nature, its value in itself, and preference for less frequented places resembles closely the leading motifs of Edward Abbey's (1968) Desert Solitaire, as well as the "inhumanism" of Robinson Jeffers's poetry. Both share with Harrison the dislike for the intruding civilization and the praise of nature left to its own devices. Also, there is a considerable amount of sheer misanthropy that links the works of the three authors. Whereas Jeffers (1935) rejoices in the fact that a rock may and will survive the turmoil of civilization, Abbey (1968) declares

that he would sooner kill a human being than a rattlesnake, and Harrison's protagonist complies: "This may seem pointlessly sentimental but I would rather shoot a human than a grizzly or a wolf" (Wolf, p. 117).

The extension of ethics, conversion experience, wider perspective of humanity, and closer scrutiny of nature constitute the already mentioned parallels with Aldo Leopold and his concept of land ethics. Another theme of Leopold's writings, the awareness of nature, also links Harrison to Barry Lopez's (1986) Arctic Dreams, Richard Nelson's (1989) The Island Within, and Annie Dillard's (1974) Pilgrim at Tinker Creek. The critical outlook upon the "sporting myth" and satirical treatment of contemporary America are a strong parallel between Harrison and Thomas McGuane. The strongest link, however, in the field of deep ecology exists between the works of Harrison and Gary Snyder. Snyder's poetry and essays contain the essence of the new ecological perspective. The themes of overpopulation, excessive urbanization, vanishing wilderness, human greed, and the wisdom of the Native American perspective overlap within the works of the two writers.

"If the cave bears were not appeased, the animals would not appear and the primitive hunters would starve to death. They began to perceive some kind of power on which they were dependent, a power greater than their own" (Campbell, 1988, p. 75). This passage summarizes the situation faced by Harrison's hunting protagonists. Harrison juxtaposes two types of hunting, one characteristic of our competitive world, the other an escape from it. The

predominant type of hunting, typical of the abusive, usurped dominance over nature, deprived of a spiritual basis, understanding, and perspective, destroys the natural balance as well as the sanity of the hunter. Greed, characteristic of such hunting as well as contemporary civilization, will, according to Harrison, result in an ecological and a spiritual void: "The implosion rather than an explosion is due. Perhaps deep in the bowels of Montana the absence of buffalo prepares a non stampede" (Wolf, p. 94). However pessimistic this prophesy seems, Harrison endows his protagonists with a possibility of an individual redemption--he advocates a very specific, difficult version of encountering nature as a means of finding oneself, overcoming alienation, and living deliberately.

CHAPTER III

THOMAS McGUANE: HUNTING AND SANITY

> A world in which a sacramental portion of food can be taken in an old way--hunting, fishing, farming and gathering--has as much to do with societal sanity as a day's work for a day's pay.
> (McGuane, 1980)

McGuane's insistence on performing fishing and hunting in the "old way" parallels Harrison's notion of an "ancient art of gathering and hunting our food." McGuane, however, deserves a separate treatment in this respect because his fiction, especially The Sporting Club and Ninety-Two in the Shade, explores the tragicomic complications of seeking redemption in nature on the social, not only individual, level. Whereas the process of destruction of nature by our contemporary civilization often constitutes a background for modern outdoors writing, it is the process of *self*-destruction of our civilization, most visible when we interact with nature, that interests McGuane. Consequently, whereas most contemporary outdoor writing concentrates on the possibility of individual retreat from oppressive civilization, McGuane's fiction and essays in their treatment of human interaction with nature are equally concerned with the failure of such a retreat on a mass scale. The similarity with Harrison's statement that "there is clearly not enough wilderness left for those who desire it" ("Passacaglia on

Getting Lost," p. 232) is striking, yet the two authors differ in their treatment of the subject because McGuane--with the exception of his autobiographical An Outside Chance: Essays on Sport--is concerned with the social, rather than individual, perception of nature. Whereas Harrison, along with other contemporary representatives of ecological outlook in outdoor writing--Richard Nelson, Gary Snyder, or Barry Lopez, for instance--demonstrates the validity of unconventional (native, primitive) perceptions of nature, McGuane concentrates on the destructive clichés of the mainstream perspective.

Societal sanity is often missing in McGuane's vision of contemporary America--or "Hotcakesland," as he calls it in Ninety-Two in the Shade. "Nobody knows, from sea to shining sea, why we are having all this trouble with our republic," the author states in the opening sentence of the novel, suggesting not only the subject of Ninety-Two in the Shade, but also the underlying concern of most of his works. Life in contemporary America involves dealing on a daily basis with "toxic winds, block meetings, bulletproof taxicab partitions and adventures with the Internal Revenue Service" ("Close to the Bone," in An Outside Chance, p. 67). In short, it is a life of alienation from the immediate sensation of living, where technological convenience is balanced with administrative complications and both separate humans from nature. A social security number, not individuality and thought, proves that one is alive, and the future of "the republic" depends on that assumption: "What was Count Tolstoy's social security number? If you don't answer that in one second, the Republic is Dead" (Ninety-Two in the

Shade, hereafter NTS, p. 77). Such an assumption leads to a pessimistic view of the whole western culture:

> Kafka as a remittance man. Van Gogh clipping coupons by the sea. Dostoyevski with a four foot string of credit cards. San Juan de la Cruz peering out of a condominium as though room service had used cheap triple sec in his margarita. (NTS, p. 59)

America, McGuane often suggests, celebrates mediocrity. As Thomas R. Edwards (1973) points out:

> McGuane can find little but the plastic-and-neon "hotcakesland" of commercialized America, where . . . everybody is named Don or Stacy and the imagination of death--the only thing left of meaning after the loss of God, country and family--is safely muffled by the consumer goods that swaddle us. (p. 2)

Faced with thoughtless mediocrity all around them, McGuane's protagonists attempt to find their own logic, which inevitably is inconsistent with mainstream norms. Metaphorically or literally, they look for a direct relationship between a day's work and a day's pay. As the opening quotation suggests, such a relationship may be found in nature; thus, McGuane's hero often is "driving hard after some lost primeval virtue, trying to remember what Faulkner would have said he never even knew. For these young men, the overriding virtues are the old ones, the culled bits of frontier ethics and inviolate wilderness verities that used to define American manhood" (Katz, 1979, p. 38).

This solution appears simple and obvious--it has been explored in American literature ever since the Romantics juxtaposed destructive civilization with the redemptive powers of nature. The importance of McGuane's work in this respect lies in his treatment of the subject, "a very different consciousness from

the old hook-and-bullet style of outdoor writing . . . a strong sense of conservation and ethics," noted by Jim Fergus (1989, p. 44) in his interview of McGuane. This feature links McGuane, as Fergus points out, to Jim Harrison and other representatives of an ecological perspective in contemporary outdoor writing.

The Sporting Club, published in 1969, is McGuane's first novel. It is also an ideal starting point for a discussion of McGuane's vision of society, sanity, and outdoor sports because the relationship among these three is central to the novel. The Sporting Club anticipates the rest of McGuane's fiction, with its recurrent image of protagonists juxtaposed in a duel against the background of a compromised society and a ravaged environment. In The Sporting Club, more so than in any of McGuane's later novels, the crisis of civilization--and of individual protagonists--is triggered by misconceptions about nature.

The action of The Sporting Club takes place in the microcosm of the Centennial Club in northern Michigan, where the members of local "nobility," businessmen, executives, and managers, find an outlet for their weekday frustrations in hunting and fishing. Their view of nature--as a background for masculine assertions--is characteristic of the mainstream American perception, that of anthropocentric utilitarianism. Their hunting is competitive and acquisitive; it is aided by expensive equipment and the sense of hereditary privilege. It is also incompetent, which becomes most apparent when their efforts are compared to the hunting and fishing performed by the manager of the club, Olson:

> When the members came swarming out of the woods with their guns and high bred animals and empty hands to find Olson, with his unspeakable

> Springer spaniel at his feet, turning a pair of effortlessly collected grouse over a small bed of hardwood coals, or when they found him with a creel full of insect fed trout and had to conceal the seven-inch, mud-colored hatchery trout that looked more like a cheap cigar than a fish and that they had almost smashed their two hundred dollar rod getting; when all that happened, they wanted to call the annual meeting right then and tell the interloper to get off the property before they got a cop. (The Sporting Club, hereafter SC, p. 62)

The unfavorable comparison to Olson triggers anger, not humility, because the purpose of the club is to assert, not question, the members' egos. Because the well-being of the members' egos is more important than the well-being of the club territory, Olson is summarily fired and replaced. In firing Olson, whose management has proven beneficial to the Centennial Club over the years, and replacing him with Earl Olive, whose questionable past in the "live-bait business" is his claim to environmental experience, the members demonstrate their naive conviction that nature will forever continue to provide gratification, regardless of environmental abuse. McGuane illustrates this attitude in the speech made by "representative John Olds, R. Mich.," whose views indeed represent the mainstream perspective:

> Olson was a useful man. Which of us would deny that? But he was headstrong. He was hard to handle. He was a thorn in our sides. We are pleased to have him out of our hair. All this talk of property degenerating makes me tired. These woods and streams have a natural tendency to maintain themselves. We need a janitor and we got one from the looks of this Olive. But whoever we have, our children, and our children's children will frequent these lands *in perpetuam.* The traditions of the Centennial Club, thanks to its board of directors, will continue *de profundis.* (SC, p. 105)

State legislator John Olds exemplifies the American mainstream perception of nature as an unlimited playground, matched with the mainstream's

reluctance to acknowledge any obligations toward the natural environment. This perception is juxtaposed with that of Olson, for whom "hunting and fishing were forms of husbandry because he guaranteed the life of the country himself" (SC, p. 62). McGuane further qualifies the division between these two attitudes by analyzing the reasons for the members' resentment of Olson: "They wanted to be the heroes and Olson made them look like buffoons when accident forced comparison. In short they wanted to kill as he killed without the hard earned ritual that made it sane" (SC, p. 62). The wish to dominate over nature, without undertaking the effort to know it first, backfires in the course of the novel. The conflict between the new manager and the members of the club results in the destruction of the club as well as the destruction of any semblance of social order. The club becomes a background for the frantic manhunt and violent confrontation--a logical outcome of the destructive tendencies that first surface when Olson is fired.

The division between the members and Olson represents the extremes of contemporary environmental perspectives. The members, who are clearly in the majority here, unfortunately exemplify the prevailing mode of relating to nature, which ultimately proves illogical and absurd because, in the course of asserting dominance over the club, they destroy it. Olson, in turn, exemplifies the awareness of interdependence in nature and human dependence on its balance:

> His years of poaching on club property gave him knowledge of it all. He knew where salt licks had to go, what crop had to grow in the open valleys and when it had to be knocked down to make winterfeed for the game birds; he knew how to keep the lake from filling with weeds and reverting

> to swamp; he knew where herons and mergansers were glutting themselves with trout fry and had to be discreetly bumped off with his twenty-two Hornet; he understood completely how to intimidate professional poachers from the nearby towns who, if they found one chink in his mysterious armor, would run like locust over the tote roads at night, shining deer with aircraft landing lights and spearing trout in the weed beds. (SC, p. 61)

It is not the environmental consciousness itself, however, but rather its firm and logical implementation that separates Olson's attitude from the absurd self-destructiveness of the mainstream perspective. He is a poacher, yet "a serious sportsman, with rigid and admirable ideas of sporting demeanor" (SC, p. 60). He does not carry his feelings for nature to the sentimental extreme of "ecology purists [who] imagine the anglers as ghouls who want to hurt the little fish with sharp hooks hidden in chicken feathers. The versions overlap in new permutations of absurdity" ("Twilight on the Buffalo Paddock," in An Outside Chance, p. 32). Olson's attitude toward nature is realistic and nondestructive; in this context, his hunting and fishing appears justifiable and sane. In this respect, Olson resembles Aldo Leopold, whom McGuane, as well as Jim Harrison, characterizes as an exemplary outdoorsman: "His conscience was clean because his hunting was part of a larger husbandry in which the life of the country was enhanced by his own work. He knew that game populations are not bothered by hunting until they are already too precious and that precarious game populations should not be hunted" ("The Heart of the Game," in An Outside Chance, p. 235). This parallel, as well as the actual references to Leopold's environmental perspective, is not explored in The Sporting Club. McGuane

discusses "redemptive" hunting later, in Ninety-Two in the Shade and An Outside Chance: Essays on Sport. In The Sporting Club, the author concentrates on the negative rather than positive aspects of human interaction with nature; therefore, he devotes more attention to the members of the club than to its manager.

Whereas the members and Olson are divided due to their insurmountable differences in perceptions of nature, the protagonists of The Sporting Club, James Quinn and Vernor Stanton, are both opponents and allies. Their first meeting in the novel is a confrontation: upon Stanton's insistence they stage a wax-bullet duel. This encounter is characteristic of their relationship throughout the action of the novel. It is also McGuane's favorite theme, "the perilous testing of man against man, the bonding of male aggressions in a violent rivalry that may also be the mode of understanding and even love" (Edwards, 1973, p. 1). Stanton and Quinn are opponents because they employ different strategies in dealing with the establishment. Quinn, dangerously close to becoming a member of the establishment himself, tries to regain perspective in the detachment of intellectual skepticism as well as solitary fishing expeditions. Stanton, in turn, exasperated by the absurdity of society in general and the Centennial Club membership in particular, acts as a catalyst for crises that bring this absurdity to full light. While Quinn mourns the degradation of the Centennial Club and the destruction of his fishing refuge, Stanton contributes to the collapse of the club by voicing the resentment against Olson, the feeling that the members fear to express. Quinn represses his annoyance with "what the club stands for" (the members' favorite

empty phrase) in hopes that eventually he will be left alone and permitted to fish. Stanton urges the members to explore the cliché by cheering them on in their most absurd endeavors. "Short of the pieties of woodland life to which the club subscribed so heartily," McGuane says, "nothing pleased them more than internecine strife. Stanton knew how to manage this impulse. In the episode with Olson Quinn saw the beginnings of something catastrophic" (SC, p. 68). Quinn represents the conservative force, hoping that imperfect, predictable order is better than none. Even though his disapproval of the status quo occasionally tempts him to undermine the established order, his newly found alliance with the establishment just as often accounts for the opposite view of reality. Thus, Quinn thinks "the hell with these unreckonable quantities. I'm a businessman. Besides, the lake was for women and children. If you didn't want to shoot, drink, or fish you were to have joined the Y" (SC, p. 116). Stanton, whose wealth and family tradition link him to the establishment, does not perpetuate this link by active participation in the business world. Consequently, he tends to view society from the outside, while his angle is sharpened by depression. Unable to tolerate the status quo any more, he is the agent of its destruction.

The protagonists are also allies against the social norms of the mainstream. Their friendship, dating back to their adolescence, has always been marked by metaphorical--or literal--"mooning" of society, exposing the ugly reality beyond the complacent exterior. Initially, their rationale was clear--they rebelled

against the obvious flaws in the social order. McGuane presents such an instance of Stanton's rebellion in the context of distorted hunting:

> When he was young, Stanton was most insistent about the matters of right and wrong; of this there is a prime example: The members discovered that they couldn't wallow voluptuously in stocks and shares all week and break brush to grouse-shoot in the northern thicket on the weekend. So, it occurred to them that the really great thing would be to shoot driven game as Harold Macmillian did. Local boys were hired for the dangerous work. Children of members were forbidden as being a more valuable commodity than the native weed. Quinn and Stanton surreptitiously joined the line of beaters to drive the birds out of the swamps to the elegant sports waiting on high ground. . . . The shooting started and the beaters got spattered with pellets. The younger boys sat down to cry. Stanton got stung on the face but kept going until he found the gunners. He gathered weapons; at first, by surprise and then at gun point. (SC, p. 179)

McGuane presents Stanton's rebellion against such a twisted version of hunting as a justifiable one because, in resenting this instance of selfish stupidity, Stanton came closest to uncovering the underlying problems of society, especially the arrogant abuse of power, visible both within society and in its idea of hunting. Stanton's and Quinn's subsequent offenses are against the effects rather than the causes of American absurdity; therefore, "the justice of his more extreme actions, though he retained his moral tone, became obscure" (SC, p. 179). Consequently, Stanton and Quinn begin to lose their perspective. The former sinks into depression, the latter into the establishment. They begin to resent each other. Stanton accuses Quinn of losing the edge, of "slipping" (SC, p. 18), and Quinn points out that Stanton's "clowning" hurts allies (Janey, Olson, and Quinn himself) rather than the establishment (SC, p. 78).

During the action of The Sporting Club, Stanton and Quinn once again try to put an end to a hunt that discredits the society. Quinn, however, does not want to follow the mob logic and attempts persuasion before he switches to physical force. His attempts fail, and he ends up in captivity, "pushed along beside Olive who was slung from a pole by his hands and ankles" (SC, p. 215). Stanton is more successful in spoiling the members' revenge because his course of action is consistent with the frenzy that overcomes the members, and his display of superior power is the only argument the mob cannot ignore:

> They entered the compound, the men and women trudging, the children dancing out ahead with lanterns. They were brought up short. Sitting in the hole where the time capsule had been removed was Stanton. He had set up a tripod-mounted, air cooled machine gun and he looked set on mayhem. (SC, p. 216)

Throughout the action of The Sporting Club, Stanton's mission is to demonstrate to the members what the club really "stands for." Their relapse into primitive modes of behavior as soon as the superficial order is destroyed--the territory and the manager fail to provide the expected service--proves that the club lacks the order and refinement it is supposed to embody. Quinn observes that "something had gone with the buildings" (SC, p. 146), thus commenting on the rapid disappearance of the club's claim to civilization. This apocalyptic vision concerns not only the club, but also the possible future of America because their summarized histories are parallel:

> There was shelter, Indians, northern lights; in the beginning wolf and lynx challenged women, children, picnic tables. The founders dreamt of a better life, a place in the forest that would be safe for their own kind, for

> their hopes, their hibachi dreams. The forests flowed to the cities and financed such dreams. (SC, p. 149)

The savage inclinations of the members in the time of crisis can be viewed as characteristic of America in general, as Quinn claims in his conversation with the tarred-and-feathered leader of the mob, Fortescue:

> "These people have gone haywire tonight."
>
> "I think so."
>
> "The world isn't like this, is it?"
>
> "I think it is." (SC, p. 213)

Having brought the crisis into the open, Stanton fulfills his self-imposed mission. This fulfillment, however, also terminates Stanton's status as a sane person. In the process of exposing the insanity of society, Stanton undermines his own. He is considered potentially dangerous due to the extremity of his actions. He also suffers an actual breakdown because the destruction of the club deprives him of his sense of mission. He persists, however, in his efforts to demonstrate "what society stands for." In the conclusion of the novel, he buys the compromised club and remains there, institutionalized. Once again, Stanton personifies the tendencies inherent in contemporary society, which are to destroy and possess the environment at the cost of personal freedom and sanity.

Stanton's attitude and fate, as well as Quinn's, are hinted at during their first fishing expedition in the novel. Both protagonists disengage from the predictable and ridiculous social event at the club and go fishing with Olson to take advantage of the evening hatch. Other members, typically, are not even

aware that their welcome party conflicts with a good fishing occasion; thus, only Quinn, Stanton, and Olson appear serious about fishing. Stanton, however, is really preoccupied with his desire to denounce the absurdities of contemporary sports:

> Quinn knew Stanton was at the foot of his pool swearing and flogging water, wanting at any cost to come up with the best catch. Stanton was a competitive fisherman; that is, an odious apostate. He tried to beat fish out of the river. When successful, he challenged you with them. (SC, p. 64)

Even though McGuane's description seems to point to Stanton's inability to comprehend the sane aspects of fishing in general, this competitive attitude appears rather too symbolic of his new role in the club to be taken at its face value. Stanton, obsessed with his sense of mission, enacts the attitudes of the members during fishing in the same manner he urges them to fire Olson: wholeheartedly yet without conviction. Stanton risks his life fishing during a storm, gets his trophy, and spoils the expedition for Olson and Quinn because of his attitude rather than because of their frustrated ambitions.

Olson is the only one to land a fish for all his efforts. He does not exert himself unnecessarily because "as a fisherman he was [Stanton's] opposite number, fished deferentially and awaited his occasions. There were none of the streamside brawls between man and fish that grace the covers of the sporting periodicals. Olson had his unique alchemy and fished for sport. He kept only the fish he needed" (SC, p. 64). Olson, unlike Stanton, appears sane and secure in

this description. It is also evident that, for him, fishing is an end in itself, not a way to validate any social or personal assumptions.

