2000

Language, myth, and perceptions in writing about the natural environment

William Laurence Redman

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LANGUAGE, MYTH, AND PERCEPTIONS IN WRITING
ABOUT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University
San Bernadino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
In
English Composition

by
William Laurence Redman

June 2000
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ABSTRACT

Drawing on a variety of sources among writers and critics of the natural environment, this analysis reveals a variety of rhetorical factors that influence such writing and our understanding of the natural environment.

The language choices of environmental writing reveal our basic attitudes toward nature, often at the same time determining the responses of many of the readers. Our language is based in our environment; thus our writing about nature reveals our own nature as well.

After a consideration of the ways we express the rights of nature, there is a discussion of the interrelationships of language and nature, followed by analysis of metaphors, myths, and symbols that help to explain those interrelationships. The role of the hero in nature is briefly considered, then exemplified in an analysis of the heroic types that have been featured in *Outside* magazine.

Nature creates our language and us; societies manipulate language and nature. Writers use language to manipulate our responses to the natural environment. Understanding the rhetoric we use about nature is essential to understanding our world and ourselves.
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INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the natural environment—by those whose announced purpose is its salvation and by those who believe that environmental protection has gone too far. The paradox is that those who celebrate their love for the natural world can contribute to its destruction just as surely as those who value natural resources purely as material resources to be exploited. Friedrich Nietzsche said, "The drive toward the formation of metaphors is the fundamental human drive, which one cannot for a single instant dispense with in thought, for one would thereby dispense with man himself" (894).

In the battle zones of the media and mass popular culture, writers and readers develop and use metaphors and myths that are basic to our diverse cultures to further environmental degradation, as well as to advance environmental causes, often unwittingly. We can never be certain where we are going within our world, but our choices and awareness of language and language structures can help us gain a measure of control regarding the choices we make, and help us to find a direction when we might not otherwise be aware there were language choices.

By accepting the persuasive language of contemporary commercial and cultural exchange, we reduce the complex
roles of the natural environment in our imperfectly understood world to quantifiable financial and utility terms. Is an ecosystem transferable into "visitor-use days" and "bottom line profits"? Our ability to exert some control over both present and future depends on knowing how our very discourse about the role of the environment is shaped by the metaphors and myths we use. Our so-called "freedoms" depend on the responsibilities inherent in knowing about what we are talking, but that requires understanding how we use our language.

Nietzsche also said, "Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins (891).

In being truthful about the human (and natural) condition, we must not just employ the usual metaphors, following the duty to lie according to a fixed convention. Too often, in referring to our relationships with the natural environment, writers just round up the usual suspects, employing language, metaphors, and myths that have lost their utility to society and can too easily appear to carry the burdens of our failures. If we are to deal with the realities of humanity in and as part of the natural
environment, we must find and use our languages to express the continually evolving truths of our conditions. Otherwise we will have no freedoms.
Christopher Manes, assessing writing relating to the natural environment, asserts:

We require a viable environmental ethics to confront this vast, eerie silence that surrounds our garrulous human subjectivity. An ethics of exploitation regarding nature has taken shape and flourished, producing the ecological crisis that now requires the search for an environmental counterethic (Glotfelty 16).

I propose that part of that search for an environmental counterethics requires a reconsideration of the language with which we comprehend our relationship to the environment. Harold Fromm proposes "The Myth of Voluntary Omnipotence," in which man has developed "a sense that he mentally and voluntarily determines the ground of his own existence and that his body is almost a dispensable adjunct of his being" (35). Control of language is at the heart of this bargain. As a logical extension of the pervasive use of synecdoche in writing about the natural environment, "The Hermeneutic Circle," discussed by Max Oelschlaeger, can be viewed as a key to understanding how we write about nature. Dana Phillips has used the term "designer" epistemologies to explain the ties between behavior and the exponential increase in commodities use of the environment, available on demand (212). Glen A. Love writes, "I was part of the deadly conquest called civilization" (233). These are just some of the viewpoints to
be considered as we study our language choices in writing about the natural environment.

After a brief consideration of the ways writers have attempted to recognize the rights of nature, the evolution of language as it speaks of nature will be discussed; how we come to write about nature and even how we see nature are important in comprehending our language choices. Through studies in the uses of metaphor, myth, symbols, and heroes in writing about the natural environment, we will come to a better understanding of the ways the choices of the writer reveal much about his or her interrelationships with nature and human culture. Environmental support often presumes awareness of the changing complexities of such relationships while defenders of the status quo and of continuing environmental degradation and neglect often simplify nature and wilderness into iconographic resource status.
CHAPTER 1
THE RIGHTS OF NATURE AS LANGUAGE

Before we can understand the role of language in our attitudes toward the wilderness, we must first be cognizant of the role of language in establishing the right of nature's continued existence in the modern world. There have always been a few voices in the contemporary wilderness proposing that the rights of the natural environment are as legitimate as those of man.

Many wilderness writers employ language that stresses the interrelationships of man and nature or the synecdoche that man and his cultures are but a part of the vastness of nature. The words of Henry Thoreau, "In Wildness is the preservation of the World...A town is saved, not more by the righteous men in it than by the woods and swamps that surround it" (1862), set the tone for Aldo Leopold, "The Wilderness Society is ... a new attitude - an intelligent humility toward man's place in nature... All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts... The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community" (1935). T. H. Watkins retorts in 1997 that some say, "The wilderness idea is just that: an idea... a kind of romanticism
that idealizes wild places and distorts ecological reality” (10). Does wild nature have a right to exist?

Many supporters of wilderness argue for a revaluing of nature, recognition of the inherent values and right to existence of the natural world. In “Revaluing Nature,” Glen A. Love argues that the current tendency in literary culture to separate human beings from the environment is “demonstrably and dangerously reductionist” (237).

Anthropologist-writer Richard Nelson suggests, "What makes a place special is the way it buries itself inside the heart, not whether it's flat or rugged, rich or austere, wet or arid, gentle or harsh, warm or cold, wild or tame. Every place, like every person, is elevated by the love and respect shown toward it, and by the way in which its bounty is received." Aldo Leopold writes in A Sand County Almanac, "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise" (Love 233-4). Such use of synecdoche and metaphor reinforces our inter-relationships with nature, while the imagery guides the emotional impact. To argue for the “rights of nature” requires many readers be led into emotional identification of nature with man, preparing the ground for similar rights.
Referring to the Glacier Bay area, Dave Bohn reflects on our instinctive connections to the natural environment of time and place, within the community of all life forms, as John Muir, who had earlier marveled at these same natural phenomena, would have appreciated:

But surrounded by mountains of almost-silent floating ice in the fog and rain, I cannot quite account for the strange intensity of thought. I think the intensity and the recognition go back. I think it has something to do with a man wrapped in animal hide and fur, crouched at the edge of a glacier twenty thousand years ago (210).

For Bohn an important value of nature is to remind us of our origins, of our connections to nature, thus ordaining a wild nature where such original connections can be explored and understood by man. Such atavistic responses are not only reflections on ancient survival instincts, but are symbolic of contemporary human rights struggles, part of not forgetting the past so we can create a better future, still involved in and respecting nature.

On the other hand, there are those who do not see competing rights of man and nature, instead they see man as a natural part of the evolution of nature. Murray Bookchin argues, "Human intervention into natural processes could be as creative as natural evolution itself." Bookchin sees man as the best hope for improving all of nature, not as a creature whose rights need tighter control:
This evolutionary and dialectical viewpoint, which derives the Human species from nature as the embodiment of nature’s own thrust toward self-reflexivity, changes the entire argument around competing “rights” between human and non-human life-forms into an exploration of the ways in which human beings intervene in the biosphere (140).

Our natural interventions in the biosphere can ultimately lead us to balance the relative rights of the different inhabitants of the earth, including competing human groups, when rights come into conflict. Aaron Sachs carries the community of man and nature a step further, reflecting the political activists who help the wilderness to survive the attacks upon it. These attacks resulted recently in the murder of Nigerian human and environmental rights activist Saro-Wiwa, who wrote, “The environment is man’s first right.” One of the recent strengths of some environmentalists has been to broaden and deepen the awareness of their appeal to groups around the world and among the diverse peoples of all cultures. The struggle for the rights of nature is concomitant with the struggle for the rights of oppressed people. Synecdoche can work in more than one direction. Such multi-directional activism cannot please repressive powers that prefer their control over the old imagery of exploitation.

Decades earlier, Aldo Leopold, in “A Sand County Almanac,” expressed the seminal symbolic concept about the
environment having uses other than human, other than economic:

The "key-log" which must be moved to release the evolutionary process for an ethic is simply this: quit thinking about decent land-use as solely an economic problem. Examine each question in terms of what is ethically and esthetically right - as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise (421).

Bringing into play the language of esthetics changes the ethics of Resource Conservation in a fundamental way, allowing not only scientists a more important role but also ordinary people, as well as artists and philosophers, a moral and ultimately political role in determining the wisest use of the planetary resources. Charles Bergman explores the language of our ethical approaches to nature, suggesting how language choices lead to power, as the "rights" assigned nature lessen human power, costing both money and feelings (295-6).

Further refining the philosophies of his predecessors about an environmental ethic, John Rodman presents the concept of Ecological Sensibility (121-9). Stressing the value of all types of natural relationships and of non-interference with nature would seem antithetical to Bookchin's perception of man as "second nature" destined to
create a "third nature" where man controls nature. Responding to continuing complaints (by Bookchin, among others) that environmentalists are elitists unconcerned with ordinary and poor people struggling for survival but victimized by environmentalist policies, Rodman makes key distinctions based in synecdoche. By understanding how humans treat the natural environment, we discover principles that reveal the human condition. Thus Rodman, like the recent shift of direction by The Nature Conservancy, involves the social problems of people within and as part of the solution of environmental problems. Our treatment of the natural world is an indicator of treatment of other parts of society.

Carrying this complex issue further, Max Oelschlaeger reports that other humanistic arguments are more sophisticated than those of the resource conservationist (in that they do not assume mechanistic materialism as a starting point), but they, too, are enframed by modernistic presuppositions. The ecohumanist argument, also called Kantian Holism, is based in the idea that it would be irrational for man to harm his environment, since then he would harm himself. The problem with this approach is that man does harm other creatures, he does act irrationally at times; therefore, Oelschlaeger concludes that environmental
appeals based solely in rationality will not suffice (The Idea of Wilderness 339). Furthermore, purely rational arguments can never be the sole approach to environmental salvation. If environmentalists and ecohumanists recognize they are not dealing with a rational species, logic demands that they use illogical approaches if they intend to persuade illogical humanity of the necessity of environmental ethics. Thus, we have cuddly wolves on Christmas cards, Yogi the Bear in parks, and talking dolphins on TV shows. The mass (need we say commercial?) success of such appeals perhaps confirms the Kantian approach. If the metaphor strikes a chord in the masses, then reality is accurately reflected. Through synecdoche, imagery, metaphor, and symbol, writers continue to explore the interconnected rights of nature and man in this world. If we are to know ourselves and realize our potentials, we must also comprehend our relationship with the biosphere, allowing it the rights we need.
CHAPTER 2
LANGUAGE AND NATURE

The very nature of the role of language in man's perceptions of his relationships to the natural environment requires some further exploration, as synecdoche leads to the hermeneutic circle as defined in The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism: in order to understand the whole of any TEXT, one first have an understanding of the constituent parts; yet to understand the parts, one must have a workable comprehension of the whole (Childers 132). (In the context of this section, the TEXT should also be understood to mean NATURE.) Max Oelschlaeger discusses the innate paradoxes of the relationships among man, nature, and language, pointing out the acute difficulties of professing to be within The Hermeneutic Circle (350-353). The nature/human/language complex is marked by recurring symbiosis amongst the three interrelated factors of human existence in a natural environment:

We have become conscious of the reality that Homo Sapiens is - qua sapiens - language. Language bears our culture, sustains our religions, carries our thoughts, and writes our science and poetry. We assert that we are Homo Sapiens, forgetting the reality that language speaks reason, that
language intermediates between ourselves and nature (350).

There lies the crux of the problem, for our use of language, (being but one of the arts of humanity), injects itself between the human experiences of self and nature. Language becomes a deception, because at its best, (like all arts), language can have more immediacy and impact than what it represents and displaces. The interconnections of man to nature involve the aspects of language (symbol, metaphor, myth, imagery, fable) yet, as the poets indicate, we must use the poetic devices to get beyond language (which is too often bound by culture) in order to benefit from the symbioses produced through the hermeneutic circle and get back to nature (green world, mountain, Magna Mater, earth, the source).

Kenneth Burke makes clear “the negative is not a fact of nature but a function of a symbol system.” In Language as Symbolic Action he further clarifies, “Nature is emblematic of the spirit imposed upon it by man’s linguistic genius” (Henderson 45). As David Abram sees it, “spoken language seems to give voice to, and thus to enhance and accentuate, the sensorial affinity between humans and the environing earth....In indigenous, oral cultures, in other words, language seems to encourage and augment the participatory life of the senses, while in Western
civilization language seems to deny or deaden that life" (71).

How does Western culture see nature? Does our use of language deaden our sensual response to the natural world? George Johnson, writing of the complexity researchers at the Santa Fe Institute, notes, "Once a filter is installed in the brain, it bends everything we see. Gazing out on the jungle, a Darwinist sees the beauty of natural selection...A structuralist imagines instead a multidimensional fitness landscape...Like all of us, both are faced with never knowing the extent to which the patterns they see are out in the world or imposed by the prisms of our nervous systems" (Lissak). Before we can assess our relationship with the natural environment, we should consider how we view what is outside ourselves and then the ways we use our languages to express these framed perceptions.

Joan Halifax has explored the connection between language and the Earth as a living being. She argues that from the spirit of communication arises the sense of community, the recognition of relationship. Thus our identity expands to include not only the worlds of minerals, plants, animals, and elements, but also the world of the unseen, of the ancestors and spirits. All these are woven
onto the loom of language. An example of this is the California Yokuts prayer:

My words are tied in one
with the great mountain
with the great rocks
with the great trees
In one with my body and my heart.
Will you all help me,
with supernatural power,
and you, day,
and you, night!
All of you see me
One with the Earth.

All of these elemental complexities contribute to our ideality; our existence and self-perception are tied into the natural cycles. Additionally, Halifax reports on Shoshone and Ute beliefs that language comes from the land and develops a sense of companionship with those other species with which language is shared. Her most pertinent comments concern shamans. In "the danger zone of the wild," where shamans live, feelings and meanings can be reciprocal among the human, spirit, and natural worlds. Signification may occur across all three worlds, which may just be varying aspects of the same universe. All are tied together by words, according to the Yokuts prayer. Through words one sees, gets help, and acquires power; however, first one must have access to the natural environment, including all of its creations. The natural environment is a pre-condition for
our language. Even our social relationships express a context of the natural environment (148-149).

