

**T.C.
EGE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı**

ECOCENTRIC POETRY OF GARY SNYDER AND W. S. MERWIN

DOKTORA TEZİ

ADNAN BARIŞ AĞIR

DANIŞMANI: Prof. Dr. Nevin Yıldırım KOYUNCU

İZMİR-2018

**T.C.
EGE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı**

ECOCENTRIC POETRY OF GARY SNYDER AND W. S. MERWIN

DOKTORA TEZİ

ADNAN BARIŞ AĞIR

JÜRİ ÜYELERİ

**Prof. Dr. Nevin Yıldırım KOYUNCU
Prof. Dr. Dilek DİRENÇ
Prof. Dr. Hasan BOYNUKARA
Doç. Dr. Mehmet Ali ÇELİKEL
Yrd. Doç. Dr. Önder ÇETİN**

İZMİR-2018

Ege Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü M¼d¼rl¼g¼ne sunduęum “**Ecocentric Poetry of Gary Snyder and W. S. Merwin**” adlı doktora tezinin tarafımdan bilimsel, ahlak ve normlara uygun bir řekilde hazırlandıęını, tezimde yararlandıęım kaynakları bibliyografyada ve dipnotlarda g¼sterdięimi onurumla doęrularım.

Adnan Barıř AęIR





T.C.EGE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ



DOKTORA
TEZ SAVUNMA TUTANAĞI

ÖĞRENCİNİN

Adı Soyadı : Adnan Barış AĞIR
Numarası : 92130003635
Anabilim Dalı : İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
Tez Başlığı (Türkçe) : Gary Snyder ve W.S. Merwin'in Doğanerkezi Şiiri
Tez Başlığı (İngilizce) : Ecocentric Poetry of Gary Snyder and W.S. Merwin
Tez Savunma Tarihi : 08.01.2018

Tez Başlığı Değişikliği Varsa Yeni Başlık:

JÜRİ ÜYELERİ

Jüri Başkanı

Unvan, Adı, Soyadı : Prof. Dr. Nевin Yıldırım KOYUNCU
Karar : ☒ Başarılı ☐ Başarısız ☐ Düzeltme
İmza :

Jüri Üyesi (Tez İzleme Komitesi Üyesi)

Unvan, Adı, Soyadı : Prof. Dr. Dilek DİRENÇ
Karar : ☒ Başarılı ☐ Başarısız ☐ Düzeltme
İmza :

Jüri Üyesi (Tez İzleme Komitesi Üyesi)

Unvan, Adı, Soyadı : Prof. Dr. HASAN BOYNUKARA
Karar : ☒ Başarılı ☐ Başarısız ☐ Düzeltme
İmza :

Jüri Üyesi

Unvan, Adı, Soyadı : Doç. Dr. Mehmet Ali GELİKEL
Karar : ☒ Başarılı ☐ Başarısız ☐ Düzeltme
İmza :

Jüri Üyesi

Unvan, Adı, Soyadı : Yrd. Doç. Dr. Önder GETİN
Karar : ☒ Başarılı ☐ Başarısız ☐ Düzeltme
İmza :

TEZ HAKKINDA JÜRİNİN GENEL GÖRÜŞÜ

(Jüri Başkanı Tarafından Doldurulacaktır)

Tez savunması sonucunda öğrenci tarafından hazırlanan çalışma;

Oybirliğiyle ☒
Oy çokluğuyla ☐

Başarılıdır

Düzeltilmelidir

Başarısızdır

- Bu tutanak üç (3) işgünü içerisinde jüri üyelerinin raporlarıyla beraber Anabilim Dalı Başkanlığı üst yazısıyla Enstitü Müdürlüğüne gönderilmelidir.
- Doktora programlarında düzeltme alan öğrencinin 6 (altı) ay içerisinde yeniden savunmaya girmesi zorunludur.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Nevin Yıldırım Koyuncu for her guidance, patience, understanding and complete freedom she has given me throughout the course of this study.

I would like to thank the members of my committee: Prof. Dr. Dilek Direnç, Prof. Dr. Hasan Boynukara, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ali Çelikel, and Assist. Prof. Dr. Önder Çetin for their encouragement and precious suggestions.

My warmest thanks go to my wife İlkay Ağır whose support, love and patience during the study and writing of my thesis have helped me to survive the hard times.

I also owe my special thanks to the Department of English Language and Literature that gave me the opportunity for leading this study.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
 CHAPTER ONE: THE CONCEPT OF NATURE FROM ANTIQUITY TO MODERNITY	8
1.1. The Concept of Nature in Western Thought	9
1.2. Environmental Ethics Approaches Against Anthropocentrism	17
1.3. Deep Ecology and Social Ecology	30
1.4. Literary Ecocriticism.....	46
 CHAPTER TWO: ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN GARY SNYDER'S POETRY	57
2.1. On Nature and Humans: Ecological Themes in Gary Snyder's Poetry	59
2.1.1. Nature as the Source of Life and Its Ability to Survive	61
2.1.2. Law of Nature	64
2.1.3. Beauty of Nature and Earth as a <i>Sangha</i>	65
2.1.4. Exploitation of Nature.....	75
2.1.5. Spiritual Emptiness and Alternative Living.....	82
2.2. Space and Place in <i>Mountains and Rivers Without End</i>	86
2.2.1. Kitkitdizze: Node of Bioregion.....	96
2.2.2. Urban Cities and Backcountries.....	102

CHAPTER THREE: W. S. MERWIN'S ECOLOGICAL WISDOM	109
3.1. A Challenge to Anthropocentrism: Animals in Merwin's Ecopoetry.....	110
3.1.1. The Intrinsic Value of Animals.....	129
3.2. Ecological Dimensions of Nature, City, and Humans	135
3.2.1. City and Nature	144
3.2.2. On Modernity: Humans and Nature	151
CONCLUSION	161
REFERENCES.....	168
ÖZGEÇMİŞ	181
ÖZET.....	182
ABSTRACT.....	183

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of American literature, a number of poets, who express an affinity with nature, have exhibited an interest in the natural environment and rejected humans' dominance over it. The attitude of closeness to nature, and of concern over its plight reached a high level in the second half of the twentieth century when many poets started dealing with ecological themes, reflecting the popular interest in ecology, Eastern religions, and American Indian cultures.

Ecology can be described as the science engaged in the interrelationship of organisms and their environments. It emphasizes, in other words, the links that exist between all forms of life. Because the balance that governs the relationships between the various life forms is delicate, serious disruption to that balance is likely to upset the whole life cycle. Paolo Pallodino states that "the late 1960s were shaped by growing public concern over the degradation of the natural environment, which translated into dramatically increased funding for ecological research to address environmental problems" (Pallodino, 1991: 224). In the sixties, and later, a number of ecologists such as Rachel Carson, William Cronon, James Lovelock and Gene Odum were concerned over the impact of industrial pollution on the air and the poisoning of drinking water by chemical wastes that seep underground. These ecologists point out that strip-mining disrupts the balance of the environment, destroying mountains and causing landslides. Also D.D.T. and other pesticides poison not only harmful pests, but can end up in the meat consumed by people, causing infertility and death.

Ecology also ushered in a novel concept of time in which past, present, and future were intertwined. The ecologist and poet Wendell Berry thinks that there is an ecological crisis today because of "the failure of the past to teach us to deal with the present, or to envision, and prepare for a desirable future Ecological justice", adds Berry, "... falls most often on later generations, or on the people who live downwind or downstream" (Berry, 1970: 409). Hence, a responsible use

of the environment for the interest of future generations is a priority. The resources of the planet are viewed as exhaustible, and, consequently, a more conservative utilization of them is required. The ecological awareness of the contemporary period was accompanied by skepticism of technological growth. People's blind faith in the uses of technology, many believed, was at least partly responsible for the present ecological disruptions. With industrial progress, based on the means of technology, upsetting nature's resources is a continuous threat. Dorothy Slusser explains this threat as below:

Industrial utopian promises have turned into threatening headlines which warn that mankind will be lucky to greet the twenty-first century firsthand, no matter what he does. Man has become, along with one thousand other species, an endangered species. Man's reckless exploitation of earth and its resources has worn out his welcome. Water, air, and soil all threaten to break down, eliminating life as we know it, and the system on which the creation is based is one that man is incapable of repairing. (Slusser, 1970: 60)

Restraint in our dependence on technology is essential if human beings are to survive on this planet. A popular turning to the religions of the East in the nineteen-sixties is related to this ecological consciousness. According to Amy Hart:

For a growing minority of young Americans, the disillusionment of the 1960s counterculture also meant a turn away from the traditional Judeo-Christian model of religion and "the commercialized, competitive, power-hungry West" that it symbolized. Some of these cynical youth turned to the growing Eastern religious movements and their gurus for guidance. Within the movements inspired by the East, two paths emerged that the alternative religious crowd typically adopted — one was the more rigorous, devoted path of the Zen Buddhists, Hare Krishnas, and other Hindu devotees. The second merged with the drug-heavy hippie culture to form a psychedelic, "New Age" philosophy. Those who pursued the more rigorous discipleship of these Eastern religions were primarily middle-class and educated, which allowed them to articulate their thoughts and ideas to the public in a meaningful way. (Hart, 2015: 66)

The teachings of Buddhism, Taoism, and Hinduism emphasize human's unity with nature, and stress the holiness of all living organisms. All life forms, in many

Eastern religions, emerge from the same source and are all, therefore, sacred and worthy. A renewed interest in the cultures of Native Americans brought to the surface the affinity with nature that characterizes the value-systems of many Native American people as these cultures “may have better discovered the meaning of life in relation to nature, because they had a better prescientific account of operational connections in nature, or vice-versa” (Holmes, 1987: 173). Earth, in many of these cultures, is a living, feeling mother. And all animals, birds, and fish are tribes of people that are close to humans, and have as much right to live as humans do.

The ecological consciousness of the second half of the twentieth century then includes both the scientific aspects of ecology and the spiritual and cultural sensibilities of Eastern religions and Native American cultures. An insistence on the interdependence of all life forms, a rejection of progress-oriented ethics, and a sense of impending ecological apocalypse are the hallmarks of that ecological consciousness. In his article *American Institutions and the Ecological Ideal*, Leo Marx describes the intensity of ecological ideas in the nineteen sixties as follows:

There was a sudden upsurge of public interest in [ecological issues]. The devastation of the environment and the threat of overpopulation became too obvious to be ignored. A sense of anxiety close to panic seized many people, including politicians and leaders of the communications industries. The mass media began to spread the alarm. (Marx, 1970: 946)

Ecological consciousness in poetry refers to those poets who see that all living organisms depend on one another for survival. The list of contemporary ecologically-conscious poets in American Literature extends beyond Wendell Berry, Theodore Roethke, W. S. Merwin and Gary Snyder to Denise Levertov, Philip Whalen, Michael McClure, and Kenneth Rexroth. They believe that humans are not separate from, or superior to, nature. Humans and nature, in their poetry, need each other, and, in fact, humans stand to gain a lot from their affinity with nature. Furthermore, while ecologically-conscious poets respect the otherness of the non-human world, they insist that human and non-human worlds are interdependent. Berry explains these poets’ relationship with nature in the

following terms: “Their art has an implicit and essential humility, a reluctance to impose on things as they are, a willingness to relate to the world as student and servant, a wish to be included in the natural order rather than to conquer nature, a wish to discover the natural form rather than to create new forms that would be exclusively human” (Berry, 1970: 634).

Eco-poets do not wish to alter the natural world or to impose human order on it. They respect its rights to unfold, free from human assumptions and aspirations. These poets insist that humans, while attempting to satisfy their legitimate quest for survival, have no right to needlessly waste the resources of the natural world. They often demand that man curb his progress-bound instincts that are responsible for many of today’s ecological disruptions. Many ecologically-conscious poets believe that the future of man and other life forms is gloomy because of the continuing ecological problems. A sense of impending doom or apocalypse is evident in some of their poetry. We, they maintain, are on a suicidal course, and it is only a matter of years before life on earth comes to a tragic conclusion.

The ecological concerns of all these poets were not, however, the same. Some, like Levertov, drew a connection between male-dominated society’s abuse of women and the exploitation of the environment. Others, like Rexroth, were concerned with scientific ecology, especially evolution and ontology. Also, the degree of anger these poets voice at exploitative practices of the environment varied. Berry, for instance, is often angry and unrestrained in his rejection of environmental abuse, but Merwin deals with similar themes in a controlled tone and a profoundly subtle manner (El-Sharif, 1983: 6).

This study explores ecological themes in the poetry of Gary Snyder and W. S. (William Stanley) Merwin who moulded old mythical elements, especially of non-Western origin, into their poetry. Snyder and Merwin were specifically chosen for the reason that their reinterpretation of the old materials taken from Native American and Eastern cultures resulted in new mythic sense and consciousness in their poetry. The aim of this study is to discuss how Merwin and Snyder, in their poetics, created a new myth based on the ecological ideals

deriving from the Native American and Buddhist beliefs which ultimately deconstructs the anthropocentric ethics and values of Western culture. Both Snyder and Merwin rejected the aesthetics of traditional Western poetry and turned to mythologies in search of an aesthetic more compatible with their own perceptions of life. These mythologies provided new concepts and ideas, as well as a host of fresh metaphors and symbols for their poetry. A predominant feature of their poetry is their interest in the American Indian and their culture and also, in Buddhism as a non-violent, nature-oriented religious system. The American Indian was a symbol of a spiritually powerful sub-culture which the mainstream white culture could not destroy, and Buddhism, by its non-competitive and non-violent nature, was an Oriental religion based on assumptions so completely different from those of Western religions that the mainstream society was powerless to combat it. These two cultures became central symbols in their works.

In this sense, I will explore the range of the ecological understanding of these two poets and point out that they express a belief based on scientific and spiritual conviction that all life systems are interrelated. I will devote the last two chapters of my work to a close analysis of the ecological themes in their poetry. It is important, however, before discussing the ecological consciousness in the poetry of mentioned poets, to understand in a broad way the attitudes of various philosophical approaches dealing with nature. In order to provide the thematic background for these poets, I will offer in my first chapter a representative account of the historical and philosophical treatment of nature from ancient to modern.

The first chapter seeks to formulate the philosophical background of the human-nature relationship in order to provide important insights for overcoming today's ecological crises. After establishing the background of ecocritical studies I tried to depict how ecocriticism became a useful tool and provided a methodology for literary studies and literary theory. The chapter discusses philosophical ideas on nature from antiquity to modernity focusing on the human-nature relationship. Environmental ethics approaches to counter anthropocentrism are discussed to

posit the idea that humans have a responsibility toward natural assets and nature itself, and to emphasize the moral dimensions of the human-nature relationship. Literary ecocriticism as a theory and its history will be discussed in detail to provide the necessary methodology for the analyses of Snyder and Merwin's poetry.

The second chapter focuses on Gary Snyder's philosophy on nature and humans. The theories of deep ecology, anthropocentrism, and spiritual ecology are used to study the thematic meanings of Snyder's poems and their ecological consciousness. The chapter begins by setting the context of nature's destruction by humans that has created a need to engage with Gary Snyder's works. The chapter then discusses themes in Snyder's works focusing on Buddhist influences. It concludes with Snyder's call for creating harmony within humans' inner universes to foster integral eco-harmony in the whole universe. The second part of the chapter aims to explore how space and place are harmoniously merged into Gary Snyder's *Mountains and Rivers Without End* based on Yi-Fu Tuan's theory on space and place. Textual and topographic spaces are examined to explore the significance of place in this work, particularly in terms of Kitkitdizze, urban cities, and backcountries.

The third chapter focuses on the poetics of W. S. Merwin, whose poetry has demonstrated sensitivity to ecological thinking, particularly in terms of the equality of human beings and non-human beings, the interdependency of all organisms within an ecosystem. The concern for ecological crisis spurs Merwin to probe into the ultimate cause of the ecological crisis: anthropocentrism. Merwin's disintegration of human-centered ideology by criticizing the moral superiority of humans to non-human beings is examined. The chapter also deals with the ecological dimensions of Merwin's poems on society, city, and modern people. In *American Sequence*, as Folsom calls his poems in *The Carrier of Ladders*, Merwin elucidates the interactions between human society and nature (Folsom, 1978). In his city poems, Merwin intends to inform the readers that the city is not separate from nature but a part of it. Finally, Merwin laments in his division

poems that modern people are separated from the natural world and trapped in a spiritual wasteland.



CHAPTER ONE: THE CONCEPT OF NATURE FROM ANTIQUITY TO MODERNITY

Nature has usually served as a basic thematic setting in the history of literature. Specifically in American literature, people's relationship with nature developed alongside the exploration of a new land with ripe opportunity for growth and production. From Native American literature to the twentieth century, writers use nature as a place for self-discovery. As epitomized by Ralph Waldo Emerson's philosophies in *Nature* published in 1836, and Henry David Thoreau in *Walden* from 1854, people's relationship to the environment reflects a transcendental experience. Despite these authors' origination of American nature writing, it was not until 1978 that William Rueckert introduced the term "ecocriticism" into literary studies as a valuable type of criticism. Since its launch, popularity of ecocriticism has escalated because of the accessibility of information on global warming and other environmental issues. While this interest and push for a conscientious respect for the earth is undoubtedly a considerable part of ecocriticism, the strongest argument for its substantiality as a literary theory is the focus on an underlying principle of life: that man must cultivate his relationship with the environment through work in order to wholly live.