Quinn would like to resemble Olson in this respect, and, unlike the other members of the club, he is willing to experience the ritualistic quality of the sane pursuit. Quinn's fishing and hunting are hardly ever social occasions; he tries to perform them in concentration and solitude. His respect for Olson goes beyond the admiration of the latter's efficiency; Quinn also respects Olson's perspective and points out to Stanton that without Olson the club will cease to exist. Yet even though Quinn does not measure his success in fishing and hunting in acquisitive terms, he remains unsuccessful even in his pursuit of peace and recuperation--he cannot fully abandon his business and personal concerns. When he almost succeeds in doing so, night fishing alone, he nearly drowns as Earl Olive blows up the dam. Quinn is swept away by the tide that destroys "his" fishing refuge. His necessary submission to the forces of nature is characteristic of the attitude he has already started to adopt toward the establishment--Quinn is passive and fatalistic in acknowledging that "calamity had deprived him of his bland vacation" (SC, p. 137).

Quinn is unable to save the club, just as he is unable to accomplish his personal goals and find peace in nature. He is carried away by the tide of events originated by forces beyond his control. Quinn's romantic perception of nature as the grounds for individual retreat is bound to result in frustration because it is impossible to have the best of both worlds--civilized and natural--anymore. Quinn

exemplifies the urge expressed by Edward Abbey (1968) in Desert Solitaire and Swanson in Jim Harrison's Wolf, but his ties with civilization are stronger than he is willing to acknowledge: as a businessman he needs to stay within telephone reach even while on vacation. His priorities are unclear; he cannot fully define his alliances. A half-hearted, temporary devotion to "living deliberately" renders him pathetically inept in both worlds. Consequently, McGuane mocks the superficial cult of wilderness, both on a mass and an individual scale. Additional insight into McGuane's perception of a back-to-nature sensibility is provided by a comparison to Hemingway's "The Big Two-Hearted River." Jerome Klinkovitz (1986) claims:

> As the novel opens he [Quinn] is throwing himself into the routines of fly-fishing with all the expertise and deliberation of a Hemingway character. The Hemingway behavior itself exists as a system of manners, a referential code to which one can allude by simply acting in the ritualistic fashion and allowing the narrative full space to record it. McGuane takes three pages out from otherwise fast-developing action to meticulously record Quinn's first visit to the stream and the business of intelligent fishing, creating a world in which the reader can take refuge from tensions at Quinn's workplace and in camp itself. (p. 115)

Because later in the novel Quinn's attempts to "fish deliberately" culminate in Quinn's being stranded in the swamp, McGuane offers an alternative and distinctly contemporary conclusion to Nick Adams's adventures. The protagonist of "The Big Two-Hearted River" is presented as having a choice in the question of location because "in the swamp fishing was a tragic adventure. Nick did not want it. . . . There were plenty of days coming when he could fish the swamp" (Hemingway, 1925/1983, p. 183). Quinn is already beyond choice in this respect.

In McGuane's world, unlike in Hemingway's, the time and space available for redemptive communion with nature are virtually nonexistent.

In The Sporting Club, McGuane presents the multiple failures of contemporary approaches to nature. Founded on mistaken notions of instant gratification, a collective retreat is destructive, whereas an individual one is, at best, ineffective. Olson, whose environmental attitude is presented as sound and sane, is banned from the scene, and upon departure leaves Earl Olive as his successor. Even though such a manager is exactly what the club deserves, Olson discredits his ecological conscience by putting Olive in charge. All the protagonists of The Sporting Club use nature as a tool for their agendas: as a playground (the members), a personal retreat (Quinn), an avenger (Olson), and a weapon (Olive). Even Stanton does so, because in the course of his crusade to expose society he does not hesitate to welcome Olive as a perfect successor for Olson. His, and Olson's, position, however, can actually be justified. Once the club is destroyed and its public appeal diminished, the territory may indeed start to recuperate. However, this rationale is not present in McGuane's depiction of Stanton's actions, and even though he eventually buys the club property, the conclusion of the novel takes place in the confinement of his house, not outdoors. It is the security of an asylum, not freedom from civilization, that constitutes the final image of The Sporting Club:

> Stanton no longer had his pistols; but he had plywood cutouts that were much the same; and they paced off, turned and said "Bang, Bang!" at each other soberly. Then someone upstairs announced Stanton's bedtime. Quinn went up too; though it wasn't until later, in bed and still awake in the

> big, strangely stilled house, that he felt each of their presences, compromised and happy, each asleep and dreaming, like bees in cells of honey. (p. 220)

Whereas the final duel between Stanton and Quinn, the misfits of The Sporting Club, marks the progress from the sublime to the ridiculous, Ninety-Two in the Shade evolves in the opposite direction. The conflict over the guiding territory between Tom Skelton and Nichol Dance begins with a practical joke on Skelton and results in the violent death of both protagonists at the end of the novel. Whereas in McGuane's first novel the club territory cannot accommodate the escalated and conflicting demands of weekend sportsmen, the fishing world of Key West proves too small for two competent guides in Ninety-Two in the Shade. McGuane proceeds to demonstrate that the perception of nature as an *individual* retreat can have destructive and tragic implications, especially if it is accompanied by commercial considerations and competitive overtones.

Tom Skelton and Nichol Dance are introduced to the novel in similar terms. They are both adrift. Skelton's perception of reality and himself, upon his arrival in Key West, is painfully distorted. As the opening sentence of the novel suggests, he perceives that there is something wrong with his world, and apparently he has been trying to alleviate that sense with drugs and alcohol. That method, however, only renders him more painfully aware of the lack of connection between his life, himself, and the world around him. His location, company, appearance, and possessions do not seem to be determined by himself; his senses are not a credible source of information about them:

> Skelton studied himself until he was sure he was dressed and slipped out of the hotel. . . . He touched himself and discovered a short heavy gun at his waistband, a .38 Cold Cobra. What the hell was that doing there. He took it out and threw it into mosquito ditch and walked on. Then he couldn't believe that there had ever been a gun; so he walked back to the mosquito ditch and saw it lying on the bottom, hard and brilliant in the stagnant slime. (NTS, pp. 4-5)

Skelton is preoccupied with himself and his possible insanity. McGuane concludes his introduction of Skelton with a moment of resolution: "When the bait was gone and Skelton was drifting once more in the wooden skiff over the stony, illuminated reef, he saw that he would have to find a way of going on" (NTS, p. 6).

Similar to Skelton, Dance is drifting in his skiff at the moment of introduction: "Nichol Dance's guide boat, 'Bushmaster,' was nosed up the tidal creek that bisected Grassy Key, not anchored but rammed into the red mangrove roots in a canopy of mosquitoes and sand flies. . . . Dance lay there, vaguely alive, his brain curing like ham" (NTS, p. 9). Even though Dance is one of the best guides in Key West, a capable outdoorsman and a model for Skelton, he does not appear to possess any of Natty Bumppo's characteristics. His interaction with nature does not endow him with any particular goodness or serenity--he is violent and suicidal. Incapable of coming to terms with the world in general and his own life particularly, he "so rued his life and the things that had come of it that he drove his entire rather complicated self through the needle's eye of a career in guiding" (NTS, p. 89). Dance alternates guiding with "drinking of the kind that is a throwing of yourself against the threshold of suicide" (NTS, p. 9), and generally seems bound to a path of self-destruction. Already in

establishing these identities for his protagonists, McGuane tests the limits of the traditional belief in the redemptive powers of nature.

The patterns of The Sporting Club and Ninety-Two in the Shade are similar as far as the alliances and divisions of the protagonists are concerned: Tom Skelton and Nichol Dance are opponents in their private duels, yet they are also allies in their unwillingness to conform to the social norms and obligations, "heroes tied to their time by a common weakness: extreme unacceptability" (Katz, 1979, p. 39). They do not care to be accepted by the mainstream; instead, they seek each other's appreciation, or rather Tom Skelton wants to impress Dance, in a manner similar to Quinn's and Stanton's wanting to impress Olson, because McGuane's "bright, cool, ironic young heroes . . . can respect only men like Nichol Dance, quiet, capable outdoorsmen unspoiled by culture, given by Nature to know what college boy types can only gradually learn by thinking and suffering" (Edwards, 1973, p. 1). Their--and Dance's--disdain for mainstream America, specifically its sportsmen, who like Rudleighs and Slatts need to be led to fish, does not alleviate the conflict between the two protagonists. It triggers its tragic conclusion because "male competition--less the matter of 'honor' than of instinctual commitment to what one has undertaken . . .--makes an impressive kind of sense in McGuane. In a world where little is worth keeping, a man can at least keep his word" (Edwards, 1973, p. 2), and Dance has given Skelton his word that if the latter persists in his determination to guide, he will be killed. Skelton, on the other hand, determined to guide because this is "the only thing he

can do half well," has also resolved to shape himself after Dance, and that decision also includes Dance's principle of "following through." Consequently, while Skelton will not abandon his commitment to guiding, Dance will not abandon his commitment to killing Skelton if he guides, even though he "wished he hadn't set Skelton up like he had; but it was done and now he had to follow through. He thought he was a nice enough boy. Nichol Dance truly hoped he wouldn't have to waste him" (NTS, p. 71).

As Albert Howard Carter II (1975) notes in "McGuane's First Three Novels: Games, Fun, Nemesis," Dance and Skelton become involved in a game that they will play by its rules, regardless of the implications:

> Games may be defined in a broad sense as a set of arbitrary conventions, accepted by the players, which guide behavior (often competitive) for amusement and for escaping the necessities of ordinary reality. On one hand, games may offer a humorous criticism of the less flexible structures of society, a satiric potential which McGuane richly exploits. On the other, games illustrate a tragic nemesis in the competitive opposition and in the encompassing non-game reality rediscovered at a game's end. (p. 103)

Getting involved in their game of "following through" temporarily saves both Dance and Skelton from the most persistent problem of their lives: integrating their pasts, futures, and presents, as well as finding a link between subjective and objective realities. "The future cast a bright and luminous shadow over Thomas Skelton's fragmented past; for Dance it was the past that cast the shadow. Both men were equally prey to mirages. Thomas Skelton required a sense of mortality; and, ironically, it was Nichol Dance who was giving it to him" (NTS, p. 89). Their concentration on the game provides them with a sense of reality, purpose, and

logic that they would miss otherwise; however, it is only a temporary salvation. As Carter (1975) notes, competitive opposition is also a characteristic of the game, and in Ninety-Two in the Shade it results in a tragic conclusion.

Even though both Skelton and Dance appear serious and determined in their commitment to guiding as the only thing that makes sense in their lives, this premise does not explain their lack of ability to coexist. Dance clarifies his position on this issue early in the novel: "But we've kept so many from crowding our trade, it discourages me to come acrosst a hard case" (NTS, p. 11), and his subsequent behavior--practical jokes and serious threats--aims at discouraging Skelton from guiding. McGuane presents competitiveness as an inevitable aspect of outdoor sports, and in doing so he questions the simple-minded assumption that hunting and fishing can provide an escape into a better and simpler world. Outdoor sports, as long as they even marginally belong to the structure of "the republic"--as guiding does when it provides bookings, clients, and reputation--are bound to conform to the same rules that make civilization so oppressive. Fishing and hunting have always involved an element of competition, but originally it was a competition between a hunter and his prey. As McGuane demonstrates, present-day hunting and fishing are more concerned with the competition between sportsmen.

Consequently, there is no direct link between these sports and sanity of "a day's work for a day's pay." Fishing and hunting in their present form carry competitiveness to the extreme--and the tragic outcome of Skelton's venture into

guiding proves that salvation through nature should not be taken for granted. Skelton is not the first to discover that guiding and fishing can save him; that refuge is already occupied by Dance, who wants his claim to be exclusive. Consequently, in Ninety-Two in the Shade, McGuane continues to explore the failures of human expectations and perceptions of nature. Whereas in The Sporting Club the attention is focused on the collective American attitudes, in Ninety-Two in the Shade the focus is on individual failures. In the former novel, Quinn's misadventures resulted from the lack of commitment; the tragic end of the latter novel results from carrying commitment too far. The common denominator for the collective and individual destructive aspects of interaction with nature is the competitiveness inherent in viewing hunting and fishing as sport and an assertion of human ego.

There are, however, some redemptive aspects of this interaction that surface in The Sporting Club and are further developed in Ninety-Two in the Shade. Such redemption, however, is impossible on a collective level. In both novels the mainstream (the members in The Sporting Club and the Rudleighs and Olie Slatt in Ninety-Two in the Shade) are beyond such a possibility because their interaction with nature will never amount to more than a thoughtless pursuit of a trophy. On the other hand, McGuane's misfits benefit from their inability to share the mainstream perspective. Quinn, following Olson's example, understands that hunting and fishing do not need to be acquisitive; even less do they need to result

in a trophy. The roots of such conviction, however, are not presented in McGuane's first novel, nor is the process of developing such an attitude.

In Ninety-Two in the Shade, on the other hand, the author records Skelton's progress toward a new perspective, and in doing so comes closer to establishing the links between his work and the biocentric outlook of the American nature writing tradition. Skelton's initial actions, aimed at establishing his position as a guide, are not necessarily characteristic of an ecological ethics, even though they could signify adherence to the principle of "inhabitation" (developed in the works of Wendell Berry and Gary Snyder), which implies precise and detailed knowledge of one's immediate surroundings: "He had poled the better parts of full days upwind and up the tide with bent drive shafts and wiped-out propellers for having had on the map of his brain previously unlocated coral heads or discarded ice cans from commercial boats; or for having lost surge channels in the glare crossing shallow reefs" (NTS, p. 13). This "slow and painful process" could just signify his preoccupation with impressing clients at a later date; therefore, it does not provide sufficient grounds for a claim that Skelton's fishing career is supposed to differ from competitive sport of securing trophies. Later in the novel, however, during Skelton's first guiding assignment, McGuane describes his protagonist's change of environmental perspective, which bears a close resemblance to events depicted by Jim Harrison in Wolf, Farmer, and Just Before Dark. McGuane, like Harrison, describes the conversion in terms that evoke Aldo Leopold's wolf hunting in "Thinking Like a Mountain"–the realization

of interrelatedness between the hunter and his prey that takes place at the final stage of the hunt. In Skelton's case, it is fishing for permit that triggers such an event.

For McGuane, just as for Harrison, fishing and hunting follow an individual system of value. Fishing for permit, in McGuane's private classification, belongs to the highest strata of sportsmen's gratifications, as well as symbolizing the ultimate meaning of the sport:

> For the ardent fisherman, progress is towards the kinds of fishing that are never productive in the sense of blood riots of the hunting-and-fishing periodicals. Their illusions of continuous action evoke for him, finally, a condition of utter, mortuary boredom. Such an angler will always be inclined to find the gunnysack artists of the heavy kill rather cretinoid, their stringerloads of gaping fish appalling. No form of fishing offers such elaborate silences as fly-fishing for permit. . . . There is considerable agreement that taking a permit on a fly is the extreme experience of the sport. ("The Longest Silence," in An Outside Chance, p. 3)

Skelton, by the time he takes his first customers fishing, is already experienced enough to share that view. Unfortunately, the Rudleighs represent the typical attitude of customers who want to catch permit as a result of "continuous action," not "elaborate silences." Skelton, in his desire to establish a reputation, leads them to permit, yet the contrast between the nobility of the fish and the vulgarity of his customers gradually destroys his resolve: "His feeling of hope for a successful first-day guiding was considerably undermined by Rudleigh's largely undeserved hooking of the fish. And now the nobility of the fish's fight was further eroding Skelton's pleasure" (NTS, p. 46). Consequently, when he is supposed to retrieve the fish, Skelton releases it, fully aware that such

an act is incompatible with his general plan of securing a position in the guiding community of Key West. His decision results from a classic conversion experience. When Skelton realizes that his life and the life of the fish are interconnected, he perceives that his affinity with the permit is far stronger than that with his customers:

> Skelton stopped and his eye followed the line back in the direction he had come. The Rudleighs were at its other end, infinitely far away. . . . An embowered, crystalline tidal pool: the fish lay exhausted in its still water, lolling slightly and unable to right itself. It cast a delicate circular shadow on the sand bottom. Skelton moved in and the permit made no effort to rescue itself; instead, it lay nearly on its side and watched Skelton approach with a steady, following eye that was, for Skelton, the last straw. Over its broad, virginal sides a lambent, moony light shimmered. The fish seemed like an oval section of the sky–yet sentient and alert, intelligent as the tide. (NTS, p. 49)

Skelton releases the fish, participating in what McGuane considers the highest gratification of fishing: "I love the feeling when they realize they are free. There seems to be an amazed pause. Then they shoot out of your hand as though you could easily change your mind" ("A New River," p. 172). Because the whole guiding trip is a practical joke staged by Dance, the outcome of fishing does not really matter to anyone, except Skelton himself. He realizes where his priorities lie as far as society and nature are concerned, and he gains a new insight into his determination to guide. Guiding has been his direct objective, yet finding the way to save himself continues to be the ultimate goal, and Skelton begins to accomplish that by establishing an unconditional alliance with nature, which he perceives as "sentient, alert and intelligent."

Even though Skelton is given a glimpse of logic and order, the reward is not imminent because such salvation is incompatible with the absurd reality around him. The guiding trip with the Rudleighs marks the beginning of a showdown between Skelton and Dance. It culminates in another booking, again inherited from Dance, which provides a background for the final encounter between the two protagonists. As before, the customer is largely unaware of the dimension of drama that happens before his eyes. Olie Slatt, the winner of a cake-eating contest, wants only a reward for his efforts: "I mean to hightail it back to Montana ten days from now with a trophy under my arm or I'm going to know the reason why. I have spent my leisure hours on the Missouri after paddlefish and saugers and dreaming of one day coming home to Roundup with a tropical trophy. Everybody knows why I am here. My reputation depends on my coming home with the goods" (NTS, p. 140). Slatt's sense of logic and justice is consistent with "Hotcakesland" principles, and so the conclusion of Ninety-Two in the Shade takes place according to its rules: Dance shoots Skelton, and Slatt kills Dance and starts back to Roundup, Montana: "The white robe he wore carried behind him and he held the bright trophy to his chest" (NTS, p. 197). Olie Slatt, the sportsman in Hotcakesland, lives to tell it all.

Both The Sporting Club and Ninety-Two in the Shade end on a pessimistic note. The protagonists are either compromised or dead, while mediocrity triumphs. The hunting and fishing world in both novels fails to provide salvation because it is ruled predominantly by absurd competitive and alienating rules that

render civilization so oppressive. The latter novel, however, provides certain clues as to the possibility of redemption through nature by establishing the affinity with a deep ecological perspective–a less anthropocentric and utilitarian view of nature. This aspect of McGuane's writing is hardly ever the subject of critical attention. The hunting and fishing world of northern Michigan and Key West is usually discussed in terms of McGuane's similarity of Hemingway, by value of subject and location. Steven Kroll's (1973) statement is characteristic of that tendency: "With its hard edged prose, its obsessions with death, guns, the outdoor life and proving yourself, The Sporting Club did bear some resemblance to early Hemingway" (p. 93). However striking the similarity may appear, it is the conflict between Hemingway's and McGuane's views of the sports that provides a solid ground for comparison.

Peter Straub (1974) explores this aspect in his discussion of Ninety-Two in the Shade: "Fishing is riddled with technics, all of that lore about what to use and where to use it, and McGuane makes of this material a giant pun on Hemingway. His novel deliberately warps the famous Hemingway ethical codes; it uses these codes obliquely and disbelievingly, since things have got too drastic for such simplicities to have moral resonance" (p. 127). The simplicities mentioned by Straub also involve the notions that Hemingway's fiction often conveys: redemption through nature in "The Big Two-Hearted River," self-affirmation in The Green Hills of Africa and "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," and male-bonding in The Sun Also Rises. McGuane's depiction of

hunting and fishing deflates these notions, whereas both nature and the protagonists appear more vulnerable and impermanent than they do in Hemingway's vision of confrontation. In McGuane's vision, civilization invades Hemingway's fishing and hunting retreats, destroys both the protagonists and nature, whereas mediocre hunters (similar to Francis Macomber unwilling to finish the wounded lion) get their trophies. As McGuane himself points out in his interview with Jim Fergus (1989), his understanding of hunting differs from Hemingway's, and, like Harrison, the author views frequent comparisons to Hemingway as oversimplifications: "The kind of hunting and fishing he liked to do is not the kind we like to do. A lot of it was that writer bullshit I find so tedious, just utter posturing--kind of grabbing your crotch Joe Piscopo style and saying 'I'm going out and fuck a big fish'" (Fergus, 1989, p. 42). In this respect, again like Harrison, McGuane would probably be more inclined to welcome the parallels with The Old Man and the Sea, or with Hemingway's discussion of the division between "real" and self-proclaimed sportsmen in the "Letters From Tanganyika." Still, the immediate connection to "early Hemingway" appears to be a more tempting area to explore, regardless of the oversimplifications involved.