Merleau-Ponty affirms it is first the sensuous, perceptual world that is relational and weblike in character, and hence that the organic, interconnected structure of any language is an extension or echo of the deeply interconnected matrix of sensorial reality itself. Ultimately, it is not human language that is primary, but rather the sensuous, perceptual life-world, whose wild, participatory logic ramifies and elaborates itself in language (Abram 84).

Barry Lopez, in *Arctic Dreams*, describes the Eskimos of the eastern Arctic, whose language, Inuktitut, only comes alive when they are out on the land. Their language is seasonal, much as snow and creatures have seasonal characteristics. Inuktitut is now beginning to die out as the Eskimos begin to move into towns, modern life, and away from interdependence on the land (*Arctic Dreams* 159). As Abram states, “Oral people will rightly say that each place has its own mind, its own personality, its own intelligence” (182). Physicist David Bohm goes farther in attributing place-making abilities to Man and his languages, “Man's meaning-making capacity turns him into nature's partner, a participant in shaping her evolution. The word does not
merely reflect the world, it also creates the world” (Demers 121). By the very acts of perception and interpretation we become a participant in the on-going processes of evolution of the environment of which we are a part or "partner," as many aborigines knew. Language interprets environment, but also creates and is created by environment. Thus being becomes meaning, and meaning becomes being, as far as human perception is concerned.

Problems arise when the language used is not a language of that environment. Claude Levi-Straus reported that hunting peoples held an animal in high totemic regard not merely because it is food and therefore good to eat but because it is "good to think" (Lopez 247). In modern American culture what is good to think for most people is money, security, and comfort. Imposing the American concept (or that of Moscow or Singapore) on the wilderness is imposing a foreign language on the land. Such an imposition must always do violence to the land, and may lead to disaster for both parties. If one has no "language" for walking on ice, one will fall eventually. The ice or head may crack; one may die. When dedicated naturalists go into the wilderness, many do everything possible to obliterate their identity as human beings, perhaps following the pattern of hunting cultures where the hunter fasted,
meditated, and became spiritually and physically (as much as possible) a wild creature. In a fundamental sense, they adapt their language of being, from human (society) to wilderness. Kenneth Brower writes, after a journey in Alaska's Brooks Range, "We were not seeing the country as it really was. If we could somehow pass through this valley invisible and odorless, we agreed, it would be a different valley" (220).

Patricia Nelson Limerick has observed that we conquer not only in the military or physical sense, but also in the context of language when we appropriate an environment. The process of conquest was enacted first in the graphic work of drawing maps, which she describes as "the definition and allocation of ownership," and then in the rhetorical work of interpreting them as guides for social policy and action. Making a map is, in effect, making a text, and texts are at once both selections and appropriations of reality, as careful readers from Plato to Derrida have observed. Simply put, the act of making a text - whether map, graphic representation, or verbal description - is essentially the act of taking control. Paul Carter observes that the conquest of the continent of Australia progressed as the Europeans treated the land "like their language," taking elements of it "out of context, like quotations, to
symbolize their own historical presence." The same metaphor can be applied not only to the conquest of the continent of North America in general, but more particularly to the textualizing of that continent that was the work of landscape painting. As Kenneth Burke observes, the making of a text entails the seeking of "faithful reflections of reality" that ironically turn out to be "selections of reality" and "deflection(s) of reality", that have the rhetorical function of inviting readers "to make (themselves) over in the image of the imagery" (Clark, Halloran, and Woodford 273).

Native Indians who lived around the dangerous, dizzying, turbulent waters of the Pacific Northwest created dozens of stories to explain their relationships to dangerous natural environments that brought them a bountiful life but also prospects of sudden entrapment by the same waters. Jonathan Raban reports in Outside on the common images and interpretations of turbulent water in the maritime art and oral literature of the Northwest coastal Indians, "an inexhaustible metaphor for the conduct of life at large... Sexual ambiguity, treachery, incest, murder... threaten to overturn the fragile canoe of the family or the village"(57). Although Captain Vancouver was desolated by the chaos of the waters and experienced it as his Heart of
Darkness ("very inhospitable...dreary and unpleasant"), the natives had gained a measure of control by naming and myths. Captain Vancouver himself controlled the chaos as he created very accurate charts with carefully precise data and imposed British names on important features. Some thrill-seekers these days seek out the chaotic waters for sport — whether fishing, sailing like Raban, or sea kayaking, imposing their own form of control.

According to David James Duncan’s interpretation of Plato’s "food of semblance," not only do we carry reality about with us, we bring meaning to the environment we encounter by organizing it in our own images, through our own eyes and minds (64). We draw lines on maps, apply names to the environment, appropriate the landscape, and then continue into the future to designate evolving meanings to the features we first named in our own images.

It may be appropriate to realize that environmental representation also includes the aesthetics of the "not-there," as illustrated by Annie Dillard in Pilgrim at Tinker Creek. Like Paul Carter and the poets, Dillard understands that in experiencing nature we are the suppliers of meaning to the natural environment, interpreting the "not-there" in "the intertextual salad" (Buell 74). As Emerson says, "No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature." The
individual must always supply the meaning to what is there, even if the meaning is in what is not there. As Buell further suggests and as is too often evident to travelers of "antique lands" or "Edens," where, in the advertising of these same tourist destinations, are the slums, dirty industry, Michael Jordan mass market jerseys and sneakers, and the crowding of Third World humanity? What is missing on the American Express tours staying in the Hiltons of exotic lands? Only the natural environment - not only in a physical sense [often prettied up, if not the "Paved paradise and put in a parking lot" of Joni Mitchell] - but also in a metaphysical sense, since the urbanite jetting in for a few days has difficulty learning the languages of the place while discarding the preconceptions and misconceptions carried as baggage from home. What the tourist sees is more likely a creation of where he/she derives than the actual location.

Barry Lopez has a different take on the "not-there" than Annie Dillard of Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, a more engaged and bonding tie to the setting, less distant and coldly judgmental, although he too is aware of "the slant of light." For Lopez, the relationships within a landscape - or natural environment - are what the mind must know to see, and what must be seen to make the mind of man
responsive to reality, in other words, to live. We are what we live in, the relationships we perceive (or not) outside us are made interior. We provide structure and meaning to what we see in nature. Or is it vice versa? The genetic analogy is telling, since genetic survival is based on very long term adaptation of the organism within its changing environment. (Has our culture of "virtual reality" moved beyond the interdependence of humanity and natural environment?) In much of his writing Lopez looks for correspondences between exterior and interior, for identification of being and setting. The exterior and interior cooperate within the living condition to create reality - the survival of species.

Although Lopez is talking about the creatures of the Arctic surviving on the edge in a land of extremes and sudden changes, within the context of his work he also is talking about the nature of the indigenes in all forms. If you extract a creature from its environment, it dies - the creature and the environment (159). Are these not the implications of the ideas of Lopez, and others such as Dillard? Do these thoughts not remind us of the hermeneutic circle (350)? Life in our biosphere is a hermeneutic circle.
Once signification for setting is taken away from the viewer to any degree and shared in any way with the setting, then one must accept that changing the environment in any way also changes the relationship with the viewer and thereby the viewer as well. (Is this not a form of Reader Response?) Physicist David Bohm proposes a holistic understanding of biology and physics that can be a path into the mystical aspects of the universe:

*Meaning is a form of being. In the very act of interpreting the universe, we are creating the universe. Through our meanings we change nature's being. Man's meaning-making capacity turns him into nature's partner, a participant in shaping her evolution. The word does not merely reflect the world, it also creates the world* (Sheldrake 39).

Rupert Sheldrake recognizes that "One of the great theories of traditional creation myths is the division of the primal unity into many parts, the emergence of the many from the one" (24). The number of religions and cultures whose origin myths might be covered by that statement is very large, but the importance here is that primal unity becomes *many parts* by the work of consciousness through words. Such interpretations may lead some to the Gaian belief that the Earth has implicit within it some form of consciousness. Pamela Kent Demers' claims that our spirit has a role in fulfilling the meaning of the universe may be circular in that, without us, there may be no meaning to the
universe; however, the significance here remains that necessary to meaning are both the universe and we, the perceivers (121). Reader-response theory is not far away.

In our time, to deepen the intimacy of modern American readers with the landscape, Lopez is serving society by going "outside" in order to help himself and his audience understand both the exotic and the familiar, plus their interrelationships. According to Scott Slovic, Lopez forces his readers to draw upon their "capacity for metaphor," to associate their own landscapes with the writer's, their language and conceptual patterns with those of the story (366). Lopez says about his own multi-disciplinary approach:

I lament sometimes that there are those who lack a capacity for metaphor. They don't talk to each other, and so they don't have the benefit of each other's insights. Or they get stuck in their own metaphor, if you will, as a reality and don't see that they can help each other in this inquiry that binds people like ourselves together. So this issue arises for me: what do we know? how do we know? how do we organize our knowledge? (Lueders 14-15)

The power of Lopez is that he shows the reader how to see a landscape that he or she will likely never set eyes upon, nor feel the empty coldness when you realize that polar bear whose tracks you are following is actually stalking you in a basic survival mode that has been going on
for millennia. The writer connects us to the landscape (or environment) by comparisons of the unknown to our own culture. Slovic recognizes the abilities of many writers like Thoreau, Berry, and Lopez to "shuffle perspectives" so that they can establish intimacy with the landscape (365). The "constant shuffling of perspectives" is a technique that is common to writers like Emily Dickinson and Dillard, as well as Lopez and Chatwin. Although the technique is useful to engage the modern reader, it may also be symptomatic of the experience of being in "the danger zone of the wild," where shuffling perspectives is a survival technique. The language structures chosen by the writer may be a reflection of the environment as well as the reader. If the structures of both are correlated through the talents of the writer then the identification may be evidence of engagement of sensibilities.

Why must writers show us how to see the natural environment? So that we may know, value, and preserve it. What is not seen is easily destroyed. Guy Hand writes, "The realization that land poorly seen is land easily destroyed is the force that has pushed me into this homecoming -- and, after two decades of blindness, opened my eyes" (26). In the past, our relationships were closer to the land. Now we
often need to reconsider our past to know the realities of our present.

Jack Turner, writing about "Gary Snyder and the Practice of the Wild" and how America has displaced Indians and wilderness into "island" reservations, observes that pre-Columbian America was filled with ecological and economical interconnections expressing the cultures of the Indians, their lives (43-5). Lopez has observed the same complex interrelationships in the Inuit of Arctic Dreams, as has Bruce Chatwin in the aborigines of Australia in Songlines. Modern civilization imposes its own patterns upon the lands but when any problems with nature occur, we often try to exert more control over nature, much like the Army Corps of Engineers binding the Mississippi river with more dams and levees. We deny that nature cannot give what we want, however shortsighted we may be. Turner sees in the themes of Gary Snyder the contexts of wilderness actions becoming the language of the natural environment. Direct experiences of nature make the world "as sharp as the edge of a knife." Without wilderness, we live real lives, but most cannot see wilderness.

Viewing nature as sacred but wilderness as undecipherable or not perceivable by modern man is a paradox common to many who write about environmental problems.
Perhaps control of wilderness is acquired so unacceptable or uncontrollable perceptions of reality can be hidden. In some ways it is easier to assume and exercise control over an image we have fixed in place ourselves, with our own limited understanding and vocabulary, than to relate to a living and therefore constantly changing complex reality. Such a course of presumed control must unfortunately lead to the problems or disasters that inevitably arise when the realities of nature fail to adhere to the rules imposed by those who dared to assume control. These approaches lead naturally to the Myth of Voluntary Omnipotence as developed by Harold Fromm (56).

What are the relationships among how we experience nature, how we see nature, and how we write about nature? David James Duncan, author of The River Why, explains these relationships in “Bird-watching as a Blood Sport” through references to two allegories of Plato (64). What we "see" is the result of complex interactions among the perceivers and the perceived, but many are lamed and mangled in the course of life so that all they perceive is the semblance of life. It is a function of art to help the trampled to see, the function of literature about the natural environment to restore the "smooth and dense" stream so that the reader is aware of the metaphors, symbols, and other rhetorical
manipulations that prevent the eyes of the perceiver from “giving light” to the natural world. Only when we fully control our language use can our minds “fly” through the natural environment with the ease of a natural creature. Our seeing, of which our language is just a codified form, must have the freedom of immediate living responsiveness to the whole of our natural environment; otherwise our sight, our language, is an imperfect semblance. The inescapable conclusion is that we must treat vision the same way we treat words, that both can be manipulated, mangled, sloppy, or dangerous. A further conclusion must be that those who take control of the language of perceiving the natural environment, control the natural environment. The powerful of the modern world determine the language employed to refer to the natural world, thus they control the ways it is seen and therefore the ways it is controlled.

Bill McKibben observes about the manipulators of wildlife images, “Their images do a lot of good: from Flipper and Jacques Cousteau to the mountain lion nuzzling her kit on your latest mailing from an environmental group, they’ve helped change how we see the wild”(20). But such photographers and editors provide us with what they have determined we want to see or read about the beautiful, odd, horrific, or newsworthy (usually based on what sells). Thus
the public is left in ignorance of the long-term problems of species and eco-systems because these concerns do not sell publications to the mass market. (Nor do they secure votes for politicians.)

Even when writers on the environment focus on the facts, such information is often narrowly and superficially focused, as James Cantrill points out, leading to ignorance about "the distinctly social causes and ramifications of ecological destruction.... Social justice issues are obscured by campaigns promoting technological fixes"(191). Such examples of mass promulgation of "single-cause fallacy" fixes of environmental problems are easily found in the sound-bite techniques of newscasters and politicians, and are easily exploited by those with agendas, such as big business and even some environmental organizations. The ultimate goal of environmentalists may be what Gary Snyder concludes, "a continuing 'revolution of consciousness' which will be won not by guns but by seizing the key images, myths, archetypes, eschatologies, and ecstasies so that life won't seem worth living unless one's on the transforming energy's side" (148). Revolution is achieved by seizing control of the language, as George Orwell showed so clearly in 1984.
Another way of considering the hermeneutic circle is to appreciate the frames that we, usually unconsciously, impose around whatever we perceive. Whatever we see we already are preconceiving through relationship to hidden frames. Kenneth Brower, while zooming into a picture via computer digitization, observes, "Throw a frame around almost anything, and the elements within try to harmonize. Composition resides more in nature, maybe, and in the effort of the viewer, than it does in the sensibilities of photographers and artists" (97).