Though, as an academic pursuit, ecocriticism is only now gaining respect among colleagues in literary circles, those working in the field of ecology and literary studies are not at all surprised by its increasing support and popularity. As Jonathan Bate explains:

We live after the fall, in a world where no act of reading can be independent of the historical conditions in which it is undertaken. It is therefore not surprising that ecocriticism should have emerged at a time of ecological crisis; it is to be expected that those who practise this kind of reading should be sympathetic to some form of Green politics. Marxist, feminist and multiculturalist critics bring explicit or implicit political manifestos to the texts about which they write. (Bate, 2000: 266)

Likewise, William Howarth defines the ecocritic as one “who judges the merits and faults of writings that depict the effects of culture upon nature, with a view toward celebrating nature, berating its despoilers, and reversing their harm through political action” (Howarth, 1996: 69). Ecocriticism, then, tries to work “within a set of informed, responsible principles, derived from four disciplines: ecology, ethics, language, and criticism” (Howarth, 1996: 71), in a way that provides an entry into literature that not only celebrates the aesthetic value of the natural world but also suggests a political interaction with nature as a means towards a healthier and more sustainable life.

In this sense, ecocriticism seeks to understand the voice which attempts to recognize a silenced nature unable to express or protest its exploitation, abuse, and destruction and humanity’s largely self-imposed marginalized relationship with the biotic community. It attempts to shift environmentalism into the politically charged arena of language and cultural interpretation in a manner that aims at giving voice to nature in a way that does not anthropomorphize that voice for the sake of human gain. Ecotheorists hope that developing such a theoretical framework will have an effect, not just on the way that texts are interpreted, but also on daily human actions, though attitudes towards the environment which effect cultural practice and production. In this respect, this chapter seeks to formulate the philosophical background of human-nature relationship that may suggest important insights for overcoming today’s ecological crises and understanding ecocriticism as a literary theory.

1.1. The Concept of Nature in Western Thought

People have always been involved in a mutual interaction with nature. For some, this interaction reflects the history of humankind’s efforts to master nature. For others it represents a unity with Mother Nature that enables the continuation of life. The human-nature relationship reflects how human communities have interacted with nature over time. It is no coincidence that many political and nature philosophies are based on postulates of the human-nature relationship. Humankind has long thought of its relationship with nature in terms of a

framework of possibilities (philosophy, science, aesthetics), which, when categorized by today's modern disciplines, is part of "nature philosophy," and also encompasses political philosophy. From Ancient Greece to modern times, the views of many philosophers laid the groundwork for political thinking. In this regard, the contributions of two philosophers are particularly notable.

The first of these is Plato, who observed differences between the mind and the senses. Collingwood observed that this perception of nature "was based on the principle that the world of nature is saturated or permeated by mind"(Collingwood, 1945: 3). Plato asserted that real animals and plants are just copies of the ideal forms living in a supernatural universe, and it is necessary to describe them according to their ideal forms. Plato noted differences between ideas and objects, and brought two opposing universes together. One is the actual universe, as perceived by the senses, and the other is the universe as perceived by the mind. No changes in the living things in the material world can affect the universe of ideas. The purpose of human beings is to move through nature, which Plato named the lower universe. He "conceived mind, in all its manifestations, whether in human affairs or elsewhere, as a ruler, a dominating or regulating element, imposing order first upon itself and then upon everything belonging to it, primarily its own body and secondarily that body's environment" (3). Plato was interested in disciplining the body, the senses, and feelings, by according the mind dominance over humans' inner nature, and thus "he made human society rather than the natural environment the object of inquiry" (Callicott and Frodeman, 2009: 356).

Aristotle shared Plato's opinion about humankind's mission. He "insisted that nature, and all its parts, living and nonliving, are directed by the principle of *telos* (purpose)" (Callicott and Frodeman, 2009: 357). Aristotle asserted that humans could eliminate many needs, if they conducted only the activities essential to their ideas. "Aristotle asserted that plants exist for the sake of animals, animals for the sake of humans, and that inferior men are natural slaves of the superior. This doctrine supports the use of nature in any way conducive to human good"

(Callicott and Frodeman, 2009: 357). He used the term soul to classify living things. According to Ronan, “Aristotle formed a ‘scale of Nature,’ which, in essence, was a scale of increasing complexity of ‘soul.’ It ran from inanimate matter at the lower end to plants, thence to sponges, jellyfish, molluscs and so on up the scale to end with mammals and man” (Ronan, 1983: 107). This classification also exemplified the scientific classifications made at the end of the eighteenth century.

Aristotle’s thoughts inspired the Great Chain of Being philosophy that dominated the Middle Ages, and laid the basis for the notion of an organic universe. According to Aristotle, the universe had not been created in the order of the unimportant to the most important, but from the unimportant to the most magnificent. On this scale, everything had been attached, one by one, to a hierarchy. According to Clutton-Brock:

Aristotle, and probably most of his contemporaries, believed that the universe was a continuous chain; at one end was the purely potential, matter without form or qualities; at the other end was the actual, which was ever existent. The actual always had to precede the potential. Thus, the seed was the potentiality of the plant, and the plant must always have preceded the seed, the fowl the egg, and so on. This was the system of cause and effect, which made up what Aristotle called “Nature” and which he believed was of eternal duration, although it could be modified and altered by two unpredictable elements of Causation, chance and the will of Man. Aristotle’s beliefs about the natural world thus were based on the philosophy of Causes, or what we might call today “reasons.” (Clutton-Brock, 1995: 423)

There is a harmony between the things in this series. A traditional understanding of nature, which is also based on the Chain of Being philosophy, places humans between nature and God, who is a mediator. People feel they are part of a large cosmic system that creates the Chain of Being, in which humans are placed among earthly and extra-terrestrial living things. This philosophy, which held sway in Western thought until the nineteenth century, was based on the idea that humanity was created by God and has a responsibility for other living things.

Although humans are at the top of this chain, they bear responsibility for other creatures.

The perception of a human-nature relationship was fractured at the end of the Medieval Period. The doctrine of the “Universal Mechanism” confuted the Chain of Being idea. As the father of this mechanistic worldview, “Descartes based his view of nature on mind and matter. The material universe, including the human organism, was a machine that could in principle be understood completely by analyzing it in terms of its smallest parts” (Capra, 1995: 21). Thus, the universe was perceived as a segmented unity, and a chain of causation defined by a hierarchical structure extended from the bottom to the top. Understanding of the whole, then, could be achieved by dividing things into segments. Accordingly, the world is also an integrated closed system that is different from the Chain of Being, in line with this paradigm’s understanding of the world as a separable system in which nature can be evaluated as an indication of a lower moral status. “Where Nature had once been seen as an organic whole, a source of mysterious constructive powers, it now became nothing more than a gigantic piece of clockwork with which humankind could tinker at will” (Bowler, 1992: 91). According to Val Plumwood:

this shift in perceived human power in relation to nature is implicit in Descartes’ images. Where Plato depicts internal nature as a prison and as a recalcitrant animal—both images of struggle—for Descartes the guiding images of external nature are those of the wax—passive and easily moulded—and the machine. The machine image confirms the new confidence in control as well as the narrow and instrumental view of nature associated with a technological outlook. (Plumwood, 2003: 109)

Instead of a pre-modern understanding of nature that viewed it as a wild and mysterious power, nature’s categorization required that it be viewed as a mathematical system based on utilitarian logic. Since nature does not have an operating system, there is no need to approach it as an organic whole, and “a new role is envisaged for reason, the role of exercising power over the natural world rather than escaping from it or rising above it through death or right living, the

role of becoming the masters and possessors of nature” (Plumwood, 2003: 110). Humankind’s main mission had changed. It was now nature’s master and owner. In this context, while the aim of traditional science is to understand the divine order, the mechanistic philosophy led to a new understanding in which nature was dominated.

Philosophers and scientists with mechanist consciousness believe that by mastering nature the human race will regain the position foreseen by God. Here, Descartes’ thinking plays an important role. In other words, the mechanistic philosophy was premised on living creatures, from which Descartes’ thinking had drawn inspiration. “Descartes’s views are usually seen as completely antithetical to those of animal ethicists and environmental philosophers” (Callicott and Frodeman, 2009: 213). Descartes suggested that animals are nothing but complex machines and the human body is nothing but a mechanical system, and posited mind-body dualism. “Descartes states clearly his dualist position, in which the created world is composed of two kinds of substances: conscious minds (the repositories of all experience) and an external material world. Human beings are composites consisting of a mind and a body that is part of the material world” (Callicott and Frodeman, 2009: 213). Thus, Descartes accepted two theses: matter works and takes up space according to mechanical principles but it does not think; a mind does not work and takes up space according to mechanical principles, but it also thinks. Since non-human beings do not have minds, they operate according to mechanical principles. Consequently, humans are strangers to nature. According to Descartes, nature is a thing that can be ruled, and the aim of knowledge is not to create harmony with nature. Knowledge is instrumental; it makes our lives more comfortable and brighter by enabling us to develop our abilities and reason.

Descartes’s mind-body dualism was an important philosophical milestone. Philosophers who regard environmental problems from the perspective of philosophical-metaphysical roots hold the Cartesian understanding responsible for modern humankind’s behavior toward other living things, because the search for

certain knowledge exalts the instrumental behavior of objectivizing scientific knowledge and manipulating nature. “Environmental ethicists would object to Descartes’s position that the physical universe can be exploited for human goals and ends. They would maintain that the physical universe, in particular its various ecosystems, have moral standing and should not be exploited or destroyed” (Callicott and Frodeman, 2009: 214).

Criticizing the mechanistic philosophy, Charles Darwin, born in 1809, posited a different human-nature relationship. He observed that the Chain of Being—which was based on the belief that God created everything in existence—failed to explain the existence of forms and how they changed, because it assumed they were stable. Although some circles disappeared from the chain over time, such as dinosaurs, how the chain remained was a mystery. Darwin greatly influenced the scientific and philosophical world with his 1859 book titled *On the Origin of Species*. His theory of evolution allowed people to reject mechanistic philosophy’s metaphysical explanations. He also showed that forms were shaped by their environment, and that instead of being stable, nature was in a constant process of development. Although evolutionary philosophy did not begin with Darwin, his philosophy of natural selection differentiated him from others. Darwin used this law of natural selection to document relationships between different sources.

Darwin’s theory of natural selection posits that living things survive, as long as they live in cooperation with the natural environment, and through this cooperation they develop their specialties, transfer these changes to their newborns, and after a long while, new forms appear. In other words, Darwin’s natural selection theory means that existence requires effort, and the fittest survive while the others die.

Darwin uses the Tree of Life as a metaphor for his natural selection theory. The tree has different branches, so it is impossible to say if a branch moves through the others or the others move through it. Every branch engages with the environment independently, so changes in one branch cannot be evaluated by

comparing them with other branches. Since humans are a product of evolution, they are no longer a unique phenomenon. They are made with the same materials as others, and use the same energy. They are connected with other living things through genetic continuity. “Perhaps the other important ontological implication of Darwin’s theory was the idea that entities in the world (including humans) are shaped over time by the world in which they are embedded. That is, things in the world are what they are because of the context in which they live and evolve over time, not in spite of that context” (Callicott and Frodeman, 2009: 204). In this way, the theory of evolution offers insights into how nature works, bases natural selection on the struggle to survive, and propounds it as the basis of evolution.

Darwin’s theory inspired different philosophers, depending on how the human-nature relation was formulated. In his book *General Morphology* published in 1866, Ernst Haeckel, who coined the word *ecology*, used it to explain interactions between the external world and organisms. Haeckel reformulated Darwin’s Tree of Life, and placed humankind at the top of the tree. Given that the human embryo resembles primitive animals in its beginning stages, Haeckel developed the idea that a human is originally an animal, and transformed the tree of evolution into a staircase, putting humans at the top of it.

Haeckel developed the word ecology from “oikos,” meaning “home” in the Greek language, and “logos” meaning science, both regular and logical. Haeckel’s use of the word ecology to explain the relationship between organisms and the environment was accepted as a scientific term in the 1940s, primarily to denote plants and animals’ relationships with the environment.

Some ecological studies have been produced by different groups of biologists who studied relations between living things and their nature using different techniques. In 1983, while physiologist J. S. Burdon was giving a speech on English Science Organization, he mentioned for the first time that ecology was a sub-branch of physiology, morphology, and biology, and that ecology was the most attractive of them all. Karl Semper had previously used the term “food chain” in his book *Animal Life as Affected by the Natural Conditions of Existence* published in 1881.

This book, accepted as one of the first texts on animal ecology, promoted the idea that there should be fewer hunters than animals hunt. Roscoe Pound and Fredericke E. Clements conducted research on plant ecology, and learned that observations cannot create the general characteristics of plants. In 1905 Clements published *Ecology's Research Methods*, which included a definition of the new methodology, and marked the emergence of ecology as a science.

These researchers accepted ecology as a science, but this acceptance became possible only after Darwin had synthesized genetics in every scientific area and earned respect in every scientific area. Only then did philosophy of any kind point out that organisms and their environment have a sensitive and close relationship. In the 1960s, environmental issues began receiving more attention, humans were starting to be seen as a threat to nature, and the field of ecology began to study humans and their effects. In this way, “human ecology” developed as a branch of ecology.

Though ecology began by studying animals and plant species' relationships with their surroundings, it adopted a reductionist method in parallel with the era's scientific tradition. This approach changed as the idea of an ecosystem emerged, and ecology moved toward a holistic approach. The differences between them are explained in the *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*.

In 1927, an English ecologist named Charles Sutherland Elton described living creatures in terms of their feeding relationships in his book titled *Animal Ecology*, which led the way to the notion of an ecosystem. In 1935 another English biologist, Arthur Tansley, described living creatures' relationships and their surroundings as a dynamic system, and called this relationship an ecosystem.

The ecosystem is a complete unit of biotic organisms in certain areas, and includes the creatures in the unit that are interacting with each other and their abiotic environments. Ecosystems have no natural limits. In practice, a wetland, a river, a lake, a great divide, and a grove can be accepted as its units. “Ecosystems are full of variables, often in flux, and subject to forces outside their boundaries.

New species arriving in an ecosystem will change it. Each local ecosystem in this way, is a part of a larger one, and all together constitute the global ecosystem called ‘the ecosphere’ or ‘biosphere’” (Waugh, 2006: 535). In ecosystems, plants, microorganisms, and animals make up ecosystems’ living factor; inorganic materials and organic materials make up the non-living factor. Living and non-living factors share three basic functions: energy flows, chemical material transformations, and population checks. An ecosystem can often survive some changes, but not always, and then it breaks down. The most prominent of these functions are population checks, which control the populations of plants and animals in ecosystems, and balance their ecological processes. Problems cannot be resolved without considering their relationships to the system, and to nature in its entirety. Humans are also integral to these systems. In this way, the ecosystem became part of the ecology movement.

1.2. Environmental Ethics Approaches Against Anthropocentrism

The environmental ethics discipline considers human’s ethical responsibilities to the natural environment. Environmental ethics is “a systematic account of the moral relations between human beings and their natural environment” (Des Jardins, 1997: 9). Do nature’s assets have value beyond meeting humans’ needs, and if yes, is there a value hierarchy among these assets, or do they complement one another? If yes, do the humans’ responsibilities relate to these assets? The environmental ethics framework attempts to organize these questions. These questions posit the idea that humans’ have a responsibility toward natural assets and nature itself, and emphasize the moral dimensions of the human-nature relationship. The moral interest of environmental ethics encompasses responsibilities for the natural assets and resources that exist today, as well as for those that will become available in the future.

Humans’ moral responsibilities for the environment did finally begin to attract attention, but only after humans had exhausted all the environmental alternatives, and they were forced to agree on environmental protection as a final option. “Somewhat ironically, just when humans, with their increasing industry and

technology, seemed further and further from nature, having more knowledge about natural processes and more power to manage them, the natural world has emerged as a focus of ethical concern” (Rolston III, 2003: 518). Establishing an elegant, orderly, rational, and clean relationship with the living and inanimate entities or species in the natural environment that surrounds them on this planet is of the highest priority. When considered in the context of rights and duties, this discussion leads to the concept of environmental ethics, which are based on the daily and future interests and behaviors of humans. Environmental ethics consider the relationships between individuals, societies, states, nature, ecosystems, life, and human and non-human assets. Different schools of environmental ethics are discussed below.

Ethics serve to guide and direct relations between individuals. However, the field of environmental ethics studies the relationships between people, nature, and future generations, without intending to create formal arrangements. Instead of acting on anthropocentric values, parties are asked to consider and respect the rights of all.

Anthropocentric ethics purport that “the purpose of nature is to serve human needs and wants” (Bekoff, 2010: 66). Other creatures have value insofar as they are useful to humans. Humans in turn tend to protect the creatures that are useful for them, and have indifferent attitudes toward creatures that are not considered useful. Today many species face extinction; since they may not have a utilitarian value, they are unlikely to be protected. Greek thinker Protagoras observed that if the notion that “man is the measure of everything” were adopted, humans would dominate. In a humanistic approach, humans are placed in the center of the society on principle. Thus, anthropocentrism leads to self-centeredness in the context of individual-society relations.