Although the settings of Ninety-Two in the Shade and The Sporting Club invite comparisons to Hemingway, McGuane's novels set in Montana are often discussed in the context of Faulkner. A certain similarity between McGuane and Faulkner exists, especially if the inbred, slightly disturbing society of Deadrock, Montana (the setting of Keep the Change, Nobody's Angel, and Something to Be

Desired), as well as the theme of "broken families and psychologically wounded protagonists trying to heal themselves in a land that itself is being violated on all fronts" (Fergus, 1989, p. 44) are compared to those of Yoknapatawpha County. The similarity between the two authors' views of human inability to relate to nature constitutes the most striking parallel; McGuane, however, does not explore the theme of hunting and fishing in Montana to the extent he does in the two formerly discussed novels, or to the extent Faulkner does in "The Bear." Therefore, the affinity with Faulkner is usually discussed in terms of McGuane's prose style in general, as well as his pessimistic view of humankind.

The action of Keep the Change revolves around the protagonist's, Joe Starling's, efforts to claim his heritage. The heritage is an old family ranch that has been leased to the local land magnates, the Overstreets, for a considerable period of time, and they have always coveted it as a missing part in their otherwise geometrically perfect property. Joe's father perceives that his life mission is to prevent the loss of the land (or at least the mineral rights), even at the cost of its destruction: "But whatever you do, even if you graze it flat and the knapweed and spurge cover it up and the wind blows the topsoil to Kansas, don't let that old sonofabitch Overstreet get it" (Keep the Change, hereafter KC, p. 11).

Starling senior leaves his son with this bit of parting wisdom and a legally unclear claim to the ranch as a legacy. Such a heritage is not generally welcome in Joe's world: "Where had people gone wrong in the west? In the latest joke, leaving a ranch to one's children was called child abuse" (KC, p. 63). Joe,

however, shares his distrust for ordinary American values with the rest of McGuane's protagonists and, in the course of the novel, establishes his own priorities. He does not perceive his unclear claim to the land as a burden, nor does he see it as a valuable commodity: "Joe loved the place, but he didn't expect or really want to end up on it altogether. If Joe was satisfied by the land in which the ranch was situated, and he loved it pretty much wherever his eyes fell, he never quite understood what that had to do with ownership" (KC, p. 11). He goes back to the ranch after his venture into the artistic and business worlds fails to be fulfilling, and he spends a season there trying to eradicate the years of environmental abuse. In the process, he loses the legal claim to the land altogether, yet the sense that he went there "to be saved" that perpetuated his decision still persists at the end of the novel: "The sky was blue and the air coming from under the slightly opened window so cool and clean that he admitted to himself that his spirits were starting to soar. He thought he'd begin to get his things together" (KC, p. 208). Joe feels saved regardless of losing the commodity because he perceives, like Faulkner's Isaac McCaslin, that the land was never his to begin with. His father and the Overstreets have lost--metaphorically--their claim to the land by perceiving it as property, the same theme that had been developed in Go Down Moses and The Sound and the Fury. Joe's satisfaction is incompatible with the mainstream system of value but is good enough for himself. In the Thoreauvian tradition, Joe went to the ranch because he wanted to live deliberately, and that he accomplished. Because his sojourn on the ranch

can be summed up in the terms of Harrison's preface to Dalva ("'We loved the land but we could not stay' [an Indian proverb])," Joe's perception of land can be compared to that of Native Americans, with the stress on use and guardianship rather than possession. Keep the Change offers an alternative to the possessiveness and greed characteristic of the western perception of land.

Hunting and fishing are hardly ever mentioned in Keep the Change, possibly because Joe has already escaped civilization far enough to lift the sense of oppression. In his own way he establishes the "ancient ritual of gathering our food." The closest he comes to hunting is the encounter with a bear family, depicted in terms similar to Harrison's "The Seven-Ounce Man":

> Suddenly, two cinnamon cubs sprang upright into the glitter, weaving to scent him. As Joe began to back out the way he'd come in, the mother bear rose on her haunches, swinging her muzzle in an arc. The sun behind her made the edge of her coat ignite in a silvery veil. The cubs hastened to their mother's side and the three of them went up to the top of the spring and disappeared into the berry bushes. Joe was out of breath. He couldn't believe his luck in receiving such a gift. (KC, p. 156)

Like Harrison's Brown Dog in "The Seven-Ounce Man," Joe feels lucky, rather than threatened, and takes precautions to avoid confrontation instead of forcing it. His attitude is that of the nonacquisitive hunter who values sighting higher than shooting. His feeling of gratitude for the encounter resembles a primitive frame of mind, which views interaction with nature as a sign of mutual consent. This attitude toward hunting invariably constitutes the basis for a meaningful experience for the two authors.

Joe, like Skelton in Ninety-Two in the Shade, is given a glimpse of logic, order, and permanence in nature that may reassure and "save" him from his doubts concerning reality in general. This aspect of the interaction with nature again provides a link to Faulkner. Quentin in The Sound and the Fury is in similar need of salvation, and on the day of his suicide he is offered a chance of redemption by nature. Victimized by the passing of time and impermanence of things, Quentin sees an image of eternity and balance in nature: a trout capable of maintaining its poise in the current, "delicate and motionless," forever eluding the fishermen. Had Quentin been more attentive and less preoccupied with self-pity, he might have noticed the answer to his problems in that image; instead, he cannot disassociate himself from the oppressive inner monologue, cannot cease to associate nature with death and sin, and instead of redemption by nature chooses death by it.

This image and the notion of learning from the balance of nature might have influenced McGuane, who in "A New River" describes the rewards of fishing in similar terms. Like a trout, "we must find a way of moving through water with the least amount of displacement. The more we fish, the more weightlessly and quietly we move through a river and among its fish, and the more we resemble our own minds in the bliss of angling ("A New River," p. 170). In metaphorical terms, McGuane's prescription for life is to imitate nonhuman nature in its grace. Those of his heroes who are in need of an example are usually given a glimpse of it by nature, and even if their salvation cannot be measured by any ordinary

system of value, on a subjective level they feel saved. Ultimately, it is their affinity with a trout, a permit, a bear, or nature in general, that puts McGuane's heroes in opposition to the mainstream. Usually, this sensation is evoked by hunting and fishing, yet in the case of Joe Sterling the sports can be foregone because he finds a more direct way to achieve it: "Instead of being someplace, where he waited for the breeze through a window, Joe had gone where the breeze came from" (KC, p. 157).

Hunting and fishing is also a marginal subject in Nobody's Angel. When it surfaces it is the destructive aspect of sport and trophy hunting that McGuane brings to the reader's attention. In the manner of The Sporting Club, the author presents an eccentric protagonist, Tio, whose devotion to the competitive world of outdoor sports fails to provide a sufficient barrier between himself and insanity. "Tio is a sportsman. Got a bunch of records and all. He shot the ninth largest whitetail to ever come out of Texas" (Nobody's Angel, hereafter NA, p. 299). Yet all these accomplishments fail to assert Tio's masculine power because, in the course of the novel, his wife falls in love with Patrick Fitzpatrick. Tio, however, does not seem to view his hunting success as any particular proof of his general prowess; instead, more like Stanton, he exerts himself in outdoor sports in order to penetrate and ultimately denounce the values of the establishment to which he belongs, thanks to his wife's money. Tio carries to the extreme the life of the rich oil heir, hunting and fishing in exclusive society; yet his view of life does not

convey emotional stability: "Life is a shit sandwich and I take a bite every day" (NA, p. 367).

As in the Sporting Club and Ninety-Two in the Shade, there is affinity and opposition between Fitzpatrick and Tio, a game of proving masculinity in competition over Claire. Tio, whose sporting gratifications apparently do not provide him with a sufficient test of power, originates the game by suggesting to Fitzpatrick that he should keep Claire company while Tio himself works on expanding his oil business. Both men appear insecure and unfulfilled in reality and expect to validate themselves in the competition for Claire. The pursuit ends in frustration for both protagonists, just as it does in hunting viewed as a means of securing a trophy. McGuane does not deal directly with outdoor sports in this novel, but he presents the competition between Tio and Fitzpatrick in terms that evoke hunting, complete with the notion of "bullet-proof" Claire.

Hunting and fishing fail to provide redemption in Nobody's Angel. McGuane reinforces that view by depicting the frustration of Fitzpatrick's escapist hopes. The protagonist seeks refuge in the horse ranch after his military career ceases to provide momentum for his life. Initially, the ranch and outdoor sports fulfill his hopes, and Fitzpatrick says, "I love this scene. It has no booze or women in it." The novel, however, revolves around Patrick's drunk and sober attempts to secure himself a woman. Civilization and society has, as before in McGuane's novels, a miraculous power of invading the simplicity of life in nature and destroying the protagonist's illusion of peace and escape.

The only positive aspect of hunting in Nobody's Angel is Patrick's grandfather's feat. At the end of the novel, Patrick relinquishes his hopes of a fulfilling relationship with Claire and, instead, fulfills a promise to his grandfather by taking him hunting. During this hunting expedition, "Patrick's grandfather shot the best elk of his life. Patrick packed it out for him and arranged for it to be mounted and hung in the Hawk Bar, the place the old man could see from the window of his apartment" (NA, p. 438). In this event, Patrick finally recaptures the feelings he vaguely associated with his childhood on the ranch, the hunting and exploring the territory together with his grandfather, that probably were the reasons for his return in the first place.

Something to Be Desired, McGuane's third novel set in Deadrock, Montana, explores the theme of hunting more fully. It begins with a typical American experience of a father and son camping in the woods. Yet, just as immediately, it pierces the stock situation by pointing out that while the father has no clue as to their whereabouts, Lucien, "a small-town boy buried in Ernest Thompson Seaton," is the one to find the way back. In a typical situation for McGuane's protagonists, the father exposes Lucien to the joys of escaping from civilization to nature, but he fails to provide the boy with any valid instruction about how to stay in nature or how to return to society. This fishing trip, which Lucien recalls later in the novel, provides an additional illustration of that tendency. As a result of a practical joke proposed by his drunk father, Lucien succeeds in destroying his friendship and fishing bliss with Andrew MacCarthy, McGuane's

version of Faulknerian Sam Fathers. The initiative in discovering nature is left to Lucien, who subsequently cultivates the romantic streak in a predictable manner. "His heroes were Ernest Thompson Seaton and Theodore Roosevelt. Like all boys, he dreamed of consequentiality, and of romantic unrest" (Something to Be Desired, hereafter STBD, p. 19). At the beginning of the novel, Lucien establishes his affinity with nature, but in a superficial manner, by being prone to "all the mindless sins of youth committed in the haze of reading Edgar Rice Burroughs, Zane Grey, James Oliver Curwood, Jack London and Ernest Seaton; wanting to be a steely half-breed Robert Mitchum type with hatchet, revolver, cartridge belt and a long mane of hair trained with bear grease" (Harrison, "The Violators," in Just Before Dark, p. 70). McGuane depicts Lucien as a victim of that tendency later in his life, when

> his craving for sport had become less a sign of buoyant youth than of crankiness and approaching middle age. In the nature documentaries that appeared on TV he identified with the solitary and knowledgeable male, whether baboon or penguin; and this foolishness represented the same gap of wishful thinking that had plagued him all his life. (STBD, p. 29)

On the other hand, in the course of the novel, Lucien's hunting and fishing gradually become more than sport, and his identification with nature exceeds his narcissistic tendencies. This happens because his lack of fulfillment in ordinary American life undermines his belief in ordinary American role models, including the brave sportsmen celebrated in sporting magazines:

> What gave "This Happened to Me" its special brimstone quality, apart from the illustrations of sportsmen dangling, sliding, or being pursued, was that each segment was signed by the survivor. For a long time Lucien identified himself with these nearly anonymous men and began seeking

> out ways of living that would produce civilian versions of "This Happened to Me." . . . Now, sunk in consequences, he no longer wished that more would happen to him. (STBD, p. 55)

In other words, Lucien grows distrustful of the illusions of continuous action that constitute the appeal of sporting life and instead begins to look "for a kind of stillness" experienced by an angler described by McGuane in "Close to the Bone":

> When a serious angler insinuates himself into the luminous, subaqueous universe of the bonefish and catches one without benefit of accident, he has, in effect, visited another world whose precise cycles and conditions appear so serene to the addled twentieth-century angler that he begins to be consoled for all he has done to afford the trip in the first place. In his imagination he is emphatic about emptiness, space, and silence. ("Close to the Bone," in An Outside Chance, p. 59)

Lucien, like Quinn, Skelton, and Sterling, illustrates the process of acquiring an individual environmental perspective. On his own, finally, without the guidance of his father or sporting periodicals, Lucien transcends the limits of sport in hunting and fishing by renouncing competitiveness and trophy sport: "Lucien concentrated himself to shoot well, walked past Sadie to make the flush; but when the grouse went up he just watched them go, brown and mottled against the open sky" (STBD, p. 69). This restraint, resembling the attitude displayed by Joseph, Harrison's protagonist in Farmer, has a similar rationale. Lucien gradually becomes aware of the consequences involved in hunting and fishing, not only in the way they affect him, but also in the way his actions affect nature. After shooting two drakes, Lucien contemplates that "long stringy Vs seemingly in the stratosphere, headed south. Lucien looked forward to his dinner and could not avoid realizing that these two weren't going" (STBD, p. 71). Just as Harrison's

protagonist does, Lucien acknowledges the sense of guilt inherent in hunting, and that feeling limits his acquisitiveness.

Lucien's interaction with nature is not as much destined to remove him from society as to enable him to reestablish some of the severed ties. Lucien's goal is to gain the confidence of his estranged son, James, and to introduce him to nature in the way Lucien's father tried to do but never succeeded in doing. The father-son bonding in the next generation is equally complicated. James is apprehensive and slightly suspicious of his father's plans and does not appear likely to accept uncritically Lucien's beliefs concerning nature. Lucien's choice of setting for the occasion is as atypical as his son's attitude. Even though his original intention is to take James fishing, he eventually chooses hawk-banding. That choice is characteristic of McGuane's distrust of clichés involved in the interaction with nature, and it also signifies Lucien's nonacquisitive bias. Finally, the setting has metaphorical implications because it parallels the process in which Lucien, who identifies with hawks, is "banded" by acknowledging his family ties. James is skeptical of Lucien's admiration for the birds of prey, as well as of the violence involved in the interaction with nature. Instead of sharing Lucien's joy of "being married" to the hawk, James feels affinity with the dead pigeon, the bait:

> When Lucien looked over at James, he was holding the pigeon in his hands. Its eyes were closed. Its head was angled harshly onto its back. Blood ran from the nostrils down the domestic blue feathers of its narrow shoulders. Lucien said nothing.
>
> "We both fell asleep at the same time," said James in an unsteady voice. (STBD, p. 121)

McGuane portrays the initiation of Lucien's son into the natural world as a more complex situation than mere apprenticeship. James establishes his own system of values and alliances, just as later in life he may establish his own sporting codes. Lucien, however, manages to get his main points across that nature is no less beautiful for being violent and that human interaction with it does not need to be perceived in practical terms. The symbolic implications of the event are not lost on James, who ceases to resent the inevitability of pain in life, or specifically, his father's conduct. Consequently, his estranged wife Susanne tells Lucien that James "seems to appreciate that you and he had some kind of adventure. When I said it was sad about the pigeon, he said that's how hawks have to live. He was kind of taking up for you in that, I thought" (STBD, p. 125).

The ties between James and Lucien are further reinforced by their shared outlook on fishing, which they both perceive in nonacquisitive terms, and resolve that inflicting pain is not a prerequisite of their success (STBD, p. 144). As a result, outdoor sports provide more than relief from civilization for Lucien; they are also his way back to establishing his own social order. Atypically for McGuane, Something to Be Desired is not about a failed attempt to escape from reality. It is about a success in reentering it. The fact that the novel also depicts the most mature attitude toward the environment--an awareness of interdependence, the affinity and responsibility between human and nonhuman nature--signifies that at least some of McGuane's tormented protagonists can find their place in society

without compromise, and as a result of achieving a new, less egocentric perspective.

The connection between outdoor sports and reentering society recurs in McGuane's short stories. As Vance Bourjaily (1985) points out,

> In Thomas McGuane's "Sportsmen" the rationale for hunting is existential--you achieve identity by what you do: existence precedes essence. . . . McGuane's characters, a couple of kids, see life as a choice between becoming hoods and becoming sportsmen. If they have some violence in them, as the hoods have, they will express it as duck hunters by the lake waters they love. That's the premise of this strong surprising piece. Threaded into its fabric is an awareness of fear and love, friendship, compassion and pain in maturing. (p. xiv)

Unfortunately, Jimmy Meade, the narrator's friend, suffers a spinal injury in the process of becoming a sportsman. Typically for McGuane, neither intentions nor commitment can save the protagonist from destroying his life. Becoming a sportsman does not always warrant success in objective terms because nature is not a predictable refuge for everyone. In "Sportsmen," McGuane stresses the fact that being a sportsman is a frame of mind rather than what one does. Consequently, Jimmy participates in hunting, even though his friend asks, "What fun is there if you can't shoot?" ("Sportsmen," in To Skin a Cat, p. 102).

Whereas choosing a way to live is the issue of "Sportsmen," choosing a way to die is the subject of "Flight." Of all McGuane's works, this short story can be most justifiably compared to Hemingway, due not as much to the portrayal of the joys of hunting as to the iceberg style of narration. Just as in "Hills Like White Elephants," the actual event--in this case, the suicide of a terminally ill hunter--is

understated, yet the progress of the story warrants the assumption that it is suicide, not hunting, that concludes it:

> Dan smiled at me and said, "Wish me luck." He closed his gun, walked over the rim and sank from sight. I sat on the ground until I heard the report. After a bit the convey started to get up, eight dusky birds that went off on a climbing course. I whistled the dogs and started for my truck. ("Flight," in To Skin a Cat, p. 160)

The narrator of the story thinks, "Maybe life wasn't something you lost at the end of a long fight." Consequently, the story is concerned with the issue of self-determination, including the choice to die. Hunting and fishing provide a setting for the decision because in McGuane's fiction self-determination is ultimately what they are about. Making the decision as to what kind of hunter you are going to be is parallel to the decision of how you want to live your life:

> Camus said that the only serious question is whether or not to commit the suicide. This is rather like a nymph question. It takes weight, weighted rod, split shot. Casting becomes a matter of spitting this mess out and being orderly about it. It requires a higher order of steamcraft than any other kind of fishing, because it truly calls upon the angler to see the river in all its dimensions. ("A New River," p. 169).

Self-determination, attentiveness toward nature, and a sense of affinity with the "river in all its dimensions" appear to be hard-earned individual qualities of McGuane's outdoorsmen rather than the components of hunting and fishing in general. An Outside Chance reinforces this view by pointing to the incompatibility between "blood riots of the hunting and fishing periodicals" ("The Longest Silence," in An Outside Chance, p. 3) and societal sanity. In An Outside Chance, more than in any of his novels, McGuane explores the reasons for such a division. He traces them to Americans' fascination with instant gratification, which

manifests itself not only in preoccupation with tangible success in sports, but also in environmental destruction for the sake of a more convenient lifestyle.