That language shapes the way we see and understand the world was popularized in the 1930s as Linguistic Relativity by linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf, who insisted that our picture of the universe changes from tongue to tongue (Turner 43-45). However, Barry Lopez, illustrating the growth in modern environmental consciousness, is at odds with Whorf's argument that language was something man created in his mind and projected onto reality, something he imposed on the landscape, as though the land were a receptacle for his imagination. For Lopez, language is the result of man's conversation with his landscape, a reflection and result of man's growth within the natural environment (249).
When we visit a new place, the irresistible impulse for many is to talk about it with the natives and to travel around it, making it understandable. As the American geographer Yi-Fu Tuan reports, "We turn these exhilarating and sometimes terrifying new places into geography by extending the boundaries of our old places in an effort to include them. We pursue a desire for equilibrium and harmony between our familiar places and unknown spaces." What Lopez sees "is the long struggle of the mind for concordance with that mysterious entity, the earth" (250). We find ways to see the new (to us) environment into an adventure, farm, home for wild creatures, site of danger or comfort, or some other human resource.

A late part of the European "discovery" of America was the discovery of the fit between a native language and its place of origin. Nancy Lord recognizes, "Languages, of course, belong to environments in the same way that living creatures do" (46). Nomadic cultures must always be very precise in identifying their environment, if they are to survive, as aboriginal cultures like the Inuit and Aborigines understood.

Max Oelschlaeger proposes that the way out of our environmental maelstrom is to take control of our language regarding the natural environment:
The road from here -- that is, from a world mired in an ever-worsening ecocrisis that verges on eco-catastrophe -- to there -- that is, to a culture built on the practice of the wild -- is marked by the signposts of language. There is no other way for Homo narrans. To change culture one must reconsider language, radically reconsider language" (46-50).

Christopher Manes notes the inherent problems of such a course, "The language we speak today, the idiom of the Renaissance and Enlightenment humanism, veils the processes of nature with its own cultural obsessions, directionalities, and motifs that have no analogues in the natural world" (339). Are we inside or outside the hermeneutic circle or the natural world of the post-modern world? The answer may be that we are our biosphere, that what we see and speak is our living world.
CHAPTER 3

NATURE METAPHORS

Human beings engage, organize, and understand their world through the use of metaphors, which at their most effective can help to create the very features to which they refer. When we are faced with ambiguity and information overload, effective metaphors not only articulate positions clearly, but they also set premises which can either lead people to clear understanding of complex situations or even mislead for other purposes. Within groups of people, metaphors are a prime method to create and share understanding. As Wittgenstein said in 1921, “The limits of my language are the limits of my world” (Lissack).

Friedrich Nietzsche wrote:

Knowing is nothing but working with one’s favorite metaphors.... What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms.... Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force.... The drive toward the formation of metaphors is the fundamental human drive, which one cannot for a single instant dispense with in thought, for one would thereby dispense with man himself (891-4).

Many would assume the fundamental human drive has always been to survive and procreate in the wilderness of the
world. If that impulse is as fundamental as the drive to form metaphors, then man living may be synonymous with metaphor. Our metaphors are the signposts of man adapting himself and his environment (as well as to his environment). The metaphors that we employ regarding our natural environment are the indications of our relationships to nature.

Many writers have commented on different human psychic needs that are met by our perceptions of the wilderness. Irene Klaver stresses the intensification of our everyday living that results from our interactions with wilderness even though the wild does not need us. Klaver notes, "We need the wild, the other... to allow us to experience that there is always more to the here, and that this more is always already here.... In the howl of the wolf heard by the Montana wind" (130). John Rennie Short perceives, "The wilderness becomes an environmental metaphor for the dark side of the human psyche" (9) (as felt by Puritans, among many others).

Andrew Light observes, "The cognitive dimension of wilderness thus refers to the wildness within the beings who are part of wild nature... The classical wilderness becomes a stand-in for a place in which the civilized do not want to go -- the result of spiritual despair, a replacement for
Hell." Mankind has long scapegoated something outside the self as the repository of evil. For many, nature has been the scapegoat. Light has defined three characteristics of classical wilderness: separation of wilderness from human civilization, savagery of wilderness inhabitants, and contrasting superiority of all aspects of civilization. Light concludes, "Wilderness... is simply a powerful metaphor that primarily describes how certain people project themselves into and as opposed to the world around them. In this sense, the cognitive dimension is perhaps the only coherent dimension of the term" (197-98). Setting up this dichotomy between wilderness and civilization may have had its uses in perpetuating civil states, but the long-term result has been alienation of humanity from nature by metaphor.

Aaron Katcher and Gregory Wilkins explain how such metaphorical dichotomy in all languages leads to iconic simplification of complex issues, reflecting only a fragment of reality in both conscious and unconscious thought. This simplification is coupled with the universal tendency to reduce complex animal roles to simple images defined by human interest or need, "Coyotes and wolves are always bad; sheep and cattle are always good" (189-90). Thus, simplistic uses of imagery and metaphor abuse the very origins of both
the figurative language and the biosphere that give them life and force.

Ursula K. Heise concludes that Green literary criticism is confronted from the start with a spectrum of different and not always compatible approaches to the environment. These constructions are a more rigorous approach to this dichotomy of civilization versus nature. Persuaded that social ecology, (clearly defined by Bookchin as focused in the needs of civilization), and deep ecology are not sufficient to the task of construction, Heise determines that we need another approach to nature clearly based in science, allowing for a more complex understanding of the realities of nature, making use of scientific language in the service of advancing our understanding of the natural environment on a clear and solid basis. Heise sees a clear problem in the basis of so much ecocritical writing in metaphorical language. Heise makes a contribution to clarity concerning writing on the environment that is probably not going to be honored by all. Many writers might argue that Science ignores the most important issues: language that ignores metaphorical implications cannot comprehend the realities of the natural environment in the human experience. On the other hand, there is certainly
value to eco-critics using scientific constructions that can support and clarify their ideas.

Nancy Ross, John Eyles, Donald Cole, and Adele Iannantuono have refined the concept of the *ecosystem health metaphor* whose purpose is to:

elicit public concern, and potentially action...a metaphor that can define research boundaries and resonate with the human condition is well suited to postmodern science. The organismic analogy is further appropriate for a postmodern ecology, in that it provides an entree for the reinsertion of humanity back into nature - it provides a language for the breaking down of the subject-object distinction in science. (125-127)

Ross provides a valuable example of the formation of metaphor as well as the comprehensive ways in which metaphor (and myth, imagery, and analogy) can function when one uses language in regard to the natural environment in this postmodern age.

The Ecosystem Health Metaphor is particularly valuable since the analogy to human health is common enough when one discusses environmental health, plus this particular metaphor requires consideration of our relationship to the hermeneutic circle once again. The metaphor is based in complex interrelationships whose meaning is not iconographically simple or immutable, but in its awareness of symbiosis it is postmodern.
Wilderness romance has always been a counterpoint to the classical view of wilderness as evil, perhaps an antidote involving heroism in the place of evil. In mainstream wilderness romance a basic theme involves the protagonist finding self and/or redemption through discovery that is provoked and/or made significant by contact with the wild. Part of this process is dependent on the protagonist becoming self-aware through realization that humans and nature are unified as living creations in one world. In partaking of nature, the protagonist is revisiting the self. The protagonist must also discard the clutter of civilization, the perversions and adulterations, the temptations and sins, the "fallen" self, and return to the type of wilderness that existed before the corruptions of mankind, to Mother Nature, the Edenic state. There are many such journeys into the wilderness to discover the true self: Moses leading the tribe of Israel, the forty days of Jesus, the utopians of early American colonies, Erehwon, the wagon trains to the West (including the Mormons), Walden, the original back-to-the-land Hippies of the Sixties, Desert Solitaire, even Tony Hillerman's detective novels set on the Navajo Reservation, where wisdom and truth always seem to be discovered in the old traditions and in the land.
Lawrence Buell interprets Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* as following a familiar Joseph Campbell monomyth of separation from regular (reservation) life for a period of self-searching and testing in mostly wilderness setting, succeeded by a return to regular life to assume a position of leadership (63-72). This Campbell monomyth is very familiar to viewers of contemporary movies set in the wilderness: take the child, man, or woman out of the urban setting, force the escapee from the civilized world to (re)discover the true self through serious physical and psychological testing while enduring the wilderness, then reintroduce the revitalized self back into modern culture where the returnee will be much more successful than your average urban stay-at-home. The origins of such a myth are clear in the many cultures where the adolescent becomes adult by succeeding in the coming of age ritual: after undergoing a variety of religious, cultural, or mystical instructions by elders, then going alone into the wilderness (with only a knife [symbol of the culture] and the best hopes of a tribe's continuance), facing tests of strength, courage, endurance, wisdom, and mystical/religious growth, and successfully returning (with the symbolic slain lion) to the acclaim and full acceptance into the leadership track of the tribe. The movie *River Wild* is a recent genre example.
Of course there are the counter-myth creations such as *Heart of Darkness* and its derivative movie *Apocalypse Now*, or *Deliverance*. Here the wilderness experience becomes the journey of the damned, where one falls from grace through the wilderness hell of experience into abandonment of the principled self in desperate selfish acts of survival - not all that far from the Puritan fears of the wild, or the Anti-transcendentalists, or television's *Seinfeld* (where the wilderness is contemporary New York City - "It's a jungle out there," says Kramer.)

A mentor always seems essential for the serious journeys, but the mentor is as much for the reader/viewer to make framed transitions into the experience and the wilderness as it is for the created character. Kramer is the comic mentor for the jungle of New York, the narrator/Sheen character for the apocalyptic jungles of *Apocalypse Now*; the Meryl Streep river guide mentors the endangered child plus the (delivered of his manhood) husband, as much as the viewer in *River Wild*. Without the mentored experience for the sudden trip into the wilderness, down into the inferno, we will die of the "horror of it all." Even Kurtz, a modern Faustus, does not survive the descent into the hell of the Vietnam War.
Lawrence Buell reminds us of the traditional function of the mentor in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, where the wise, mixed-blood mentor, Betonie, expounds an updated version of traditional native wisdom, like such mentors in Faulkner or Cooper. These are all romantic concepts, but what happens when one wants to go beyond? Then one encounters the Kurtz character, which must be hidden away in the blackest darkness, as barely discernible self-created nightmare incarnations of evil. Thus Buell divines Edward Abbey's desire for primal bonding in *Desert Solitaire*, going "into the howling wilderness... to confront, immediately and directly if it's possible, the bare bones of existence."

This Thoreauvian desire reminds us of John Muir who left the predictable farm drudgery of Wisconsin to find wilderness in Glacier Bay, but Abbey as well must recoil from the ultimate identification with the "howling" (echoes of Whitman's "barbaric yawping") and reintegrate with the people and comforts of this civilized world. As in Dante's *Inferno*, the fear is, if you go too far, you will not come back, as T. S. Eliot's Prufrock too prissily demonstrates. Buell sees the limitations of the desire for primal bonding within the wilderness setting. Except for the truly dedicated Faustian character, such as Kurtz, the modern searcher into
the wilderness ultimately does not want to leave behind all the advantages of the modern world.

Using metaphors that would not fit into Heise’s scientific constructions, Charles Bergman discusses how we personify nature:

Nature becomes a kind of language by which human desire is expressed, comprehended, and justified... The body of nature and the human body intersect in the wild and even dangerous terrain of human desire...inventing ourselves out of natural images, and simultaneously placing ourselves as human animals within nature. It is a process we negotiate with language and images. It is the process of rhetoric itself (282-3, 298-300).

Thus our symbols, images, and metaphors of nature reveal our relationship to nature. Our language choices identify our natural world as we perceive and feel it. Our rhetorical choices indicate more of our choices than we realize or want to acknowledge.

Charles Bergman further explores the modern interrelationships among nature, language, and culture, particularly as they demonstrate the various aspects of power and control. Since we love the beautiful, we are constructing an idealized, Narcissistic body of nature, dividing “the sacred and the profane in nature, between the parks and the exploited areas. The map of this new landscape is also the geography of our own fragmented and regimented bodies” (298).
Such theme park relationships to nature are what Dana Phillips means by “designer epistemologies” (Glotfelty 212). Disney artists airbrush our metaphors of nature; Nature begins to resemble Hefner’s Playmates. Our responses are controlled in Orwellian ways. We do not realize that words and concepts have been removed from our language, that our exposures to culture and the world are controlled in all ways at all times, so that our internal and external relationships to the world, the natural environment, are not free and living, but fixed by a Big Brother who controls all the images and metaphors.

Bergman assesses our metaphorical and mythical relationships with nature in terms of gender and power, where males attack and females defend nature and then offers a positive alternative, “But if desire is written in language, inscribed upon the body, we can begin to imagine new possibilities, write new metaphors. Metaphors that have less to do with domination and escape, that think of desire as something other than lack and absence and wounds.” The Bodies Politic, Media, and Economy may be abusing Bodies Nature and Human, but Charles Bergman has some optimism that we can take control of our language.

Mary E. Gomes and Allen D. Kanner address the issues of eco-feminism more directly when they interpret an old Grail
story, "The Tale of the Well-Maidens" in terms of current eco-feminist environmentalism. Considering the fable’s metaphors and images, they show how the concept of the dynamic feminine develops from the language and the literature. For them, the despoiling of the bounteous Earth and the subjugation of women are intimately connected. Domination of land and women is a common feature of patriarchal societies. On the other hand, the dynamic feminine is found in the mythical Dionysus, Pan, Coyote, and Artemis, associated with untamed lands and wild nature (111, 119). The "dynamic feminine" appears to be remarkably similar to the energy of fully active nature, with much of the same imagery, symbols, and metaphors that one might find in the chaos of Pacific coastal waters when Captain Vancouver arrived to chart them (Raban 45-58).

One must conclude that the manufacture, understanding, and deconstruction of metaphors have become important activities for all those who engage in environmental skirmishes with language as the medium between man and nature.
CHAPTER 4

MYTHS ABOUT NATURE

I therefore claim to show, not how men think in myths, but how myths operate in men's minds without their being aware of the fact (Claude Levi-Strauss).

Myths have always played an essential role in human cultures. That myths about the natural environment have assumed pivotal roles in our cultures is inevitable as societies developed, but in many areas these environmental myths are disguised, twisted, or abused. Many see traditional religious interpretations as antithetical to the concerns of environmentalism, but in some parts of the world, that is not necessarily so.

Regarding the pollution of the Ganges in India, Veer Bhadra Mishra concludes that the direct Western approach about pollution will not work, but that couching ecology in the sacred language of the sacred river will succeed. Mishra, however, sees no necessary contradiction between the mythological and the scientific. Indeed, the practice of harnessing the metaphors of Hindu mythology to create a new environmental ethos is common in India. Even secular magazines, like India Today, invoke Lord Krishna's love of the forest in writing about the need for protection against the denuding of the Indian landscape (Stille).
Max Oelschlaeger considers the earliest linkages of human ideas to the natural world and to the gods, when the sacred was made to live and human beings were not separate from nature, “Nature was alive and sacred, filled with spirits.” As Eliade argues, for Homo religious, “The gods manifested the different modalities of the sacred in the very structure of the world and of cosmic phenomena.” The Paleolithic mind, according to Eliade, found that harmony was based on mankind knowing its proper relationship to everything in the cosmos, including nature. Thus we can see that the sacred involved according to nature great respect as the basis for all that was good and necessary. Nature was living and sacred.