Anthropocentrism emerges in different aspects of human-nature relationships, such as agriculture, urbanization, hunting, industry, and energy. Environmental issues can be grouped under three themes: increases in human populations, the depletion of natural resources, and environmental pollution. The anthropocentric

approach reveals that developments in the areas of science and technology have brought no absolute benefits for humans or for other creatures. Value is only relevant for humans, since they are the only valuable assets. Other creatures are related to humans only because they satisfy human demands. Nature is valuable to the extent that it satisfies human needs. Creatures and beings outside this circumference have no value. “Most theorists identify the militantly and exclusively anthropocentric worldview as the root cause of environmental problems such as species extinction, the loss of natural areas and wilderness, and the general decline of environmental quality” (Callicott and Frodeman, 2009: 58).

Hans Jonas offers a critical approach to anthropocentric ethics by observing that anthropocentrism does not include ethics, which are rightfully based on nature. “Jonas criticizes the anthropocentric dimension of old ethical systems. The anthropocentric dimension is not central here. Given this and that a man conceives or tries to conceive values of life, he must be responsible for it. This responsibility implies a positioning of a man with respect to nature” (Bazin, 2004: 11). Ergo, nature is valuable at its core, and important for the future unity of humanity, and ethics should take the lead with regard to nature instead of humans. This view posits that human attitudes and behaviors are compatible with the continuation of life on Earth. When individuals have value, whether or not they contribute to society, humans rise from slavery to citizenship, and discriminatory understandings based on ethnicity, religion, class, and gender are eliminated.

The history of anthropocentric approaches is very long. Today, relationships between humans and nature are more concentrated, and the character of these relationships has changed. Nonetheless, anthropocentric views have continued to maintain their effectiveness. The ideas integral to environmental ethics focus on the damage that has been inflicted on living organisms. Some schools distinguish between those living creatures with emotions and those without. Others place all ecosystems and the biosphere at the center of their analyses.

All living centers have a purpose and are good. Although each species has a special objective, all types have common objectives that usually include growth,

development, and maintaining and increasing their numbers. Having inherent goodness allows the living to be the subject of humanitarian assignments. From this point, a biocentric approach introduces a system of beliefs that enables the conceptualization of humans' relationships with other living creatures.

When this view is accepted, all living beings are treated as having intrinsic value—"all organisms and entities in the ecosphere, as parts of the interrelated whole, are equal in intrinsic worth" (Devall and Sessions, 1985: 67). The life and survival of each kind of living being is important, though there remains the problem of dealing with harmful creatures. Accordingly, there are actions that must be undertaken responsibly and with awareness, according to the rule of respect for life.

The biocentric approach considers all living beings equal, without any discrimination. To be alive is a sufficient condition for having value and being worthy of respect. Thus, the biocentric approach represents a significant break from the anthropocentric approach. Anwarullah Bhuiyan explains the differences between two approaches as follows:

Anthropocentrism is centered in binary opposition comprising two oppositions: man and nature. In addition, their relationship is hierarchical, from top to bottom. This duality reveals the up and down positions in the relationship among the realities and that it appears as exploitative. Therefore, dualism, as a source of the anthropocentric worldview, should be rejected as an exploitative. On the contrary, biocentrism is different from that of anthropocentrism. It focuses on "nature-centered living" and holds that human beings are inherently members of nature. All of the components of nature are integrated through the flow of life. However, biocentrism as a notion is opposite to anthropocentrism. Therefore, it does not permit the use of other components of Nature for the consumption of human beings; rather it considers non-human species as equally valuable in Nature. For example, we should protect natural beings or different species from extinctions. However, this is clear to us that like other species or organisms, human beings are also an integral part of world life cycle. (Bhuiyan, 2005: 198)

Though biocentric ethics acknowledge that all kinds of life have an intrinsic value, industrialized society emerged as the result of developments in science and

technology, premised on the notion that nature was an irrelevant power, to which ethics did not apply. Modern science often considers nature as a phenomenon that is ruled by the laws of physics and mechanics, but does not mention “good” as one of nature’s values. However, nature and ethics are included in the respect for life principle. From another perspective, all living beings on Earth create goodness and are teleological centers of life, which stems from the fact that all living creatures have a life. Consequently, respect for the natural environment and morally responsible behavior characterize a moral attitude.

Biocentric ethics introduced significant changes to ethical considerations, by disabling a moral hierarchy based on traditional theories, and extending moral capacity to a large part of the natural world. However, they could not resolve many environmental problems, and consequently the ecocentric ethics approach emerged, arguing that moral values should also be given to non-living natural objects and ecological systems. Ecocentric ethics adopt a holistic perspective by trying to understand and explain the interdependencies and interactions of living organisms with each other and with their non-living environment.

Ecocentric ethics encompass all living and non-living beings. “This ethic is holistic in that it bases moral concern primarily on features of natural systems rather than on the individuals in them” (Hettinger and Troop, 1999: 4). The expectation that nature must have instrumental value is replaced with the notion everything that exists has value and rights. Environmental ethics therefore represent ideas opposite to those in anthropocentric approaches.

Today, given that anthropocentric approaches are deemed inadequate, the protection of plants, animals, and even non-living elements of the ecosystem has gained importance. Many disputes related to human-nature relationships can arise in social, economic, and political life. Examples include the degradation of a grassland or pasture to build a shopping center, the opening of a mine on a mountainside, or harming the natural environment to build a business or company. If we believe that certain activities are creating significant harm for other living organisms, we are confronting a moral problem. Some guidelines have been

developed to resolve these conflicts impartially, without favoring humans. They are characterized by words such as self-defense, proportionality, do less wrong, distributive justice, and compensatory justice. Accordingly, self-defense considers it right to give priority to human interests only if the interests of the non-human living organisms threaten or endanger human health and life.

To this time, the egocentric approach—in which humans make the decisions—has dominated human-nature relationships. However, an agenda has formed around the need to question the human-nature relationship, and, as a result, the ecological nature design has been added to the theoretical debates agenda. The opinion that there is a state of tension and connection between nature and life has been part of humanity's agenda for a very long time. It began with the ancient Greek philosophers and has continued to the present time. The full and correct answer to this question has not yet been found. The multi-dimensional, serious, large, and vital problems of our relationship with nature outside the human are emerging, and being considered. A non-utilitarian approach to nature is needed. It is apparent that an ecocentric ethics approach must be adopted, and selfish, narrow, biased, and unconscious perspectives abandoned.

Ecocentric ethics have three primary objectives: 1) all human, psychological, social, and cultural development should meet one's personal needs; 2) social justice should be achieved both within cultures and between cultures; 3) by adopting a holistic approach, conditions should allow adequate development in terms of quality for human life and outside of human life. The philosophical thinking that influenced the relationships between humans and nature led to an increasingly uninhabitable world for living beings. The questioning of existing ethical approaches that regulate the human-environment relationship and a search for new ethics is therefore necessary. Ecology constitutes the scientific basis for this search.

Although the main sources of environmental problems are the relationships between humans and nature, human behaviors and their relationships with one another should not be ignored. Adopting ethical approaches that direct humans'

attitudes and behaviors toward nature and other humans are the first step. The predominantly ethical approach that is guiding societies today, is, unfortunately, an anthropocentric approach, and exhibits a unilateral response to conflicts between nature and humans. Solving problems between humans is as important as solving humans' problems with nature. Since social issues and environmental issues are intertwined, solutions to problems with nature necessitate solving inter-human problems. It is wrong to expect people who are experiencing poverty and under pressure to protect the environment, just as it would be wrong to expect humans' welfare and living conditions to improve in an environment where nature has been corrupted. Environmental protection also encompasses an improvement in the quality of humans' lives. Sustainable development should not be based on nature, but it should be achieved by resolving existing inequalities and injustices in societies' revenue distributions.

Aldo Leopold developed the land ethic at the end of the 1940s. He “was the first person to call for a radical rethinking of ethics” (Des Jardins, 1997: 173). His essay, *The Land Ethic*, has become a modern classic, and it is considered an example of a standard paradigm, because it was to some extent new for Western philosophy.

Leopold argued that in traditional ethics—unlike humans who were thought to have equal rights—animals, plants, lands, and waters, which he described as ethical beneficiaries, did not have a moral stance, rights, or dignity. “Leopold’s land ethic rests on an understanding that humans exist within an integrated community of life that also includes other animals, plants, rocks, soils, and waters” (Callicott and Frodeman, 2009: 21). An essential feature of his land ethic requires that humans respect non-human natural assets. Thus, the land ethic exceeded anthropocentric and biocentric ethical values with the extent to which it applied moral interest.

In the land ethic, nature has an intrinsic value irrespective of its benefits for humans and other selected species. Humans have moral responsibilities for nature, and the boundaries of an individual’s sense of community includes land, water,

plants, and animals. The land is valuable as a community, not as a property, and ethics should be recognized as part of the human-earth relationship. The land must be given economic value, because most of the land's community members do not have an economic value, and when nature is protected on the basis of economics, only species and lands with economic value will be protected, and protecting all ecosystems will not be possible.

In the land ethic, earth, nature, land, and ecosystems have intrinsic value. According to Leopold, the greater the tendency to protect the integrity, continuity, and beauty of the biological community, the more correct the tendency is, while a converse tendency shows how relatively wrong the tendency is. Humans are only one of the members of the earthbound community, and relative to other entities and communities. Therefore, humans are obliged to respect the community and all its members. However, natural assets can be used as resources for humans' benefit, as long as the community itself is respected as a whole. Moreover, the use of a resource does not diminish the status of natural assets used as resources in the community.

The land ethic is based on four principles. First, the land is a system in which a variety of items are interconnected in dependency relationships, in what should be regarded as a community, not as a property, which provides economic benefits. Second, humans do not have a dominant position in the land community, rather, they are just simple members of this community, and any behavior or actions that harm this community are unethical. Third, the integrity of biota, their locations, and the values inherent in the nature of humans and other living beings are understandable only by looking at them as a whole. Fourth, humans have a moral responsibility to the land, and are obliged to protect it.

As is apparent, the land ethic adopts an integrated approach. The rightness or wrongness of an action can be understood by looking at the whole, and its effect on the goodness of the ecosystem itself, and not by looking at its effect on the goodness of the individuals that constitute an ecosystem. What Leopold argues is that all assets, including humans, individually have only an instrumental value.

These individuals contribute positively or negatively to their ecosystem. The unimportant problems of the individualistic biocentric approach are thus removed; the real subject of the approach is whether the system is functioning in a healthy way.

Leopold benefited from an ecology that was a relatively new science, to the extent required by environmental problems, and thought that we should attribute the necessary value to the complementary, because we know the truth that this science has offered us. Though more than half a century has passed since land ethics were developed, today we feel the need to attribute intrinsic value to ecosystems, and to show respect for them.

Increasing urbanization has led to a new kind of relationship with the animals that are not expected to provide benefits. The most significant of these is the relationship with domestic animals that has led the middle classes to develop more optimistic views about animals, that is, views that allow animals to have their own character and personality, based on the notion that at least some animals may have moral interest. As a result of this growing sensitivity to animals, the animal rights movement was formed. The roots of this movement are associated with the prevention of persecution and mistreatment of pets in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—one of a series of liberation movements aimed at ensuring universal equality. The animal rights movement is a response to the need for developing moral approaches for non-human creatures such as imprisoned and oppressed cows and chickens.

Theorists of this new ethics movement view animal liberation as the next and most daring phase of political freedom. Animal liberation activists' priorities are to first provide equality in theory, and then in practice, following the path taken in the ideological pursuit of equal rights and treatment for women and racial minorities. Although this idea of progress is similar to the idea of expanding the field of application of ethics in Leopold's land ethics, it is less comprehensive. The animal liberation movement finds its expression in a part of Leopold's ethic, which includes lands, waters, and plants, along with animals. These stages include

animal rights today, equal rights for plants in the future, a holistic moral stance for rocks, lands, and earthy elements later, and freedom and equality for water and other elemental units in a more distant future.

The reason the animal rights doctrine can be included in environmental ethics, despite the fact that it is not sourced in ecology, is that it aims to protect some organisms other than humans as a part of the environment. The animal rights doctrine and environmental ethics overlap to some extent. Since some animals are considered worth protecting in animal rights doctrines or animal-centered ethics approaches, they are accorded intrinsic value for preventing humans' merciless and consumerist behavior. Because there is no difference between these animals and humans in terms of their ability to feel pain, and despite the significant differences between humans and non-human beings, in this context, animals, just like humans, have interests. Here the animal-centered approach reveals the groundlessness of the anthropocentric approach that attributes intrinsic value on the basis of human and mental criteria.

Peter Singer and Tom Regan, two key names in the animal-centered approach, describe the animal as a creature to be respected. They accept the animal as a moral personality with inherent honor. Their approaches do differ in some respects, however.

Singer, who has been well known for his intentions to extend ethics to animals since the 1970s, noted similarities between rejecting the notion of animals' moral interests, and prevailing attitudes toward women and blacks. He used "speciesism" to explain this parallelism, which means "a prejudice or attitude of bias in favor of the interests of members of one's own species and against those of members of other species" (Singer, 2002: 6). He did not believe that being superior in terms of intelligence should give a human the right to exploit and use non-humans for his own purposes. He argued "that since animals can suffer, they undeniably have an interest in the outcome of many if not most human actions, so their interests should be taken into account in moral reasoning. Singer thus attacks what has become known as 'speciesism,'" the view that only the members of one

species, the human species, deserve direct moral consideration” (Evans, 2005: 4). Singer points out that the anthropocentric approach contradicts itself, and, from this point of view, he justifies the speciesism critique.

In his book *Animal Liberation*, Singer discussed his rejection of anthropocentrism in a philosophical sense. Basic moral principles is a fundamental pre-assumption of moral theory that requires that all interests should be given equal attention, and all assets that are the subject of moral interest are considered as one. He lists which assets should be included in the moral interests or have intrinsic value, namely assets with the capacity to feel pain and pleasure.

Kicking a mouse, which is an asset with the capacity to feel pain, will cause the mouse pain. However, a stone does not have the capacity to feel pain, and, therefore, it has no interest. Similar pains must be regarded equally, regardless of which assets are feeling them. Singer attributes an intrinsic value only to assets that feel pain or pleasure, and equality is not the expression of a phenomenon, so it cannot be based on intelligence, moral capacity, physical strength, or other factual features. Differences between two peoples’ levels of ability do not require their interests to be given different levels of attention. In this context, Singer emphasizes that equality is strictly a moral idea. However, the principle of basic equality does not demand the equal treatment of assets; it requires that equal care be given to assets. Singer concretizes his philosophical statement about equal care by using the example of an American boy and a pig:

It is an implication of this principle of equality that our concern for others and our readiness to consider their interests ought not to depend on what they are like or on what abilities they may possess. Precisely what our concern or consideration requires us to do may vary according to the characteristics of those affected by what we do: concern for the well-being of children growing up in America would require that we teach them to read; concern for the well-being of pigs may require no more than that we leave them with other pigs in a place where there is adequate food and room to run freely. But the basic element—the taking into account of the interests of the being, whatever those interests may be—must, according to the principle of equality, be extended to all beings, black or white, masculine or feminine, human or nonhuman. (Singer, 2002: 5)

Singer argues that what is important is that an asset has interests; that some assets are simpler and fewer is not important. Pain is bad, therefore, everyone is obliged to minimize it, and the pain and pleasure of humans and animals should be considered equally. Some critics contend that animals have no ability to feel pain, or not at the same level as humans, and therefore we cannot be sure that non-human animals feel pain.

Animal ethics critics argue that it is indeed possible to say that they may be applied to humans. In fact, the behavior of a human in which he shows that he is feeling pain does not prove that he is really feeling pain. Since we do not exclude a human's moral interest, even though we are not sure of his feelings, neither should we exclude animals. Tom Regan addresses this issue as follows:

People who reject animal rights sometimes do so by stating the obvious: other than-human animals are not human. From this they infer that animals do not have rights. Part of what this objection alleges certainly is true. Dogs and dolphins, rhinoceroses and roosters are not human beings. While true, this fact provides no reason for thinking that animals do not have rights. (Regan, 2003: 99–100)

Scientific research has shown a close relationship between the physical structure of a person's brain and his mental states, so it can be argued that some animals have the capacity to feel pain. Animals have a nervous system similar to that of humans, and also have the capacity to feel pain. Whether animals feel at the same level as humans is the next question. If living beings feel greater pain because they have more complex nervous systems, then snakes will not be seen as morally equal. Though Singer's utilitarian approach aims to minimize total pain, it may be possible to sacrifice some animals to prevent greater pain, though this understanding carries a significant risk. If painful experiments on monkeys can be justified on the grounds that monkeys feel less pain than adult humans, conducting these experiments on humans who are in a coma could also be justified. Singer refuted the anthropocentric approach, in which the animals are perceived as machines without feelings, using strong philosophical reasoning. He placed "the pains of the animals" on humanity's agenda, and largely contributed

to the formation of a social conscience on this issue. His work represents an important step in the development of ethics.