> The older men remember the California fishery when it was the best of them all, the most labyrinthine, the most beautiful. A great river system initiating in the purling high-country streams, the whole thing substantiated by an enormous stable watershed. Now the long, feathery river systems are stubs and even those are squabbled over by Cyclopean morons who have somehow institutionalized their love of useless dams. ("Twilight on the Buffalo Paddock," in An Outside Chance, p. 30)

In acknowledging the degree of environmental destruction, McGuane joins the sentiments expressed by the representatives of the ecological perspective in American nature writing, most notably Aldo Leopold, Edward Abbey, and Rachel Carson. McGuane devotes more attention to civilization than to nature in his works, yet it is the interaction between the two that provides clues to the persistent question of "why we are having all these troubles with our republic" (NTS, p. 3). The absurdity of contemporary life results from the distance from the basic facts of existence. Nowhere is this phenomenon more visible than in contemporary hunting and fishing, where the alienation from nature and the search for instant gratification are manifested in excessive equipment and insufficient knowledge. McGuane juxtaposes this vision of outdoor sports with hunting and fishing performed in the "old way," characterized by appreciation of difficulty, disregard of success, and a sense of kinship with the prey. This view closely resembles Harrison's hunting and fishing ideal, as well as the appreciation for the primitive perception of nature explored in the works of Gary Snyder, Richard Nelson, and Barry Lopez. In contrast to these authors, however,

McGuane hardly ever presents such ideal hunting and fishing in his works--more often, he concentrates on the frustrated efforts to those who aspire to it, as well as on the dangers of perceiving nature as a field for human glorification.

CHAPTER IV

GARY SNYDER, BARRY LOPEZ, AND RICHARD NELSON:

RITUALS OF APPEASEMENT

> Old man in the fur coat, Bear! Come out!
> Die of your own choice!
> (Snyder, 1960)

Jim Harrison's "La Venerie Francaise" depicts *la chasse*--deer hunting in France, performed in accordance with its centuries' long tradition. *La chasse* differs considerably from the encounters with nature Harrison usually describes--it remains an aristocratic privilege involving a considerable number of participants whose roles are determined by an elaborate set of rules. The objective, however, stays the same as in its American, more egalitarian, counterpart--the stag is supposed to be chased down and killed. Even though Harrison's description suggests that the author is impressed with the ritualistic quality of *la chasse,* its conclusion triggers reflection on the justifications for contemporary hunting:

> There is no apologia now for hunting except that the desire is in us. Some are born hunting and rarely in our time out of need. I thought of the painting I had seen last summer in Browning, Montana, of a Blackfoot Indian delivering an arrow while riding full speed along a buffalo's side. Of course then it was what is called "necessary" but at the very least *la chasse* had preserved the ritual dignity of the hunt. It wasn't a million licensed hunters in my home state wandering around the shrinking woods,

> probably killing more trees with their stray shots and target practice than the sixty to ninety thousand deer taken yearly. Without becoming stupidly atavistic one might say at base that we are meat eaters still and some like to kill the meat they eat, which is not far removed in dignity from letting someone else do the killing. (in Just Before Dark, p. 96)

Harrison's comment on *la chasse* illustrates the apprehension of a contemporary hunter who thinks that hunting might have outlived its justification. This sentiment is echoed by Tom McGuane in "The Heart of the Game":

> Nobody who loves to hunt feels absolutely hunky-dory when the quarry goes down. The remorse spins out almost before anything and the balancing act ends on one declination or another. I decided that unless I become a vegetarian, I'll get my meat by hunting for it. I feel absolutely unabashed by the arguments of other carnivores who get their meat in plastic with blue numbers on it. I've seen slaughterhouses, and anyway, as Sitting Bull said, when the buffalo are gone, we will hunt mice, for we are hunters and we want our freedom. (In An Outside Chance, p. 230)

These two statements have an important characteristic in common. Both Harrison and McGuane claim that the only justifiable type of hunting is that on which one's subsistence unconditionally depends. Both authors evoke Native American hunting as an illustration of such a thesis. Such a thesis, however, finds its counterpart in a "million licensed hunters" who define a contemporary variation of the hunt. The two authors' protagonists cannot escape classification among the members of this antithetical group, at least not from the practical point of view. With the exception of Skelton in Ninety-Two in the Shade, they do not choose to depend solely on their hunting or fishing skills for survival. On the other hand, however, they refuse to subscribe to the mainstream version of hunting, and the majority of their outdoor adventures are described in terms of finding a synthesis between their unavoidable identity as modern sportsmen and the native

hunting ideal. *La chasse* is an example of such a synthesis because its elaborate form evokes the thoughtfulness and care that characterize primitive subsistence hunting. More characteristically, however, it is the individual rituals of hunting and fishing--and the frame of mind of the fishermen and hunters--that preoccupy the two authors.

In presenting their hunting and fishing protagonists as on a quest for such a synthesis, the two authors indeed seek to produce their own "apologia" for contemporary hunting. Their main reservations against hunting are of an ecological rather than a sentimental nature because they are generally more inclined to mourn the environmental destruction than the death of individual animals; and the grim ecological reality magnifies the difficulties of finding justification. "The hunt would be finally doomed not by its outraged opponents but by the fact that there is simply little room left in which to 'chase' an animal," claims Harrison (Just Before Dark, p. 96), referring to the end of *la chasse,* which involved chasing the stag along a busy interstate and across the grounds of an insane asylum. The only way in which hunting could appear defensible in the contemporary world is if it contributed to maintaining ecological balance, instead of destroying it further.

This argument is hardly a revolutionary idea. It has been used by hunters and government-sponsored conservationist agencies throughout the twentieth century. Most notably, it appeared in Aldo Leopold's Game Management (1933)--and was later rejected in A Sand County Almanac (1949/1974), in which the

author criticized conservationist logic and its adherence to an ecologically ignorant "Abrahamic concept of land." As Roderick Nash (1967) demonstrates in Wilderness and the American Mind, "as an ecologist, Leopold regretted his own youthful contributions to the campaign against predators. Not only did the elimination of the beasts of prey remove a desirable check on the population of other species, but the whole idea of undesirable species was entirely synthetic" (p. 196). Due to Leopold's influence on the contemporary perception of nature, the present ecological rationale for hunting has to be of a different type, and of a much less simplistic character. If anything, earlier ecological justifications of hunting, such as predator control or subsequent "trimming" of excessive deer populations, are arguments against rather than for hunting because they exemplify conservationists' oversimplifications and lapses in long-term thinking. A more valid argument for the ecological value of hunting would have to suggest that hunting as a pastime--if it cannot be a lifestyle--promotes development of an environmentally valid mode of coexistence. In other words, hunting would not have the responsibility for correcting ecological imbalance, but for promoting the consciousness that would eliminate the possibility of such imbalance occurring.

Harrison and (less often) McGuane refer to the Native American worldview as the one capable of integrating hunting and an ecologically sound approach to nature. Their references, however, are often oblique--such as those quoted above--and, as a result, they do not fully convey the explanation as to *why* native hunting traditions could be capable of providing solutions to the current ecological

crisis. Consequently, it is necessary to discuss their treatment of the outdoors theme in the context of works by other authors who devote more space to the Native American perception of nature whenever the subject of hunting and fishing comes into focus: Barry Lopez, Gary Snyder, and Richard Nelson. For these authors, with the exception of Nelson, hunting and fishing are rarely the main topics, but their outlook on current ecological issues and their interest in native perception of the environment justify such a selection. As far as Snyder is concerned, the selection is justified not only because the poet provides important insights into the Native American and paleolithic worldviews, but also because in Myths and Texts (published in 1960) the poet makes hunting a leading metaphor of (Leopoldian) ecological conscience. Lopez, in turn, supplements Snyder's poetic and philosophical considerations with detailed information on primitive worldviews and on hunting practices. Richard Nelson's works--Hunters of the Northern Ice and Shadow of the Hunter, for instance--provide further insights into primitive hunting, whereas The Island Within illustrates the author's personal attempt to integrate the primitive worldview with present-day hunting.

Two important terms need to be defined before discussing these authors. The first is hunting itself, which for our purposes includes both hunting and fishing and generally denotes the "ancient art" of securing food. The second definition concerns the Native American belief system as expressed by J. Baird Callicott (1989) in "Traditional American Indian and Traditional Western European Attitudes Towards Nature: An Overview":

> There is no *one* thing that can be called *the* American Indian belief system. The aboriginal people of the North American continent lived in environments quite different from one another and had culturally adapted to these environments in quite different ways. For each tribe there were a cycle of myths and a set of ceremonies, and from these materials one might abstract *for each* a particular view of nature. However, recognition of the diversity and variety of American Indian cultures should not obscure a complementary unity to be found among them. (p. 177)

Callicott subsequently quotes Joseph Epes Brown's definition of such cultural unity, which is useful as well: "All American Indian peoples possessed what has been called a metaphysics of nature; all manifested a reverence for the myriad forces of the natural world, specific to their immediate environment" (p. 177). Furthermore, because the works discussed in this study also include references to a paleolithic worldview (as representative of similar attitudes toward nature), both native and prehistoric modes of subsistence will be labeled "primitive hunting."

Snyder, the Pulitzer Prize winning author of Turtle Island, seldom refers to contemporary outdoor sports. On the other hand, his references to primitive hunting are frequent and are always related to the issue of an environmentally sound mode of existence. Continuous education derived from hunting is for Snyder, as well as for Harrison and McGuane, a possible way out of the contemporary ecological and psychological crises.

Similar to Harrison and McGuane, Snyder claims that the contemporary world faces the death of wildness outside and within:

A war against earth.
When it's done there'll be
no place
A Coyote could hide

Envoy
I would like to say
coyote is forever
Inside you

But it's not true.
("The Call of the Wild," in Turtle Island, hereafter TI, p. 21)

Coyote, whose howling is referred to as the call of the wild, is a recurrent symbol of wilderness outside and within for Snyder. The coyote figure not only indicates the species whose presence annoys "the heavy old man . . . A catholic, A native Californian," but also the Trickster hero of Indian lore. The destruction of "Trickster," in turn, signifies a considerable psychological impoverishment, a loss of "something in ourselves which is creative, unpredictable, contradictory" ("The Incredible Survival of Coyote," in The Old Ways, hereafter OW, p. 75). In addition, the extermination of Coyote provides a pessimistic comment on the future of civilization, who finds his presence annoying: "The Trickster plays a vital role in the Indian mythology by explaining the existence of 'bad luck,' mischief, sorrow and death as inseparable from the brighter sides of life. The Coyote brings all of them to people; he is both a curse and a blessing" (OW, p. 69).

The existence of Coyote in mythology justifies the existence of mischief in people, proves that a trace of evil does not exclude good, and shows that the two are interconnected. In a civilized society that takes pride in exterminating wilderness, darkness, and evil, both the Coyote and the Trickster myth are found to vanish. In "On the Psychology of the Trickster Figure," Carl Jung (1956/1988) foretells the results of such loss:

> The so-called civilized man has forgotten the trickster. He remembers him only figuratively and metaphorically, when irritated by his own ineptitude, he speaks of fate playing tricks on him, or of things being bewitched. He never suspects that his own hidden and apparently harmless shadow has qualities whose dangerousness exceeds his wildest dreams. As soon as people get together in masses and submerge the individual, the shadow is mobilized, and, as history shows may even be personified or incarnated. (p. 269)

Jung predicts that the failure to "accept" the Trickster results in repression, accumulation, and eventually expression of evil within individuals and society. In Snyder's vision, the extermination of Coyote symbolizes both psychological and environmental crises.

"The Call of the Wild" introduces a recurrent concern of Snyder's poetry: a war against the earth waged by modern political, social, and religious systems, leading to psychological, spiritual, and ecological void. The outcome evokes T. S. Eliot's pessimistic prediction that "this is the way the world ends/Not with a bang but with a whimper," as well as a more immediate parallel with Harrison's "suffocation by chintz, not apocalypse" (Wolf, p. 159). The anticlimactic end of the world--the world worth living in--acquires additional dimension due to Snyder's use of the "Climax" concept, whose definition the poet ascribes to Ramon Margalef's (1968) Perspectives in Ecological Theory and Eugene Odum's (1963) Fundamentals of Ecology:

> The condition called "Climax" is an optimum condition of diversity--optimum stability. When a system reaches climax, it levels out for centuries or millennia. By virtue of its diversity it has the capacity to absorb all sorts of impacts. Insects, fungi, weather conditions come and go; it's the opposite of monoculture. . . . This is also what is called maturity. Many species exist in relation to the possibility of climax and to its reinforcement.

> Certain human societies have demonstrated the capacity to become mature in the same way. Once they have achieved maturity, they are almost undestructible. But this kind of maturity has nothing to do with civilization [the only societies that are mature are primitive societies]. ("East-West Interview," in The Real Work, hereafter RW, p. 117)

According to Snyder, the climactic stage of civilization is represented most closely by the primitive tribal community of the paleolithic period, which indeed stayed relatively stable for millennia, capable of maintaining the ecological balance of the environment and the spiritual balance of the individual. Consequently, Snyder views the paleolithic community as the fullest stage of human development, a type of social organization that promoted "wholeness" of existence, nondestructive and almost indestructible. He illustrates the emergence of this community in "Towards Climax":

Salt seas, mountains, deserts--
cell mandala holding water
nerve network linking toes and eyes
fins legs wings--
teeth, all purpose little early mammal molars.
primate flat-foot
front fore-mounted eyes--

watching at the forest-grassland (interface
richness) edge.
scavenge, gather, rise up on rear legs.
(TI, p. 83)

As he proceeds in his description of the early society at its best, Snyder stresses its climactic characteristics. That society is characterized by spiritual refinement, artistic achievements, life in harmony with other life forms, and strength of myth and ritual:

learn more plants, netting, trapping, boats.
bow and arrow. dogs.
mingle bands and families in and out like language
kin to grubs and trees and wolves

dance and sing.
(II, p. 83)

Evolving in the flow toward climax, this society was not, however, climactic itself. It had stayed close to the ideal for a long time, but eventually it evolved further--and in a wrong direction:

begin to go "beyond"--
get better off, get class,
make lists, start writing down.

forget wild plants, their virtues
lose dream-time
lost largest size of brain--
(II, p. 83)

In this manner, Snyder describes the "fatal flaw" of humanity, visible as early as in its paleolithic stage: the compulsive urge toward progress and power. This feature takes the form of acquiring superficial control over nature--and from then on, constant struggle to preserve and reinforce the usurped superiority because one intrusion into ecological balance creates an avalanche of effects: "start farming/cows won't stay away, start herding" (II, p. 83). In the meantime, spiritual refinement, awareness of the immediate (wild plants), and mystical (dream time) worlds vanishes, replaced by technological concerns and ignorance --or forgetfulness--of literacy. The result is a degradation of the species, which instead of further refinement within the climax-oriented flow, directs its energies into a side-alley of a technocratic civilization:

get safer, tighter, wrapped in,
winding smaller, spreading tighter
lie towns out in streets in rows,
and build a wall.
(TI, p. 83)

This image corresponds to Snyder's vision of contemporary Western (most typically American) society, characterized by overpopulation, expansionism, excessive urbanization, monoculture, alienation, and insecurity in "Four Changes" (TI, p. 91). Most alarming for Snyder, however, is the loss of energy, which, similar to the disappearance of the Coyote, carries a double meaning for the poet. In a literal sense, the loss of energy implies our dependence on--and forthcoming exhaustion of--fossil fuels, as well as the environmentally destructive search for more energy sources to satisfy the addition of "fossil fuel junkies" (TI, p. 103). Snyder points out that the addiction to external energy resources marks the loss of an ability to "generate" energy from within--which used to characterize primitive life "dependent on an interpenetrating network of wild systems" ("Energy Is Eternal Delight," in TI, pp. 103-105). As James McClintock (1994) demonstrates in Nature's Kindred Spirits, Snyder's concept of inexhaustible energy is linked to the fundamental ecological principle of succession:

> Snyder often cites Eugene Odum and Margalef in stating his understanding that essentially in any ecosystem over time there is a pattern of change from initial instability and simplicity to a mature "climax state" of optimum stability and optimum diversity. It is a lesson Aldo Leopold had taught in A Sand County Almanac--food chains constitute an energy circuit for the biotic pyramid, and the evolutionary pattern is towards a diverse and stable biota. (p. 116)

In this respect, hunting--as a means of direct participation in the food chain--implies a direct link to the energy source, as well as being the source of energy itself. "It is an act, related to eating and dancing, of participation and communion for the continuation of the species. The steps of the hunt--stalking, killing, eating, growing, procreating and dying--recapitulate the cycle of life" (Steuding, 1976, p. 85).

In the light of its transformation from internal to external energy sources, a primitive society can be considered Snyder's social ideal only as long as it stays within the frame of evolution toward climax, which means evolution toward stability and equilibrium. Having remained relatively stable and undestructive for millennia, the paleolithic community proved as close to the climactic ideal as humanity has ever gotten; however, it was not ideal itself because ultimately it failed to absorb and discuss the urge toward technocratic civilization. Consequently, it would be an oversimplification to claim that Snyder advocates a return to the paleolithic order because going back would create a vicious cycle. Instead, he advocates reevaluation and imitation of the valuable heritage of the prehistoric past, while bearing in mind recent experience, even using technological achievements:

> A decentralized energy technology could set us free. It's only the prevailing economic and government policies that block us from exploring that further. There is a people's technology. This means that in eight or nine years where we live up in the Sierras without electricity but tied to buying that fifty-five gallon drum of kerosene for our lights, we'll have photovoltaic solar cells charging a couple of car batteries: which will be essentially free energy once the investment of the cells is on the roof. And everybody could do that. ("The Bioregional Ethics," in RW, p. 147)

Thus, Snyder urges a return to the point where the right path was abandoned and reentering the flow toward Climax, without obliterating the valid heritage of the recent past: "It is only the temporary turbulence I am setting myself against. I'm in line with the big flow" ("East-West Interview," in RW, p. 112).

The model of life suggested by Snyder as an antidote to contemporary crises is both unorthodox and complex. It becomes comprehensible only in the context of specific ideas--such as bioregional ethics, re-inhabitation, Zen Buddhism, and planetary consciousness, to mention just a few. Each of these concepts could provide a starting point for the detailed discussion of Snyder's program--this purpose, however, can also be accomplished by exploring Snyder's vision of primitive hunting, which becomes the symbol of overcoming alienation and expanding awareness of biocentric equality.

In the already quoted "Towards Climax," the hunting images still belong to the portion of the poem where humanity retains the climactic orientation; the decline of species follows transition to herding and farming. Consequently, Snyder presents hunting as the ultimate stage of a mature society, a notion that introduces a rare note of disagreement between Snyder and Thoreau. The latter claims that:

> There is a period in the history of the individual, as of the race, when the hunters are the "best men," as the Algonquins called them. We cannot but pity the boy who has never fired a gun; he is not more humane, while his education has been sadly neglected. This was my answer with respect to those youths who were bent on this pursuit, trusting that they would soon outgrow it. *No humane being, past the thoughtless age of boyhood, will wantonly murder any creature which holds its life by the same tenure as he does* [italics mine]. (Thoreau, 1854/1985, p. 492)

The conflict concerns Snyder's conviction that the only mature society was the prehistoric one (whose mode of subsistence was hunting), and Thoreau's claim that hunting is merely a stage in human education, a necessary rite of adolescence.

On the basis of the latter statement, American nature writers--whose views, according to Peter Fritzell's Nature Writing and America (1990), have all been influenced by Walden--have traditionally condemned hunting as inconsistent with a sense of oneness with nature. Joseph Wood Krutch's "The Vandal and the Sportsman" (1958) exemplifies that tendency of linking any form of killing to a discredited Carthesian cruelty toward animals. Krutch advocates learning from nature in a gentle way, through intuition rather than participation in the dramatic aspects of life: "Despite the cruel dilemmas with which a contingent universe continually confronts us, we can still sometime elude and mitigate them" (p. 146). A similar argument will be discussed later in relation to Nelson's The Island Within (1989) and Sherman Paul's response to that book in For the Love of the World (1992). As far as Snyder's views are concerned, the answer to the conflict lies in the fact that the poet considers contemporary society to be infantile rather than mature; therefore, the education derived from the primitive hunter's worldview still remains to be integrated in the course of reentering the climactic flow:

> Americans have a supermarket of adulterated ideas available to them, thinned out and sweetened, just like their food. They don't have the apparatus for critical discernment either. So that the term infantilization is something I can relate to. I think there's a lot of truth in it. The primary quality of that truth is the lack of self reliance, personal hardiness--self sufficiency. . . . There's a triple alienation when you try to avoid work: first you're trying to get outside energy sources/resources to do it for you; second, you no longer know what your own body can do, where your food

> or water come from; third, you lose the capacity to discover the unity of mind and body via your work. (RW, 103)

In Myths & Texts, Snyder's second collection of poetry, published in 1960, "logging" is the metaphor for anticlimactic progress of modern society. As Bob Steuding (1976) claims, "'logging' has come to represent for Snyder the mindless rapaciousness of society and the destruction which has occurred due to man's egotistical manipulation and exploitation of his environment" (p. 74). Steuding further declares that, in the second part of Myths & Texts, "hunting" represents an antithesis to the process of environmental destruction. Just as in the cases of Harrison and McGuane, however, it is a specific kind of hunting that (as Steuding suggests) Snyder has in mind:

> "Hunting," in contrast to its practice by weekend tourists in the mountains for a shot at a deer, is an act of worship for Snyder. If undertaken with knowledge, full awareness, and reverence, the hunt, in contrast to logging, represents the communion of all life forms and the participation of man in his ecosystem. Hunting makes clear man's place in the food web. To hunt and then to eat the flesh of the slain animal is in Snyder's words, "making love with the animals." (p. 75)

Whereas hunting for entertainment and "logging" are sacrilegious in Snyder's poetic vision, primitive hunting practice is sacramental (Steuding, 1976). The difference between sacrilege and sacrament lies in the perception of nature by the logger and hunter, who respectively understand it as an opponent and as a powerful ally.