John Passmore observes, "By the time the Genesis stories were composed - in Mesopotamia - man had already embarked on the task of transforming nature. In the Genesis stories man justifies his actions. He did not set about mastering the world - any more than he set about multiplying - because Genesis told him to. Rather, Genesis salved his conscience." Thus the Biblical injunctions concerning man’s relationship with nature can be seen as one more example of after-the-fact manipulation of imagery and symbol. Our symbols, metaphors, and imagery express our relationship with nature, even when we are trying to justify our
mistreatment of nature. Max Oelschlaeger also suggests how such self-manipulation might be the cause of man's alienation, "Man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man. Perhaps it is before all else man's subversion of this relation of dominance that drives his nature into alienation" (20). Our poets of wilderness, such as Snyder and Jeffers, seeking to cure us of such alienation reveal that language speaks ultimately of nature and man intimately intertwined within past and present, sacred and profane, joined together again by the myths, symbols, and images - our language of our place in the cosmos.

Given the Puritan influences on early American settlement, plus the seeming necessity of "taming the wilderness" (including the native Americans) and expanding the frontier, it was easy to assume the Christian precepts of "man's dominion" over Nature, proclaiming the natural environment as subservient to human culture. Murray Bookchin offers the familiar argument (ultimately a circular one) that man is the ultimate enabler of nature; thus, all that man does is part of the natural process. Man's power of thought, no matter how expressed, cannot become a type of "original sin," even if man appears to be a blight on nature (119). Man is part of nature; therefore, he can do no wrong
appears to be the ultimate interpretation of this argument. Obviously man can find a better way, despite such circularity of reasoning.

On the other hand, American religious attitudes can be pro-environment. Mark Sagoff offers the results of a survey about the natural environment, "The reasons for protecting nature are often religious or moral. As the philosopher Ronald Dworkin points out, many Americans believe that we have an obligation to protect species which goes beyond our own well-being; we "think we should admire and protect them because they are important in themselves, and not just if, or because, we or others want or enjoy them." Americans from various walks of life agreed by large majorities with the statement "Because God created the natural world, it is wrong to abuse it." The anthropologists who conducted this survey concluded, "Divine creation is the closest concept American culture provides to express the sacredness of nature" (Sagoff 80-96). Perhaps American environmentalists might make a better effort to articulate religious or sacred metaphors about preserving the natural environment, as Stille indicates has met with some success in regards to the Ganges (58-67).

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. suggests the anti-environmentalist business interests relationships to environmentalists
are the same as "joy-riders" to community supporters. We don't protect Pacific Northwest forests to protect the spotted owls, but because the forest has more value standing than cut. Kennedy reminds us that many nations have environmental disasters because they do not have the environmental laws, developed out of respect and reverence for the land, that have protected this country. Like Mishra in India, Kennedy sees nature as an aspect of God, whose resources are to be treasured, not destroyed (Werth 92-96).

During the nineteenth century, preservationists forthrightly gave ethical and spiritual reasons for protecting the natural world. John Muir condemned the "temple destroyers, devotees of ravaging commercialism" who, "instead of lifting their eyes to the God of the mountains, lift them to the Almighty dollar." Not calling for better cost-benefit analysis, Muir described nature not as a commodity but as a companion. Nature is sacred, Muir held, whether or not resources are scarce.

Transcendentalists such as Emerson and Thoreau thought of nature as full of divinity. Walt Whitman celebrated a leaf of grass as no less than the journeywork of the stars. "After you have exhausted what there is in business, politics, conviviality, love, and so on," he wrote in Specimen Days, and "found that none of these finally
satisfy, or permanently wear - what remains? Nature remains." These philosophers thought of nature as a refuge from economic activity, not as its resource (Sagoff 67).

On his 1965 trip to Glacier Bay, David Bohn writes of his primal connection to "a man wrapped in animal hide and fur, crouched at the edge of a glacier twenty thousand years ago" (210). Such a connection through human history to the earlier earth history is a common thread in much writing about wilderness and nature. The mythic image here becomes metaphor.

John Seed expresses this concept in a farther reaching way, "I have the scientific understanding that we humans spent 125 million of the last 130 million years evolving within rain forest, and that our cells and our very psyche are infused with the intelligence of the forest" (278-281). Cells and psyche become one, irrespective of time or humanity. When one recognizes the value and need for such ties, it is much more difficult to harm one's home, Earth. Seed's ideas illustrate some of the underpinnings for the Gaia concept promoted in the 1980's.
Gaia, said James Lovelock, "has continuity with the past back to the origins of life, and extends into the future as long as life persists. The atmosphere, the oceans, the climate, and the crust of the Earth are regulated at a state comfortable for life because of the behavior of living organisms" (62). Lovelock publicized for our times the metaphor that the Earth is a living organism. Mother Nature now has a new mythic meaning in the postmodern world.

Long ago in wilderness writing, Charles Sheldon killed a sow grizzly in the Yukon, skinned it while her cub cried nearby, then wrote moving words about "the wild enchantment of the wilderness," calling himself "a lover of the wilderness and its wild life" (141). Sheldon was hunting around the time Theodore Roosevelt, a great killer in the wilderness, refused to kill a yearling black bear and thus started the "Teddy Bear" craze which made its own contribution to the conservation ethic. But let's not condemn such hunters too quickly. Sheldon writes that he loved the wildlife that he obviously expected the wilderness to contain. He probably felt that same primordial connection to wild things that so many others have noted. Part of that confirmation of identity requires for some a participation in wild acts, even the ultimate wild act, a
"blood lust." In a recent thriller on poaching endangered species, *Prey*, Ken Goddard creates an important character as "a man with an international reputation for hunting, killing, and satisfying his craving for the ever-addictive sensation of facing death" (28). The compulsion to define oneself by denying life to others can be traced back to the time of Oedipus or Cain, in myth. Such ultimate empowerment of the self, though bringing death to other creatures, opposes the more common synthesis with the environment that others find.

After studying the native people of Alaska's Koyukon River in their close seasonal interaction with their environment, Richard Nelson concluded, "Trapping is not just an occupation for some Koyukon people, it is a passion, a reconnection with the freedom of life outdoors in the wild country where they were born" (262). Notice the powerful impact of such words as "passion," "freedom," and "wild." These words resonate within the human psyche. But the "wilderness" is not quite what urbanites always imagine. Nelson concludes about the Koyukon River, "The fact that Westerners identify this remote country as wilderness reflects their inability to conceive of occupying and utilizing an environment without fundamentally altering its natural state" (258). The Koyukon lifestyle may be a fine
example of Bookchin's "third nature," where man is a constructive part of nature.

Kenneth Brower, The Nature Conservancy, and others have thus been addressed, along with all those conservationists who oppose hunting on any grounds, preferring perhaps an Edenic, pre-Fall paradise where illness, struggle, and death do not occur. True wilderness must still include these elements. Can wilderness include man and not be an oxymoron? James Lovelock asserts, "Organisms are adapting in a world whose material state is determined by the activities of their neighbors; this means that changing the environment is part of the game" (75). Human beings, if they are part of Gaia, must not be without a role in the evolution of the Earth, although, as in the Biblical conundrum of free choice, we must learn to make the right choices.

The Dene people call the area around the Thelon Game Sanctuary "where God began when the world was created." But for these people of the central Arctic of Canada, Eden is a place of struggle in life and death, wherein all are a part. One elder says, "When government people talk about land, I find it very funny, talking about all the things we use, all the things we survive on, like animals and caribou and those things. When I think about land, I think about the Great
Spirit.” When these people travel the land, they follow the story lines spun by their ancestors in their journeys of survival, recreating and reviving them. Not only the Dene (Indian) do so; the Inuit (Eskimo) who travel from the opposite side of the Thelon area do the same. James Raffan writes, “Land remains the places where people have been, the stories they have heard and the spiritual connections they feel to an integrated physical, cultural and spiritual universe. It defines them and makes them whole” (49-57). By such integration, mankind becomes one with the world. Such sentiment echoes Bruce Chatwin in Songlines, who wrote about the aboriginal people of Australia:

No Aboriginal could conceive that the created world was in any way imperfect. His religious life had a simple aim; to keep the land the way it was and should be. The man who went on "walkabout" was making a ritual journey. He trod in the footprints of his Ancestor. He sang the Ancestor's stanzas without changing a word or note - and so recreated the Creation (13-14). An unsung land is a dead Creation (52)

As Abram interprets, “For Aboriginal peoples the Dream time stories and the encompassing terrain are reciprocally mnemonic, experientially coupled in a process of mutual invocation. The land...and the language are inseparable” (177).
The aborigines of Australia and the Arctic, like many others, recognize and celebrate the human integration to the environment in cultures that extend many thousands of years back in time.

Leslie Marmon Silko writes of a similar pathway between Laguna and the "Emergence" natural springs at Paguate in New Mexico, for the Laguna people a ritual circuit marking an interior journey of awareness and imagination from within the earth to differentiation as the people and culture they became. Such landscape-linked narratives mark the complex relationships that people must maintain with their natural environment if they are to survive as a culture (891).

The Laguna recognized their survival depended on their interrelationship with nature, not in their power to destroy it. This was an oral culture whose traditions placed great value on the continued retelling and regrounding of the tales, so that even the accidental loss of a red VW in an arroyo would place the victims in their cultural, spiritual, and physical landscape.
Like the Inuit, Dene, Aboriginal, and innumerable others over-run by Western life, they celebrate their necessary dependence on nature, "One look and you know that simply to survive is great triumph, that every possible resource is needed, every possible ally -- even the most humble insect or reptile" (894).

The Laguna struggle to hang on to their view of the world while coal and uranium ore are torn out of the Navajo Reservation around them and Huggies, and Big Macs and ATVs drift onto the earth. To be part of a human community inevitably involves separations from the land. Abram says:

We simply cannot take our place within any community of human speakers without ordering our sensations in a common manner, and without thereby limiting our spontaneous access to the wild world that surrounds us. Any particular language or way of speaking thus holds us within a particular community of human speakers by invoking an ephemeral border, or boundary, between our sensing bodies and the sensuous earth (256).

In a Westernized world where everything is measured by money, the world of nature cannot survive the linguistic attention of short term and specialized self-interests. Once that standard is accepted by any culture, as it is so massively today, even in the disguised terminology of "employment losses" or "private business," then the natural environment wars are lost. The "megabucks" win.
Aldo Leopold recognized this tendency in the seminal *A Sand County Almanac*, "A system of conservation based solely on economic self-interest is hopelessly lopsided. It assumes, falsely, I think, that the economic parts of the biotic clock will function without the uneconomic parts"(414). The natural world cannot translate to the economic without serious losses of integrity.

Another approach to the essence of postmodern nature is found in *Song for the Blue Ocean* by Carl Safina, director of the National Audubon Society's Living Oceans Program, who uses the past tense to describe our time: "The last buffalo hunt was occurring on the rolling blue prairies of the ocean." Safina makes clear the differences between the finite nature of natural systems and the cornucopian myths propounded by those who believe that man can make nature better. Metaphors are abundant as Safina confronts cornucopian myth with reality through a study of the Bristol Bay salmon fishery in Alaska, making clear the deleterious effects of fish-farming as a counterpoint to the idea that man can make a better fisher than nature (66-8).

Tony Eberts, in the Wilderness Committee Report, cites the "horrifying world record" of fish farming and "the inevitability of threats to wild salmon stocks - the spreading of disease, genetic degradation, and filth in our
oceans"(1). Paul Rauber in *Sierra* creates a vivid image of the progress of global warming resulting from environmental pollution, "Ecosystems start to shift, subtly at first ...species you have never heard of. Then, familiar favorites like polar bears and manatees"(32-41). The effects noted proceed from the remote distance to the backyard songbirds, a common rhetorical progression among environmentalists. The conflict is clear: cornucopians see man and his technology overcoming any problems (Myth of Voluntary Omnipotence), while those who perceive natural limits view man as part of the natural system, subject to natural limits.

A common journalistic method to draw attention to a core environmental problem is to set up a particular situation as a paradigm for all such problems. This technique, an example of analogy in action, has the advantages of highlighting a particular problem as extremely important, while at the same time giving the reader the approach to other such problems; in effect, teaching the reader to become proactive in other environmental problem areas. Edwin Dobb’s "Pennies from Hell", about the massive copper mine pit in Butte, Montana is a fine example of this method. Dobb reports, "Like Concord, Gettysburg, and Wounded Knee, Butte is one of the places America came from. Indeed, it can be looked upon as a national laboratory, in which the inner
workings of a crucial kind of economic activity are laid bare and U.S. environmental policy is being put to one of its most severe tests."

Dobb sets up the connections of a copper pit to the related economic, political, environmental, and consumer issues so that the full meaning of a Butte resident’s comment about the Pit must become clear, “The Pit is the receptacle of all our sins.” Such a theme returns us again to a consistent message of environmental theory: everything is interconnected in the natural world; man breaks these connections at his peril and the world’s.

Dobb points out that adhering to wise environment-friendly policies can have positive economic results. There are many other instances of economically viable and environmentally sound practices, beyond Ben and Jerry’s, the ice cream purveyors who espouse and practice environmentally sound practices that resonate with the well-heeled professionals of New England. However, companies that find themselves obligated to become environmentally cooperative often find ways to promote their newfound self responsibility, while trying to extract concessions from others, continuing to pass the costs of their business onto others - as occurred with ARCO in Butte. On a sobering note, Dobb concludes that not all environmental problems can be solved,
that man-made environmental disasters can endure into human eternity, despite all of our technology (42-54). Thus the reader must realize, if the paradigm holds and the teaching is valid, that environmental regulations are still necessary to avoid the disasters that basically unfettered extractive industries can impose on the environment, including the people in places such as Butte. The Berkeley Pit is definitively not a Cornucopia.

Another approach to consideration of environmental disaster is found in David Quammen’s The Song of the Dodo. Here the analogy is set up between island biogeography and continuing fragmentation of the natural environment, as modern civilization continues its seemingly inevitable cancerous growth at the expense of the natural environment. For Quammen, islands represent what humankind is making out of the natural world, as great continental masses ecologically begin to resemble South Pacific atolls, threatening extinction to species uncountable. Quammen shows that “evolution as it occurs on islands - all islands - is not unrepresentative of evolution at large. On the contrary, it’s paradigmatic (137)....Sauromalus hispidus, like any other species chosen for study by a thoughtful ecologist, is a synecdoche, a concrete reality that signifies more than itself....But in even its most
particularized details can be seen aspects of general patterns" (191).