Tom Regan also developed an animal-based ethics approach that judges most human actions as harmful to animals. Regan, however, unlike Singer, views human actions that negatively affect animals as wrong, because they violate animals' rights by ignoring their intrinsic value, not because they inflict pain on animals:

Like us, they are in the world, aware of the world, aware of what happens to them; and what happens to them (to their body, their freedom, their life) matters to them, whether anyone else cares about this or not. Thus do these beings share the rights we have mentioned, including the right to be treated with respect. (Reagan, 2013: 121)

In other words, Regan's defense is based on the idea that some animals have rights, and these rights impose moral obligations. Hence, the basic wrong, according to him, is the ethical view that allows these animals to be used for various purposes. According to Reagan, there are animals that are aware of the things that happen to them and care about them. These animals, like humans, have life, and, therefore, have rights. According to Lisa Yount:

Regan sees animals—mammals, at least—as “subjects of a life,” meaning that they are conscious beings with some concept of self-identity and of goals that they wish to pursue. He goes further than Singer by stating that animals' inherent value, and, therefore, their moral standing, is the same as that of humans. Because animals and humans have the same inherent value, Regan believes that they are entitled to the same basic rights, including rights to life, bodily integrity, and respectful treatment. (Yount, 2008: 6)

These animals have bodies, nervous systems, feelings, languages, behaviors, and origins similar to those of humans. Hence, if individuals that have life achieve equal rights by being considered equal, these animals also have life, and are also within the scope of eligible individuals. Regan argues that when mental states are used as a measure of intrinsic value and combined with the pragmatic principle of maximizing pleasure, unacceptable outcomes such as the murder of an innocent human may result.

Regan's "criterion of being life subject" is comprised of many different features, together with Singer's "criterion of feeling pain." "Singer's position has come to be known as 'animal liberation' in contrast to Regan's 'animal rights' position. In spite of their differences, Singer and Regan have importantly similar approaches with regard to broader environmental issues" (Evans, 2005: 5). Both of their approaches extend the boundaries of ethics to include advanced mammals in addition to humans. Both approaches assert that the same living group deserves the same moral interest, despite their different ethical traditions and their use of different criteria for value attributions.

1.3. Deep Ecology and Social Ecology

The deep ecology movement was based on a particular design of human-nature relations, and formed the basis for ecological movements that reflected how deep ecologists separated themselves from shallow ecology. Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, whose name is closely linked with deep ecology, discussed the distinction between deep and shallow ecology in his essay *The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects*. This essay, which outlines differences between deep and shallow approaches to environmental issues, summarizes deep ecologists' main arguments, and reveals their perspectives on environmental problems.

The first striking feature in this separation is that shallow ecology considers the varieties in nature as sources for human beings, "who have the technology to exploit them" (Naess, 1995: 72); deep ecology asserts that natural varieties have value. In other words, shallow ecology emphasizes the importance of sources for current generations, while deep ecologists reject viewing nature as the source, because nature has inherent value. Whereas shallow ecology finds it absurd to mention a value concept not meant for humans, deep ecology regards this as a racist approach. As Wendy Ambroisus writes:

shallow ecology is a much more anthropocentric point of view, in that it holds values of nature entirely on the premise that nature's sole purpose is for human needs. Shallow ecology neglects many of the important aspects that deep ecology

touches on, the most important being that it neglects every living being's human and nonhuman, intrinsic right and value to live and flourish. Shallow ecology sees nature at the disposal of humans, whereas deep ecology recognizes no right other than vital needs for humans to dispose of nature. (Ambrosius, 2005: 3)

Although shallow ecology claims that pollution is a process that should be stopped, it affects economic growth, and "polluting industries are preferably exported to developing countries" (Naess, 1995: 71); deep ecology asserts that pollution should be stopped independent of economic growth, because "it is not only a crime against humanity, it is a crime against life in general" (72). According to Naess, deep ecology deals not only with the influences of pollution on human health, but also evaluates the effects of pollution in terms of the biosphere and living conditions. In this way, deep ecology endeavors to struggle with the root causes of pollution.

Deep ecologists also criticize forms of production and consumption. While shallow ecology deals with population growth "as a problem for developing countries" (73), and deep ecologists admit that the growth of human populations imposes constraints on the life of the planet, they do not refer to the population explosion in less developed countries, because they view developed societies as the source of oppression, and "industrial societies as a major factor" (73).

While shallow ecologists view nature as cruel, deep ecologists argue that man, not nature, is cruel. While shallow ecology separates parts of nature into soil, marine, national or personal levels, in deep ecology the earth does not belong to people, and if people's vital needs conflict with other assets, the non-human asset should be asked for its opinion.

These parallels are most apparent in deep ecologists. Fritjof Capra defines deep ecology as being an interrelated network of interdependent phenomena:

Deep ecology is supported by modern science, and in particular by the new systems approach, but it is rooted in a perception of reality that goes beyond the scientific framework to an intuitive awareness of the oneness of all life, the interdependence of its multiple manifestations and its cycles of change and transformation. When the

concept of the human spirit is understood in this sense, as the mode of consciousness in which the individual feels connected to the cosmos as a whole, it becomes clear that ecological awareness is truly spiritual. (Capra, 1988: 412)

People who can see themselves as a part of the cosmos in this relationship can experience the situation at the conscious level. In this context, ecosophy provides a holistic understanding of integrity, and Capra comments that the planet's problems are systemic. A system approach focuses on the whole, not on its parts. Systems are not comprised of essential elements, but rather of interrelationships, and humans are involved in continuous interactions with the surrounding ecosystem.

The mysticism that guided deep ecology's quest for spiritual meaning and understanding of integrity, and a system theory that advocates the mechanical worldview can be completed with Thomas Robert Malthus's views on population, as described in *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. According to Malthus, humanity should not be optimistic at all about the unlimited happiness and progress made during the Enlightenment, because populations will always grow faster than production, constrained only by the need for food, sanitation, and somewhere to live. As these resources increase, so will the population. However, "the power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man. Population, when unchecked, increases in a geometrical ratio. Subsistence increases only in an arithmetical ratio. A slight acquaintance with numbers will show the immensity of the first power in comparison of the second" (Malthus, 1998: 4). In response to the arithmetic growth of survival tools, the population increases geometrically. Achieving a balance between population and food supplies requires controlling the growth of the population in two ways: positive checks and preventive checks. Positive checks include the factors that shorten natural lives, such as war, disease, hunger, poverty, misery, and natural disasters. Preventive checks are measures that prevent overpopulation such as abstaining from sex and delaying marriage. Here Malthus' main contribution to deep ecology is the notion of limited sources, which impose limits on continuing progress.

Naess derived deep ecology's ecosophy philosophy from mysticism, system theory, and Malthusianism, and commented that deep ecology is different from shallow ecology because it asks deep questions:

The essence of deep ecology—as compared with the science of ecology, and with what I call the shallow ecological movement—is to ask deeper questions. The adjective “deep” stresses that we ask why and how, where others do not. For instance, ecology as a science does not ask what kind of a society would be the best for maintaining a particular ecosystem—that is considered a question for value theory, for politics, for ethics. As long as ecologists keep narrowly to their science, they do not ask such questions. What we need today is a tremendous expansion of ecological thinking in what I call ecosophy. Sophy comes from the Greek term *sophia*, “wisdom,” which relates to ethics, norms, rules, and practice. Ecosophy, or deep ecology, then, involves a shift from science to wisdom. (Naess, 1995: 27)

According to Naess, the science of ecology is not interested in understanding the kind of society that could maintain a special ecosystem. He observed that these questions need to be informed by both ethics and politics, for which task the science of ecology was insufficient. Instead, he suggests that the earthly wisdom Naess calls ecosophy could facilitate this understanding, since it represents a deeper knowledge and a kind of planetary consciousness.

Naess derived the term ecosophy from the conjunction of the Greek notion of wisdom and *eco* from the science of ecology, to describe a philosophy of ecological harmony. He called it Ecosophy T. This school of thought emphasizes deep ecology's concern with spiritual salvation. Ecosophy points to the need for a transition from science to wisdom. However, ecosophy also makes inferences on the ecology science. In ecology, various entities in the ecosystem are perceived as different manifestations of the same energy. Second, in mystic traditions, since there is no supernatural god and the divine power is innate in nature, natural and supernatural sacred or non-sacred separation is not in question. Without such a distinction, existence is sacred. Also in ecological views, the sacred, value, and meaning are immanent in nature. Third, mystic traditions are not anthropocentric, but biocentric. Man is a being and not the lord of other beings. Fourth, mystics

find happiness in spiritual opening and development, not in material consumption. They adopt a simple lifestyle comparable to that of ecologists. Finally, in mystical traditions, the ultimate goal of the human is identification with the whole, and experiencing the unity of existence. In ecosophy, perfect self-realization means identifying with the universe. To achieve this level of consciousness, ecosophies with different bases can be improved. This approach includes the pluralism and holism of deep ecology. Deep ecologists criticize anthropocentric systematic thought, and regard it as a key source of the current ecological crisis:

Shallow ecology is anthropocentric. It views humans as above or outside of nature, as the source of all value, and ascribes only instrumental, or use value to nature. Deep ecology does not separate humans from the natural environment, nor does it separate anything else from it. It does not see the world as a collection of isolated objects but rather as a network of phenomena that are fundamentally interconnected and interdependent. Deep ecology recognizes the intrinsic values of all living beings and views humans as just one particular strand in the web of life. (Capra, 1995: 20)

Problems can be solved by changing the whole ideological, economic, cultural, and technological pattern, or by developing an alternative eco-philosophy—such as Naess' ecosophy, which assumes all living systems in the world are interrelated. In this regard, deep ecologists adopt biocentrism to counter anthropocentric thought.

Deep ecologists reject categorizing nature as human and non-human. Platonist dualism set mind over nature, Bacon and Descartes's technical perceptions of science degraded the universe to provide a source of resources for human beings, and the modern industrial world prioritizes the economy. In contrast, the first principle of deep ecology is that human beings have moral responsibilities to other living creatures, next generations, themselves, and God, and Naess observed that fulfilling these responsibilities can only be achieved with a harmonious life style in which human beings are viewed as one part of an equal life for the whole universe. Thus, anthropocentric modern society is rejected in favor of the continuity of the biosphere and the ecosphere.

The second principle of deep ecology is Self-realization. Bill Devall and George Sessions focus on the Ecological Self, “where Self stands for organic wholeness” (Devall and Sessions, 1985: 67). They view Self as an open and alive system of relations in which humans are connected to the environment with biological and psychological links. “Spiritual growth, or unfolding, begins when we cease to understand or see ourselves as isolated and narrow competing egos and begin to identify with other humans from our family and friends to, eventually, our species” (67). Since the ecological Self becomes one’s identity, humans no longer need to differentiate between themselves and other living creatures in order to survive. However, to develop an ecological identity, people should first identify with their close environment to develop an ecological identification “which goes beyond humanity to include the nonhuman world” (67).

Naess, who concurred with Devall and Sessions’ observations, says that we need symbiosis and to minimize differences to achieve self-realization. The first basic principle of his ecosophy, self-realization, is described as “universal symbiosis” (Naess, 1995: 80), and one’s identity is part of nature and the unity of relations. Munir Hossain Talukder states that:

Arne Naess’s ecosophy has as its ultimate norm Self-realization, a norm that holds that all entities in Nature are interrelated. Human beings can only achieve this ecological consciousness through the process of identification. Once identified with Nature they can feel the ecological wholeness, the interconnectedness of animals, plants, and even landscapes. A more deepened, rather than alienated view of empathy and compassion for other biological entities, as they also have potentialities, is the goal of such realization. (Talukder, 2016: 288)

Self-realization involves a process of self-investigation through which people begin to understand that they are part of a bigger entity. “This leads to a hypothesis concerning an inescapable increase of identification with other beings when one’s own self-realization increases. As a result, we increasingly see ourselves in other beings, and others see themselves in us. In this way, the self is extended and deepened as a natural process of the realization of its potentialities in others” (Naess, 1995: 80). Naess suggests the concept of identification as an

extension of the self-realization principle, which involves realizing one's life potential, and leads to an extension of the Self. Deep ecologists, who insist on including non-human life as part of self-development, in so doing reveal the biospheric equality principle, which emphasizes the equal rights of other species. It is inevitable that organisms use others for shelter or as a source of food, to survive. Here, deep ecologists emphasize the rights of non-humans, and are unwilling to support human beings when their interests conflict. Consequently, deep ecology's distinctive philosophy includes a discussion of a state of existence that will provide the most inclusive form of identification.

Although Naess discusses ecosophy's political stance in relation to an arrangement of life based on ethical norms, deep ecology's comprehensive political program is usually not accepted, since deep ecology deals primarily with individual and lifestyle changes. Naess, however, claims that a political understanding of the deep ecology movement facilitates innovation, and the most important aspect of deep ecology is moving politics from the social scale to the biospheric scale. Deep ecology rejects anthropocentric and short-term arguments, and moves earth-centered and long-term arguments to the forefront, while generalizing ecopolitical themes. Subjects such as "source" and "life quality" are validated for human and non-human beings, and the removal of pressures, inequality, exploitation, and restrictive ideological apparatuses among interspecies and human society is advocated. Consequently, the norm of deep ecology's worldview is both social and political.

Deep ecologists encourage several generations of people to live and work together in bioregions instead of traditional political institutions, in simple decentralized societies. Ecosystem borders should be used to determine bioregions where collectivism, hierarchy, domination, and monarchism are not tolerated. Collaboration among societies, integration with nature, variety and flexibility could all occur in one bioregion. With societies and political units defined by ecosystem memberships, ethnic, religious, domestic, denominational, and religious constraints would diminish along with hierarchies and male domination.

People would identify with a living region, not this or that country. Suitable technologies should be adopted, and industrial and agricultural units should be small. Settlements would ideally be close to working units, and all forms of transportation would be public transportation.

Deep ecologists view Western culture as fostering the domination of humans over the non-human world, the rich over the poor, and Western over non-western cultures. Deep ecologists emphasize that technical development is a cultural term, and draw attention to the artificiality of this development. In bioregions called Green Societies, people accept social responsibilities and offer mutual assistance, they reject violence, and voluntarily live simple lives.

Deep ecology's attribution of ecological and biospheric destruction to humans was seen as problematic, because it ignored the social context. Joel Kovel argues that deep ecology's weakness is its decentralization of humanity. This assessment overlooks nature's role in the society as a social construct. Kovel further argues that people can be categorized as unwelcome and be separated from others. In deep ecology, humanity is in conflict with nature, rather than being a part of it. According to Kovel:

No doubt an attitude of domination over other species plays an essential role in our ecological woes. But deep ecology has also to take into account that as a species we are fundamentally part of nature, and that our "nature" is to express nature's transformative power. At its far, anti-humanist edge, deep ecology can give the distinct impression that all of this is bad, and that the best thing for humans to do is to go back to a paleolithic existence in the wilderness, or live like the Unabomber, who used sophisticated technology to try to destroy industrial civilization and bring about the mass disappearance of humanity. By denying humanity's creative potentials, deep ecology is denying nature itself. (Kovel, 2007: 188)

According to Murray Bookchin, an American anarchist, social scientist, and the founder of Social Ecology, deep ecology's negative judgments of humans should be rejected. Nonetheless, Bookchin claims that humans are the only ethical subject, so they are also the main cause of the problem, and so the main source of a solution. Bookchin criticizes deep ecology for its anti-humanism, strict

Malthusianism, and generally biocentric philosophy. According to Bookchin, seeing society as a stranger thing to nature is to create a society-nature duality determinant of modern thought. For him, Deep ecology is a hypothesis that does not recognize how human species are different from other species, or the extent of power human's have to change the whole environment. Bookchin also points out that both society and nature have a history of interacting with each other, and deep ecology is a reactionist philosophy. According to Bookchin, since humanity cannot be separated from nature, the social cannot be separated from the ecological. Deep ecologists, on the contrary, argue that biocentrism and anthropocentrism are in conflict, and separate nature and social events.

Social ecologists and deep ecologists agree that humans dominate nature. Deep ecologists regard anthropocentric thought as the source of the ecological crisis, and propose biocentrism—where all species have their own values—as an alternative. Social ecology objects to the feelings of superiority humans impose on other humans. It “analyses the intricate, dialectical relationship between nature and society and sees human beings as the products of both natural and social evolution” (Best, 1998: 337). Social ecology features the social relations that form between human beings, and claims to highlight the opportunities characteristic of an ecological society by criticizing such analyses. “But to have formulated for the first time in its universally valid form a general law of development of nature, society, and thought, will always remain an act of historic importance” (qtd. in Selsam and Mantel, 1987: 126)

Murray Bookchin's theory of social ecology was based on his investigation of the social and political roots of the ecological crisis. He criticized the current social structure from a radical ecological perspective, and his “main contribution to green politics has been the development of ‘social ecology,’ a radical and revolutionary form of green political theory and action which he has developed and espoused since the 1960s” (Palmer, 2001: 242). He argued that preserving

only natural resources while ignoring other dimensions of issues will destroy the environment, and will not lead to social change. “His integration of ecology and anarchism helped to create a novel form of eco-anarchism—one he prefers to call social ecology...its primary insight is that the ecological crisis is a social crisis of values, with hierarchy the main culprit” (Curran, 2007: 157). Bookchin developed a vision for using social resources to solve ecological problems.