The roots of the loggers' perception are traced by Snyder, as well as Lynn White (1968) in "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis"--to the combination of progress and Judeo-Christian tradition, where nature is viewed as opposite of,

and inferior to, technological and spiritual refinement. The same attitude is discussed by Callicott (1989) in "Traditional American Indian and Western European Attitudes Toward Nature," in which the author traces the roots of Western attitudes toward nature even further back than emergence of Judeo-Christianity and discusses such attitudes in the context of their relationship to an ecological as well as a primitive worldview:

> The Pythagorean/Platonic concept of the soul as immortal and other-worldly, essentially foreign to the hostile physical world, has profoundly influenced the European attitude towards nature. . . . Aristotle's taxonomic hierarchy . . . resulted in a view of living nature which was, if that is possible, more ecologically blind than Plato's. Relations among things again are, in Aristotle's biological theory, accidental and inessential. A thing's essence is determined by its logical relations within the taxonomic schema rather than, as in ecological theory, by its working relations with other things in the environment. (pp. 182-183)

Western attitudes toward nature appear ecologically blind due to their disregard of the interconnectedness of life, not to mention their trust in human superiority and uniqueness. The primitive worldview, according to Callicott (1989), is just the opposite:

> The implicit overall metaphysics of American Indian cultures locates human beings in a larger social, as well as physical, environment. People belong not only to the human community but to a community of all nature as well. Existence in this larger society, just as existence in a family or a tribal context, places people in an environment in which reciprocal responsibilities and mutual obligations are taken for granted, and assumed without question or reflection. (p. 189)

Snyder's poetic vision of hunting supports this claim. In his poetry, the key transformations in the process of acquiring a sense of belonging are the acknowledgment of the animal within the hunter and a "person" within an animal.

The sense of belonging to the same community as all of nature begins with knowledge, which overcomes fear and alienation. One can acquire this knowledge most directly through hunting simply because hunting both demands and promotes it. Snyder points out that the attention and awareness involved in learning animal behavior, in addition to developing the biocentric perspective, eliminate human dependency on technological aids: "Why then does it seem to be a weakness in their [American Indians'] hunting technology. The answer is simple: they didn't hunt with tools, they hunted with their minds. They did things--learning an animal's behavior--that rendered elaborate tools unnecessary" ("East-West Interview," in RW, p. 107). In this respect, primitive hunting in Snyder's opinion could provide a valuable lesson for a contemporary Western world characterized by alienation from nature and addition to elaborate technology.

Snyder proceeds in his description of the process of studying animals by pointing out the importance of animal imitation:

> You learn the animal mind by becoming an acute observer--by entering the mind--of animals. That's why in rituals and ceremonies that are found throughout the world from ancient times the key component of the ceremony is animal *miming*. The miming is a spontaneous expression of the capacity of becoming physically and psychically one with the animal, showing the people know just what the animal does. (RW, p. 107)

The pragmatic aspect of education through miming, for the sake of a successful hunt, should not overshadow the spiritual importance of acquiring a sense of oneness with the animal. Such identification, in Snyder's opinion, signifies the unity with Original Mind, the Buddhist/Native American notion of universal,

subconscious, creative power and knowledge, unrestricted by dogmas of specific religions:

> Original mind speaks through little myths and tales that tell us how to be in some specific ecosystem of the far flung world. . . . To go beyond and become what--a seagull on the reef? Why not? For an empty moment while their soar and cry enters your heart like sunshaft through water, you are that, totally, we do this everyday. So this is the art that gives art, style, and self-transcendence to the inescapable human plantedness in a social and ecological nexus. (He Who Hunted Birds in His Father's Village, p. x)

For Snyder, the social and ecological orders converge because his notion of society--where both "four-legged" and "two-legged people" (TI, p. 48) are equal--does not exclude ecological balance. The perception of all elements of nonhuman nature as enspirited and sentient promotes ethical restraints upon any interaction, and that in turn promotes ecological balance, according to Leopold's land ethics. In Snyder's poetry such perception of animate and inanimate nature recurs whenever primitive hunts are evoked. The division between human and animal is often blurred, as it happens in Myths & Texts in the shaman's power vision experienced in the process of "hatching a new myth":

Dying carp biting air\
in the damp grass,
River recedes. No matter.
Limp fish sleep in the weeks.
The sun dries me as I dance.
(Myths & Texts, p. 37)

Similar imagery of enspirited and sentient nature is evoked directly in relation to hunting:

this poem is for the deer

"I dance on all the mountains
On five mountains, I have a dancing place
When they shoot at me I run
To my five mountains"
(Myths & Texts, p. 26)

The anthropomorphic perception of prey might suggest that the act of killing is morally indefensible, and it is, as Steuding (1976) points out, when performed without full self-knowledge and reverence by a hunter who does not share the primitive wisdom. The killer is not only an inattentive sportsman, but also a driver on an interstate, as well as the civilization that builds roads. The modern-primitive hunters should begin their hunting not by killing, but by the rituals of atonement for the deaths unaccounted for because they should first assume responsibility for the sum of human transgressions.

The doe apparently was shot
lengthwise and through the side-
shoulder and out the blank
belly full of blood
Can save the other shoulder maybe,
if she didn't lie too long--
Pray to their spirits. Ask them to bless us:
our ancient sister's trails
the roads were laid across and kill them:
night-shining eyes

The dead by the side of the road.
("The Dead by the Side of the Road," in II, p. 7)

Snyder, however, also offers an interpretation of hunting that turns sacrilege into sacrifice, thus affirming the act of killing. In "Long Hair," the animals initiate the hunt:

> Once every year, the Deer catch human beings. They do various things which irresistibly draw man near them: each one selects a certain man. The deer shoots the man, who is then compelled to skin it and carry its meat home and eat it. Then the deer is inside the man. He waits and hides in there, but the man doesn't know it. When enough Deer have occupied enough men, they will strike all at once. The men who don't have Deer in them will also be taken by surprise, and everything will change some. This is called "takeover from inside."
> (in Regarding Wave, p. 65)

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of this poem, as far as Snyder's vision of hunting is concerned. "Long Hair" contains all the key elements of a redemptive ritual: nature is perceived as sentient and enspirited; the divisions between humans and nonhumans, hunter and the hunted, are blurred; the prey consents to participate in the hunt; finally, wilderness is essential in overturning the anticlimactic status quo. Even though these notions evoke the primitive hunter's perception of the hunt, the poem's ending suggests that the setting is contemporary--or rather futuristic--due to its insistence that the situation has to change. This implied change, takeover by the wilderness "within," is the necessary condition for reentering the big flow toward "Climax." Snyder's vision of hunting suggests that human alienation is overcome gradually and mostly on the subconscious level. Even if contemporary hunters (or people in general) have lost the ability to sense that hunting restores their ties with the wilderness, their weakness in this respect does not undermine the possibility of "everything changing some." The wilderness--or the Deer--is presented not as the object of the hunt, but as the initiator of both the hunt and the subsequent change. This

image might imply that humanity/hunters need not feel the responsibility to acknowledge, explore, and revere the wilderness outside and within because they are to be "taken over" anyway. This interpretation undermines most of the distinctions drawn earlier between careless, recreational, profane hunting and hunting performed within the primitive frame of mind. It also undermines the thesis that only the exercise of the latter type of hunting can produce long-term ecological and psychological benefits. The answer to this problem lies in the beginning of the poem. Snyder presents the Deer coming to the human beings purely out of choice. In Snyder's poetic vision, as well as in the primitive belief, the animals may refuse to do so if the hunters behave inappropriately. Callicott (1989) presents this principle as central to the Native American dealings with the environment:

> In one's practical dealings in such a world it is necessary to one's well-being and that of one's family and tribe to maintain good social relations, not only with proximate human persons, one's immediate tribal neighbors, but also with the non human persons abounding in the immediate environment. (p. 188)

Snyder illustrates this in the final part of the poem "for the deer," which immediately follows the description of a deer blinded by headlights, shot by a drunken driver:

Deer don't want to die for me
I'll drink sea-water
Sleep on beach pebbles in the rain
Until the deer come down to die
in pity for my pain.

Primitive hunting does not end with the kill because it is followed by rituals of appeasement and atonement: "It is thanking a friend for cooperating in a mutual relationship. And if you didn't thank him, the species would become offended," as Joseph Campbell puts it in The Power of Myth (1988, p. 74). In Snyder's poem, the need for a proper ritual is even greater because the animal was killed in a thoughtless fashion. Failure to do so might result in "refusal" of the game to participate in the hunt or, in broader terms, "unwillingness" of the wilderness to assert its existence. In both cases, it leads to breaking the chain of life, and therefore physical, spiritual, and ecological death, just as it is described in Snyder's vision of "logging."

The first mention of hunting performed by the author in Lopez's Arctic Dreams also evokes the image of animals that "will not come": "Always we were *hunting.* This particular habitat, the number of cod in the water, the time of the year--everything said ringed seals would be here. But for us they weren't" (Arctic Dreams, hereafter AD, p. 78). The futile hunt described by the author is part of a scientific experiment. The purpose of the experiment is to determine the effects of offshore oil development on Maine wildlife. As Sherman Paul (1992) points out in For the Love of the World, hunting is a scientific and moral issue for Lopez:

> The gathering of ecological data involves killing seals . . . , data that will be used "to guide oil and mineral development." Lopez's sentiments are clear enough: He would like this immemorial hunting and fishing land to remain inviolate. But he also respects knowledge, the scientific inquiry that always seems to be used to alter old ways and stable ecosystems. So he does not settle the matter "as if there were no seals" but uncomfortably stands in the middle of the question" in the way he stands between the scientists and the crew that abhors the killing. (p. 78)

Paul's description of the author torn between the two conflicting perspectives is reflected in the opening quotation. However, the claim that the seals "were not there for us" also suggests that Lopez's perspective has already assimilated to a large extent the primitive hunting worldview, and his choice of expression (denoting lack of volition on the part of the seals) proves that in the author's view seals are more than the object of the experiment.

In describing the arctic landscape, Lopez draws attention to the notion of ecotones: "the edges of any landscape--horizon's, the lip of the valley, the bend of a river around a canyon wall--quicken an observer's expectations. . . . In biology these transitional areas between the two different communities are called ecotones" (AD, p. 123). In Nature's Kindred Spirits, McClintock (1994) claims that "the edges he [Lopez] 'walks' are more than ecological, however; they are thin boundaries between human and non human, between knowledge and mystery, between the mundane and the sacred" (p. 145). The notion of an ecotone can be applied both to the actual landscape and to human consciousness, according to Lopez, because in "The Country of the Mind" the author professes his belief in the claim that "what lies at the heart of the religion of hunting peoples is the notion that a spiritual landscape exists within the physical landscape." Lopez's perception of hunting, like his perception of the arctic landscape, is an example of a spiritual and intellectual ecotone, where Western and primitive worldviews converge.

Arctic Dreams is not a diary of conversion to a totally different ecological outlook, in the way Leopold's "Thinking Like a Mountain" is. It is rather an account of a process of realization that science--even the science of ecology--is not enough to comprehend any landscape, and only when the spiritual and physical landscapes converge in human consciousness, human actions can contribute to maintaining the ecological balance of their surroundings. Arctic Dreams, published in 1986, follows a sequence of Lopez's works in which the author demonstrates both his knowledge of human--primitive and civilized--response to nature and of nature of itself (Of Wolves and Men and River Notes), as well as his appreciation of Native American lore (Giving Birth to Thunder, Sleeping With His Daughter: Coyote Builds North America). Consequently, the author is familiar with both Western and primitive environmental perspectives when he approaches the arctic landscape, and in his book these perspectives finally merge with the landscape.

Lopez's enthusiasm for the primitive hunter's environmental practices is not devoid of certain reservations:

> Hunting wild animals to the point of extinction is a very old story. Aleut hunters, for example, apparently wiped out populations of sea otter in the vicinity of Amchitka Island in the Aleutians 2500 years ago. . . . Man's ability to destroy whole wildlife populations goes back even further than this. Arthur Jelinek, a vertebrate paleontologist, has referred to early man in North America in very harsh terms, calling him predator "against whom no (naturally) evolved defense systems were available" and "a source of profound changes" in the ecosystems of North America at the beginning of the Holocene. . . . The specific events on which Jelinek bases these judgments are the catastrophic die-offs of large mammals that began about 18,000 years ago in North America and in which he believes man played the crucial role. (AD, pp. 50-51)

Even though these data do not directly contradict Snyder's thesis about the ecological nondestructiveness of primitive hunters (because Snyder's paleolithic ideal goes further back in the human past, whereas his appreciation of Native American hunting practices is always in direct relation to their adherence to the paleolithic worldview), the evidence that Lopez considers checks the inclination to unconditionally praise the environmental conscience of primitive hunters. In a scientific manner, Lopez proceeds to investigate the data, and he arrives at the conclusion "that man played a significant, if not decisive, role seems inescapable" (AD, p. 52). Still, Lopez shares Callicott's (1987) conviction that instances of environmental abuse do not totally deny the existence of environmental ethics among primitive hunters:

> To point to examples of wastage--buffaloes rotting on the plains or beaver all but trapped out during the fur trade--which are supposed to deliver the coup de grace to all romantic illusions of the American Indian's reverence for nature would be very much like pointing to the examples of murder and war in European history and concluding that Europeans were altogether without humanistic ethic of any sort. What is lacking is the useful understanding of the function of ethics in human affairs. Ethics bear, as philosophers point out, a normative relation to behavior; they do not describe how people actually behave, they rather set out how people ought to behave. . . . Examples of occasional destruction of nature on the pre-Columbian American continent and even the extirpation of species . . . do not, by themselves, refute the assertion that the American Indian lived not only by a tribal ethic, but by a land ethic as well, the *overall* and *usual* effect of which was to establish a greater harmony between Indians and their environment than enjoyed by their European successors. (pp. 249-250)

Lopez does not, in his initial discussion of native hunting, relate the specific details of primitive land ethics; he does so later in the book whenever the landscape triggers his thoughts on human interaction. In the initial chapter,

however, he sums up his discussion in a way that evokes both Snyder's and Callicott's convictions:

> The cold view to take of our future is that we are therefore headed for extinction in a universe of impersonal chemical, physical, and biological laws. A more productive, certainly more engaging view, is that we have the intelligence to grasp what is happening, the composure not to be intimidated by its complexity, and the courage to take steps that may bear no fruit in our lifetimes. . . . Their [Eskimo] traditional philosophy is insistent on the issue of ethical behavior toward animals. Within the spirit of this tradition and within the European concept of compassionate regard may lie the threads of a modern realignment with animals. We need an attitude of enlightened respect which will make both races feel more ethically at ease with animals, more certain of following a dignified course in the years ahead, when the animals will still be without a defense against us. (AD, pp. 52-53)

Lopez illustrates both the native practice of "being ethically at ease with animals" and the Western attitudes that are still far from compassionate regard in "Tornarssuk," the chapter devoted to the polar bear. Lopez describes the polar bear as "a creature of arctic edges," and indeed the subsequent discussion depicts it not only as a creature of physical, but also metaphysical ecotone: "The artistic and philosophical evocation of the polar bear by Eskimo and pre-Eskimo cultures leads one to believe that their insight derives from a special affinity with the bear" (AD, p. 109). The author ascribes the affinity between the bear and Eskimos to the similarity in their lines of adaptation, modes of subsistence, and hunting methods. In addition, he mentions the hunters' awareness of the biological likeness between the two species: "From seeing a polar bear stripped of its skin, how disquietingly human his appearance is" (AD, p. 109), which echoes Harrison's proclamation, "When you hang up a deer and strip its hide it

looks a bit too human for my taste" (Wolf, p. 117). The realization of a basic identity is magnified by the fact that "there is something deeper in their involvement, for each is prey to the other" (AD, p. 109). Consequently, the primitive belief that during the hunt the roles of the predator and the prey are sometimes blurred--a notion that becomes Snyder's poetic metaphor in "Long Hair"--finds its very concrete illustration in Lopez's discussion of Eskimos and polar bears. The awareness of the immediate danger does not, however, cause hostility toward the species, as Lopez points out in his description of polar bear hunting:

> These were not simply terrifying moments but moments of awe and apotheosis. These were the moments that kept within the culture the overreaching presence of being held in fearful esteem. Tornarssuk, the Polar Eskimo called him, "the one that gives power." To encounter the bear, to meet it with your whole life, was to grapple with something personal. The confrontation occurred on a serene, deadly, and elevated plain. If you were successful you found something irreducible within yourself, like a seed. To walk away was to be alive, utterly. To be assured of your own life, the life of your kind, in a harsh land where life took insight and patience and humor. It was to touch the bear. It was a gift from a bear. (AD, p. 110)

The history of European encounters with polar bears is a study in fear and alienation:

> To men who grappled, instead, with abstractions of geography, with dreams of a mother lode of wealth in the New World, the bear was something else. Thousands of miles from familiar surroundings, genuinely frightened, and perhaps strained by the grim conditions of shipboard life, Europeans took to killing any polar bear they saw. They shot them out of pettiness and a sense of rectitude. In time, killing polar bears became the sort of amusement people expected on an arctic journey. (AD, p. 111)

In listing the usual reasons for European polar bear hunting, Lopez points out that the bears symbolized the harshness and indifference of the arctic landscape, and killing them signified triumph over the inhospitable land. The Eskimo hunters reinforced their sense of kinship with bears by stories concerning bear-human marriage (similar to Snyder's poem number 6 in the "hunting" section of Myths & Texts) or stories concerning the noble character of bears (AD, p. 114). The European hunters drew on their own set of myths (bears purposefully poisoning their killers, for instance) in order to justify further extermination. "Such stories only confirmed some in their sense of being offended, of being trifled with in this difficult place" (AD, p. 111).