T.H. Watkins reports on this same problem with present wilderness preservation efforts, "Wilderness areas... cannot function forever as islands in a sea of ever-increasing development, isolated natural systems cut off from one another so completely they might as well be atolls scattered across the boundless void of the Pacific" (34). Michael Soule concludes, "In our lifetimes, this planet will see a suspension, if not an end, to many ecological and evolutionary processes which have been uninterrupted since the beginnings of paleontological time" (530). Quammen sees the key concepts of man’s role vis-a-vis the natural environment in the 1869 words of Alfred Wallace, the father of evolutionary theory, "Should civilized man ever reach these distant lands, and bring moral, intellectual, and physical light into the recesses of these virgin forests, we may be sure that he will so disturb the nicely-balanced relations of organic and inorganic nature as to cause the disappearance and finally the extinction" (611). "Our light" has reduced wilderness into "island" pockets that cannot protect biodiversity. The fate of the exotic islands of distant exploration in the 1800s has become the paradigm
of the fate of the planet: the explorations of man destroy the world he seeks and knows, his world.

Max Oelschlaeger interprets Sustainable Development, a key buzzword among mainstream environmentalists, as a "fence between nature and culture" to enable Man to control all development on the planet while denying the reality that we cannot maintain all life forms. Scientific literacy helped convert nature "through some strange kind of linguistic alchemy" as man pretends that science has control over nature. David Quammen contends this approach "entails a presumption that humanity is the star of a one-character drama around which everything else is just a scenery and proscenium" (47-9).

An assumption of Sustainable Development is that mankind can control technology. Mark Sagoff points out the ethical basis for the Triumph of Technology argument: without economic growth, pollution and other environmental problems in impoverished areas will only get worse (44-61). This need to deal with the devil conundrum is consistent with The Myth of Voluntary Omnipotence for the Triumph of Technology argument presupposes that we know and can control all that we do and affect in regards to the complex interactions of the biosphere. In other words, we have an example of a fallacious argument based on incomplete
evidence. While certain of the facts are indisputable in some areas of the globe, such as that areas of the Third World have severe problems with food scarcity and fuel depletion, it is not a given that the only solutions to the problems involve further applications of technology.

Harold Fromm develops the concept of The Myth of Voluntary Omnipotence, a contemporary form of the Faust legend, a legend which in all of its variants ends the same way: man destroys his world through arrogant belief in his own infallibility. "Trade-offs" are almost universally recognized as necessary in our modern world; thus Fromm's attack on them hits at the symbolic heart of our Faustian bargain to favor technology at the expense of nature.

Voluntary Omnipotence is a key mythic concept, since, by the determination of many such as Fromm, mankind has become temporarily godlike at the expense of the natural environment (30-38). This folly ultimately must result in his own destruction, modern man having concluded that He can never be mistaken in his basic assumptions. Remember the nuclear scientists, including Einstein, who finally spoke out against nuclear weapons and proliferation? Mutually Assured Destruction was one myth that was at the core of American and Soviet defense policy for some decades and has now resurfaced in the Indian subcontinent. These policies
were "negotiations with nature" just as certainly as are the business decisions of Maxxam Corporation in Redwood country.

Anne H. Ehrlich and Paul R. Ehrlich in *Betrayal of Science and Reason* point out how anti-environmentalists misuse the scientific processes and logic to advance their causes with the public by developing their own environmental myths in what the Ehrlichs term Brownlash (reactionary responses to environmentalism). Some of this rhetoric has found some positive reverberations in the public, which the Ehrlichs argue has little scientific knowledge or even common sense.

The Ehrlichs also discuss the problem of confusing price with cost, as Sagoff does in arguing that price signals will indicate that something has become too valuable to waste. As others put it, the market place will always rule wisely, a common mythic refrain in the age of privatization. Too often the seller of an item has not had to pay for the full cost of something because he purchased it at a bargain price, just as many modern consumers will go to some lengths to pay a cheaper price. The item may be stolen (from the environment that paid for its production), as are many of the base commodities which are not going to be replaced or regrown, without, for example, loss of soil, water, or air quality, three of the original four elements.
In effect, the costs are too often borne by the unempowered, such as the indigenes of various forests. Mass extinctions are being driven by mass consumption (35). Cost is a rhetorical concept.

Even for those who retreat to a wilderness setting in public proclamation of their ties to the land, supporting the natural environment is often a myth. Robert Greenway says, "One tends to live in parasitic relationship with Western culture even as one basks in the backcountry meadows of the wild western homestead surrounded on three sides by national forests" (187). Their devotion to the land becomes a form of consumption, with its attendant costs.

The Precautionary Principle counts among its precedents the Resource Conservation movement of Gifford Pinchot and Theodore Roosevelt a century ago. However it becomes clear that the earlier concern was primarily to conserve resources so they could be most wisely used by human society, with little recognition of the interests of other parts of the natural environment, nor was there much apparent consideration for detailed scientific investigation of the implications of development. John Rodman emphasizes that wise use involved the interests of resource developers, exemplifying anthropocentric utilitarianism (121-9). The term wise use has been adopted by the Wise Use Movement,
although some might argue that the few ranchers who are the main proponents of the movement do not qualify as Pinchot's "for the greatest good of the greatest number." Rodman continues on to emphasize that Resource Conservation is ultimately an example of species imperialism since its assumption all that is non-human is for human use must lead to a utilitarian approach to all that is not man. In the end, all of the natural environment would be used, thus ended. (This reminds of the Borg of Star Trek - "You will be assimilated. Resistance is futile.")

In contrast to utilitarian interpretations, Matt Ridley and Bobbi S. Lowe analyze the selfish gene theory of biologist Richard Dawkins, who asserts that there are only two instances of cooperation in the animal kingdom: when altruist and beneficiary are close relatives and when the altruist can expect the favor to be returned later. This theory resulted from George William's "eye-opening" message that evolution pits individuals -- not groups or species -- against each other. Ridley and Low pair this "selfish gene" theory with the nearly coincidental publication of economist Mancur Olson's theory that individuals pursue short-term individual interests. They conclude, "Societies are sums of their individuals, each acting in rational self-interest, and policies that assume otherwise are doomed." Thus they
can account for both the failure of the communist ideal and the American refusal to vote for deficit reduction sacrifices, neatly suggesting their analogies may have universal applicability. The author's introduced context of contemporary politics inversely suggests that there is always common ground between two images of non-cooperation, just as Americans and Communists have created common ground recently for mutual self-interest. The authors posit that the environmental lobby runs the same risks the failed Marxists faced, "largely ignoring the fact that human beings are motivated by self-interest rather than collective interests" (78).

Equation of environmentalists with Marxists is a double whammy: many Americans identify Marxists as part of "the evil empire" as well as losers. One can conclude there is not the obvious contradiction between Marxism and the thesis of Ridley and Low, if one considers carefully the implications of the following by the Marxist, Mikhail Bakhtin, "The personality of the speaker, taken from within, so to speak, turns out to be wholly a product of social interrelations. Not only its outward expression but also its inner experience are social territory" (935).

If one extends this reasoning about individual consciousness being dependent upon social context, the
argument can be made that social relationships also depend upon individual context; therefore, individual self-interest is a necessary pre-condition of social self-awareness.Appearances to the contrary -- that the article is a direct attack on the Marxist interpretation of social, economic, and biological theory in regard to environmentalism -- Ridley and Low share a fundamental understanding of social functioning with Bakhtin. Bakhtin also writes, "Outward expression in most cases only continues and makes more distinct the direction already taken by inner speech and the intonation already embedded in it" (934). Are not Ridley and Low echoing the same Muse when they refer to the successes of environmentalism as having been achieved "by changing individual incentives, not by exhortation, moral reprimand, or appeals to our better natures"? This conclusion has a dual function: on one hand it keeps committed environmentalists on track by showing how they already know the "best" approach; on the other hand, it pre-empts three of the tactics that have been successful for environmentalists among a large constituency. (Are they to ignore these successes?) Bakhtin's "inner speech" is a "product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener." Put in popular vernacular: you can't just talk at someone, you must talk with him or her. Environmentalists
must offer the individual a reciprocal relationship to be recognized and shared. Through examples of deterrents -- both individual punishments and the Clean Air Act of 1990 -- the authors conclude that incentives should include prizes as well as punishments: carrots as well as sticks (80).

The next section of the paper, "Playing Games With Life," makes use of Game Theory, which both biologists and economists use to study competing theories, with the game winners earning survival/breeding or money. The Prisoner's Dilemma game proves to be a most apt analogy in both disciplines. Separated, forced to choose between defecting (confessing) and being silent, not knowing what the other accomplice is doing, the two accomplice prisoners each rationalize defecting as the best guaranteed result for the individual, even though it is not the best ideal result, if they could fully trust each other, a prerequisite they cannot know for sure. So they both confess, getting three years, when acting with full trust in each other not to confess would have yielded only one year for each. "In the language of game theorists, individually rational strategies result in a collectively irrational outcome" (80). Interpreting this model of bleak discovery, biologists realized that it did not apply if the game was only one in a long series. Tit-for-tat, or reciprocity of favors in the
future for those who do not betray trust, was soon discover-
ed everywhere in the animal kingdom (examples given among
bats, dolphins, chimpanzees, and the Ache of Paraguay),
implying, "Cooperation can emerge naturally. The collective
interest can be served by the pursuit of selfish interests" (81).
Thus "game theory," an artificial construct accepted
as a premise (implying that a science can find all the
parameters for a situation, with nothing of import omitted)
appears to confirm that selfish interests can achieve
collective goals "naturally." Using the "prisoner" image
should remind the readers that, environmentally speaking,
all people are prisoners of a closed system - Earth - not in
total control or knowledge, and liable to suffer for any
individual's action, perhaps arbitrarily. Like most
prisoners, we want out. Prisoners are also stereotyped by
most as being selfish and shortsighted. "Tit-for-tat" shows
how life is a series of exchanges, not one dilemma, thus
turning the premise of the prisoners' shortsighted self-
interest upside down, clearly a postmodern twist.

The next target for the Ridley and Low is Garret
Hardin's classic 1968 model of The Tragedy of the Commons,
where "individually rational behavior deteriorates into
collective ruin." Referring to the ozone hole and the
greenhouse effect as "classic tragedies of the commons in
making," the authors begin talking about costs and benefits, where costs are ultimately spread diffusely to all, but benefits are reaped at low cost by the few - "In economic jargon, the costs are externalized." For Hardin there were two ways to avoid overexploiting commons: privatize or regulate by outside agent.

The latter solution has been most common, with centralized controlling agencies cited in India and the U.S. as "egregious...far away...bureaucrats...creating perverse incentives for polluters." An Amoco Corp. spokesman says, "The guy who does nothing until forced to by law is rewarded." A particularly damning study of one refinery by the EPA and Amoco concluded that the same effect in health and environment protection could be achieved for 1/4 the cost if government dictates did not have to be followed. In the 55 lines of text on the centralized solution to the commons problem, there are 15 specific references to governments, all indicating inefficiency, incompetence, and corruption. These might suggest the authors were against government controls, but this section concludes, in seeming turnabout, that polluters should have to buy "polluters' quotas" to provide revenue for cleanup and as incentives to companies to keep polluting costs low, as the Clean Air Act of 1990 did for sulfur-dioxide pollution (81). One must be
forgiven for wondering how these quotas can be legislated and administered without government.

It is necessary at this point to remember a fundamental concept of environmentalists as developed by Aldo Leopold in the seminal *Sand County Almanac*, "A system of conservation based solely on economic self-interest is hopelessly lopsided... It assumes, falsely, I think, that the economic parts of the biotic clock will function without the uneconomic parts" (414). Managing human relationships and those of all the living creatures on Earth will never be fully a game or a science. Any approach that has science (or money) as a quantifier is based on false presumptions. Ridley and Low have ignored this wisdom and do not recognize that the scientific approach can only be completely valid where all the parameters can be known for a situation. (Remember the Myth of Voluntary Omnipotence?) Managing human relationships within the biosphere must ultimately be understood as an art as well as a science.

Eugene Ionesco once wrote in reference to his play *Rhinoceros*:

> The universal and modern man...cannot understand that a thing might perhaps be without usefulness; nor does he understand that, at bottom, it is the useful that may be a useless and back-breaking burden. If one does not understand the usefulness of the useless and the uselessness of the useful, one cannot understand art. And a country
where art is not understood is a country of slaves and robots (Merton 605-606).

If "to be truthful means to employ the usual metaphors... The duty to lie according to a fixed convention" (Nietzsche 891), the economists and biologists are mistaking their metaphors of scientific conclusions for truth in environmental situations, where mistakes could lead to the downfall of even the species of Homo Sapiens, whose destiny we hope is not as either slaves or robots. The hubristic self-deception of scientists could be the downfall of us all; the debates over global warming are but recent signs of the on-going tensions between truth and reality, between science and art.

In "The Pitfalls of Privatization," continuing Hardin's commons analogy, Ridley and Low refer to the English land enclosures of 1534 to confirm that accountability was one purpose then, just as it was later for putting barbed wire on the prairies. Marxists, the poor, and shepherds might argue for the dispossessed that accountability did not count the interests of all, only those with the power to do the counting. In extending privatization to clean air, the authors quickly recognize the need for a large enforcement bureaucracy, which can lead to their evil of centralization. They also recognize the social disorders that result from privatization: the past British enclosures, wilderness
rights, and wild creatures auctioned off to the highest bidder. A mathematician concluded about whales, that for economic self-interest, "It would be more profitable to kill them all, bank the proceeds, sell the equipment, and live off the interest," confirming the hard, cold facts that privatization may not be acceptable for all the parties with interests in the natural environment. The benefits of privatization are mythic for too many. Ridley and Low conclude their analysis of approaches to environmental problems on a pessimistic note. The struggle for common resources is mostly a "destructive free-for-all" (82).

The hope-for-the-future section is suitably entitled "The Middle Way" - which has "an uncanny similarity to tit-for-tat, in that it rewards cooperators with cooperation and punishes defectors with defection - a strategy animals often use." Elinor Ostrom cites a Turkish inshore fishery at Alanya as well as the Valencia huerta to illustrate how a community that is small, stable, communicating, and concerned for the future can solve its problems without government input or exploitation and in contradiction of game-theory, which often ignores the long-time cooperation of groups for common good.

Stepping from human groups into the genetics of animals and plants, Egbert Leigh uses the analogy of the human body
in his *Parliament of Genes*, where some 75,000 different genes cooperate to continue the life of a human body (82-3). Thus have Ridley and Low used analysis and examples from many different sources, large to small to inner, to develop their thesis that cooperation is a facet of human nature that can offset unbridled self-interest, even at the cellular level. Searching for an example of corporate self-sacrifice, (a seeming oxymoron), the authors look at the conclusions of Prof. Kenneth Oye concerning Du Pont's decision to phase out the chemicals that damage the ozone layer (a decision that led to the Montreal Protocol, a prototype for international environmental agreements). On first inspection Du Pont's decision seems altruistic, but Oye speculates that their announcement prevented rivals crashing their market for their ten-year phase-out period (very profitable), while also giving Du Pont the decisive edge in developing replacement chemicals. Du Pont had its cake and ate it too. Self-interest was the real motivation of the company (84).