The ecological crisis of our age is that today’s society has harmed the planet’s organic evolution to greater degree than all past societies combined. According to Bookchin, humanity is part of life, and the future of humanity depends on diversity and complexity, so “humanity must show a conscious respect for the spontaneity of the natural world” (Bookchin, 1980: 75). Sustaining life in the future depends on the increasingly complex and interdependent evolution of organisms. Humans should not be excluded from the organic evolution, given natural evolution; humans are now at a crucial crossroads and have the ability to influence evolution. They will wait for extinction in a self-destructing system or create an ecological society based on liberal democratic structures that have eliminated domination. Social ecology aims for a libertarian ecological society as an alternative to the current class-system and hierarchical society. Bookchin’s “libertarian municipalism offers both an outline of a political strategy and the structure underlying social ecology’s long-range reconstructive vision” (Tokar, 2010: 123). Social Ecology espouses a radical perspective that is completely different from reformist environmentalism, which approaches ecological problems from a short-term and pragmatic perspective. As Bookchin wrote:

far from adhering to the claim that many environmentalist demands are too “radical,” I would argue that they are not radical enough. Confronted by a society that is not only polluting the planet on a scale unprecedented in history, but undermining its most fundamental biogeochemical cycles, I would argue that environmentalists have not posed the strategic problems of establishing a new and lasting equilibrium with nature. (Bookchin, 1980: 74)

Social ecology is premised on the notion that conflicts between society and nature arose through the process of social development. According to Bookchin, “what

literally defines social ecology as ‘social’ is its recognition of the frequently overlooked fact that nearly all our present ecological problems arise from deep social problems. Conversely, present ecological problems cannot be clearly understood, much less resolved, without resolutely dealing with problems within society” (Bookchin, 2001: 354). The contrast and a divide between nature and society stems from the divides in social areas, and conflicts among people themselves. Therefore, according to Bookchin, the main point to be revealed is that ecological problems and the “irrational, anti-ecological society” in which we live have a direct relationship (Bookchin, 1982: 262). The origin of the problem is the belief that humanity must exploit and subjugate nature, and this understanding comes from the domination of humans over humans, and their exploitation, and extends to include man’s exploitation and subjugation of woman in the patriarchal family (121). The hierarchies, classes, forms of ownership, and static institutions that emerged through social domination have moved to humanity’s relationship with nature as conceptual. Viewing nature as a resource to be ruthlessly exploited as a source of raw materials led to current ecological problems. Social ecology takes a different perspective than other ecological schools of thought, by searching for answers to these ecological problems.

Social ecology rejects the notion that nature is static. Instead, nature represents the cumulative evolution of increasingly diversified and sophisticated lifestyles. According to social ecology, nature is not everything “that exists.” Its development is an evolutionary process that has moved from non-organic to organic, and finally toward the social. In this context, social ecology investigates the interpenetrations and continuities between biological nature and human society, by sidestepping the society-nature dilemma, and focusing on the breaking points that occur during the process of social evolution, and confront human society in natural life.

A deep socialization analysis reveals that the most primitive form of society was substantially derived from nature. Social evolution is an extension of natural evolution in a humanitarian context. From this perspective, we distinguish

between “first nature,” that represents the world outside humans, and “second nature,” which was created by humans (279). “Human society constitutes a ‘second nature’, a cultural artifact, out of ‘first nature,’ or primeval, non-human nature. Where ‘first nature’ is in large part the product of biological evolution, the ‘second nature’ of society is a product of social evolution, of a mind that can act purposefully and creatively” (Marshall, 2008: 606). Bookchin observes that not only hands are used in the process of converting untouched “first nature” to “second nature.” In addition, language and complex biological changes are also vital to the creation of a second nature, which is synonymous with society’s evolutionary process and humanistic internal nature. Social evolution differs from organic evolution. Institutions, economic forces, and other techniques can be used to enrich the organic world, or move it to the point of destruction. Competitive market economies impel hierarchies, classes, states, private property, and economic rivals to grow or be wasted, and leaves its mark on “second nature.” As Edward T. Wimberley states, “chief among the societal problems that Bookchin believes must be solved is the problem of Western market economics and its hierarchical underpinnings. In his opinion, Western-oriented market-economies pose the greatest threat to the environment” (Wimberley, 2009: 33).

Social ecologists observe that society is not a new phenomenon, and accept that social life is not entirely in conflict with nature. The emergence of society is a “natural” phenomenon rooted in the biology of human socialization. The social ecology that rejects the society-nature opposition also opposes the biocentric and reductionist approaches that immerse society in nature. According to social ecology, both approaches reflect a form of domination. Mechanistic approaches, which set out the duality of society and nature, convert nature into an object to be dominated. Biocentric and misanthropic approaches that reduce society to one element of the natural world place society in a dominant role over nature (Bookchin, 1994: 38).

Social ecology contextualizes the social pressure associated with the domination of humans over nature as an offshoot of the domination of humans over humans.

Social ecologists perceive hierarchy and domination as problems that emerge, apart from economic exploitation, between generations and genres, in families, ethnic groups, political, economic, and social institutions, and expand to include nature (Bookchin, 1995: 53). Bookchin further states that:

By hierarchy, I mean the cultural, traditional and psychological systems of obedience and command, not merely the economic and political systems to which the terms class and State most appropriately refer. Accordingly, hierarchy and domination could easily continue to exist in a “classless” or “Stateless” society. I refer to the domination of the young by the old, of women by men, of one ethnic group by another, of “masses” by bureaucrats who profess to speak in their “higher social interests,” of countryside by town, and in a more subtle psychological sense, of body by mind, of spirit by a shallow instrumental rationality, and of nature by society and technology. (Bookchin, 1982: 4)

Bookchin argues that domination over nature should be eliminated. Social ecology argues that the ecology movement should first address the main causes of ecological problems, namely hierarchies and domination.

A holistic transformation that considers all areas of life in relationship to each other is needed to achieve an ecological society. It is not possible to protect the environment if current production, patterns of consumption, and relationships continue. Environmental problems cannot be prevented by a centered, large, and cumbersome state; using technologies that cause major problems, and cannot deliver pollution-prevention technologies. The idea of an ecological society suggests that current production and consumption practices lead to environmental problems, because they fail to achieve human-nature harmony. At this point, ecological society offers to reverse the historical development of capitalistic societies.

Social ecology argues that ecological problems cannot be prevented using the solutions proposed by reformist environmentalism; instead, a change in mentality is needed. According to Bookchin, talking about new techniques for protecting and strengthening the natural environment is not sufficient. We should deal with the world as a community. Our cities should be divided into communities or eco-

communities, designed according to their ecosystems' capacities. Technology should be adapted to eco-technologies, be organized gracefully, and expertly minimize pollution using local energy resources and materials. "The communities would develop 'ecotechnologies,' using flexible and versatile machines that not only make use of local materials and energy sources with the minimum of pollution but favor diversity in the ecosystem and consciously promote the integrity of the biosphere" (Marshall, 2008: 614). We should also develop a new understanding of today's consumer society, one that supports a healthy lifestyle, and expresses our individual needs, and not those dictated by the media. To manage society, we should implement the human scale in our environment and social relations, rather than direct personal relationships. All forms of domination, whether social or personal, should be eliminated. The management of things should replace the management of humans. These revolutionary principles should embrace not only political institutions and economic relations, but also lifestyles and our understanding of the meaning of life.

Called Libertarian Municipalism, Bookchin's project created and disseminated direct democratic institutions that offered the possibility of having ordinary citizens manage society and communities. Bookchin defines this system as "a confederal society based on the co-ordination of municipalities in a bottom-up system of administration as distinguished from the top-down rule of the nationstate" (Bookchin, 1992: 94). It "offers both an outline of a political strategy and the structure underlying social ecology's long-range reconstructive vision: a vision of directly democratic communities challenging state power while evolving in harmony with all of nature" (Tokar, 2008: 55). The purpose of libertarian municipalism is the revitalization and conversion of extinct public spaces into new political spaces, along with the formation of active citizens instead of passive voters. It promotes institutionalizing the power of citizens, in an effort to resurrect and disseminate direct democracy, and believes that local governments are potentially libertarian institutions. It can potentially create the conditions necessary for the institutionalization of direct democracy.

The most important elements of the transition to an ecological society are the creation of libertarian institutions and the reformulation of its politics. Libertarian institutions include a diverse group of people. They share feelings of citizenship that highlight participation, interest, and effective involvement. The principle that gives life to libertarian institutions is the belief that individuals can directly manage their own social affairs.

The second element of the transition to an ecological society is the implementation and enrichment of politics and citizenship. Today, politics has been reduced to state administration, and citizens are reduced to voters. Policy and administrative practices have to be separated from each other. Representative systems, based on political parties, are contrary to democracy, and structures that facilitate control. Creating a society in which each individual is able to participate in decision-making processes will revitalize politics and citizenship. In this sense, the real units of politics are local, self-governed communities. Libertarian municipalism requires that citizens manage economies and that local administrative bodies run them. For the confederate system to reach the highest point of its development and become a social organization, the economy should become confederate, local governments should manage farms, factories, and other necessary initiatives in the settlements. Local governments should manage property. The citizens, who are the collective owners of a community's economic resources, should manage the economy through public assemblies. The questions that will need to be resolved include planning the work, deciding which technologies to use, and which goods should be distributed. Rational and ecological standards should serve as alternatives to capitalism. Social ecology aims to implement versatile industrial projects on a human scale, promote the use of organic agricultural methods and energy sources such as solar, wind, methane, and eco-technologies.

The social ecology philosophy proposed an alternative form of society to modern society. It argued that the transformation of society to an ecological society could occur without a revolution or force. Although the idea was developed and

promoted by anarchists, individuals, or groups, it is not intended that the state be completely eliminated, leaving chaos to dominate. Social ecology defends decentralization over centralization, and states that decentralization will expand people's freedom. Greater freedom is viewed as a step toward an ecological society.

Social ecologists view cities as small-scale aspects of society. Relationships are face-to-face and direct. Social relationships, however, are organic. People are directly involved in decision-making according to democratic principles. In the absence of private property, everyone benefits from production based on his or her needs. Public assemblies govern the society. Confederate local government unions apply administrative decisions. Social ecology perceives modern society as being characterized by elderly people dominating young people, men dominating women, the state dominating society, and individuals dominating and exploiting nature. In order to end this exploitation in society and allow humans to live in peace with nature, current social structures need to be changed and society re-established according to ecological principles. According to Peter Marshall:

such a society would take up the legacy of freedom from the past, especially the commitment of traditional societies to usufruct, complementarity, the equality of unequals, and the irreducible minimum. It would go beyond the claims of existing class society to private property, the sanctity of contract, and its adherence to the rules of equivalence. It would also develop the Renaissance sense of universal humanity and the modern emphasis on individual autonomy, without the loss of strong communal ties enjoyed by earlier organic societies. Above all, it would replace domination and hierarchy by interdependence and mutual aid. (Marshall, 2008: 614-615)

These ideas and arguments give ecological crises a voice, and question the current system. The social ecology movement questions the nature of modern society by forming a connection between a problem in nature and a social problem. It does not view the ecological crisis as a disruption of how modern society functions, but rather as a crisis caused by modern society's success. Modern political-social organizations and value systems regard nature and society as being in opposition.

Hence, the ecological crisis is due to the nature of the modern-industrial society. To resolve this crisis, the social ecology movement proposes a confederal political system and decentralization, with the aim of creating an ecologically rational society, liberating and humanizing nature-human relations, while removing the domination of humans over humans and humans over nature. While presenting these proposals, the social ecology movement distinguishes itself from other environmental movements, and critically evaluates their analyses, which are human-centered, legitimize exploitation, and lack social and philosophical depth.

1.4. Literary Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is a new, widely-accepted type of literary criticism. It “is the latest emerging field in literary studies that directly relates who we are as human beings to the environment” (Bressler, 2011: 231). Cheryll Glotfelty, widely acknowledged as the pioneer of ecocriticism in the academic world, defines ecocriticism as follows:

Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies. (Glotfelty, 1996: xviii)

Glotfelty establishes a link between the literature and nature, and explores relationships between culture and nature. In the study of ecocriticism, literature and nature should not be considered as two independent, but rather interdependent, concepts, and so be consistent with the first principle of ecology that all things—whether living or non-living, human or non-human—are interconnected. Everything in the universe, including the universe itself, contributes actively to this interaction. Ecocriticism argues that these effects and relationships are explored in literary works that adopt an environment and earth-oriented approach. All the components of these interactions deserve recognition and a voice in literary works, and literary ecocriticism gives them this voice. This field of research also involves investigating and mitigating natural and

environmental disasters, and encouraging humans to adopt more environmentally sensitive approaches. Ecocriticism proponents suggest that literary texts and the people dealing with literature can help mitigate natural and environmental disasters.

The search for human and organizational responses to environmental disasters evolved into a scientific discipline in the second half of the twentieth century. Beginning in the 1960s, public opinion was greatly influenced by the threats posed by nuclear weapons, nuclear energy accidents, the rapid depletion of animal and plant species, excessive air, water, and land pollution, the loss of fertile land due to erosion accelerated by humans' activities, production inefficiencies, overpopulation, and the continuous loss of natural areas and resources. Millions of Americans strongly protested environmental pollution and the destruction of natural resources for the first time. Environmentally conscious Americans described the 1970s as an environmentalist decade, and led the initiative that would change Americans' attitudes to natural resources. Consequently, humans became more conscious of, and sensitive to, the destruction of nature and environmental pollution.

Environmentally conscious literature and criticism first appeared in the 1960s. In 1978, William Rueckert coined the term "ecocriticism" in his article *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism*. In this article, he observed that many ecologists agreed with him that mankind's biggest challenge was to prevent the destruction of the natural world—which included human beings:

The problem now, as most ecologists agree, is to find ways of keeping the human community from destroying the natural community, and with it the human community. This is what ecologists like to call the self-destructive or suicidal motive that is inherent in our prevailing and paradoxical attitude toward nature. The conceptual and practical problem is to find the grounds upon which the two communities—the human, the natural—can coexist, cooperate, and flourish in the biosphere. (Rueckert, 1996: 107)

Rueckert emphasized that humans will save themselves when they rescue the natural community, and they could develop an ecological environmental

understanding by studying literal works based on ecology science. He asserted that the shared aim of reading, teaching, and critical discourse was to release the energy and the power stored first in poetry, and then more generally in literature, and argued that this process was similar to energy flows in nature:

A poem is stored energy, a formal turbulence, a living thing, a swirl in the flow. Poems are part of the energy pathways which sustain life. Poems are a verbal equivalent of fossil fuel (stored energy), but they are a renewable source of energy, coming, as they do, from those ever generative twin matrices, language and imagination....Reading, teaching, and critical discourse all release the energy and power stored in poetry so that it may flow through the human community....In literature, all energy comes from the creative imagination. It does not come from language, because language is only one (among many) vehicles for the storing of creative energy. A painting and a symphony are also stored energy. And clearly, this stored energy is not just used once, converted, and lost from the human community....Literature in general and individual works in particular are one among many human suns. We need to discover ways of using this renewable energy-source to keep that other ultimate energy-source flowing into biosphere. We need to make some connections between literature and the sun, between teaching literature and the health of the biosphere. (Rueckert, 1996: 108–109)

Reuckert is credited with naming the concept ecocriticism, for evaluating literary works with an environmental perspective, and promoting the idea that the damage being done to nature could be stopped.

Studies had previously been conducted on nature and the environment, and one can see traces of nature and the environment in literary works. However, the notion of ecocriticism provided a systematic approach to the study of nature and environmental concepts in literary works, and the interactions between human and nature or humans and the environment. Although there have been independent attempts to adopt this approach, there is not a bibliography of published research that examines consciousness and movement in a systematic way. To compile existing works, Alicia Nitecki launched the *American Nature Writing Newsletter* in 1989, which is a compilation of short articles, book reviews, lecture notes, and information on nature and the environment. In 1990, Nevada Reno University

created the first academic position in the field of literature and the environment, an initiative led by Cheryll Glotfelty. In addition, Patrick D. Murphy, Harold Fromm, Glen A. Love, Michael P. Branch, and Scott Slovic worked to develop the emerging concept of ecocriticism.

As a result of growing academic interest in the relationship of literature and nature, an association of like-minded people was formed at the Western Literature Association meeting in 1992, and called the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE). Its mandate was “to promote the exchange of ideas and information pertaining to literature that consider the relationship between human beings and the natural world and to encourage new nature writing, traditional and innovative scholarly approaches to environmental literature, and interdisciplinary environmental research” (Glotfelty, 1996: xviii). *The ISLE*, a magazine that contributed greatly to the development and propagation of ecocriticism, was launched by Patrick Murphy in 1993, to “provide a forum for critical studies of the literary and performing arts proceeding from or addressing environmental considerations” (xviii).

At this point, it can be accepted that ecocriticism has become a well-known, new, and independent form of literary criticism that is now included in universities’ academic syllabuses. Ecocriticism is associated with regionalism and bioregionalism, the representation of animals in the literature, environmental justice, and ecofeminism. The main subjects discussed in ecocritical books since the 1970s include the following: the relationship between literature and the physical environment; the interactions between the natural world and people; the interactions between philosophy, literature, the visual arts, the cinema, and nature during times of environmental crisis; the political effects of environmental crises; literary and cultural reflections on specific aspects of nature; criticizing the literature for its insensitivity to the environment; the role of the imagination for addressing environmental problems; personalizing nature, devoting the self to nature, and being aware of possible environmental disasters; anticipating future environmental disasters; protesting human/nature duality; the importance of the

natural environment; investigating the artificial environment as well as the natural one; relations between political applications and ecocriticism; using and saving nature; ecology as a form of political and cultural analysis; relations between ecological literary criticism and evolutionary psychology; relations between ecology and new historicism, postcolonialism, deconstruction, feminism, and Marxism; ecological investigations of literary pieces in different genres; the effects of urban life and the global economy on the boundaries between people and spaces. Dictionaries and bibliographies of ecocriticism writings have also been published.

Having described how ecocriticism evolved into a scientific discipline, we will now address the major factors that influenced its emergence. By explaining these factors, we think that we will be able to present the notion of ecocriticism, its priorities, and the innovations it has produced, in a more understandable way.