Lopez adds new insight into the subject of the origins of destructive sport hunting by pointing out that the main reasons for it are insecurity and alienation caused by displacement. Although it would be an oversimplification to claim, on the basis of this statement, that the only destructive hunting is that performed by Westerners and tourists, data supplied by Lopez prove that, in the present, native hunting still needs less supervision:

> Recent research into the size and dynamics of polar bear populations has resulted in a hunting moratorium in Svalbard and a partial ban on hunting in the United States. (According to the terms of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, which supersedes the stricter provisions of the IUCN Polar Agreement, there are no seasonal limits and no limits on the number of bears that can be killed by native hunters. Nor are cubs, females with cubs, or denning females protected.) (AD, p. 116)

Lopez's discussion of native arctic hunters suggests that their understanding of nature should be consulted, respected, and incorporated into

contemporary environmental science. Lopez often draws attention to the insufficiency of Western science in penetrating the complexity of ecological connections, where precision does not necessarily equal accuracy and "the animal itself will always remain larger than the sum of any sets of experiments. To acquire a closer understanding of, for instance, the life of an arctic fox, one should try to penetrate its world, or its *Umwelt* (as Lopez calls it, borrowing the phrase from Jakob von Uexkull):

> The discovery of an animal's *Umwelt* and its elucidation require great patience and experimental ingenuity, a free exchange of information among different observers, hours of direct observation, and a reluctance to summarize the animal. This in my experience is the Eskimo hunter's methodology. Under ideal circumstances it can also be the methodology of Western science. (AD, p. 265)

In practical terms, the study of *Umwelten* of the inhabitants of a certain ecosystem can, in addition to expanding scientific knowledge, provide guidelines for minimizing human interference. This can be accomplished by both ethical restraints toward "the familiar" as opposed to aggression toward "the alien," and by learning principles of coexistence from animals, who appear to have had a better record in this respect than humanity. Snyder's poetry provides an image to illustrate Lopez's claim:

> the man who as the soul of the wolf
> knows the self-restraint
> of the wolf
>
> aimless executions and slaughterings
> are not the works of wolves and eagles
> ("Spel Against Demons," in TI, p. 16)

Lopez, however, is skeptical as far as the possibility of transmitting Eskimo knowledge, not to mention animal *Umwelt,* to mainstream science is concerned. "A belief in the authority of statistics and the dismissal of Eskimo narratives as only anecdotal is a dichotomy one encounters frequently in arctic environmental assessment reports. . . . The *Umwelt* of a statistician, certainly, plays a role in developing the 'statistical picture' of a landscape" (AD, p. 270). If the Western and the native environmental perspectives are to merge, it can happen only over a long "field trip" on which the scientist can participate directly in the interaction with the land and expand his awareness through hunting:

> Hunting in my experience--and by hunting I simply mean being out on the land--is a state of mind. All of one's faculties are brought to bear in an effort to become fully incorporated into the landscape. It is more than listening for animals or watching for hoof prints or a shift in the weather. It is more than the analysis of what one *senses.* To hunt means to have the land around you like clothing. . . . It means to release yourself from rational images of what something "means" and to be concerned only that it "is." And then to recognize that things exist only insofar as they can be related to other things. (AD, p. 200)

Lopez's understanding of ecotone applies to such an image of hunting. Once one transcends the Western heritage of perceiving all elements of natural work as objects, and once one establishes a "local and personal" (AD, p. 201) relationship with animals and land, the hunt will take place on the edge of consciousness, between the physical landscape and the "landscape of the mind." Because Lopez insists that ecology should be equally concerned with both landscapes--the environment and its perception in a native mind--such a hunt takes one closer to an actual ecological science.

Skeptical as Lopez is about the Western receptiveness to the primitive worldview, he nevertheless provides examples of successful experiments in this area. Richard Nelson, whose anthropological works are based on research among northern hunters, is characteristically quoted in this respect:

> Several Western scientists, including anthropologist Richard Nelson, marine mammal biologists John Burns, Francis Fay, and Kerry Finley, and terrestrial mammal biologist Robert Stephenson, have sought out Eskimo hunters as field companions in order to get a better understanding of arctic ecology. Nelson . . . wrote a line any one of the others might have written after a year of traveling through the country with these people: "[Their] statements which seem utterly incredible at first almost always turn out to be correct." (AD, p. 271)

Referring to Nelson's Hunters of the Northern Ice and Hunters of the Northern Forest, Sherman Paul (1992) draws attention to the subtitle of the latter book: "Both are studies in the 'Designs for Survival'—*designs* suggesting that we, too, may find something valuable in them" (p. 144). In other words, Nelson's study of the native hunting practice can provide some solutions to the current crises of an ecological nature and contribute to our survival on a larger scale. Their solutions are of a nature similar to those suggested by Snyder and Lopez: expanding our environmental awareness by the study and practice of primitive hunting, as well as alleviating our sense of spiritual estrangement from nature by accepting the prescientific, mystical view of the natural environment. Nelson's works provide a detailed description of hunting techniques, as well as information concerning primitive hunters' beliefs, myths, and rituals. In this respect, Hunters of the Northern Ice, for instance, and Make Prayers to the Raven supplement each other, whereas Shadow of the Hunter synthesizes the information coming

from both sources in its fictionalized hunting narratives. The latter book represents the primitive hunters' worldview, not only its content but also in its form, where the divisions into hunting seasons replace traditional chapters, while the narrative method evokes the primitive mode of teaching--transmission. As Paul (1992) points out in For the Love of the World, Nelson's interest in transmission as the only valuable method of learning adheres to Snyder's vision of education: "And the stories, telling of *old, adult,* and *apprentice* hunters concern transmission (the ancient way of learning upheld by Snyder in Axe Handles) and are themselves its instrument" (p. 142). This type of learning from ancient hunting experience is also, according to Barry Lopez, the only reliable way to supplement contemporary ecological knowledge.

The possibility of acquiring knowledge through transmission, however, is diminishing. This is happening not only because of the reluctance of Western science to accept "unscientific" data, as Lopez points out in Arctic Dreams, but also because the process of acculturation leads to a decline in traditional hunting experience. Regardless of the fact that the primitive hunting tradition of the Koyukon or the Eskimo peoples is presented as grounded in a set of stabilizing myths and rituals, Nelson admits that the tradition is declining:

> The young man must be willing to shrug off continual ridicule and teasing for his errors, and seldom is he able to strike a counterblow. The would-be hunters of the past have been required to endure this "hazing" treatment because for them there was no alternative. . . . Today he can leave the village, find a job in the village, or live as an unproductive consumer. (Hunters of the Northern Ice, hereafter HNI, p. 387)

Nelson, similar to Lopez and Snyder, expresses hope that Western civilization will be able to recognize the process of cultural destruction and act in time to reverse it:

> It is obvious, therefore, that the native economy will die with the passing of the present adult generation. And along with it the fascinating and impressive body of knowledge which has been developed over these hundreds of generations will be lost. It is fortunate that we realize ahead of time that there is considerable practical value, to say nothing of limitless intrinsic worth, in collecting and preserving this information. (HNI, p. 387)

While optimistic, Nelson does not provide many examples of the successful transmission of the primitive hunting heritage into a modern environmental outlook. When he presents success in this regard, it is only on the individual rather than the collective scale. The Island Within serves as an example of such transmission. As the author claims, it is

> an account of my efforts to learn about the island and understand my relationship to it, drawn from a journal I've kept since the process began. At the outset I was mostly interested in exploring the terrain, experiencing the natural community, finding ways to subsist from the animals and plants, and integrating these activities with the teachings of Native American people among whom I had lived. (The Island Within, pp. xi-xii)

Nelson's work documents a conscious contemporary attempt to live in the Old/New way (as Snyder would call it) where hunting would constitute one of the chief means of subsistence. Consequently, The Island Within is a valuable test for the proclamations of contemporary hunters who disregard the idea of sport and attempt to expand their ecological perspective by adhering to primitive hunters' worldview. In Paul's (1992) For the Love of the World, Nelson's work is the subject of a dispute between the two authors (Nelson responds by a letter to

Paul's discussion of the book). One of the main points of this dispute is the issue of moral and ecological justification of hunting. Thus, the argument between Nelson and Paul--in addition to illustrating two interpretations of the book--concerns directly the search for "apologia" for contemporary hunting.

As Paul (1992) points out, The Island Within begins and ends with a recollection of the words of Grandpa William, a Koyukon elder: "A good hunter . . . that's somebody the animals *come* to" (p. 152). Paul, usually intent on finding parallels among Snyder, Lopez, and Nelson, does not comment on the relationship of this opening to similar comments in the works of the other two authors. As a result, he overlooks the distinction--vital in the primitive worldview--between sacrificial (voluntary on the part of an animal) and sacrilegious (voluntary only on the part of the hunter) aspects of hunting. Disregarding this distinction leads to a considerable conflict between the two authors' understanding of hunting, which gives rise to an argument highlighting the division between Snyder's and Thoreau's views. Paul reveals his underlying concern with hunting, even before he begins his discussion of The Island Within. In his comments on Shadow of the Hunter, he objects to violence in hunting:

> Life is taken and life is renewed; the "conversation of death," as Lopez calls it, makes sacred the necessity of killing.
>
> Granted that we need to recover a sacramental sense of life, is there no other way to do this? Is the sacred, as Rene Girard tells us, always coupled with violence? Must civilization always rest on victimage? (p. 144)

As a result of such objections, Paul (1992) deems Nelson's attempt "to live deliberately" a questionable choice:

> For reasons that are creditable yet still, I think, insufficient, Nelson . . . has chosen not only to live as the Koyukon people do, with respect, humility, and restraint in the watchful world, but to hunt, "to take a portion of [his] family's food from the land and sea." Necessity does not press him to do this; not even the desire to know where his food comes from, so much as the desire to participate in the flow whereby death furthers life, to be an agent and locus of his fundamental transformation, itself a paradigm of how the world enters us, how an island without becomes an island within. (p. 153)

Paul's (1992) objections are rooted in an impressive heritage of ecological thought, beginning with Thoreau's already quoted claim that hunting is to be "outgrown" in the course of acquiring a biocentric perspective. Paul not only views Nelson's book from such a critical angle, he also ascribes similar doubts about hunting to the author himself: "But Nelson has misgivings about hunting--these more often than want of luck brings failure--and more often than not foregoes killing" (p. 153). Paul ascribes this tendency to Nelson's double cultural allegiance, where the "civilized" outlook promotes humane restraint. In the conclusion to his discussion of The Island Within, Paul claims that:

> For most of us, the hunter's way is not an ontological possibility. Leopold's husbandry of the wild, Snyder's inhabitation of the San Juan Ridge, and Berry's settlement of America are most useful and demonstrably political models. This is not to say that we have nothing to learn from the ancestral wisdom of hunting peoples. They have thought Nelson to be watchful in a watchful world, and this is a fundamental lesson that we too much learn. (p. 162)

However fundamental, such a lesson appears limited, compared with the faith Nelson puts in the environmental value of primitive hunting. Consequently,

in his letter to Paul, he meticulously lists the former's reservations about hunting and responds to them in a detailed fashion. In the subsequent discussion of Nelson's defense, the arguments will be presented in order following that of Paul's objections, rather than in the way they were presented by Nelson--because the order of Paul's objections appears characteristic of the mainstream reservations against hunting.

Nelson does not directly address Paul's omission of the distinction between sacrilegious and sacrificial hunting. On the other hand, he responds to the notion of victimage as a basis of hunting. His response points to the persistent presence of killing of one kind of another in life, which we deem "victimage" only if its manifestation is fairly obvious:

> The essay asks Girard's question, "Is the sacred always coupled with violence?" I believe that it is true only if "violence" includes the killing of plants by gatherers and the destruction of natural communities by traditional and modern agriculturists, many of whom surround their plant-focused activities with sacred beliefs and religious rituals. The further question, about civilization resting on victimage, is an interesting one. Perhaps the most elementary of ecological principles is that life sustains itself in other life. If we accept the idea of "victimage" and the moral judgment it implies, then worms are the victims of robins and mice are the victims of foxes, as surely as goldthread and flowering dogwood are the victims of deer. (Paul, 1992, p. 169)

Whereas Nelson tactfully dismisses Paul's argument on logical grounds, he does not use any of the arguments that come from the primitive worldview. He might have done so in order to further dismiss the notion of victimage (incompatible with voluntary sacrifice) by pointing out the concept of reciprocity in primitive hunting beliefs. This concept is the basis on which Roderick Nash (in

Calicott, 1987) demonstrates certain inconsistencies in Aldo Leopold's land ethics: "Leopold simply dismissed the notion that animals, plants, and soil had reciprocal ethical obligations toward people. For Leopold it was a one-way street: Humans were the ones to exercise restraint, to extend their ethics to include nature" (p. 79). This concept of unilateral obligations is at odds with the concept of biocentric equality and delegates to humans a superior position. Consequently, when Paul (1992), influenced by Leopold, views killing of animals as victimization, even when it is combined with ritualistic restrictions that ensure survival of the species, he steps outside of a perspective that he professes to represent.

Nelson's subsequent argument concerns the necessity of his hunting, which in Paul's opinion is a weak justification of the author's experiment. Nelson responds by drawing attention to the fact that "Athabascan Indians and Inupiaq Eskimos have long had access to imported agricultural foods," and it is by choice, not necessity, that they depend on hunting for subsistence (Paul, 1992, p. 175). Consequently, Nelson himself should not be condemned for choosing to hunt, any more than the native population should, provided that hunting indeed becomes his chief means of subsistence. Moreover, because The Island Within demonstrates how hunting contributes to developing the primitive view of the environment, and that in turn contributes to successful hunting, Paul's implication that an ecologically valid mode of life can be developed without hunting seems to be oblivious to the connection between the two. His use of Snyder's

inhabitation of Shasta Nation as an example of a valid mode of existence alternative to hunting appears to contradict Snyder's vision of primitive hunting as a way of atonement for contemporary "logging." A similar instance of Paul's selectiveness in recognizing connections between lifestyle and its effects on the land is related to his belief that we are capable of "outgrowing" hunting in the present. As Nelson points out, "If we accept the lifeways of traditional people like Eskimos and Athabascan Indians as one valid measure, my focus on active, outdoor living is appropriate for a mature adult" (Paul, 1992, p. 170). In addition, Nelson points out that Paul's implication that hunting is a somehow childish endeavor is determined by the latter's inability to transcend the outdated aspects of Western anthropology:

> In our Western tradition, removed from day-to-day working relationship with our surroundings, we often regard the outdoors primarily as a source of adventure, play, pleasure for the senses, and other pursuits commonly associated with the freedoms of youth. Hunting is strongly perceived as a form of recreation, not as a kind of legitimate work or a way of life to be undertaken by responsible adults. As a serious endeavor, hunting and the intensely outdoors lifeway associated with it are conceived as the realm of the "primitive" or "archaic" peoples, whom we may respect but also believe we have evolved beyond. (Anthropologists, of course, recognize that these cultures are highly evolved in their own direction as we are in ours, just as biologists recognize that all organisms are equally "advanced," though on separate evolutionary courses.) (Paul, 1992, p. 165)

For Nelson, just as for Snyder, one matures into being a hunter, not regresses toward it. This mature identity of a hunter, however, does not exclude the possibility of deriving pleasure from the pursuit. Even if such pleasure signifies indulgence in bloodthirsty instincts, it is natural rather than wrong, if we look at it from a biological point of view: "A similar challenge of sorting out

motivations with regard to biological processes seems to underlie the religious edicts deeming sex for procreation conscionable while sex for pleasure is not; as if it were possible to carry out the act of procreation without pleasure" (Paul, 1992, p. 176).

This last argument is to some extent related to the issue of hunting for pleasure and entertainment. Nelson does not seem to agree with Paul's implications that only "civilized" allegiances promote nonacquisitive hunting. Instead, he points to the native practices of "hunting" or stalking animals: "I have been with Koyukon people when they stalked within a few yards of animals, having no intention to hunt them, wishing only to be near them and to see them closely" (Paul, 1992, p. 171). As a result, Nelson refuses to acknowledge the validity of Paul's distinction between "civilized watcher" and "primitive hunter." As far as the Western hunting for sport is concerned, Nelson treats this issue with more equanimity than Harrison, McGuane, or Snyder, and even admits some basic affinity between himself and a typical sportsman: "Although I do not consider myself a sport hunter or sport fisherman, I have much more in common with those who are, than with the leaders of Exxon or Dow Chemical. To me, our shared purpose of keeping natural communities intact is more important than the differences in how we choose to engage ourselves with those communities" (Paul, 1992, p. 169).

Nelson appears considerably more at east in his defense of primitive hunting that Paul is in his attack. This may be ascribed to the fact that Nelson's

arguments reflect the same interconnectedness and consistency that characterize the primitive hunting worldview, where the lapses of scientific nature are compensated with the mystical and ethical perception of the environment. On the other hand, occasional shortcomings of Paul's arguments reflect the same insufficiency of the Western worldview, which Lopez considers characteristic of our science of ecology--inadequate knowledge of connections due to our lack of willingness to supplement science with awe, as well as the persistent conviction that humanity has to perform a special role in the natural community. Nelson's defense of hunting in For the Love of the World to some extent provides an answer to the torn ecological conscience of the contemporary hunter. Nelson, similar to Snyder and Lopez, suggests that the rituals of appeasement, a humble acknowledgment of human dependence on nonhumans' benevolence toward us, are not only a necessary element of primitive hunting, but also something that we, as humans, should perform in relation to the earth in the nearest future, if we want to survive. A revival of primitive hunting could be the most direct way of acknowledging such dependence. On a mass scale, however, it would probably be sufficient to realize our indebtedness to nature and the wilderness for sustaining our life.

CHAPTER V

AFTER HEMINGWAY: THE EVOLUTION OF THE SPORTING MYTH

> But the most satisfaction is to dominate and convince the fish and bring him intact in everything but spirit to the boat as rapidly as possible. (Hemingway, 1936)
>
> . . . To expect nothing of nature, but to humbly receive its mystery, beauty, food and life. . . . This is the source of success for a hunter or a watcher; not skill, not cleverness, not guile. Something is only given in nature, never taken. (Nelson, 1989)

Critical responses to contemporary American literature dealing with hunting and fishing often include references to "the Hemingway tradition." This tendency, resented by writers such as Jim Harrison and Tom McGuane, provides an interesting insight into the American understanding of hunting and fishing. Regardless of the fact that Hemingway was neither the first in American history, nor the only writer in his time, to deal with the subject of hunting and fishing, it is his accomplishment rather than Cooper's, Melville's, or Faulkner's that still serves as a common denominator for the theme of the outdoor adventures. Seemingly, Hemingway's treatment of the subject has given the fullest expression of American understanding of human interaction with nature.

The opening quotations illustrate the difference between Hemingway's perception of the ultimate thrill of hunting and fishing and that of Richard Nelson,

a contemporary anthropologist, writer, and hunter. Whereas Hemingway stresses the triumph of human will over nature, Nelson expresses the primitive belief that human will plays only a subordinate role in the outcome of the hunt. For Hemingway, hunting or fishing is a matter of "taking" a fish, a lion, or a deer; for Nelson, it implies life being given. For Hemingway, hunting or fishing is a test of self, whereas Nelson sees it as a test of belonging to a larger than human community of sentient and enspirited beings. In short, the differences between the two attitudes toward hunting and fishing stem from anthropocentric and biocentric perspectives on nature.

The quotations, however, illustrate only an extreme case of disparity between Hemingway's and contemporary perception of hunting in American literature. The contrast is, of course, much more complex. Hemingway's description of the greatest satisfaction in fishing does not convey the sum of his outlook on hunting and fishing. Even though it emphasizes recurrent ideas of the author, it fails to render the evolution of the hunting theme in Hemingway's later works. This evolution beyond the "sporting" myth is apparent in The Old Man and the Sea, where the protagonist perceives his contest with the fish in terms of human sin rather than human right. The comparison between Hemingway's and Nelson's ideas of a successful hunt reflects two distinctly different outlooks on human interaction with nature; the evolution in Hemingway's perception of hunting and fishing validates the claim that these two different traditions share some common characteristics. This study reevaluates a critical approach, both to

Hemingway and to contemporary American literature, in the light of recent developments in the literary treatment of human interactions with nature.

Just as "the Hemingway tradition" is the common denominator for American literature of hunting and fishing, "outdoor sports" is the term that critics such as Carlos Baker, Edmund Wilson in Hemingway's time, Gregory S. Sojka, and Wiley Lee Umphlett more recently commonly apply to describe Hemingway's understanding of the subject. As Wiley Lee Umphlett (1975) suggests, Hemingway perceived hunting and fishing as a sport or a game:

> In presenting his heroes' experience through the dominant metaphor of the game or confrontation, Hemingway has forged a vividly dramatic and forceful means of conveying universal ideas about twentieth century man. From the episodic experiences of Nick Adams to the epic quest of Santiago and even the posthumously published Islands in the Stream, the Hemingway vision has dramatized through ritualistic sports of hunting, fishing, boxing, and bullfighting, modern man's struggle to define himself, not only on a literal but also a deeper, metaphorical level. (p. 18)

Umphlett's description of hunting and fishing as ritualistic sports provides an important qualification. The ritualistic dimension of Hemingway's treatment of the outdoor subject contributes to the appeal of the sporting life because the notion of the rituals, rather than rules, suggests the sacred rather than profane occupation. This quality of hunting and fishing is often evoked by Jim Harrison, Gary Snyder, Richard Nelson, and Barry Lopez. The similarity, however, is only superficial. For Hemingway, "fishing evolves as a ritualistic act that saves men from *nada* their chaotic lives" (Sojka, 1985, p. 40), and so the rituals exist as an individual defense against emptiness--or lack of any belief system--rather than as an expression of a belief system itself.