Next Ridley and Low consider environmental consciousness raising at the individual level. They cite the effectiveness of shame in regard to fur and ivory sales and of refunds for glass, metal, and plastic. Both are easily recognizable examples of tit-for-tat. Both are of limited
importance, since the public really gives up nothing. To
give up carbon dioxide, people lose part of their standard
of living but solving global warming demands this sacrifice.
(The authors accept global warming as a given problem,
omitting any reference to some conflicting reports on this
issue.) The authors refer in passing to the mysticism and
morality that have been introduced recently into the
environmental debate, such as the Gaia hypothesis, (However,
Lovelock and others have presented a scientific basis for
Gaia [62]) and the reverence for nature of some Asian
religions, but they also note the environmental degradation
that is common to many of the countries of the East. They
conclude that much of the moral reverence for nature is but
lip service. This section is called "The Intangible
Carrots." Perhaps the carrots of social control never have
much effect.

In the next section, "The Golden Age That Never Was,"
the authors attack the cliché that pre-industrial people
also lived in harmony with nature. With examples such as
the extinction of the moa, devastation of Pacific island
environments, the self-destruction of the Mayan and Anasazi
environments, and with the observation that in many cases
natives achieved further extinctions as soon as presented
with higher technology, the authors emphasize that there
never was a lost golden pre-history of man and nature in harmony. One might question whether the authors are overgeneralizing on the basis of societies that lost their equilibrium with nature, while they ignore societies that were somewhat harmonious.

In "Cause for Hope," the authors conclude, "Tit-for-tat can come to the rescue. If the principles it represents are embodied in the treaties and legislation being written to avert global warming, then there need be no problem in producing an effective, enforceable, and acceptable series of laws." The heroic approach implied in the first sentence, its echo in "principles...treaties and legislation...series of laws," is belied somewhat by the negatives that are implicit in the last hesitant clause, "there need be no problem" and the overstated requirements for a series of laws. Thus, it is no surprise that the authors clarify further how the laws must be fine-tuned on the international and national level. They explain how "free-rider countries" can be controlled by a middle way between war and world government, "trade sanctions, blackmail, bribes, and even shame... The implicit threat of trade sanctions for CFC is a classic piece of tit-for-tat." At the national level, free riders will be made to pay or cooperate in tit-for-tat to "make it rational for individuals to act 'green'." Ridley
and Low conclude, "Instead of trying to change human nature, go with the grain of it. In refusing to put group good ahead of individual advantage, people are being both rational and consistent with their evolutionary past"(86). "Human nature" and "narrow interests" are set up in opposition to governments, shock, and change, as well as "group good," all by now discredited as lip-service or non-realities; thus leading to the rediscovered goal of all evolutionary life: the rational imperative of individual advantage.

Ridley and Low have reminded us that the path to environmental salvation must involve the middle path where society recognizes that the self-interest of the individual is a basis for saving the "commons." A good part of the success of this recognition is founded on realizing that not just life, but also language, is founded on an exchange between the individual and his society. There will not be a successful middle path unless scientists, biologists, politicians, and many others accept that cooperation among human beings and with the environment is as much dependent on art as on science, and on understanding our own language usage.

Murray Bookchin earlier developed the concepts of first nature (before man) and second nature (influenced by man),
concluding that "an ecological society would be a transcendence of both first nature and second nature into a new domain of a "free nature," a nature that in a truly rational humanity reached the level of conceptual thought…a nature that would willfully and thinkingly cope with conflict, contingency, waste, and compulsion"(136). Perhaps there is an ideal world where man and nature can find the language for the co-existence of all for the good of all. At the heart of Bookchin’s third nature one finds that the world is comprehended and responsive to the clear and effective use of human language that reflects both nature and humanity for the betterment of both.
CHAPTER 5

NATURE AND SYMBOLS

The use of symbols in writing about the natural environment is multi-faceted but essential. Writing about the natural environment involves the creative connections between skilled, precise recording of what is observed and the symbols that the artist finds to connect nature to the reader. Kenneth Burke clarifies that rhetoric uses "language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that naturally respond to symbols" (Henderson 120).

Thoreau, Muir, Annie Dillard, and Barry Lopez, among many others, pride themselves on careful and precise recording of their observations. Loren Eiseley suggests how they make the Romantic connection of Nature to Reader, "It was better, I decided, for the emissaries returning from the wilderness, even if they were merely descending from a stepladder, to record their marvel, not to define its meaning. In that way it would go echoing on through the minds of men, each grasping at that beyond out of which the miracles emerge, and which, once defined, ceases to satisfy the human need for symbols" (533). A scene or event that is fully defined no longer has power, perhaps because the reader has no need or compulsion to engage the mind and
emotions in pursuit of the miracle, of the Holy Grail, to
find meaning out of the wilderness, to put to rest his
fears. Powerful symbols, although they reach out to a
multitude of readers, appeal to individual, sometimes
unnamed, emotions in the reader.

Thomas Berry concludes that our industrial/modern age
has broken down too much of the interconnectedness of all
life on this planet. In suggesting how civilization might
begin to restore the natural balances of our world, Berry
employs several of the basic nature symbols: Earth as the
Great Mother whose reviving would reduce aggressiveness, the
cosmic tree, and tree of life which "gives expression to the
organic unity of the universe but especially of the earth in
its integral reality (17). In making use of the "Great
Mother" and "cosmic tree" symbols, Berry effectively
identifies, but does not fully define, two "miracles out of
the wilderness" that have been used repeatedly to rally
powerful support from masses of people around causes. The
Virgin Mary, Mother Theresa, Queen Victoria, and "family
values" are only some obvious examples of this principle.
The Gaia hypothesis is one attempt to unify some of these
great principles. Perhaps the instinctive primal responses
to the Gaia concept are not only indicators of the
effectiveness but also maybe the ultimate essentiality of this symbol.

Although many writers approach the environmental issue from the symbolic side, there are some that are prepared to address head on the economic values—another symbol form—of nature. John Sawhill of The Nature Conservancy estimated the value of the world’s ecosystem services and natural capital at some $33 trillion annually, an astonishing figure that is almost double the gross national product of the entire global economy in 17 broad services that the natural world provides, free of charge (58). The dollar symbols are the ones that the capitalist world understands most easily.

The Ehrlichs look at the complex interactions of all the earth-systems in referring to the failed experiment of Biosphere 2, where the experimenters were placed into a closed system with a number of carefully chosen plants and animals that together were designed to be a sustainable closed ecosystem (at a cost of $200,000,000+). They discovered that they could not replicate eco-system services of the biosphere for long periods of time with current technology. Ehrlich disputes as dangerously absurd Sagoff’s claim that there is no credible argument that, “all or even most of the species we are concerned to protect are essential to the functioning of the ecological systems on
which we depend.... Until science can say which species are essential in the long term, we exterminate any at our peril" (98-104). Again, we are not omnipotent; it is a myth that we can know all that the Earth or we do to incubate life on this planet. Our economic, political, religious, or other cultural systems cannot grasp, know, or even find the language to identify all the factors that are involved in life in our natural environment, Eco-system Services. Bookchin suggests a way, third nature, but we have not achieved that goal yet.

Paul Hawken, a businessman, environmentalist, and author, attacks the present realities of Capitalism, pointing out that natural capital comprises the resources we use, both nonrenewable (oil, coal, metal ore) and renewable (forests, fisheries, grasslands whose most important value lies in the services they provide, distinct from the resources themselves:

Trillions of dollars of critical ecosystem services are received annually by commerce.... Economists argue that rational markets make this the most efficient of all possible economies. But that theory works only as long as you use financial efficiency as the sole metric and ignore physics, biology, and common sense" (53).

This concept of the irreplaceable and indefinable values of "ecosystem services" is an effective counter to the arguments of so many apologists for Laissez Faire
Capitalism that excuse environmental problems because humanity has been exploiting for many centuries, but we and our wonderful planet are still alive and kicking. As Hawken argues, the wrong symbols are engaged by the discussion; it is not dollar costs that need addressing as symbols but the actual symbols of environmental degradation that indicate the impoverishment of our biosphere.

David Corn and Kenneth S. Zinn engage in an interesting debate in The Nation over the issues concerning global warming as they relate to the Kyoto Treaty. As an American labor leader, Zinn says he represents workers and conditions in this country, apparently downplaying global influences on the environment that Corn argues could be best alleviated by following the Kyoto Treaty. Zinn presents the case that we would just export jobs and environmental negatives to Third World countries by adopting the Kyoto Treaty, while Corn says America and other First World countries must accept some short term costs, that will be minor to our way of life and justified because we have contributed the lion’s share of environmental pollution already, in order to avert global warming catastrophe. The problem is Zinn’s symbolic role. Whom does he represent? The welfare of our country and our labor force ultimately rests in the health of the
environment (36). Let's not confuse symbolic roles with reality.

One of the standards of the modern world is consumption for the sake of consumption, where status is graded by consumption. That such standards are anathema to the preservation of the environment are readily apparent to most environmentalists, but not necessarily to the outdoor sportsman. Dana Philips writes in "Double Whamm" of fisherman Dennis Gault regarding fishing tackle with the gaze "of a new kind of commodity fetishist: he is having an attack of conspicuous consumption that has to do not with his own status, but with that of the totems he has purchased -- totems of which he has become a mere function." Phillips suggests the modern sportsman participates in nature by consuming consumer symbols, thus real wilderness is no longer necessary (206-217).

Many of the best manipulators of the symbols of wilderness are found among those who make a living appealing to the emotions of the masses in the name of saving the wilderness. Such appeals have long traditions in our culture: just remember Smokey the Bear, who was responsible for generations thinking all fires that occurred in the wilderness were bad.
Similar campaigns have been conducted in the last few decades to make the wolf finally a victim of good press, not bad press. For ten years a public relations campaign has been conducted to return wolves to Yellowstone Park. Millions signed petitions, polls were conducted to raise support, and children were organized (to counter the old fable of the bad wolf in "Little Red Riding Hood") to make public and politic appeals. As Alexander Cockburn reports in The Nation, "Environmental groups found wolf appeals to be as big a money magnet as dolphins and baby seals and have sold wolf calendars by the million." All three of these appealing images have become icons for environmental consciousness-raising because they have a winning combination of perceived intelligence and cuteness, tied to potential pet status (the wolves look like lively dogs). But for ranchers and realtors, the wolves' howling symbolizes lost calves and lambs and scared buyers of land. They are fighting for their perceived interests by using the Big Bad Wolf icon. (Although Defenders of Wildlife created the Wolf Compensation Trust to compensate for wolf depredations.) The Defenders of Wildlife tried to manipulate the Endangered Species Act and with copious publicity stage-managed the reintroduction of wolves from Canada to former wolf territory, ignoring the fact of a
remnant wolf already population in the area. Then opponents of wolves argued that any wolves found outside the reintroduced group and designated area no longer deserved endangered status protection. Thus the native wolves were at more risk than previously from the well-armed interests opposed to them. Cockburn concludes, "Moral for the season: Bureaucratic sleight of hand, "win-win" solutions and environmental opportunism may fool Little Red Riding Hood for a while, but sooner or later the mask drops"(9). Wolves that had undergone X-Files type traumas of aerial pursuit, drugging, thorough study and documentation, confinement, deportation, and release into strange territory with attached radio collars were used as symbols of wild creatures in wilderness. As of June 14, 1998, Defenders of Wildlife had a half page ad in The L.A. Times with a howling wolf picture headlined, “Don’t Let Them Kill the Yellowstone Wolves.” These wolves are the reintroduced ones and progeny from Canada, whose destruction D.W. is determined to avoid, even as they loosely use the iconographic term Yellowstone to gain more leverage with American supporters of wilderness creatures.

One common approach of environmental writers is to emphasize drama by suggesting disasters that await the world. This “Henny Penny, the sky is falling in!”
hyperbolic approach is sure to get attention, including headlines and TV spots, but it can only be used sparingly before you have a “crying wolf” response. Bill McKibben reports on this problem in an *Outside* article referring to fishery conflicts around the world as examples of “doom and gloom” approaches, “No matter how often we hear about limits, they never really seem to impinge on our lives... The fisheries in crisis seem to exist on another planet”(60). Such disaster invocations often include elements of inculcated guilt, pessimism and cynicism, even paranoia and incipient helplessness while still hoping for the public to buy into the new cure to mankind’s problems on this planet.

Employing effective symbolism has become a preferred tactic of too many groups fighting for consumption and for the environment, among other interest groups. Such proliferation is undoubtedly a mark of the success in Westernized societies - and others - of the effectiveness of symbols in motivating humanity. Perhaps we have achieved a contemporary wilderness that is all symbol and optical illusion - postmodern imagery.
CHAPTER 6

HEROES AND NATURE

One recurring feature of writing about the environment is the use of heroic figures. Obviously, inclusion of heroic characters is extremely useful for dramatic considerations, involving as it does the necessity of conflict and the testing of character. Other than the ensuing photogenic scenes of exotic or romantic locales, is there some other key attribute of wilderness that leads to its exploitation by the heroic? Do not forget that wilderness involves to some degree the unknown or unpredictable. Until a few centuries ago, the maps for the edges of the known world often symbolized the ultimate wilderness with figures of incredible beasts or the perhaps equally terrifying words "terra incognita" or "unknown lands."

Although involvement with car chases may become predictable, even for heroes, adventures into unknown lands may effect unpredictable consequences that will engage the hero in physical and psychic challenges. From the times of Homer onward, literature has often illustrated such an approach.

Wilderness as a staple in the story telling of all cultures has advantages and disadvantages for the natural environment and wilderness itself. Superficially it would
appear that enlightened cultures would want to maintain such natural environments so that their mettle may continue to be tested, so the brightest and strongest may be recognized and rewarded, leading to the continued strength of the society. Indeed, such is the premise of some military advertising campaigns, "Be the best that you can be!" over a backdrop of recruits crossing a wilderness stream, even the guided rehabilitation of problem adolescents in Outward Bound-type programs, where both the challenge of difficult wilderness passages and a measure of bonding with the wilderness are required.