Literary ecocriticism explores people's insensitivity to dire human-induced environmental issues. "Ecocriticism not only lays emphasis on the 'harmony' of humanity and nature but also talks about the destruction caused to nature by the changes which take place in the modern world for most of which man is directly responsible" (Fenn, 2015: 114). Unlike other assets, the human species has altered nature. Some of these actions have disrupted the natural balance. Environmental pollution and industrialization have destroyed the ecological balance, particularly since the second half of the twentieth century. They include temperature increases, global warming, nuclear accidents, melting glaciers, expanding deserts, droughts, floods, storms, hunger, thirst, the loss of plant and animal species at increasing rates, and excessive human populations. Meanwhile, the excessive depletion of natural resources and pollution in natural areas has reached alarming proportions. Environmental problems are the most serious they have ever been, due to human attitudes and behaviors. As Lynn White wrote, "ever since man became a numerous species he has affected his environment notably" (White, 1996: 3). It is very difficult to say that there is another living or non-living asset that damages the universe more than we do. The harm done affects humans and all other living

or non-living assets in the world, and the world itself is in a very serious state today. The possibility of life on the Earth is now at risk, and the process may be beyond our ability to control.

Ecocriticism purports that serious and harmful attitudes, opinions, and actions by humans against nature and the environment are the predominant worldview. They are also among the main reasons why the world of literature remains indifferent to natural and environmental disasters. Thus, humans believe that everything exists for their benefit; otherwise assets have no value. Ecocriticism targets the development of an earth-centered literary criticism approach, in place of anthropocentric literary criticism. Humans are not the center of this universe, they are only part of it. Therefore, ecocriticism focuses on technological solutions that could be developed within the framework of anthropocentric traditions, human welfare, and how humans can benefit more from the world's limited resources. It can be argued that technology cannot effect real and acceptable solutions for environmental and natural disasters, because they will focus primarily on the continuation of human life in the universe. What is needed is to change the human beliefs, values, and actions that are integral to the anthropocentric view.

Ecocritics have tried to address the anthropocentric attitudes and eliminate the indifference, in an attempt to be part of a solution for ecological crisis. Therefore, ecocriticism examines how the anthropocentric approaches were created, and the effects they are having, and attempts to understand the real causes of environmental and natural problems. Ecocriticism adopts an earth-focused perspective that gives a voice to all beings in the universe, and cares for each asset's intrinsic value. Thus, we posit that a new type of literary criticism has been developed.

Nature and culture, which anthropocentric approaches regard as being in opposition, are considered as having a dualistic approach. Ecocriticism uses an earth-focused approach by altering the dualistic anthropocentric approach. According to anthropocentrism, culture is often superior to nature, and it is always evaluated as being dominant over nature. Nature, in turn, was thought to be

submissive to culture. “Bookchin, for instance, insists that humans have a ‘second nature’ (culture), which gives them not only the right but the duty to alter, shape and control ‘first nature’ (the non-human world)” (Manes, 1996: 23). This link between culture and nature also forms the basis of ecocriticism. However, it can be argued that ecocriticism, unlike anthropocentrism, adopts a more egalitarian and holistic approach; ecocriticism examines this interactive process within the boundaries of literary criticism, by accepting that culture and nature affect each other and are influenced by each other. As Glotfelty stated:

despite the broad scope of inquiry and disparate levels of sophistication, all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it. Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature. As a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on land; as a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between the human and the nonhuman. (Glotfelty, 1996: xix)

A key part of this perspective is that literature is not only human-centered. If there is an interaction between human culture and physical environment, and thereby between all human and non-human beings, and both groups influence each other, then it can be claimed that the literature should also give non-human beings a voice. Ecocriticism observes that non-human beings are considered as elements acting on events, situations, and characters, instead of passive elements in textual analyses. It sometimes claims that non-human beings should also be considered as characters. In other words, ecocriticism encourages the expanded application of literary criticism to include social, physical, and environmental aspects of the world, as well as the interactions that occur in this environment, and not be limited to a social world determined exclusively by culture.

When we examine the root-words of ecocriticism, it is apparent that ecocriticism covers more than cultural and social worlds. William Howarth states that the words “eco” and “critic” that constitute “eco-criticism” are based on “oikos” and “kritis” from Greek:

Eco and *critic* both derive from Greek, *oikos* and *kritis*, and in tandem they mean “house judge,” which may surprise many lovers of green, outdoor writing. A long-winded gloss on ecocritic might run as follows: “a person who judges the merits and faults of writings that depict the effects of culture upon nature, with a view toward celebrating nature, berating its despoilers, and reversing their harm through political action.” So the *oikos* is nature, a place Edward Hoagland calls “our widest home,” and the *kritos* is an arbiter of taste who wants the house kept in good order, no boots or dishes strewn about to ruin the original décor. (Howarth, 1996: 69)

When we evaluate these definitions in terms of ecocriticism, we extend the term “home” to include the entire universe. Ecocritical applications consider humans as one of the universe’s living and non-living beings. The relationships humans have established at home represent not only inter-human relationships, but also inter-species relationships. From there it follows that ecocriticism uses the concept of “world” in literary studies, and that ecocriticism is different from other literary critical approaches. “World” as a concept implies more than a world surrounded by culture in ecocritical readings whereas in most literary theories, world is synonymous with the society, or social milieu. As Glotfelty noted “Literary theory, in general, examines the relations between writers, texts, and the world. In most literary theory ‘the world’ is synonymous with society—the social sphere. Ecocriticism expands the notion of ‘the world’ to include the entire ecosphere” (Glotfelty, 1996: xix).

Ecocriticism tries to expand this world concept to encompass the whole ecosphere. The area to be examined, then, emerges from the societal and social area, and it is almost inevitable that the focus will be on the concept of humans, and that human actions in the world are limited to the society and social area. In this case, we can say that nature and the environment will serve only as place-time elements in literary work. However, if we expand the world concept from the perspective of ecocriticism, to encompass the whole ecosphere, and remove it from the society and social area, both human and non-human beings, culture and the cases outside culture are given a voice and status. When the scope of ecocriticism is taken into consideration, the nature and the environment and all

living and non-living beings should be considered in literary works, as factors that can fulfil a character, a factor, or, in a broader sense, any of the functions undertaken by humans in literary works.

It may not be sufficient or correct to suggest that ecocriticism is limited to a literary discipline, given its expansive, inclusive, and holistic approaches. Ecocriticism embraces interdisciplinary studies, and it should not be forgotten that human actions occur in a cultural as well as in an ecological domain, since the human is both a cultural as well as a biological being. The main objective behind interdisciplinarity is a holistic ideal. As Paula Willoquet Maricondi stated, “since its official inception in the early 1990s and its recognition as a significant academic field of study, ecocriticism has expanded beyond the area of literary analysis to embrace the study of other forms of cultural production, including theoretical discourse, music, photography, virtual environments, and film and video” (Maricondi, 2010: 1). Therefore, ecocriticism should be inclusive. All ecocritical efforts are a part of this comprehensive process, and ecocritical approaches should extend to other areas that include and combine the theoretical, historical, educational, analytical, psychological, and rhetorical.

Ecocriticism should not be limited only to finding and examining environmentally themed works, but rather, it should be used to review the political content of classics or other less-well-known works with an ecocentric approach, and reevaluate them (Tallmadge, 2003: 282). For ecocriticism, the objective is to increase environmental awareness or environmental sensitivity by analyzing every literary work read, staged, heard, or observed. Hence, environmental sensitivity is often ignored or not considered enough in literary studies. Ecocritics also need to maximize readers and listeners’ environmental sensitivity. This task is consistent with the objectives of ecocriticism, and ecocritics have a pen that allows them to voice heavy criticism of individuals or groups that abuse nature or cause harm, while simultaneously revealing its beauties. Ecocritics—environmental activists in the literary field—should be involved in identifying solutions or actions that support environmental awareness, by discussing the relationship between culture

and nature in every respect, while trying to make radical changes, if necessary, in all fields. Ecocritics are also tasked with investigating and evaluating these relationships in literary texts, where the nature-culture relationship is unclear. Glotfelty gave examples of questions to be kept in mind by eco-critics when examining the texts, and what they should focus on. According to Glotfelty, ecocritics can achieve these objectives by focusing on such questions as the following:

How is nature represented in this sonnet? What role does the physical setting play in the plot of this novel? Are the values expressed in this play consistent with ecological wisdom? How do our metaphors of the land influence the way we treat it? How can we characterize nature writing as a genre? In addition to race, class, and gender, should place become a new critical category? Do men write about nature differently than women do? In what ways has literacy itself affected humankind's relationship to the natural world? How has the concept of wilderness changed over time? In what ways and to what effect is the environmental crisis seeping into contemporary literature and popular culture? What view of nature informs U.S. Government reports, corporate advertising, and televised nature documentaries, and to what rhetorical effect? What bearing might the science of ecology have on literary studies? How is science itself open to literary analysis? What cross-fertilization is possible between literary studies and environmental discourse in related disciplines such as history, philosophy, psychology, art history, and ethics? (Glotfelty, 1996: xix)

Ecocriticism is a movement, a method, and a strategy or a critiquing method that does not as yet have a theory or doctrine. It is in a formative stage that highlights interdisciplinary study, "in a process of inventing and shaping itself, borrowing largely from other disciplines and the natural sciences" (Oppermann, 1999: 31). Therefore, ecocriticism is sympathetic to each proposal. Ecocriticism views scientific values with the same level of importance given to human-non-human values. Any reasonable, serious, scientific work can be a form of ecocriticism, if applied to certain types of literary works. Therefore, it is very difficult to talk about the method, strategies, teachings, and theoretical tools of ecocriticism, and it would be wrong to say that a specific doctrine, strategy, or method is dominant in ecocriticism. Strategies, methods, and teachings may emerge every day from

critics around the world, that fall under this comprehensive title. This situation is normal and natural for a new kind of criticism, which is both in the formative stage and inclusive, and there is not one worldview that guides the application of ecocriticism. Neither is there a single strategy. It is difficult to describe a new method that was originally introduced by ecocriticism. Ecocriticism tries to examine the contents of literary works by using and benefiting from any method that was used previously, or is being used currently, without surrendering fully to the human-centered perspective, or by introducing a new perspective. Each author or theoretician interprets ecocriticism differently.

From this perspective, ecocriticism is a new movement in search of answers to questions such as whether the role of nature in the literature, or the values in the writings, have ecological meanings; the real meaning of nature writing and of the term nature; whether the environment is classified based on class, sexuality, or race; the real content of wilderness; changes in the concept of nature through history; whether environmental subjects are expressed correctly in the popular culture and modern literature; the role of sexuality in the understanding of nature and nature writing, and how other disciplines like history, philosophy, science, ethics, and psychology can contribute to ecocriticism.

Ecocriticism, unlike other types of literary criticism, wishes to use the world of literature to examine human actions that have led to dire situation of the earth. In response to human indifference to the threats facing the planet, ecocriticism proposes a new mindset, new attitudes, and actions that may also prepare humans with earth-centered approaches that are more sensitive to nature and the environment, to remove curtains that prevent human minds from perceiving this situation—largely the returns of a human-centered worldview—to engage people in actions that can stop, mitigate, or prevent environmental disasters by making humans more aware.

CHAPTER TWO: ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN SNYDER'S POETRY

Gary Snyder is an important figure among the ecologically-conscious poets in the latter part of the twentieth century American literature. Indeed, among the ecologically-conscious poets of the nineteen-sixties, Snyder exhibits the most deep-rooted sensitivity towards the non-human world. He is, as Wendell Berry says, "the most austere, the one willing to venture farthest from the human assumptions and enclosures" (Berry, 1970: 423). Snyder's commitment to the land is strongly felt in many of his poems. Snyder wishes to establish a new myth based on ecological ideals calling for the right of all life forms to unfold. The new myth Snyder is advancing is evident in his rejection of man-bound notions that validate man's supremacy over nature.

Snyder was born in San Francisco on May 8, 1930, and grew up in Oregon and in a farm north of Seattle, Washington. He took his B.A. in anthropology at Reed College in 1951. In the early fifties, he worked as a logger. He later studied Oriental languages at Berkeley. During that period, he came to know Ginsberg and other Beats. From 1956 until 1964, Snyder lived in Japan, where he underwent formal Zen Buddhist education. Before returning to the United States in 1968, he worked on an American tanker in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. He now lives in California in the foothills of the Sierras.

Snyder treats a wide range of ecological themes. In many of his poems, he expresses a scientific and spiritual belief in the interdependence of all life forms. He respects non-human nature's otherness and distrusts progress-oriented ethics that are disruptive to the balance of the environment. Finally, although frustrated at continuing environmental deterioration, Snyder believes that healing is inevitable, and that seeds for a new beginning will emerge out of the waste and destruction. The sources of Snyder's ecological consciousness are manifold. Scientific ecology, American Indian mythology, Buddhism, and working on the land are among the major factors that sharpened his ecological vision. According to Paige Tovey:

Gary Snyder's poetry and poetics reflect a lifetime spent learning and practicing an attitude to experience, at once contemplative and active, shaped from the interaction of international cultures, mythologies, religions, and ideas. He is one of the foremost figures in the American ecological literary movement. Underlying his ecological writing is a study of cultural and ideological influence that reaches from East Asian religion and culture to Native American history, folklore and tradition. (Tovey, 2013: 1)

It is the diversity of Snyder's ecological sources that make his poetical vision unique. His creative ideas are mainly influenced by his childhood and his experiences abroad in eastern countries. For him, North America is the root of his literary creation and his life. Snyder compares North America to "Turtle Island," (the Native American term for North America) as he thinks that Native American culture is the soul of the country. Snyder calls this strong native sense the sense of place, which people naturally acquire from their treatment of the land beneath their feet as well as their concern for their neighborhood. Snyder's final creative goal is to realize his own sense of place and to be in harmony with his surroundings.

Another important influence on Snyder's ecological thoughts is eastern culture, particularly Chinese. Snyder was always inspired by eastern countries which greatly affected the manner and content of his discourse. In Snyder's opinion, in the western arts the mountains and rivers are personified and symbolized, whereas in the eastern arts they remain just as they are: a pure image of the natural elements. This led Snyder to study Native American Indian and Chinese culture and poetry, and Buddhism. What Snyder wants is not the "back to nature" notion espoused by philosophers, nor self-improvement through natural poems, or even to plant trees to help rebuild nature, but the real primitive conduct of getting back to nature. He wishes to rediscover and re-experience the primitive situation wherein people cooperated with and were mutually dependent on nature. On the other hand, Buddhism is an important base of Snyder's thoughts, helping him to establish a holistic consciousness of ecological protection.

His works embody different perspectives, showing the different aspects of nature and the nature-human relationship. The most attractive point of Snyder's thoughts is his unique ecological philosophy. As James I. McClintock states:

Snyder uses a rhetoric of ecological relationship to outline an ecological vision in which nature, society, and spirit are interdependent: what happens in nature has social and spiritual consequences; what happens politically and economically has natural and spiritual consequences; and what happens spiritually has social and natural consequences. Gary Snyder's lifelong interest in place creates a focus for this ecological vision that intermingles ecological language and concept with anthropology and art.(McClintock, 1994: 111)

In his early poems, he emphasizes the importance of nature and the necessity of harmony between nature and humans in a time of technological civilization and ecological deterioration. From the unstable emotions of suspicion and radicalization, to the force of ecological revolution and a strong sense of place, Snyder entertained himself in nature to experience nature, to practice in nature. He combines western and eastern thought to explain nature and calls on the whole world to change the ecological system. The first part of this chapter discusses the themes in Snyder's poetry such as nature as source of life and hope in the natural world and how drawing from Buddhism, Snyder attempts to present an interconnectedness of the whole world to readers.

2.1. On Nature and Humans: Ecological Themes in Gary Snyder's Poetry

Modern technology is like a double-sided sword, while enriching people's material lives, it has ushered in global problems, such as population explosion, exhausting resources, and environmental problems that threaten human existence. Under such conditions, humans must face environmental problems and take responsibility. However, instead of protecting the environment, humans have become its destroyer. Therefore, it is of vital significance to transform human cultural awareness and create a new culture respecting nature. In addition, humans' spiritual health plays a vital role in maintaining ecological health. People who are ecocentric attempt to find a solution from Eastern culture. Eastern

philosophies emphasize the harmony and unity of all things. Buddhism emphasizes that all things interact within a whole net. Humans are a part of this net and should live in equilibrium with all other parts of the planet. “From a Buddhist perspective, solving and contributing to the eradication of environmental problems is itself part of the practice of Buddhism. In other words, solving environmental problems is a natural aspect of the Buddhist philosophy” (Yamamoto and Kuwahara, 2008: 78).

Buddhism maintains a holistic view of nature and humans, which in a word is “oneness.” According to Callicott and Frodeman, “the centrality of the doctrine of dependent co-arising (*pratityasamutpada*) in Buddhist thought appears to provide powerful support for the modern conception of ecology. If there are no independent entities, the interdependence and interrelatedness of things are established. The doctrine of the *gati* reflects this by pointing to the radical kinship of all living beings” (Callicott and Frodeman, 2009: 122). Gary Snyder, who is both a Buddhist and ecologist, believes that nature is lively and sentient. Ecology and Buddhism are related to an extent. As Greg Garrard states, “the notion of ecocentrism has proceeded from, and fed back into related belief systems derived from Eastern religions, such as Taoism and Buddhism” (Garrard, 2012: 25). Joan Qionglin Tan makes a connection between Buddhism, nature and poetry as below:

Chan and ecology are two different terms used in different fields within different traditions. The former, “Chan”, is an ancient religious or philosophical concept in the Oriental tradition, whereas the latter, “ecology”, is a modern, scientific discipline originated from the Occidental tradition. How can they coalesce harmoniously in contemporary ecopoetry? The interconnectedness between mind and nature may be the main thread that links them (Tan, 2009: 32).