The contemporary authors, in turn, discuss the ritualistic quality of hunting and fishing in terms of a definite belief system, characteristic of a primitive worldview. Snyder's description of a Native American hunter illustrates the interrelatedness between rituals and beliefs:

> Let me describe how a friend of mine from a Rio Grande pueblo hunts. He is twenty seven years old. The Pueblo Indians . . . begin their hunt by purifying themselves. They take emetics, a sweat bath, and perhaps avoid their wife for a few days. They also try not to think certain thoughts. They go out hunting in an attitude of humility. They make sure that they need to hunt, that they are not hunting without necessity. Then they improvise a song while they are in the mountains. . . . It is a song to the deer, asking the deer to be willing to die for them. They usually still-hunt, taking a place alongside a trail. The feeling is that you are not hunting the deer, the deer is coming to you; you make yourself available for the deer that will present itself to you, that has given itself to you. Then you shoot it. After you shoot it, you cut the head off and place the head facing east. You sprinkle corn meal in front of the mouth of the deer, and you pray to the deer, asking it to forgive you for having killed it, to understand that we all need to eat, and to please make a good report to the other deer spirits that he has been treated well. ("Energy Is Eternal Delight," in TI, p. 110)

Snyder presents a vision of hunting in which all the rituals are manifestations of a powerful, nature-oriented myth, and the hunter's behavior is not indicative of a search for order; it expresses it instead. Those of Hemingway's works that demonstrate the "proper" hunting conduct share only superficial similarities with this vision. Both Nick Adams in "The Big Two-Hearted River" and Jake Barnes in The Sun Also Rises do not talk (or think) about certain things, yet their restraint results from different reasons than respect for the act of hunting. The subjects that are avoided deal with war, women, and God; thus, they are related to personal disappointment and emotional crisis. A similar kind of restraint, which characterizes contemporary hunting protagonists, results from the

conviction that nature is aware of the hunter's behavior. Adherence to this belief, characteristic of the primitive hunter's worldview, is illustrated in Nelson's description of Koyukon speech taboos:

> Sometimes, for instance, a man will decide against hunting an occupied den alone; but when he comes home he avoids any mention of his find, knowing that the animal's spirit is ever aware. Then, shortly before he begins his trip back to the den, he goes to another man and explains his discovery with indirect words, asking if he will come along for the hunt. Talking openly about it would assure that the bear would be gone when they reached the den. (Make Prayers to the Raven, hereafter MPR, p. 176)

The conduct of a contemporary hunter who wants to reenact the ancient rituals is related to nature's, not personal, awareness. Hemingway's ritualistic quality of hunting reflecting the search of personal order does not imply reverence for nature or the act itself. Contemporary literature dealing with the subject of fishing and hunting, however, evokes rituals as a tribute to the sacred exchange of life. This distinction is further magnified by the fact that, in Snyder's description, hunting requires prior, ritual, purification, whereas for Hemingway hunting and fishing themselves are supposed to purify the protagonist. Even though critical discussions of Hemingway's sportsman code stress the fact that "the pursuit, not the goal, is the thing" (Umphlett, 1975, p. 49), this claim may be true only as far as the actual process of hunting or fishing is concerned; these activities are not valued for themselves, but for their beneficial effect on the protagonist.

Both Umphlett and Sojka stress that the world of ritualized sports provides an escape from reality: "Fishing and other activities that Hemingway and his

fictional people participate in serve an important function as alternative realities that are not only ideal but also more viable than life in the real world. A game with its own set of clearly defined rules provides an ordering process" (Sojka, 1985, p. 4). The preference for the "alternative reality" of hunting and fishing can be viewed as a common denominator for Hemingway's and contemporary hunting protagonists. Nick Adams and Harrison's Swanson (Wolf) or McGuane's Skelton (NTS) believe that their sanity is restored in such a retreat. However, the relationship between hunting and fishing and the "real" world is different, as far as Hemingway's and the "biocentric" hunters are concerned. For the former, disappointment with reality results from the loss of ideals and beliefs, alienation and displacement--not from environmental destruction. For the representatives of the latter perspective, environmental destruction is invariably linked to psychological and spiritual impoverishment and provides one of the chief arguments against the world as it is. Hunting and fishing for Hemingway signifies an alternative reality in terms of its effects on protagonists' psyches, rather than on the world itself. For contemporary writers, such as Harrison, Nelson, Lopez, and Snyder, the world of hunting and fishing is the world as it should be, not only in terms of human conduct, but specifically in terms of human relationship with the natural environment. As a result, outdoor sports for Hemingway imply an escape from society toward self and affirmation of self in a competitive endeavor. For contemporary, "biocentric," hunters, it means escaping from human society

toward a larger community of interconnected life forms where the boundary between human self and the nonhuman "other" is often obliterated.

The evolution of public ecological consciousness has developed more slowly than the evolution of the theme of hunting in literature. The difference between Hemingway's perception of hunting and fishing as sport (separate from reality) and a contemporary vision of hunting and fishing as a way of life (ultimate reality) is radical, yet the latter is still considered to be a subcategory of the former. Harrison illustrates that tendency in "La Venerie Francaise":

> As an instance, whenever most fellow writers of assistant professor mentalities learn that I hunt and fish they usually say something on the order of "Oh gawd, the Hemingway bit!" The grand one from Oak Park has made it difficult for others in his craft. In any event my usual response to the quip is unquotable. (Just Before Dark, p. 90)

That Hemingway's literary treatment of hunting and fishing still provides the matrix for evaluation of contemporary literature dealing with this subject results from the combination of two factors: the persistence of the Judeo-Christian, anthropocentric perspective toward nature in Western culture, and the appeal of the sporting myth to the American public.

The first factor, referred to as the "Abrahamic concept of land" in Aldo Leopold's "The Land Ethic" explains the appeal of Hemingway's protagonists' quest for peace and self-affirmation in the great outdoors even if the trail of such a quest is marked with skeletons of marlins, lions, and kudus. In his preoccupation with the human side of hunting and fishing, Hemingway adheres to a centuries-long tradition of subjecting nature's priorities to those of human

kind, where the death of an animal is justified not only as a means of providing subsistence, but also when it provides a test of courage, a measure of skill, or--in an extreme case--pure entertainment. Hemingway's criticism of society sometimes includes the denunciation of its attitude toward nature (this aspect of his writing will be discussed later in this chapter in relation to The Green Hills of Africa). Hemingway's criticism of human interaction with nature, however, does not culminate in rejecting the belief in humans' superiority over nature. The philosophical summary of Santiago's fishing trip is "a man can be destroyed but not defeated," whereas contemporary ecological philosophy (and its representatives, Snyder, Nelson, and Lopez) indicates that anthropocentrism leads to both self-defeat and self-destruction. Whenever Hemingway's fascination with hunting and fishing is criticized as an expression of a juvenile mentality, an obsessive search for self-assertion, or a manifestation of insecure masculinity, these arguments reflect an opposition toward hunting in general rather than toward Hemingway's treatment of the subject. This criticism of Hemingway's favorite theme stems from the conviction that literature should outgrow outdoor sports as a subject because humanity has already outgrown its hunting stage. This conviction is essentially anthropocentric because it perpetuates the belief in the unique ability of humans to progress beyond their direct dependence on killing for survival. Consequently, whether Hemingway's description of hunting is applauded or denounced, the public reaction to his writing is rooted in the sense of human superiority to the natural order.

The lack of a popular appeal of a biocentric approach to fishing and hunting as a literature subject, and its subsequent classification under "the Hemingway tradition," result to a large extent from the lack of spectacular competition in the primitive type of hunting that Nelson and Harrison depict. As the opening quotation suggests, Nelson perceives the death of an animal as a result of a voluntary sacrifice to the hunter; consequently, self-affirmation and victory in the encounter are secondary to the sense of cooperation and benevolence of the participants. Hemingway, on the other hand, even if he perceives the struggle with an animal in terms of a temporary alliance in The Old Man and the Sea, portrays this alliance in terms of a contest between the two noble opponents, where the kill results from man's superiority, not from the magnanimity of the fish. Whenever Hemingway presents nature as noble, the nobility reinforces the value of human victory. Invariably, for Hemingway, hunting and fishing is a competitive endeavor. The reverence for competition is characteristic of American culture, as Umphlett (1975) points out in The Sporting Myth and the American Experience:

> For a country in which "society" as a compactly organized unit never really existed, the search for identity or a sense of community could be realized through the hunt or the game because these activities demanded for their successful pursuit or performance qualities that Americans have always admired. . . . Here is an experience that is so indigenous to American fiction that characters who undergo it often take on mythical dimensions. (pp. 20-21)

Hemingway's vision of hunting and fishing has been elevated to a mythical dimension due to its adherence to the basic elements of the American

experience. As Umphlett claims, these elements consist of the antithetical treatment of nature and society (p. 22), mobility of the protagonist (p. 24), and a quest for innocence and self-realization (p. 24). These notions provide parallels not only between Hemingway and James Fenimore Cooper, but in more general terms signify an affinity between the author and the history of the country.

The contemporary treatment of hunting and fishing adventures evokes a different set of ideas. Whenever nature and society appear as antithetical (for instance, in McGuane's The Sporting Club or Snyder's Turtle Island) it is an "unnatural" condition that should be amended by a transition to a biocentric community. The mobility of an archetypal American invites critical comparison to a "grasshopper man" in Snyder's poetry, where uprootedness and the consequent disregard for natural surroundings is juxtaposed with the notion of "inhabitation" (implying more responsibility and restraint in the interaction with one's permanent location). The search for innocence in nature, or the image of nature as a playground for humans, is contrasted with the belief in ontogenical maturity of the primitive hunters expressed by Snyder in Real Work (p. 117) and Nelson in For the Love of the World (p. 165). Finally, self-realization on Harrison's, Nelson's, or Snyder's terms denotes the obliteration of the boundaries between nature and self, rather than self-definition accomplished by a competitive encounter. As a result, the contemporary perception of fishing and hunting in literature renounces rather than reflects the American experience. This tendency is most visible in Snyder's Myths & Texts and Turtle Island, and Harrison's

"Passacaglia on Getting Lost," where the authors link environmental destruction to American history.

> The U.S.A. slowly lost its mandate
> in the middle and later twentieth century
> it never gave the mountains and rivers
> trees and animals
> a vote.
> ("Tomorrow's Song," in II, p. 77)

Harrison is more direct than Snyder in his criticism of American history: "It was greed that discovered this country, greed that murdered the Indians, greed that daily shits on the heads of those who love nature" ("PGL," p. 233). The contemporary authors present redemptive encounters with nature in terms of a search for the primitive, specifically Native American, experience, rather than a reenactment of the pioneer experience. As a result, their treatment of the subject is not likely to be absorbed into the mainstream American culture as a canon of outdoors literature; instead, it is safely and inaccurately classified as the continuation of the Hemingway sporting myth on the basis of a superficial similarity.

Hemingway's hunting and fishing is the search for affirmation of one's outstanding status among other humans and nature. Hunting and fishing depicted by Harrison, McGuane, Nelson, and Snyder is the search for affirmation of one's equal status among all life forms. This difference is apparent whenever Hemingway and contemporary authors depict nature. For Hemingway, nature is either a background or an adversary; it is never a protagonist itself. Contemporary literature of hunting and fishing often portrays nature--both the prey

and the setting--as an enspirited and sentient participant. This is the way that Snyder presents the bear in Myths & Texts, when he asks him to "come out and die of your own choice," the way in which Harrison depicts Joseph stalking the coyote in Farmer, or the way Nelson portrays and island and the deer in The Island Within. This perception of nature derives its heritage not only from the biocentric outlook of American nature writing, but also from a much older tradition of primitive hunting peoples.

When Hemingway attempts to penetrate the mind and motions of the prey, he does so in a manner that stresses the difference and opposition between the hunter and the hunted:

> The lion still stood looking majestically and coolly toward that object that his eyes only showed in a silhouette, bulking like some super-rhino. There was no man smell carried toward him and he watched the object, moving his great head a little from side to side. . . . He trotted, heavy, full bellied through the trees toward the tall grass and cover, and the crash came again to go past him ripping the air apart. Then it crashed again and he felt the blow as it hit his lower ribs and ripped on through, blood sudden hot and frothy in his mouth, and he galloped toward the high grass where he could crouch and not be seen and make them bring the crashing thing close enough so he could make a rush and get the man that held it. ("The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," in The Fifth Column and First Forty-Nine Stories, hereafter FC, p. 114)

The lion, in Hemingway's description, sees humans as "objects," similar to the way humans see the lion. Hemingway's attempt to penetrate the lion's emotions results in a predictable image of anger, hatred, and vengeance. The fictional lion does not exceed the limits of human expectations; its emotions justify the hunter's urge to kill. The lion exists purely as a prop in providing the setting for the test of Macomber's sportsmanship. Hemingway objectifies the prey by

portraying its responses as purely instinctual, and its role in the hunt as secondary. Critical responses to the short story reinforce that impression and perpetuate the tendency to objectify nature: "Where the lion was an instrument for the establishment and build-up of emotional tension, the oncoming horns of the buffalo are the pronged forceps for Macomber's moral birth" (Baker, 1963, p. 187).

Unlike Hemingway and his critics, contemporary writers avoid describing the prey in a predictable manner. Snyder describes the deer as initiators of a hunt (Regarding Wave, p. 65), and Harrison's protagonist in Farmer envisions the coyote amused by human clumsiness. This disparity between Hemingway and contemporary "biocentric" writers is most evident in their description of the culmination of a hunt. Whereas in Harrison's Farmer or McGuane's Ninety-Two in the Shade the protagonist's moral growth is marked by eventual reluctance to bring hunting or fishing to a conclusion, Macomber's maturity follows his resolution to participate in another hunt and to shoot the buffalo, this time without hesitation. For Richard Nelson, the teachers are the Koyukon elders who say "a good hunter is somebody the animals come to," and in The Island Within, the author integrates their teachings in his very selective hunting. Macomber's education follows a different course: "The lessons Wilson has been teaching him are now his own. A wounded buffalo gets away, as the lion did, and he can hardly wait to go in after the beast" (Young, 1966, p. 65).

In Hemingway's works, the education of a hunter promotes a competitive attitude toward the hunt. Hemingway's heroes strive against three categories of opponents: nature, other hunters, and self. The competition against other hunters reflects Hemingway's personal traits more than it reveals his philosophy of hunting. Consequently, most instances of competition among hunters come from the autobiographical The Green Hills of Africa. As Gregory Sojka (1985) suggests, this type of competition is equally apparent in Hemingway's attitude toward writing, or life in general:

> Hemingway's life illustrated his competitive spirit and determination to excel. . . . The intense competition with "Karl" in Green Hills of Africa provides another example of Hemingway's competitive spirit. . . . Central to Hemingway's philosophy of life and literature stands the necessity for each man to use his innate potential: if he does not reach his full potential, his life is a failure. (p. 9)

The size of the trophy is the measure of success in this contest. The author eventually denounces this aspect of hunting and fishing, most notably in The Old Man and the Sea, yet recurrent references to the size of the prey in most of his works remain a distinctive characteristic. Even Santiago's return with the largest skeleton of marlin ever seen in his village is a manifestation of a (possibly subconscious) need to validate his status as an *ex-salao*; otherwise, it is impossible to see a reason for hauling the skeleton back to the port. Although it would be unfair to discuss Hemingway's understanding of hunting and fishing predominantly in terms of competition with other sportsmen, this aspect constitutes the most visible difference between his and contemporary attitudes. Trophy hunting in the works of Harrison and McGuane is the subject of criticism

and ridicule. Competition between hunters is presented not only as an instance of environmental destructiveness, but also as the path of self-destruction. This aspect of competitiveness is most apparent in McGuane's The Sporting Club, where Stanton goes beyond the boundaries of caution and reason, and fishes the stream during a violent thunderstorm. He almost dies in the process; however, he lands the largest catch of the day. Nobody is particularly impressed with his feat; his friends are mostly worried about his sanity, while the other members of the sporting club are drunk and distracted. The triumph does not seem to affect Stanton either, and in the course of the novel his mental instability deepens. In The Sporting Club, McGuane presents a skeptical version of Santiago's experience just like in Ninety-Two in the Shade he explores the risks of Hemingway's idea of apprenticeship, the sporting code, and masculine competition.

Competition against nature and competition against self, the remaining two elements of Hemingway's "essential encounter," can be linked together. Competition against self (one's own weakness, fear, and self-indulgence) also signifies a contest with nature because the protagonists have to conquer their own animalistic instincts in order to become mature hunters. Never is this tendency more highlighted than in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," when Harry's soul transcends the domain of the hyena (animalistic, materialistic existence) and joins the league of the dead leopard in "man's attempt to transcend his animal nature and to reach a spiritual plane of existence, no matter what the cost," according to

Robert O. Stephens (1960). Stephens links the theme of this short story to that of The Old Man and the Sea and considers the common denominator for both an "account of man against animal instinct with the motifs of fateful choice and of search beyond ordinary limits" (p. 86). According to Robert W. Lewis (1966) in "Vivienne de Watteville, Hemingway's Companion on Kilimanjaro," an attempt to transcend the animal nature can be fulfilled only in death because "in life such transcendence is denied" (p. 79).

Thus, the highest level of Hemingwayan hunting denotes the triumph of a human soul over the limits of the physical world. The juxtaposition of animalistic body and divine soul is, according to both J. Baird Callicott (1989) and Lynn White (1968), yet another aspect of Western cultural heritage, contributing to the environmental problems of the twentieth century:

> The Pythagorean/Platonic concept of the soul as immortal and other-worldly, essentially foreign to the hostile physical world, has profoundly influenced the European attitude towards nature. . . . The essential self, the part of a person by means of which he or she perceives or thinks, and in which resides virtue or vice, is not of this world, and has more in common with gods than with nature. If the natural world is the place of trial and temptation for the soul, if the body is the prison and the tomb for the soul, then nature must be despised as the source of all misery and corruption, a place of ear and loathing. (Callicott, 1989, p. 182)

Contemporary "biocentric" writers do not glorify the notion of going beyond the physical world. Snyder advocates hunting as an affirmation of physical life, an activity in which body and soul, the hunter and the hunted, are not subject to any hierarchy of values, but united in their participation in the circle of life. Hunting, in his works, promotes physical and, on a wider scale, environmental existence.

It does not signify going beyond geographical, topographic, or psychological limits, but staying at psychobiotic home.

The difference between Hemingway's and contemporary hunting tradition is apparent not only as far as the contest with nature "within" is concerned, but also in relation to challenging nature "outside." The basic reason for that division, the primitive belief in "life being given, not taken," has been discussed earlier, in relation to Richard Nelson's The Island Within. The division between triumph and sacrifice, however, is not the only indication of the evolution in hunting literature. Hemingway, as Stephens (1960) suggests, employs "an intuitive ranking of the hunted animals into the noble and the obscene. The prehistoric rhinoceros and the hermaphroditic hyena are obscene; the lion, leopard, kudu, and water buffalo are naturally noble" (p. 87). To some extent, this classification suggests similarity between Hemingway's and Harrison's, Nelson's, and McGuane's views. Nelson, in his study of the primitive worldview, discusses the classification employed by Koyukon people, which, for instance, ranks a wolverine and brown bear higher than a black bear or an elk (MPR, p. 184). Harrison often expresses his personal reverence toward a wolf, a coyote, and a crow, whereas McGuane talks in a similar manner about permit and bonefish. However, the similarity ends at this point. For Hemingway the nobility of the game enhances the value of the kill; therefore, the confrontation with the noble species is the ultimate goal of the hunt. The contemporary writers refrain from killing their "totem" animals; instead, they derive value from the inconclusive pursuit. Killing these animals is a sacrilegious

act for Harrison and McGuane and, if described, serves as a further denouncement of those who do it for sport.

Another aspect of the differences between Hemingway's and the biocentric view of the hunted species is of a philosophical and scientific nature: from the deep ecological point of view, any distinction between desirable and undesirable species is artificial and environmentally ignorant. Biocentric equality, by definition, assumes equal standing of all forms of life and interconnectedness that exceeds the range of human judgment. Even if the primitive hunting worldview "discriminates" against certain species in matters of spiritual power, as Nelson demonstrates in Make Prayers to the Raven, it does not imply that such species should be eliminated. In this respect, Hemingway does not stop at expressing his dislike for the "profane" animals: "We shot thirty five hyena out of the lot that follow the wildebeest migration to keep after the cows that are about to calve and wish we had ammunition to kill a hundred" ("a.d. in Africa: A Tanganyika Letter," p. 146).