In contrast to these positive understandings of the challenges of wilderness, there are the natural impulses to control and thereby - to greater or lesser degrees - to destroy the wilderness. Even the impulse to tell the story of conquering the wilderness leads to its destruction. Surmounting wilderness challenges means that control has been taken; others may follow a similar approach. To be graphic, think of the purists who argue that all technical climbers should not leave behind nor use any previously set assistance such as bolts or ropes. "Terra incognita" symbols must be erased. When others hear the adventure hero story in modern cultures, large numbers flock to the area depicted, trampling its wilderness values. Even if most
visitors are well removed from heroic status, their presence, their roads, gear, and ideas left behind, and their disruptions of wilderness values of flora and fauna and even local indigenous economies all tend to displace the very wilderness they supposedly valued enough to attempt to experience. The continuing campaign since the Sixties in America of "Take only pictures, leave only footprints" is an ongoing recognition of the problem, but only a partial solution. It is the very nature of heroes to leave footprints. Being heroic in most human cultures involves changing the environment, taking control.

Chip Brown writes about the clients of a Twentieth Century big game safari in Africa, following in the footsteps of Hemmingway trying to read a country with eyes clouded by European biases, fantasies, and fears. "Every generation struggling to decipher its own story has some version of a frozen leopard, some haunted totem that expresses its unconscious terror, its perplexity in the face of death." In The Snows of Kilimanjaro, for all of Africa's Edenic connotations, the wild country was still presented first as the land of savage blood-sports -- of snapped spines, severed jugulars, shredded hamstrings, and flyblown eyes"(119-83). This Africa is the land of heroes, but their adventure and self-image are expressed in the terms they
bring with them from their own lands, their own cultures, and their own languages. For the Browns, the wife may feel heroic just in using the latrine -- an act that became a tragic joke on the anti-heroic fat man in the movie *Jurassic Park*. When we travel, we bring our guides so we may take control, whether of PBS or Masai or our very language.

As Gary Snyder sees it, wilderness is where you find it in yourself; however, the recognition of the wild in the self allows the individual to make important discoveries that yield freedom, expansion, and release, thus the source of the worldwide hero narratives. "On the spiritual plane it requires embracing the other as oneself and stepping across the line -- not "becoming one" or mixing things up but holding the sameness and difference delicately in mind." The true awareness of the wild leads to the true awareness and realization of the self. In such realization one can then become the hero while at the same time making the discoveries of the very humble place of the individual in the vast complexity of all being. Snyder’s poetry conceives the conscious self in terms of a fully wild unbounded creature; thus wilderness serves to free the human soul to discover the self in all its relationships to the rest of the natural world. The metaphor of the soul as a free and wild creature is a key to understanding the importance of
wilderness to humanity. Snyder notes, "Nature is ultimately in no way endangered; wilderness is,"(48) but, without wilderness, our souls cannot make the critical journeys into the wilderness for self-discovey.
CHAPTER 7
HEROES AND NATURE IN OUTSIDE

One measure of successful methods in writing about the environment can be found in the feature articles of Outside magazine. The monthly magazine with over 1/2 million paid subscribers has adapted to modern adventure travel writing age-old character types such as the Hunter, Bumbler, Resolute, Arrogant, Obsessed, and the Tragic.

Outside magazine has secured its large niche in the American publishing scene through a proven formula: challenge the readers with wild adventure, inspire them to venture out on their own, but get them safely back out of the theater of danger. The "outside" must be dangerous, but not deadly; challenging, but not, in the end, overwhelming; exotically new, but reassuringly familiar. One could coin these opposites endlessly, for the dictum that opposites attract may best be applied to the readers of Outside, who are, after all, reading when they might be "outside." Thrill rides at theme parks, the "holodeck" of Star Trek: The Next Generation, and video games are other variants of this theme -- that the adventure has really only the safe reflection of danger -- which is at least as old as the tale of the hunt told around the campfire of the Neanderthals. Annie Proulx
writes of these approaches to nature, "His attitude would give a frisson of danger to a wienie roast in a state park. I swear each trip is the last, but back home, all cracked fingernails, and gravel burns, I know I've been somewhere (93).

The details may change, but E. Annie Proulx's attitude applies as well to adventure travel and Outside adventure writing as it might to the late night tales of campfire girls and boys. We all want to go somewhere, even if - or especially if - our imagination is going on the trip. Writers for this magazine scour the globe, from the depths of its waters, to its mountaintops and above, to all the hidden corners, including those of science, psychology, and environmentalism. They get us outside ourselves; the human condition is often shown as just a part of the earth condition. The selections are eclectic and various, as befits the subject of the outdoors, while the 200-plus page monthly magazine is replete with both lavish and funky advertising.

In the Feature article of the month, Outside profiles an individual taking on an "outside" activity. The title of the article, usually several lines long, clearly indicates its theme in an attractive way, even for the uninitiated in that activity. Outside readers must be
busy and practical enough to want essential information up front. The key to unlocking the secret of the Feature approach is to realize that at the heart of each article is a stereotypical character type. Remember that there are other types than those developed here and that none are mutually exclusive. In fact, the character types often interact within one person to produce the interesting and complex characters that are natural to the complicated world "outside."

1. The Hunter

There is an environmental philosophy behind outdoor adventure in *Outside* that mountain lion bow-hunter Don Thomas of Montana expresses as well as anyone. Watching a mountain lion along a rimrock for half an hour "was one of the most powerful experiences I've ever had with an animal in the outdoors.... Something clicked. I knew that I somehow had to interact with these animals." His interaction takes the form of hunting the studied creature, just as writer David Quammen "wanted to participate in the darting, lambent dynamics of [trout] lives within their environment.... with a fly rod." Such actions may appear atavistic, but if trout "didn't kill and eat insects, they wouldn't be susceptible to predation by fly fishermen. That fact is not
offered here as an ethical justification for sport fishing. It's just part of the ecological context, worth keeping in mind." Thomas argues that hunters and non-hunting conservationists really share common goals, preservation of the species (43). Thought becomes action; action returns us to our oneness with nature. We are what we think and what we hunt. The process may seem elemental, but maybe that is the point for Hunter. If Outside can bring closer together those who share the limited resources of the outdoors, then it may be serving the cause of all of humanity's creatures, while developing a larger market for itself and its advertisers.

2. The Bumbler

The writers are our stand-ins for adventure. For Outside, such a standard approach must include many variations to appeal to a very diverse market. One time-honored character is the Bumbler, "the fumbling, all-too-human adventurer who survives despite ignorant self-induced mishaps in a difficult world." We can identify with this writer as neophytes ourselves or laugh at the survival antics of a beginner. We learn through error and laughter or virtuously realize our superiority. Properly handled, this technique can appeal to all but perhaps the most
hardened adventurer. Tim Cahill is a master of this genre, as the following long title suggests:

You, Too, Can Be a Polar Hero
Navigate the treacherous floes! Track the savage ice bear! Survive the Man Who Didn't Get It! How to reach the North Pole without spilling your drink.

The ability to carry tongue firmly in cheek is indispensable for a writer enduring "adventure travel" in comparative luxury at a dollar a minute. Does such luxury allows the modern writer to empathize with the travails of the ice bear, alone and far from land among the ice flows? Cahill reports, "We're lonely travelers across a barren icescape, but in time we begin to move through it with assurance, completely wild and independent. Like the ice bear."

Whether the detailed, well-researched analysis is of polar bears, seals, birds, or fellow travelers, a little spicing of humor through irony or satire can disguise the mundane ingredients for the experienced reader or the scholarly material for the reading-challenged. Either of these readers can more easily ingest insightful commentary or philosophizing when the writing is amusing. Explorers died on these journeys in the past; now we can only pretend to travel in the mind, even when we are involved in "adventure travel." As Cahill says, "The North Pole, an atavistic voice whispered, ought to be earned at the risk of
life. My shipmates and I lived in an age when technology had replaced honor."

Many of these modern comfort travelers do make the unsettling discovery that their very act of travel, of discovery, is disturbing to the very bears they came to discover. They begin to reject their own quest. In the end, their arrival at the North Pole is marked by barbecue, polka, speeches, champagne, and a wedding— a First. You always take yourself with you on your voyage, even to the ends of the earth. These days, discoveries are -- or must be -- cerebral.

3. The Resolute

Mountain climbing is another standard of Outside adventure. "The Gasping Game" by Mike Steere is a classic example of the magazine's ability to appeal to very diverse groups, including the Resolute in us all, even if we may have "Forrest Gump" tendencies. This character has distinct differences from the Bumbler. The subtitle gives the clear theme, "With the right guide and the right peak, even a mortal can flirt with high altitude." The peak being challenged is 20,000 feet Huayna Potosi in Bolivia which "worked an irresistible, grailish fascination...juiced up by fear" on a 42 year-old with no crampon or ice ax experience. Some of Steere's language is over-the-top, which may be
bowel cramping, and who-knows-what rose into a Verdian brain opera -- tragic, but a hell of a show... I wanted, yes, to hear the fat mountaineer sing." The mountain guide fits the heroic mould: "When he chewed, sinews stood out like guitar strings." The expedition includes the classic "A team" of experienced mountaineers and the "B team" that needs instruction and good guidance to enjoy any chance of reaching the top.

This article reinforces the idea that money and good guides can get you anywhere, if you are willing to persevere. The problems are clear, "Headaches, high-altitude coughs, intestinal distress.... You had to brain-breathe, consciously pairing each step with a breath hammered to the bottom of the lungs. Uphill breathing could bring on a fierce machine ecstasy.... You had to walk and breathe the way Peter Pan flew, with happy thoughts." The dangers are not underplayed, but the humor lightens the heaviness of instruction and exercise as the writer -- and reader -- is trained in basic mountain survival. "You had to get mad at the mountain. Mistakes could result in impalement.... Never, ever present a non-stick surface to a mountain. Fear was now a big player."

Steere is a master at finding truths among his fellows, such as the Gasping Game as explained by fellow climber
Buddix, "Here-and-now is a sacrifice to the future. Mountaineering takes you to recollective paradise, for which you must suffer. "The pleasure increases every day after you're done and peaks about a month afterward." After initial bickering in the early days, bonding becomes necessary to individual success. "Doing the No-Oxygen Burgeoning Buddy hood Shuffle," seems essential on the ascent, especially for the slow group, also self-named Team Escargot, which sees itself as a big locomotive with rhythm and purpose, all joined together, even waiting while a member gets through the "gasps." All the while contrasted with those in the gung-ho A team, the writer has a subdued assessment of his successful ascent, "Triumph and ego fireworks were not a big part of the picture. The feeling was more like contentment" (118-184).

Accompanied by a thorough guide to "top big-mountain schools," this article is a realistic but entertaining primer on summiting "big ones," aimed squarely at people like the writer who are middle-aged but ambitious for safe adventure. Metaphors and similes are especially important to establish ironic counterpoint between heroic aspirations and realistic achievement with some limited suffering, all the while suggesting by such folksy language that the boys are just having fun outside.
Humorous self-effacement is necessary to avoid the risk of over-commitment and failure in adventures better achieved, on the surface, by the younger and more fit. Knowing your self-limits, pacing, and bonding for group success are the strategies the mature survivors know well. The typical reader of Outside is not an expedition leader with an A-type personality, but a follower who likes to think he/she is determined to make best use of his or her own resources, with good guidance, where necessary.

4. The Arrogant

At the other end of the spectrum of adventure writing is the quest of Arrogant. Outside reports regularly on those who take the quest to the extreme, whether as round-the-world solo sailors, skiers, or underwater spelunkers (cave-divers). Such writing often focuses on definitive characters, as in "Lord of the Big Guys: Adventure man. Freedom fighter. Brat. Meet Jack Wheeler, the Indiana Jones of the Right" by Alex Heard. For Wheeler, "reckless" is a term referring not to daredevil adventures only, but to the iconoclastic attitude of an "offbeat brand of freedom fighter." In contrast to the legendary Edward Abbey, the mostly reclusive creator of the "monkey wrenchers," (the engineers of warfare against anti-environmentalists), Wheeler is self-billed as "the creator of the Reagan
Doctrine," which was designed to provide weapons and cash to third-world anti-Communist guerrillas. Using this subtext of mystery, danger, and the patriotism of a new form of "Manifest Destiny" before "adventure travel" was spawned, Wheeler’s trips turned out to be not so much ultra-rugged as improvised, with unexpected minor misadventures. The article chronicles Wheeler's extensive global travels, including his pioneering commercial trips to the North Pole and as an "explorer-advocate" for freedom fighters in a variety of Communist colonies. Interestingly, one commercial adventure for ordinary people merged with front-line combat observation in Angola, a venture he decided not to repeat "because of the obvious risk." Writer Heard's super-charged language includes such phrasings about Wheeler as "stereotypical superguy who roams the planet to the clanging rhythm of his own steel gonads" to "there are two Jacks occupying the same body -- one larger than life, one a brat," the comic contrasted with the Arthurian. (Such motifs recur in many Outside Features.)

The adventures on the trip the writer takes with Wheeler include typical Third World screw-ups, river-rafting on a river "that is brisk enough to entertain and slow enough not to terrify," and "a voyage into the deeper realms of outdoor beatitude." Throughout the article, Wheeler
refers to moments of epiphany, visions that have changed his life in several different directions (30-92). The outdoors and travel to exotic places with unplanned dangers have often inspired such personal, life-changing insights. Of course, the readers are mostly mature adults, who like to think that going to a great deal of trouble, expense, and often pain must have more than just material rewards, that, indeed, some kind of spiritual renewal or reward can be found "outside." Going outside is another way of finding or joining some mystical Emersonian "Oversoul," perhaps. Certainly those who venture to the extremes of nature put themselves well outside the ordinary. Arrogance might seem justifiable.

5. The Obsessed

At the depth of danger in the Outside pantheon is cave exploration combined with skin diving. These activities have their own dangers, but "Bill Stone in the Abyss" by Craig Vetter takes the hyperbolic danger of such sport to the extreme, revealing Obsessed whose "life's obsession has been to get to the bottom of the world's deepest cave. Two team members have already died. How much farther is he prepared to go?" References to "suicidal" and Conrad's "Kurtz" underlay the challenge of "a cave as hard as Everest. Maybe harder." To handle the extensive underwater
cave passages that have challenged him for nearly two decades, the team leader, Bill Stone, developed a "rebreather" (recycling breathing system) for the dives:

...a testament to his great problem-solving aptitude, his tenacity, and his two-headed passion for science and adventure. It was a rare and powerful combination: a kind of tough brilliance that took the mapping of a circuit board to be the same as the mapping of a cave.

The marriage of science with adventure is not new. Buck Rogers and Jules Verne in fiction, Captain Bligh and the climbers of Everest, all put science to the use of humanity on exploration's edge. Extending the metaphor to include the silicon chip is a refinement in the process needed for a journey towards the center of the earth that Vetter himself rejects with, "I decided I'd sooner light my hair and try to roast hot dogs over the flame." Such everyman phrasing ties the couch-bound reader to the story, while emphasizing the adventure's extreme dangers.