This potentiality lays the foundation “in the shaping of Snyder’s poetry” (32). Snyder’s experience working as a fire lookout on Sourdough Mountain in the summer of 1953 provided him ample time to simply be present in nature and experience it. The poem “Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout” describes a mid-August day from his experience.

Down Valley a smoke haze
Three days heat, after five days rain
Pitch grows on the fir-cones
Across rocks and meadows
Swarms of new flies.

I cannot remember things I once read
A few friends, but they are in cities.
Drinking cold snow-water from a tin cup
Looking down for miles
Through high still air
(Snyder, 1992: 399).

Snyder depicts nature without any personal judgment, refraining from subjectively evaluating the landscape. According to Snyder, “being above all the clouds with only a few other high mountains also in the sunshine, the human world still asleep under its gray dawn cloud blanker, is one of the first small steps toward Aldo Leopold’s ‘think like a mountain’” (Snyder, 1990: 215). Snyder thus endows mountain with life and sentient feeling. The major themes of Snyder’s works and his proposal for an alternative way of life in the face of environmental and spiritual decay is discussed in the next few sections.

2.1.1. Nature as the Source of Life and Its Ability to Survive

The concept of nature as the source of life is depicted in the poem “Source” in Snyder’s book *Turtle Island*. In this poem, Snyder highly praises the plant Manzanita— a second-growth bush that proliferates rapidly in mined-off and clear-cut land.

Clears up, and all the stars,
the tree leaves catch
some extra tiny source

All the wide night

Up here

out back

drink deep

that black night.

(Snyder, 1974: 26)

The manzanita plant proliferates because it has learned to grow not only with sunlight but also with “that black night” (26) of the night stars. The plant can catch any source of life to survive. Manzanita clans cluster up “with birds and woodrats underneath” (26). By co-existing with and not against its bioregional co-inhabitants, manzanita exhibits its hospitality and friendliness to other plants and creatures. Snyder’s understanding of co-existence here indicates agreement with Snyder’s Buddhist influences. He wants to convey that humans should learn from natural phenomena and treat nature kindly as its co-inhabitant.

Not only is nature the source of life, but it also has the powerful ability to survive. The sequence of logging poems in Snyder’s canon *Myth & Texts* primarily presents the variety of creatures that populate the forest wasteland. “Some are clearly in danger of getting hurt, while others have proved their ability to endure” (Gray, 2006: 70-71). Some trees and insects have adapted themselves to the present environment. These species can “accompany anyone who moves in this domain”(Murphy, 1992: 26).

“Logging 3” describes the miraculous ability of nature to survive. The poem begins with a textbook definition of lodgepole pine. Because of its wonderful reproductive power, lodgepole pine becomes a phoenix-like archetypal symbol. Its new life arises from seed cones that gestate in the ashes of the tree-consuming fire. Despite abuse by modern technology, Snyder has hope in nature’s powerful ability of rebirth by the end of the poem. “Rocks the same blue as sky/ Only icefields, a mile up/ are the mountain/ Hovering over ten thousand acres/ Of

young fir”(Snyder, 1978: 5). Here “mountain” plays a crucial role. Its height provides the physical opportunity to see the world from a different perspective and better understand nature. Standing on the high mountain, the young fir mentioned in the beginning can be seen. “As logger, the speaker expresses nothing, but contempt for the new growth, but as poet he expresses respect for the new meaning of that new growth” (Dean, 1991: 104).

Most material in “Logging” is based on Snyder’s experience from the summers of 1951-1954 when he worked as a timber scaler and log setter. Snyder painfully witnessed the damages inflicted on his beloved west coast wilderness areas by greedy lumber companies and Western civilization in general. His work involved selective cutting instead of clear-cutting. Snyder has remarked, “I had no great problem with that job because I don’t doubt that the many seed-trees and smaller trees left standing have flourished, and that the forest came back in good shape” (qtd. in Murphy, 1992: 22). This is why he depicts the contrast between damaging logging, and hope and source of life.

In “Logging 8”, Snyder starts by depicting the suffering of the living creatures through a whole day from dawn to nightfall, but emphasizes their powerful ability to survive: The bough leaps of the pine tree are snapped by diesel; the boulders are grounded by steel tracks, smoking; the piss-fir is torn; the seed-pine is scraped; and the bushes are smashed. Standing beyond a row of pines, the wild horses witness all these. Deprived of their inhabitation, chipmunks, black ants, and yellowjackets flee in great confusion. Unlike other writers who describe the impending end of the world, Snyder presents a hope in the poem. He finds the rebirth of nature and is encouraged by it. Hope lies in the fact that “a black ant carries an egg”(Snyder, 1978: 10); the “barked trees” (10) are still standing; and the yellowjackets swarm and circle their home and will come back.

2.1.2 Law of Nature

Snyder's wide range of knowledge, particularly that about American Indians enables him to present the law of nature. "Fire" is a frequent image in Snyder's poetry. As Massih Zekavat states, different qualities have been attached to fire as it has been so vital within natural phenomena and human life. For instance, in Greek mythology, it was symbolized as the yearning for liberty; and it was associated with law and order in Persian mythology (Zekavat, 2014: 3). Likewise, American Indians would burn out the bushes with the grasses and kitkitdizze under them once a year so that the oak and pine trees could stand tall and clear. By praising the role of fire, Snyder attempts to reveal the law of nature. "Control Burn" in *Turtle Island* reads, "Fire is an old story. /I would like / with a sense of helpful order /with respect for laws/ of nature/ to help my land/ with a burn. A hot clean/ burn" (Snyder, 1974: 19). Here fire does not damage everything in nature but causes the growth and rebirth of the right plants. "[M]anzanita seeds will only open after a fire passes over." The controlled burn could never cause devastating fire, "...never enough fuel there that a fire could crown"(19). Snyder does not wish to teach readers about the native activity of controlled burns but uses it to demonstrate power of nature. He wishes to convey to humans that they should abide by the law of nature. Otherwise, excessive logging slash and secondary growth would render the entire ecosystem vulnerable to catastrophe.

Controlled burning has a purgative function. Snyder hopes that a new culture in America can have the same function. Snyder emphasizes that "A hot clean/burn" is a sudden upheaval or revolutionary social transformation, which would "clear away all of this tangled undergrowth that obscures vision and threatens the 'tall and clear' stands of trees normal to a mature forest" (qtd. in Murphy, 1992: 109). Snyder's ecological philosophy has two dimensions: time and space. In the dimension of space, a biological system is a balanced dynamic net where all kinds of energy flows. In the dimension of time, a biological system is a slow and permanent progress. In this chronotope, each life is dependent on another and has

its place. Fire serves to maintain and protect the wholeness, stability, and balance in the biological system.

Snyder writes about the cost of humans' actions in "Affluence." Twenty years ago, people did not "slash and burn" the "still-hard limbs and twigs," which resulted in "fire hazard, every summer day" (Snyder, 1978: 50). Therefore, he attempts to burn the tangles with diesel oil to pay the price. "Logging 15" reinforces the rebirth of nature in "Logging 3" and the role of fire. Although the forest is thin, cone seed is waiting; squirrels are pursuing the cones; and seed pod void of seed is also waiting. They are all waiting for fire to be reborn.

"Logging 15" imparts a Buddhist sense that depicts the law of nature and inculcates ecological consciousness. The word "void" in the first stanza indicates a positive Buddhist sense. According to Buddhism, everything starts from nothing. The forest has been cleansed of underbrush and dead wood, leaving the area empty to enable new growth. In the second stanza, the use of void indicates "the American sense of sterility. Snyder suggests that hope lies in the mythic cycle of rebirth, rather than in the physical regeneration of the society" (Murphy, 1992: 29). "Millions of worlds, burning" regenerate a rebirth so that "flowers crack the pavement" (Snyder, 1978: 15).

2.1.3. Beauty of Nature and Earth as a *Sangha*

Snyder's nature poems brilliantly reflect the ecological philosophy of Buddhism, reflecting the concept that everything is animistic and sentient. Snyder appreciates the beauty of nature and its distinct features "legitimizing right understanding, right speech and right action" (Tan, 2009: 185). In this sense, he appreciates the beauty of nature and its distinct features. From the ecological aesthetic perspective, he highly praises it. Ecological aesthetics refers to the appreciation of nature and intoxication with nature involving respect and love for nature instead of using nature as a tool to reflect one's feelings. In Snyder's poetics, natural

things such as woods and ridges frequently appear in readers' visions and "nature images own the quality of transparent simplicity in much the same way that their intrinsic natural qualities possess it" (186). In his poems, the most ordinary things become lovely. Snyder states: "I grew up in close contact with the fabric of nature, rather than removed from it. Growing up in that fabric gave me a powerful moral perspective of respect and regard for all sentient beings and gave me a powerful sense of membership in all real world" (qtd. in Murphy, 1992: 2). Snyder describes a peaceful and beautiful scene in the natural world in "O Waters":

O waters
wash us, me,
under the wrinkled granite
straight-up slab,
and sitting by camp in the pine shade
Nanao sleeping,
mountains humming and crumbling
snowfields melting
soil
building on tiny ledges
for wild onions and the flowers
Blue
Polemonium
great
earth
sangha.

(Snyder, 1974: 73)

The poem semiologically resembles a tree and Snyder compares the earth to "sangha" and observes the interdependent energy-transfer network. Occasionally, he claims that a poet should be a voice for the voiceless nonhuman world. Humans "are indeed children of, sons and daughters of, and eternally in relationship with, the earth" (Snyder, 1990: 172). In the net, everything has its place and exists for the other. Snyder calls on the waters to wash him appearing to be a harmonious integrity with nature. Everything exists for the benefits of others.

He therefore ends the poem by defining the network as a “sangha” (Buddhist fellowship) of the entire planet.

Only by retaining calm and leaving all other things behind can one realize the interconnectedness of the web and feel the beauty and peace in nature. Meditation is a way to access the truth. To practice meditation, one should become motionless and relaxed. Entirely immersed in nature, one may lose the self and cling to a rigid sense of consciousness and “can be reconstructed from the unconscious through meditation” (qtd. in Zazula, 246). If one has erased self-importance temporarily, then one may find that everything is in a web with its own role and in its place. Zazula further claims that “Once a person has this much faith and insight, he must be led to a deep concern with the need for radical social change through a variety of hopefully non-violent means” (246). As Snyder effectively depicts in the preface of the *Turtle Island*, those who meditate extensively know that “what you aim at is never what you hit. What you consciously aim at is never what you get. Your conscious mind can’t do it for you. So you do have to practice a kind of detached and careful but really relaxed inattention, which lets the unconscious do its own thing of rising and manifesting itself” (Snyder, 34). Snyder enjoys peace without any human disturbance. This equality among all things is also revealed in “Pine Tree Tops” in *Turtle Island*:

in the blue night
frost haze, the sky glows
with the moon
pine tree tops
bend snow-blue, fade
into sky, frost, starlight.
the creak of boots.
Rabbit tracks, deer tracks,
What do we know.
(Snyder, 1974: 33)

An interrelated natural world is depicted in this poem. The first six lines present natural things as they are “drawing a simple yet profound picture of Zen flavor” (Zhao, 2014: 9). The poem depicts human and animal tracks interwoven in a harmonious wholeness. A universe containing things of each kind is depicted — frost , pine tree tops, rabbit and deer, moon, and the creek of boots respectively symbolize natural phenomenon, plants, animals, planets, and humans. The juxtaposition of human footprints along animal tracks under the sky vault suggests an essential membership shared by all the animated creatures. A dynamic picture is formed against the static background. The static sky, moon, and tree tops contrast with the dynamic rabbit and deer; the combined sound of animals and human beings is set against the quietness of the night. Pine tree tops are embraced by the sky. Human beings are part of this fabric where everyone is dependent on the whole fabric for their existence. Each is inside of another. There is no self, but the unity of all. Snyder intends to guide the reader to a quiet state or tranquility and calmness.

Snyder believes in biocentric equality and suggests that people should express awe about nature. He said in an interview that his poems, “on one level, call the society’s attention to its ecological relationships in nature, and to its relationships in the individual consciousness” (Snyder, 1980: 4). Buddhism teaches people to extend love to animals, rocks, dirt, and everything else. “Without this love, we can end, even without war, with an uninhabitable place” (4). The doctrine “Everything has Buddha nature” is appreciated by some other Western ecologists. For example, Lewis Lancaster thinks that one of the great contributions of Chinese Buddhism is its development of “Everything has Buddha nature.” He says:

Teaching that everything has Buddha -nature was a revolutionary development in China. Every person has Buddha-nature, but what was of such importance to the Chinese was the teaching that insentient objects also have it. The rocks, trees, lotuses, streams, mountains—all have Buddha-nature. Therefore, one’s mind, which has Buddha-nature as its essence, shares a common aspect with every part of insentient nature, which also possesses this same Buddha-nature. With this

introduction of the idea that the mind and the natural objects had the same Buddha-nature, the Chinese at last had an explanation for the power of nature. (Lancaster, 1997: 13)

Snyder agrees with the above doctrine. Snyder intends to convey in “Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout” that the species all play different but essential roles. Everything in sight and in mind moves in his mind. The world he sees is the world as it is naturally. The mind of the “I” is already infused with the cold air in the valley. Thus “I” and “a few friends” have become a part of nature: “drinking” and “looking” are regarded as natural actions. Patrick Murphy suggests that “this understanding occurs because it is a place for meditation”(Murphy, 1992: 46).

With his belief that everything has Buddha nature, Snyder overtly speaks for the whole ecosystem due to his belief in Indra’s net, “a symbol for a holistic vision of the world that stresses the causal relationship and mutual dependency among all phenomena in the universe” (Taylor, 2005: 848). His ecological consciousness leads him to undertake the role as a spokesman of American environment and everything sentient and insentient. In “Mother Earth: Her Whales,” Snyder compares the earth to whales, the world’s largest animals. He calls on people to pay attention to the plight of the earth and defend all its creatures. Regarding all living beings as people, Snyder argues that everyone must stand in solidarity to protest:

Solidarity. The People.
Standing Tree People!
Flying Bird People!
Swimming Sea People!
Four-legged, two-legged, people!
(Snyder, 1974: 48)

Snyder’s consideration of all things sentient is due to the influence of shamanism in addition to Buddhism. Snyder had contact with shamanism, which he then

fused into his Buddhism. Shamanism has three principal elements: “communication with the transhuman (animals, spirits, and more broadly, life’s network), giving voice to that contact in one’s community, and healing” (Barnhill, 2002: 120). Snyder becomes the spokesperson of the natural world, similar to the shaman who also “speaks for wild animals, the spirits of plants, the spirits of mountains, of watersheds. He or she sings for them” (Chung, 2005: 40). Snyder believes that it is in the wildness that one first learns to hear, because it is less static in the wildness where voice and music are clearer than anywhere else. He has talked about his own experience in one interview: “There is a sense of communication with all of life’s network that somehow happens in the wilderness for some people, and I’m one of them” (Snyder, 1980: 154). Animals and humans are on the same stage of wilderness playing their own role. The poem “The Dead by the Side of the Road” further illustrates this. In the poem, he calls on people to show respect to all other animals even after their death. By attempting to utilize “roadkill” victims for good or fur instead of wasting their products, he attempts to afford them a sense of respect. He carefully accesses the carelessly shot doe to see if any meat can be saved.

In “Hunting 5,” the making of the horn spoon with the head of the mountain-goat also indicates respect for the dead mountain-goat: “The whole head of a mountain goat lies waiting in a corner, possibly because it is the last part of the animal to be used” (Gray, 2006: 79). Its sacred character is reinforced by an untranslated chant, “Wa, lame gwala tsolololaqeka ts! Enaqe iaxeq” which is translated as “Now the black horn spoon is finished after this” (qtd. in Gray, 79). Native Americans traditionally used dead animals. Environmental philosopher J. Baird Callicott claims the following:

the typical traditional American Indian attitude was to regard all features of the environment as enspirited. These entities possessed a consciousness, reason, and volition, no less intense and complete than a human being’s, the Earth itself, the sky, the winds, rocks, streams, trees, insects, birds and all other animals therefore had

personalities and were thus as fully persons as other human beings. (qtd. in Garrard, 2012: 121)

This American Indian attitude has found its way into ecological holism. Ecological holism, the core of ecology, considers humans an indispensable part of nature. Based on ecological holism, Chinese scholar Lu Shuyuan has further noted that in the time of ecological crisis, the spiritual ecology of humans is increasingly becoming a top issue. To maintain the balance of ecology, nature has played a vital role in maintaining the internal balance and health of the human spirit. Nature has provided humans a platform for meditating on their own culture and state in the world (Shuyuan, 2017: 1). Snyder's meditative poem "Piute Creek" demonstrates the interactive relationship of ecological holism. It records Snyder's experience of a tremendous awe-filled moment in the Yosemite high country:

Hill beyond hill, folded and twisted
Tough trees crammed
In thin stone fractures
A huge moon on it all, is too much.
(Snyder, 2009: 8)

Such a quiet place is good for meditation. Uninterrupted by human activities, everything is free in the natural world. These ideas are in line with the Buddhist idea of "no obstruction among things" (8). Snyder attempts to allow human limitations to expand: "The mind wonders. A million/ Summers, night air still and the rocks/ Warm. Sky over endless mountains"(8). Patrick Murphy rightly comments: "Nature includes and surrounds the individual, and in the process of realizing that participatory inclusion, he moves beyond the limitations of being human" (Murphy, 1992: 50). Through meditation, humans achieve enlightenment:

All the junk that goes with being human
Drops away, hard rock wavers
Even the heavy present seems to fail
This bubble of a heart.