Hemingway's action and rationale resemble American conservationist policies aiming at the elimination of wolves in order to maintain a high deer population. Snyder's and Harrison's responses to such a practice, exemplified, respectively, by "The Call of the Wild" and Wolf, evoke Aldo Leopold's (1949/ 1974) criticism of human arrogance in manipulating the natural order: "[I] thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunter's paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the

mountain agreed with such a view" (p. 138). Consequently, the contemporary distrust of a conservationist rationale for hunting further supports the thesis that Hemingway and the "biocentric" authors should not be classified as exponents of the same worldview.

The notion of "noble" and "profane" animals in Hemingway's works is linked to the recurrent characterization of outdoor sports as a masculine domain. In Hemingway's diction, "noble" animals are invariably male. As Robert O. Lewis (1966) points out in "Vivienne de Watteville, Hemingway's Companion on Kilimanjaro," "Hemingway's bestiaries . . . divide animals into either the rapacious, foul, cowardly, and villainous or the noble, courageous, and 'manly'" (p. 78). It is the pursuit of a "manly" animal that constitutes the proper hunt; killing the female of the "noble" species (as well as any member of the "profane" species) is only a preparatory measure: "'In the old days,' the white hunter said, 'the rule was to shoot the lioness first. Damned sensible rule'" ("Shootism vs. Sport: The Second Tanganyika Letter," p. 19).

Hemingway's outlook is quite contagious, because his critics also perceive the adventures of his protagonists in terms of documenting one's manhood instead of documenting courage, determination, or moral growth. Phillip Young (1966) exemplifies this tendency when he claims that Margot shoots her husband because she is unable to recognize "the hero's new life as a man" (p. 74). Hemingway's critics hardly ever miss the implications involved in the division between a "profane" female and a "noble" male; thus, a large portion of their work

is devoted to this juxtaposition. In most cases, including Leslie Fiedler's (1960) statement that women in Hemingway's fiction represent oppressive society (as opposed to restorative nature), this assumption is well documented. As Oliver Evans (1961) demonstrates, Helen in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" comes closest to the embodiment of feminine destructiveness because she shares the symbolic implications of "death in life" with society, wealth, hot plains, and the hyena: "Of the various death symbols, Helen is the most important: the vultures and the hyena are waiting in the hope that he will die; Helen is waiting in the hope that he will live--but live a death-in-life" (p. 604). Consequently, Hemingway's contribution to the sporting myth reinforces the assumption that the outdoors is a place for men without women, and such men (including authors) represent an extremely sexist attitude.

Preoccupation with the pattern should not, however, dismiss the possibility of exceptions. Although most of the critics (Philip Young, Carlos Baker, Edmund Wilson, and Leslie Fiedler) claim that in Margot Macomber Hemingway portrayed an ultimate "bitch" who murders her husband on the verge of his graduating to "moral manhood," Warren Beck (1955) in "The Shorter Happy Life of Mrs. Macomber" and Robert B. Holland (1967) in "Macomber and the Critics" adopt a different approach. "Surely if Hemingway had meant that there was a pretense of aiming at the animal, if Margot merely 'ostensibly' aimed at it, he would not have written that she 'shot at the buffalo,'" claims Holland. Beck supports this

thesis by demonstrating that Margot is portrayed from Wilson's point of view--and Wilson, as a narrator, is inadequate in his judgments:

> Perhaps Wilson's absolute and complacent assurance about the ethics he does understand leads him to estimate too carelessly other matters which may lie beyond his intuitions; or perhaps it is Wilson's naivete and uncertainty beyond his narrow limits which has accustomed him to muddling along by blunt guesswork. In either case, who is Wilson, that so many readers have strung along with him--this hunter with a first and great commandment and no other, who will welcome an employer's wife to his cot but not if it seems inexpedient, who would illegally order the natives lashed because they may prefer it to having their wages docked, who will illegally chase buffalo in a car as long as the shooting is done on foot to take the chance of the animal's charging, this steely-eyed professional with the muddy boots, this red-faced Mr. Wilson with the white forehead, whose speculations about the Macombers reiterate a yes and then again no. (p. 32)

This approach to "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" opens new critical possibilities. The most immediate result is a reevaluation of the "bitch" stereotype in Hemingway's works and criticism. A less direct--and more relevant for this study--implication of a thesis that Margot Macomber is not a "bitch" results from her questioning Wilson's hunting code.

As Beck (1955) points out, Margot notices that Wilson's hunting code is inconsistent. Under usual circumstances, Wilson is as strict as Hemingway himself about shooting animals from cars:

> For a man to shoot at a lion from the protection of a motor car, where a lion cannot even see what it is that is attacking him, is not only illegal but is a cowardly way to assassinate one of the finest of all game animals. . . . If you shoot as you should on the Serengeti, having the car drive off as you get out, the chances are that the first shot will be a moving shot, as the lions will move off when they see the man on foot. That means that unless you are a good or a very lucky shot there will be a wounded lion and a possible charge. So do not let anyone tell you that lion shooting . . . is no longer a sporting show. It will be exactly as dangerous as you choose to

> make it. The only way the danger can be removed or mitigated is by your ability to shoot, and that is as it should be. . . . But you will be more of a sportsman to come back from Africa without a lion than to shoot one from the protection of a motor car, or from the blind at night when the lion is blinded by a light and cannot see his assailant. ("Shootism vs. Sport: The Second Tanganyika Letter," p. 150)

Wilson's priorities and emotions, however, are likely to undermine the commandments that differentiate hunting from shootism. In "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," this happens when, anxious to fulfill his contractual obligations as soon as possible, Wilson allows a car chase of the buffaloes. This breach of the hunter's code is not unprecedented in Hemingway's works. Hemingway himself, in The Green Hills of Africa, perseveres in his search for a wounded buffalo only to the point where his guide tells him it is time to quit: "We both felt good because we had made Droopy do the calling off and I was relieved as well" (The Green Hills of Africa, hereafter GHA, p. 117). Thus, he breaks another rule of a safari, explained by Wilson to Macomber, namely, that one has an unconditional obligation to follow the wounded animal: "For one thing he's certain to be suffering. For another, someone else might run onto him" (FC, p. 117). It appears that for a Hemingway sportsman the main objective is not to compromise oneself and not to endanger the others. The remaining commandments, such as moral obligation to a wounded animal, are less urgent. As a result, the hierarchy of rules promotes occasional breaches of the sportsman code, and the whole system that differentiates hunting from murder is undermined.

If we accept the basic premises of Holland's and Beck's claims, and assume that Hemingway does not present Margot as a scheming destroyer of men, it appears that neither Wilson's perspective, nor his actions, are presented as justifiable by the author. This implies that Hemingway himself occasionally doubts the sporting code. Additionally, it is a woman who points out to the sportsman that his code is faulty. Therefore, Hemingway does portray a woman whose affinity with nature is closer than that of an inconsistent hunter. However, Margot's possible innocence in relation to her husband's death, and her disgust with arrogance displayed in the process of "achieving manhood" by Macomber, do not in themselves endow her with an ecological conscience. For Hemingway's male protagonists, proper behavior in nature is a matter of arbitrary rules rather than a spiritual sense of kinship with the prey. Similarly, Margot's distrust of these rules does not reflect her system of environmental beliefs. As a matter of fact, her belief system does not play a significant role in Hemingway's story. This again evokes the initial claim that women in Hemingway's outdoor theme represent the "less equal" category but with an important reservation. At times, they speak against the hunters, and with good reason.

Contemporary writers who deal with the subject of hunting and fishing inherit from Hemingway not only the "outdoor sportsman" stigma but also the "macho" label. Consequently, both McGuane and Harrison are classified among the authors who present women as sex objects, interchangeable yet not compatible with the delights of hunting and fishing. If any similarity between their

and Hemingway's portrayal of women exists, it is Margot Macomber--of Holland's and Beck's interpretations--who constitutes the common denominator. McGuane's Miranda in Ninety-Two in the Shade or Claire in Nobody's Angel appreciate hunting yet distrust "shootism," which includes all the instances of male competitiveness and arrogance, not only in relation to nature. They excel in piercing the protagonist's ego if his conduct appears inconsistent. In Ninety-Two in the Shade, Miranda refuses to have her sexual life perceived in terms of masculine competition:

> "Tom, what's the matter?"
>
> "Jealousy."
>
> "Well, that's wrong. And you weren't going to have any drugs any more. . . . I'm twenty four and I've been with a bunch of men . . . and I won't have it made an ugliness. You'll have to think of another kind of innocence" (NTS, p. 19)

Although Miranda resolves to stay faithful to Skelton once he acknowledges her equality, Clair's infidelity to her (record sportsman) husband in Nobody's Angel causes his emotional breakdown and suicide. Superficially, these situations evoke Margot's affair with Wilson. However, because McGuane's novels are also concerned with the absurdities of competitive attitudes toward nature, his portrayal of women and love can be discussed as a metaphor for human relations with nature, which, like women, fails to provide gratification unless treated as enspirited, sentient, and equal. Any breach of this contract ultimately leads to the self-destruction of a protagonist.

Whereas McGuane's female characters relate to nature on a metaphorical rather than an actual level, Harrison often portrays women whose worldviews include complex and specific ideas about humans' relationship to nature. If they are to be identified as cultural archetypes, their identity goes much further back than Hemingway's Margot Macomber. Just as the philosophical roots of contemporary hunters' worldview are pre-Christian, the character of some of the female protagonists in Harrison's novels is that of the pagan divine huntress:

> As the goddess of hunting, Artemis embodies all the ambiguities inherent in the figure of the hunter. Though she persecutes the wild animals with her "arrows of anguish," she is also their friend and protector. She killed (or contrived the death of) the great hunter Orion because he boasted in her hearing that he would kill every wild beast alive. The wild places of the earth are sacred to her, especially mountain forest. (Cartmill, 1993, p. 33)

Even though this characterization seems also to apply to Margot Macomber, the last sentence dispels the affinity because nowhere in the text of Hemingway's short story do we find any indication of Margot's sense of the divine in nature. On the other hand, the same sentence establishes a close similarity between Harrison's Dalva, Julip, and Diana (pun intended as Thomas Maher Gilligan [1984] points out in "Myth and Reality in Jim Harrison's Warlock"), although they do not directly participate in any hunt. Their views of nature, however, considerably influence the male protagonists, who begin to perceive hunting and fishing in less anthropocentric terms, as Tibey does in "Revenge": "Miryea had made him promise not to shoot coyotes and showed him a book on the subject that he read with curiosity. He made the promise" (Legends of the Fall, p. 61).

The reluctance of critics to acknowledge the evolution in the portrayal of women in the hunting and fishing context persists regardless of the obvious changes. Snyder, whose poetry and essays explore the subject of femininity with reverence--inspired, among other ideas, by Gaia Hypothesis--slights women in Mary Kinzie's (1983) opinion: "His poem on breasts is at once offensive and hilarious (his is not a world for women, except in their function as squaws)" (p. 41). It is doubtful, to say the least, that the function of "squaws" applies to such a perception of women as Snyder presents in "The Real Work" interview:

> So a woman who, of her own nature, has a dark side--she will also be creative. Something is triggered by being a witness to that most paradoxical of human situations, witnessing the dark and the light side of the mother simultaneously. . . . If you only see the dark side you probably go crazy. The poet holds the dark and the light in mind, together. Which, by extension, means birth and death in its totality. We worship not only the positive forces, the life-giving forces--not just that. We can all say, "Ah, planet earth biosphere, mother earth, mother wonderful--all these green plants." But there is also death, there's also the unknown, there is also the demonic. And that's the womb and the tomb, that's samsara, that's birth and death, that's where the Buddhists go in. (RW, p. 81)

The accusation of excluding the female principle from the world of hunting and fishing can be rejected not only on the basis of the works of contemporary writers, but also on the basis of anthropology. The primitive worldview, which constitutes the ideal of environmental consciousness for these authors, elevates the position of woman, as Joseph Campbell (1988) claims in The Power of Myth: "For a long time in primitive societies, the female is the dominant mythological image. . . . Moving back toward nature will certainly bring forth the mother principle again. How it will relate to the patriarchal principle I do not know. . . . But

certainly nature is coming back" (p. 182). As a result, female characters in the works of Hemingway (with the exception of Margot Macomber) and those depicted by Harrison, McGuane, and Snyder do not belong to the same perspective; the difference in their portrayal provides yet another proof that the contemporary treatment of the outdoor theme belongs to a different tradition altogether.

The critical controversy over Hemingway's portrayal of Mrs. Macomber, however, provides an insight into possible affinities between his and contemporary treatments of the outdoors theme. Just as Margot's ambivalent status has been overlooked by a majority of critics preoccupied with the "bitch" hypothesis, contemporary authors have been compared to Hemingway on the superficial basis of occupation and location, rather than a common worldview. If a similarity between the two traditions exists, it is based on the aspects of Hemingway's writing that hardly ever have been used as a basis for comparison. Regardless of the similarity, however, it is impossible to claim that Hemingway has given the fullest expression to the tradition exemplified by writers such as Harrison, McGuane, or less directly, Nelson, Lopez, and Snyder. Their traditions converge whenever Hemingway introduces a new element into his perception of hunting and fishing inconsistent with the "sporting myth." In "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," an example of such a departure from the pattern is Mrs. Macomber's questioning of the validity of the sporting code, if we agree with Holland and Beck in assuming that she, not Wilson, should be trusted.

The insecurity about the sporting code that Hemingway conveys in this story bears a strong resemblance to the issues that preoccupy the "biocentric" hunters. They frequently reiterate the anxiety about the validity of human conservationist practices first expressed by Aldo Leopold (1949/1974) in "Thinking Like a Mountain." In broader terms, they are concerned about the validity of any rules regulating human interaction with nature, if such rules are not based on philosophical and moral considerations. The belief in the ecological value of a primitive hunting worldview, expressed by Lopez, Snyder, and Nelson, provides an answer to these doubts and an alternative to the arbitrary and anthropocentric sportsman's code. Hemingway's doubts about the sportsman's code, however, do not promote his search for more consistent guidance. As A. Carl Bredahl and Susan Lynn Drake (1990) demonstrate in Helix and Scimitar: Hemingway's "Green Hills of Africa" as Evolutionary Narrative, the author, having explored the primitive attitudes toward nature (exemplified by Droopy and M'Cola), dismisses them as inadequate and progresses toward building his own perspective (p. 95). Bredahl and Drake view this kind of progress as constructive and creative, a sign of personal and artistic growth. This view, however, is not likely to be reiterated by Snyder, Lopez, or Nelson, who treat the "civilized" urge to progress beyond the primitive perception of environment as premature.

Another instance of the similarity between the two traditions occurs in relation to their preoccupation with environmental destruction. In The Green Hills of Africa, Hemingway voices his concerns with the state of African nature:

> A continent ages quickly once we come. The natives live in harmony with it. But the foreigner destroys, cuts down the trees, drains the water, so that the water supply is altered and in a short time the soil, once the sod is turned under, is cropped out and, next, it starts to blow away as it has blown away in every old country and as I had seen it start to blow in Canada. The earth gets tired of being exploited. . . . A country was made to be as we found it. (GHA, p. 284)

The affinity between this vision and that of the contemporary "biocentric" hunters is striking. Hemingway's comment foreshadows the anxiety and anger expressed by Harrison, McGuane, and Snyder, as well as the majority of American nature writers and ecologists. However, his response to the problem signals disparity rather than affinity between the two traditions: "It [America] had been a good country and we had made a bloody mess of it and I would go, now, somewhere else as we had always had the right to go somewhere else and as we had always gone. . . . We always went in the old days and there were still good places to go" (GHA, p. 285). Hemingway advocates disassociating oneself from the destroyed environment and moving on to discover a more pristine setting. Whereas in the earlier passage the author demonstrates his comprehension of the ecological interconnectedness around him, he fails to perceive the same aspect in relation to his own actions. In his resolution to disassociate himself from America, and in justifying such resolution by the American tradition of movement beyond an inhabited/corrupted area, he exemplifies an illogical assumption that his own actions, even though they reflect American history, would not result in a similar outcome. In broader terms, his sense of being an exception to the rule parallels the irrationality of anthropocentric belief in human uniqueness, which

recurs in his hunting and fishing accounts. Harrison and McGuane react to the grim ecological reality by exploring the new dimensions of wilderness "at home" because they believe there is no place left to escape and "each with privacy and tact must secure our own wildness" ("PGL," p. 232). Consequently, whereas in Hemingway's vision one progresses to the new hunting grounds in terms of geographical mobility, contemporary authors fight the sense of confinement by expanding their awareness of wilderness in psychological and ecological terms.

The strongest case for the claim that Hemingway and contemporary hunters understand fishing and hunting in similar terms can be built on the evidence provided by The Old Man and the Sea, where the protagonist lovingly addresses the marlin as his brother. The portrayal of Santiago and the fish merging into one entity in the moment of struggle (parallel to the fishing episode described in Islands in the Stream), and the image of the marlin rising from the safe depth of the ocean to meet the fisherman, evoke the instances of hunting presented by Harrison (Wolf) and McGuane (Ninety-Two in the Shade), as well as illustrating the basic beliefs of primitive hunters presented by Snyder, Lopez, and Nelson. An additional--and strongest--affinity with the modern/primitive perception of hunting arises from Santiago's conviction that, in going too far and subsequently wasting the marlin, he committed a sin against the fish, or nature in general. The novel, however, as suggested earlier, glorifies the value of human victory over nature and affirms human uniqueness. Consequently, another claim to as general affinity between the two outlooks on hunting and fishing has to be

dismissed on the basis of incompatibility between the anthropocentric and biocentric perspectives.

However tempting, the comparisons between Hemingway and contemporary writers, who describe hunting from a biocentric perspective, are bound to be superficial. As Peter Fritzell (1990) and Joseph Wood Krutch (1958) demonstrate in Nature Writing and America and Great American Nature Writing, the origins of a biocentric perspective in contemporary American literature, specifically nature writing, go back to Thoreau's sense of kinship with all life forms developed in the course of the Walden experiment. The treatment of hunting and fishing in the works of Harrison, Nelson, and McGuane, who evoke the primitive environmental outlook, can be more accurately viewed as an extension of Thoreauvian tradition than a variation of the "Hemingway bit." Even though Hemingway affirms hunting and fishing while Thoreau denounces it as ontologically juvenile, the affinity with the former's biocentric perspective is direct and basic, whereas that with Hemingway's sporting myth is often contrived. Hemingway's treatment of the hunting and fishing theme, in turn, occasionally shows an insight incompatible with the anthropocentric sporting code, which suggests that his understanding of these activities was undergoing an evolution. This evolution, however, had not changed Hemingway's basic outlook on humans' position in nature by the time of the author's last novel. Hemingway's statement about Thoreau can be viewed as an illustration of the author's incomplete evolution toward the biocentric outlook: "There is one at that time that is supposed to be really good, Thoreau.

I cannot tell you about it because I have not yet been able to read it. . . . Maybe I'll be able to later. I can do nearly everything later" (GHA, p. 22).

The biocentric approach to hunting and fishing in literature is a recent, unique phenomenon. Comparisons to the Hemingway tradition are inevitable because the ecological philosophy underlying hunting and fishing in contemporary literature is still relatively new and hard to accept. To discuss writers such as Snyder, Harrison, and Nelson as independent of the "sporting myth" demands a departure from the anthropocentric worldview, which, as Lynn White (1968) and J. Baird Callicott (1989) demonstrate in their works, underlies the very foundations of Western civilization. The historical and philosophical roots of the "biocentric" hunting tradition are both more contemporary and more ancient than those of the "sporting myth." The Old/New way of a hunter advocated by Snyder in Myths & Texts and Turtle Island as an answer to contemporary environmental and spiritual crises combines the most recent ecological awareness and the prehistoric reverence for nature.

The biocentric perspective underlying the works of Harrison, McGuane, Snyder, Lopez, and Nelson shares philosophical grounds with American nature writing. Both ecological awareness and the Thoreauvian sense of kinship with nature constitute the common denominator for these writers, yet their choice of hunting and fishing as frequent subject matter introduces a new element into the environmental philosophy. For these writers, ecological awareness is less a question of scientific understanding of the interconnectedness of life than of

personally experiencing that principle at work, not only by observation but also through participation. But, because a similar rationale has been used in modern times to justify the competitive aspects of outdoor sports, these authors depict outdoor adventures where limitations are consciously imposed on their protagonists' hunting potential. The purpose of such hunting and fishing is to experience the original human perception of the environment and to evoke a sense of kinship and awe. Such an exercise in environmental awareness, in their opinion, will endow everyday interactions with nature with an ecological conscience and ethics that is still missing, regardless of developments in ecological science.

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