Complicating this adventure are the personality conflicts exacerbated by Stone's obsessive nature, the weeks of preparation, the "feverish pace," and "more than a hundred antlike trips into the cave, carrying nearly two tons of gear and food." Among the many comments that Vetter elicits from team members about the expedition leader, "He's not a people person," establishes the dynamic of the
obsessive quite well. When an experienced lead diver dies from what turns out to be diabetic complications, it is expedition leader Stone himself who retrieves the body from the deepest reach of the expedition. But Stone cannot quit; he insists that the expedition must make the death worth something, a typical motivation of the obsessive. In a "desperate and dangerous stroke... Don't fall, don't make a mistake, because there ain't gonna be any rescue," Stone and friend make a final six day push, totally dependent on underwater technology and each other, greatly extending the limits of the mapped cave system. Vetter concludes that Stone's "rough charisma and galloping hubris lay at the center of everything right and everything wrong about the whole Herculean endeavor." The prize goes to those who do not ask the price or permission for what they will seize (55-168).

It is at the very heart of real expeditions that they challenge the known world, venture into the unknown. The leaders must be larger than life, have the arrogance to go beyond the normal limits, and thus lead ordinary mortals into some danger. Combine obsession with arrogance and you may have heroic achievements. At tremendous cost, Stone succeeds where others failed, but ordinary mortal readers may find his obsession difficult to accept as heroics. For
most people, the costs (often carefully unspecified by the obsessive) of obsession outweigh the benefits. The obsessed revel in a world of achievement where costs are typically ignored, reminiscent of the Myth of Voluntary Omnipotence (Fromm 30-38), or even perversely celebrated by the obsessed as the sacrificial part of the achievement.

6. The Tragic

A distinct variant of the Obsessed adventurer is the solo around-the-world sailor and racer, such as the late Mike Plant, a winner and a promoter in an expensive sport that requires tremendous fund-raising and the temperament plus skills to sail alone for 24,000 miles. In the end, Plant can be considered Tragic. "All Mike Plant Wanted was to Sail Around the World" by Rob Buchanan reveals how the sailing was not quite that simple for a Mid-West sailor afflicted with sea-fever. The around the world race "got faster, hairier, more expensive" so that Mike Plant had built a new boat, Coyote, "in essence a 60-foot sailboard," with high-tech electricals, oversize sails and rigging, and an untried carbon-fiber fin with lead bulb-keel. With a month left before setting sail in the 1992 Globe race, "He was half million dollars in debt, with no sponsor in sight." Finding sponsors came before checking the many details and fine-tuning the boat. Until his departure, Plant was a good
example of the Obsessed. His departure for the race was the last that was seen of him. Eventually the upside down Coyote was discovered: "losing a keel bulb is about as catastrophic an accident as you can have at sea."

The writer places no blame, but finds it valuable to analyze the situations leading up to the accident. Adventurers must learn from the mistakes of the past. As Buchanan sees Plant's mindset, the chaos preceding his departure was not new after three previous races. It was exhilarating, "part of the sport of the thing." However, others had handled the boat building, so "he was sailing at the edge of the charts in the world's greatest race."

In single-handed racing, Plant found a sort of refuge, a borderless landscape wholly beyond politics - especially down in the Southern Ocean, the savage gray-green void south of the great capes that stretches clear around the world. Down there, the wind blew forever out of the west, whipped by the very rotation of the earth, and the waves piled up in massive liquid mountain ranges that rolled eastward in eternal pursuit of themselves. At times it was terrifying, but after a while you didn't want to sail anywhere else. "It's neat," Plant said. "There's no bullshit down there. Bullshit doesn't work."
Adventure writers need the poetic skill to portray this foray into the elemental world where the individual is skin to skin with the universal, where the human merges with all of creation, where, despite the most advanced skills and training, you still come "face to face with the primal terror of the place." Perhaps obsession leads the person away from the human, via heroism in some form, to transcendent participation in the elemental conflicts of an uber-nature, as Buchanan's language implies.

The writer also needs to show the subject as both heroic and human. As shown from interviews with Plant, friends and associates, Plant fit the bill: "In the classroom he was a disaster. Half rebellious and half bored... scraped and pinched... honest American. Coyote was Plant's parry... He may have had a chronic liver infection... People need heroes... Mike became ours. He experienced the ragged, dangerous edges of the world that the rest of us grow away from." Buchanan's article suggests that Plant's downfall may have been over-reliance on untested technology and trying to do too much himself in too little time so as to compete as an individual in a complex and corporate world --- single-handed around-the-world racing (56-170). Or perhaps Plant's fate is a classic example of the Myth of Voluntary Omnipotence.
Conclusion on *Outside* Heroes

This is a sampler of the characterizations found in adventure writing. Obviously there are no simple classifications that can categorize all the techniques used so well to develop the readers' appreciation of the diverse individuals found in the Feature article of *Outside* every month. Each of the writers is skilled at a variety of methods of both character development and evocative writing about outdoors adventure. Providing clear and dynamic characterizations of the types discussed makes the reader's identification with and response to the adventurous situations developed both easier and more ironic, both important considerations for the modern media. The editors are well aware that their writing must be as elaborately varied, eccentric, and exciting as is the "outside."
CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSIONS

Language choices in writing about the world of nature reveal much about individual places in nature. The reader, given the rhetorical power of the writer, is often unaware that the writer largely predetermines reader responses to the subject. Writers adept at recreating the magic, power, and poetry of the symbiotic worlds of nature can draw the reader into the hermeneutic circle of human relationship to the natural environment, producing the appreciation of nature that effective use of rhetorical devices such as metaphor, symbol, heroes, and myths reinforce. Going outside our human culture does not have to mean going outside ourselves. Nature is part of us as much as is language.

Through synecdoche, imagery, metaphor, and symbol, writers continue to explore the interconnected rights of nature and man in this world. Act in accordance with the land ethic, as espoused by Aldo Leopold among others; revalue nature to recognize its rights to existence, as proposed by Glen A. Love; and become conscious of the reasons for own atavistic responses to wilderness, encompassing awe to fear. Such developments may give postmodern humanity the opportunities to derive further understanding of its own place in the cosmos. The
Ecological Sensibility approach of John Rodman and Eco-humanism are only two of the approaches to the esthetics and ethics of the inter-relationships of wilderness and man, where consideration of language usage helps us comprehend the realities. If we are to know ourselves and realize our potentials, we must also comprehend our relationship with the biosphere, allowing it the rights we need and express ourselves.

Consider the language with which we write nature. There are many writers who make use of the language itself to indicate the symbiotic relationships among the natural, human, and language complexes -- relationships that provide barriers as well as opportunities to revaluing nature. Max Oelschlaeger develops the hermeneutic circle concept as applicable to our language use regarding nature. While Kenneth Burke sees language as symbolic action, Joan Halifax emphasizes that language connects to Earth as a living being. It becomes clear that being and meaning are symbiotic, as are nature, man, and language. To understand one factor, you have to have some understanding of all. Isolation of just one of the elements will do violence to all.

Although the ways we see nature are governed by many factors, it is also clear that a precondition for language
has been the natural environment. David James Duncan suggests that the function of literature about the natural environment is to help the "mangled" to see wilderness. Man has continually used language to appropriate environment as part of the pattern of conquest, as Patricia Nelson Limerick illustrates. Naming and myth making have always been a way for man to take control of the environment, organizing the apparent chaos, even Annie Dillard's "not-there," in our own image. Barry Lopez points out that language intermediates between the external landscape and the internal mind, providing opportunities for genetic survival. Scientist David Bohm illuminates the ways language begins to change/create the world. Such interpretations can make it readily apparent why some have accepted the Gaian belief that the natural world has a level of consciousness, as explained by Pamela Kent Demers. Harold Fromm's Myth of Voluntary Omnipotence is an attempt to explain man's continued insistence that man can control Nature.

It becomes clear that we use language to take control of our world. Wilderness language is no different. If we are to perpetuate our species, our language must reflect our environment reasonably accurately. If the semblance is not there, then we ultimately lose control -- or destroy the environment. Just as certainly, whoever controls the
language, controls the environment — in human terms, since the long-term biospheric result may be very different. Since what we see and speak is our living world, we — and our language — are our biosphere. If we betray that concept, then our world may not be here long.

Metaphors have typically been employed to express our relationships to nature in easily understood terms, but many have ended up alienating man from nature as civilization separated from nature, twisting or simplifying our relationships with nature, as Katcher and Wilkins make clear. In response, Ursula K. Heise has asked for scientific use of language in ecocriticism, freeing us from imprecise dependence on metaphor. Unfortunately, such scientific language cannot adequately convey all of man’s relationships to nature. The Eco-System Health Metaphor of Nancy Ross et al is a good example of how metaphors can serve both science and environmentalism, in a hermeneutic sense that illustrates symbiosis of man and nature. We need metaphors to understand nature and ourselves.

Wilderness Romance has always had a basis in metaphor. Quests for self-identity and connection to something larger than the self are in themselves a form of metaphor. Adding a mentor for the quest becomes a useful metaphor for the plot as well as the reader. Charles Bergman interprets our
"language of desire" as the rhetoric of power and control. Such control is increasingly exerted by modern image-makers, who manipulate our responses to nature as a commodity to be sold - like everything else. Gomes and Kanner use "The Tale of the Well-Maidens" to clarify current eco-feminine environmentalism, which sees nature's subjugation as another example of the abuse of the dynamic feminine.

Metaphors have become a potent force of language in all forms of our communications and in our relationships to nature, along with everything else. Nature metaphors have a special significance, since their use can often reveal as much about the people using them as about nature. In postmodern times, metaphors have become especially effective in the hands and control of the image makers and sellers. As environmentalists become potent forces themselves, they have learned to make use of metaphors to power their own messages. Just as in the American political scene, metaphors sell, gather power about themselves, and become dangerous weapons - even in the environmental wars.

Myths about the natural environment have assumed pivotal roles in our cultures as societies developed, but in many areas these environmental myths are disguised, twisted, or abused.

The history of myths about nature is quite mixed, with
positive and negative results. Many religious myths and
metaphors produce reverence or disrespect for nature. Some
use religious myths to support environmental abuse, but
others find respect for the environment essential to their
religion. Poets like Jeffers and Snyder see the sacred
expressed in nature. Others see mythic ties of man and
nature leading irresistibly to the Gaia concept of a
consciousness in nature. In contrast is the myth of man as
a killer exploiting his dominance over nature. Others, like
Nelson, find natural man as just a part of all the processes
of nature. Man has even been discovered in Edenic
relationships with nature, whether in the Arctic or
aboriginal Australia, where the language of the Songlines
becomes inseparable from these relationships.

One of the important myths in the Westernized world is
that Nature must lose as Capitalism triumphs. Numerous
studies have revealed that much individual business success
is based on passing costs on to others or to the environ-
ments. Short term profit for the individual becomes long
term cost to the environment and society. Such oppositions
are apparent in cornucopians and those who see natural
limits to mankind’s cancerous growth. Edwin Dobb’s “Pennies
from Hell” exemplifies mythic resource success story meeting
end-term reality. Quammen’s “island extinctions” and
Oelschläger’s “Sustainable Development” show opposing myths of mankind’s control over nature. Fromm’s Myth of Voluntary Omnipotence suggests the heart of the issue: humanity assumes control, but we do not actually control our natural environment.

Ridley and Low’s “Can Selfishness Save the Environment” considers quite thoroughly many of the issues that pertain to man’s place in nature. The “selfish gene” theory is an interesting variant of Bookchin’s “third nature,” where nature prospers with man’s guiding help. Like Ursula Heise, Ridley and Low do not recognize that the scientific approach can only be completely valid where all the parameters can be known through science for a situation. There will not be a successful middle path unless scientists, biologists, politicians, and many others accept that cooperation among human beings and with the environment is as much dependent on art as on science, and on understanding our own language usage.

Humanity continues to create, manipulate, and abuse mythic concepts for individual and short-term advantages, often twisting former myths to fit newer situations and interests. Tracing and comprehending the twists and turns of mythic trails is difficult but necessary if one is to understand how myths continue to bedevil and betray humanity
as we try to use myths and language in understanding ourselves and our environment, natural and/or man-made. Such efforts are necessary since our myths remain so potent in motivation and meaning.

Many writers, like Barry Lopez and Annie Dillard, pride themselves on careful and precise wording, avoiding use of symbols as they record nature. However, in writing their marvels of nature, they still create sometimes powerful symbols of complex realities, "the shaft of light." Wendell Berry remarks on the "Great Mother" and the "cosmic tree" as but two symbols central to his understanding of nature. The Gaia concept is central to many environmentalists.

The Ehrlichs and Paul Hawken consider the issues of commodity values and eco-system services as symbolic frameworks necessary to valuing the environment, even though the plenitude of symbols of environmental degradation may be more pertinent. Economic concerns must often be addressed first in our society before other fundamental issues can be addressed.

Zinn and Corn, in their own symbolic roles as spokesmen, discuss the symbolic Kyoto Treaty on global warming, indicating the complex environmental and economic/social problems internationalism produces. In a related concern, the symbols of status create their own
challenges to sound environmental practices. However, many pro-environmentalist have become as adept as commercial marketing at manipulation of the masses through careful use of symbols. Many environmental organizations are very careful symbol managers to raise funds and achieve ecological goals.

It is a truism perhaps that our language and cultures use symbols to do the heavy moving of motivation and emotional commitments necessary to unify people for diverse goals.

Heroic figures, extremely usefully dramatically, have always been common in literature relating to the natural environment. They accentuate environmentalism at the same time as they threaten the environment, immediately or by example. They lead many others into nature, where some form of conquest is often the goal — antagonistic as that often is to the continued existence of a free wilderness. Significantly, the individual can develop a heroic self-image in the wilderness setting, freed from the limitations of civilization into self-discovery. Thus the wilderness has an essential role in liberating the young person into an adult role for the betterment of society, as many societies, aboriginal included, have often formally recognized.

The rhetoric of the heroic is important to telling this
story. **Outside** magazine exemplifies how nature can be sold, in all senses of the word, to the mass consumer market. The very successful magazine challenges the readers with a great variety of approaches to outdoor adventures aimed at a diverse range of people, who are the dream of many marketing concepts. Nevertheless, the Feature articles, often by very gifted writers, often reveal that the adventure yields important comprehension of human conditions and Earth’s conditions. The heroic types reflect on the reader’s own diverse human conditions, achievements, and frailties, while suggesting the diverse varieties of interactions within our natural environments.

We must realize that our language choices themselves inform the reader, in many cases lead the reader unknowingly to respond to the natural environment in ways that serve ulterior motives beyond the conscious awareness of most of the public. Our language, developed originally through intimate knowledge of the natural environment - often survival-based - has been twisted in modern times into an alienated or abusive relationship to nature. Our rhetoric continues to play a major role in determining how we live in nature and in the survival of our natural environment without further degradation or destruction.
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