Words and books
Like a small creek off a high ledge
Gone in the dry air.
(Snyder, 2009: 8)

Here, books are compared to flowing water. In Indra's net, the wavering of the rock transmits energy and wisdom in nature. Through meditation, Snyder has learned: "A clear, attentive mind/ Has no meaning but that/ Which sees is truly seen" (8). One has to be a part of nature to feel it with no self. Matsuo Basho who is in agreement told his disciples: "To learn about the pine, go to the pine. To learn about bamboo, go to the bamboo. But this learn is not just what you think learn is. You only learn by becoming totally absorbed in that which you wish to learn" (qtd. in Snyder, 1980: 67). This is again confirmed by Murphy's words: "One's vision is based on one's place when experiencing that vision"(Murphy, 1992: 51). Ecology's first principle that humans and everything else are closely related and develop in their interactive influence is presented at the end of this poem:

Night chills. A flick
In the moonlight
Slips into Juniper shadow:
Back there unseen
Cold proud eyes
Of Cougar or Coyote
Watch me rise and go.
(Snyder, 2009: 8)

Not only can civilized nature study wild nature, but wild nature in its various manifestations can also see and study human nature. Snyder wants to tell readers that the speaker in the poem is merely a visitor to this particular part of wilderness and not a resident. "It is appropriate, then, that he approach the place not only with awe but also with deference to its inhabitants"(Murphy, 1992: 51). Only

those who are really immersed in nature can learn about nature and perceive life. Snyder finds Buddhist meditation a good means for achieving the same:

I have had a very moving, profound perception a few times that everything was alive (the basic perception of animism) and that on one level there is no hierarchy of qualities in life— that the life of a stone or a weed is as completely beautiful and authentic, wise and valuable as the life of, say, an Einstein. (Snyder, 1980: 17)

When meditating, Snyder can sense a cougar or coyote watching him. The observation between humans and the natural world is not one-way. Intelligent and sentient animals such as coyotes are also observing human beings. In a 1973 interview, Snyder mentioned the fundamental Buddhist idea of interpenetration. He felt excited to experience the beautiful interconnection of things. In the platform of nature with no other distraction, Snyder perceives the world uniquely. “The Uses of Light” reflects the ecological philosophy of Buddhism:

It warms my bones
Say the stones

I take it into me and grow
Say the trees
Leaves above
Roots below

A vast vague white
Draws me out of the night
Says the moth in his flight—

Some things I smell
Some things I hear
And I see things move
Says the deer—

A high tower

On a wide plain.
If you climb up
One floor
You'll see a thousand miles more.
禪.

(Snyder, 1974: 39)

The distinct feature in this poem is the big Chinese character 禪 that ends the poem. Snyder depicts the feelings of each being, particularly humans' perception and emphasizes the equality through their equal use of light in the ecosystem. Humans are juxtaposed with all other things. Snyder is attempting to show his respect for non-sentient beings in universe. Though simple in language, it conveys a profound meaning to readers who are deeply impressed by the seemingly separate and independent beings. Sunlight pervades the gaps between stanzas. The interconnected network is seen through enlightened eyes. The poem borrows from Buddhism because "the principal Buddha in the Avatamsaka sutra is Vairocana (the Sun Buddha), who is depicted in that sutra as the center of the universe" (Murphy, 1992: 119). The insentient things in the eyes of ordinary people have sensations and can speak in Snyder's poem. The stone feels temperature; the tree feels its growth; the moth has the sensibility at light; and the deer can smell, hear, and see. Sun Buddha has unselfishly distributed its light to illuminate all kinds of equivalent things in the world. Thus, a harmonious whole world is constituted.

Humans can literally broaden their horizons by climbing up. Here, Snyder borrows lines from a Chinese poem "Climbing Crane Tower" by Wang Zhihuan. If you make a slight readjustment, you may expand your perceptual horizons and awareness significantly. The Chinese character is the highlight of the whole poem, suggesting that the Buddha light—wisdom—will be used for transcendence and descent. If you do not confine yourself to your own world, you can achieve your desired level of enlightenment. After achieving enlightenment, you can realize the

biocentric equality of all beings represented by the stones, the trees, the moth, the deer, and man. “The Uses of Light” is very well illustrated by Timothy Gray’s words: “The poems Snyder wrote upon his return to America emphasized a cross-fertilization of ancient Buddhist tradition and current ecological strategies in a playful effort to guarantee the well-being of the greatest number of sentient beings” (Gray, 2006: 283).

2.1.4 Exploitation of Nature

In *Myths&Texts*, Snyder has written a series of logging poems attacking the destructive logging enterprise. “Logging 2” presents the story from Exodus 34:13: “But ye shall destroy their altars, / break their images, and cut down their groves” serves as a metonym for western attitudes towards the wilderness (Snyder, 1978: 3). Snyder depicts global deforestation. Influenced by anthropocentrism, “someone killed and someone built, a house/ a forests, wrecked or raised/ All America hung on a hook/ & burned by men, in their own praise” (4). While people mistakenly take pride in destroying nature, only the poet remains clear-headed. He woke up from “bitter dreams,” which reminds readers of the good dream in “Logging 1”:

dream
dream
Green comes out of the ground
Birds squabble
Young girls run mad with the pine bough.
(3)

Unfortunately, in “Logging 2,” the poet wakes up to find the spring and goddess missing. He has to start the whipsaw to kill trees and destroy nature. Consequently, his heart only has bitterness. Murphy interprets that the bitter dream “may reflect a desire to imagine the present-day anti-ecological activities of American culture as something unreal, a period of time that will be remembered

in the future by humanity as only a brief bitter dream” (Murphy, 1992: 24-25). This reflects the human desire to end the present ecological crisis.

In the pursuit of economic benefits, people treat trees as mere products: “Pines grasp the clouds with iron claws/ Like dragons rising from sleep’ /250,000 board-feet a day/If both Cats keep working/ & nobody get hurt” (Snyder, 1978: 4). They are only concerned about the use of trees and their exchange rather than intrinsic value. Snyder uses the word “kill” to indicate the living state of trees. Ironically, “if a forest can be ‘killed’ then it makes no sense to claim that ‘nobody gets hurt,’ unless the concept of life is limited only to human beings”(Murphy, 1992: 25).

Snyder continues listing the destruction by humans in *Turtle Island* and depicts humans as destroyers. The same theme as the logging poems is found in “Front Lines.” The chainsaw growls like a stalking predator. Contemporary American people do not stop the destructive action, logging, except when the weather is bad:

Ten wet days and the log trucks stop,
The trees breathe.
Sunday the 4-wheel jeep of the
Realty Company brings in
Landseekers, lookers, they say
To the land,
Spread your legs.
(Snyder, 1974: 18)

“The trees breathe” indicates that Snyder treats trees as sentient beings similar to “Logging 1.” The description is literally true in that trees do breathe, but one should realize that the relaxation of trees is momentary, for immediately jets are heard overhead. They represent the entire economic empire with its military power that threatens the trees and the land. The enemy is spelled out as “Amerika,” the popular epithet used to identify the fascist U.S. during the 1960s. The U.S. is compared to an obese man with cholesterol-clogged arteries. Snyder

uses this image of decadence to depict man's "rape" of "Mother Earth"(Murphy, 1992: 114).

Snyder demands that people take a stand against further devastation of the natural world in "Front Lines." The real nature destroyer is not the individual operating the bulldozer but the person from the city who is manipulating the destruction without any direct contact with the environment. For financial gain, humans raze the environment. If the devastation continues, forests would turn to desert. Snyder painfully anticipates the future and calls for a stop to humankind's devastating behaviors. "Behind is a forest that goes to the Artie/ And a desert that still belongs to the Puente/ And here we must draw/ Our line"(Snyder, 1974: 18). Certainly, he does not wish to raise a call to defend only one form of life, forests. He intends to protect all forms of life, as he remarked in a mid-1970s interview: "It's the eternal moment. I think in those terms, but I also think in terms of organic evolution, and from that standpoint we have a critical time now in which decisions are being made which will have long reaching effects on the survival of many forms of life"(qtd. in Murphy, 1992: 115).

What is more significant is that in "Mother Earth: Her Whales," Snyder lashes out in particular at the "once great Buddhist nations — Japan and China. In the poem, Snyder draws people's attention to the whole world. He warns all residents on earth that the earth home is collapsing. Images are combined into a collage — owls, male sparrows at home; lizards and grass in the wildwood; whales in the sea; Brazil, America in the West; and Japan and China in the East. The natural world had existed without any human interruption. However, armed with the concept of the "sovereign use of Natural Resources," (74) Brazil sold and tortured "the living actual people of the jungle" (74). Here, Snyder regards the non-human beings in the jungle as "people." The used-to-be ideal life for whales forms a contrast with the presently devastating sea pollution. He severely condemns Japan for slaughtering whales and polluting the sea.

And Japan quibbles for words on
 what kind of whales they can kill?
A once-great Buddhist nation
 dribbles methyl mercury like gonorrhea
in the sea.
(47)

Snyder was 54 years old when he visited China in 1984. He had learned from books that China was a country full of myths and natural beauty. However, reality differed drastically from his learnings:

Pere David's Deer, the Elaphure,
Lived in the tule marshes of the Yellow River
Two thousand years ago— and lost its home to rice —
The forests of Lo-yang were logged and all the silt &
sand flowed down, and gone, by 1200 AD—
(47)

Ah China, where are the tigers, the wild boars,
 the monkeys
 like the snows of yesterday
Gone in a mist, a flash, and the dry hard ground
Is parking space for fifty thousand trucks.
(48)

Snyder stated the following at a seminar: “The west is not the only culture that carries these destructive seeds. China had effectively deforested itself by 1000 A.D. India had effectively deforested itself by 800 A.D.”(Snyder, 1974: 106-107). He painfully asks himself the difficult question of how a traditional Asian country with a Buddhist background could ultimately become the most ecologically self-destructive country in the world. Using a historical dimension, Snyder attempts to depict the extermination of species and agricultural degradation of bioregions.

People should learn how to reinhabit, as depicted in “What Happened Here Before.” In the poem, the place was originally occupied by Native Americans who “came with basket hats and nets/ winter-houses underground/ yew bows painted green” (Snyder, 1974: 79). However, the arrival of trouble is depicted in stanza five:

Then came the white man: tossed up trees and
boulders with big hoses,
going after that old gravel and the gold,
horses, apple-orchards, card-games,
pistol-shooting, churches, country jail.

(78)

As Patrick D. Murphy remarks, “the ‘white man’ did not come to inhabit, to adapt himself to the land and the creatures already there, human and nonhuman, but to make all else adapt to him. And therein begin the trouble” (Murphy, 1972: 126). Snyder has clearly condemned the wrong notion of humans in *Turtle Island*:

At the root of the problem where our civilization goes wrong is the mistaken notion that nature is something less than authentic, that nature is not as alive as man is, or as intelligent, that in a sense it is dead, and that animals are of so low an order of intelligence and feeling, we need not take their feelings into account. (Snyder, 1974: 107)

Even though Snyder is primarily concerned about the natural world and his public figure as a spokesperson for nature may overshadow his concern for humans, he does depict humans’ spiritual emptiness. He believes that advertising and propaganda activities are polluting people’s minds, blinding them to reality. People are consuming more than they need. “Much of the production and consumption of modern societies is not necessary or conducive to spiritual and cultural growth, let alone survival, and is behind much greed and envy, age-old causes of social and international discord” (Snyder, 1974: 97). Snyder expressed this in a 1976 interview, “we all know that the power of a great poem is not that we felt that person expressed himself well.... and so a great poet does not express

his or her self, he expresses all of our selves”(Snyder, 1980: 65). He usually depicts people in the tone of a bystander, recording the degeneration of humans and their spiritual emptiness in the material world.

Snyder reinforces the theme that Western civilization has ruined the backcountry in “In the Night, Friend.” Moreover, he emphasizes the influence of the Western civilization on people’s minds. Readers may first feel confused by the poem. Different voices are speaking different things: “Beards don’t make money”; “the money culture run by Jews”; “I think them poets are all just charlatans”; “Teenagers! Getting busted for shoplifting is no joke!” “Teach black people to have more self-respect/ and they’ll blame the white people more—”(Snyder, 1992: 53). However, on reading again, pursuit of money and inequality become apparent as common features in the different speech fragments. The poem is comparable to a video camera, recording what Snyder sees and hears, with his own aside. The following is Snyder’s aside:

At thirty-five my father had a wife,
Two children, two acres, and two cows.
He built a bam, fixed the house and added on,
Strung barbed-wire fence,
Planted fruit-trees, blasted stumps,
They always had a car.
They thought they were poor— 1935—
(52)

Snyder is well-conscious of “the money culture run by Jews” (52). The dissatisfaction depicted above is caused by greedy desires and proves Buddha’s understanding— “human desire is in all its forms the cause of suffering” (Wangu, 1993: 8). The whole state of California is talking about stocks, taxes, and so on, without caring for nature, as is shown in the end: “the unspeakable U.S. government cut down the Navajo peach trees at Canyon de Chelly”(Snyder, 1992: 53). These peach trees are very beautiful and should be highly valued. Snyder

depictsthem at the start: “Peach blossom/ Cling Peaches/ Freestone peach” (53). Unfortunately, they have been cut down. Therefore, Snyder also calls on people to clean their thoughts, remain awake in the face of all this confusion, and live a quiet and simple life: “After midnight, the ‘clean time of night’/ Rise to see the Mourning star. / Panting the peach tree, mopping the floor”(53).

Devall and Sessions believe that “the material standard of living should be reduced and the quality of life, in the sense of basic satisfaction in the depths of one’s heart or soul, should be maintained or increased” (Devall and Sessions, 1985: 33). People’s pursuit of materiality has driven them into a spiritual wasteland. Snyder further reveals this empty-mindedness in “Before the Stuff Comes Down.” People appear to be enjoying themselves with music and soaking in the affluence of material things: “Walking out of the ‘big E’ / Dope store of the suburb, / canned music plugging up your ears/ the wide aisles, / miles of wares/ from nowheres” (Snyder, 1992: 61). Although the poem conveys the kind of revolution-around-the-corner optimism that suffused the 1960s counterculture, Murphy remarked that this poem “presents an unusual voice for Snyder, one that is smug and dismissive about the transience of late capitalism in the United States” (Murphy, 1992: 102). In the last twenty years of the late twentieth century, the discount store “big E” has survived with less difficulty than the “Turkey Buzzard” in overpopulated California. However, when Snyder exits the store, he sees natural things — live oak, brown grasses, and the Turkey Buzzard high in the blue air. He feels that only natural things can last and that the pursuit of material things is but transient. To solve the problem, Snyder has proposed building a bioregional community in compliance with a spiritual path. He firmly claims in a 1979 interview that “we learn that community is of spiritual benefit and health for everyone, that ongoing working relationships and shared practice of a set of values, visions, and quests. That’s what the spiritual path really is” (qtd. in Oelschlaeger, 303).

2.1.5. Spiritual Emptiness and Alternative Living

Snyder's attention to people's spiritual minds and the transmission of ecological knowledge is clearly revealed in *Axe Handles*. The poem "Dillingham, Alaska, the Willow Tree Bar" clearly describes humans' spiritual emptiness:

On the wood floor, glass in hand,
 laugh and cuss with
 somebody else's wife.
Texans, Hawaiians, Eskimos,
Filipinos, Workers, always
on the edge of a brawl—
 In the bars of the world.
 Hearing those same new songs
in Abadan,
 Naples, Galveston, Darwin, Fairbanks,
 White or brown,
 Drinking it down,
the pain
of the work
of wrecking the world.
(Snyder, 2005: 91-92)

Being an oil worker, Snyder goes to a bar with the other workers, where he observes how these men "entertain" themselves. In the eyes of Snyder, these men are empty-minded. They do not know how to inhabit their land. They are only laborers compelled by the economic system in its constant expansion for profit. Therefore, here in this poem, Snyder not only depicts the emptiness of humans, but he clarifies that "he is primarily angry at, and condemning, the economic system that compels these men to labor, not at the men themselves"(Murphy, 1992: 146).

If the above poem reflects the ordinary workers' spiritual emptiness, then the poem "Alaska" discloses the spiritual confusion of knowledgeable men. Working

at Gold Stream Vale, people feel cold even in thick clothes. Even it is in the sun, it is terribly cold— forty below zero in the sun. A graffito has been spray-painted on the pipeline— “Where will it all end?” (Snyder, 2005: 90). The unknown author is concerned about the future of humankind and natural environment. People are only attempting to dry up the crude oil, ignorant of the future of human beings and the results of their actions. “Drive back to stuffy rooms: /lawyers, teachers, plant ecologists, / energy visionaries, people’s land managers / cross minds”(90). These people are very important as they exert a great influence on people’s behaviors and the world’s future. In determining the appropriate human inhabitation of Alaska, they must utilize oil, one of the products that constantly threatens Alaska’s ecosystem. They do not know how to solve the problem. It is imperative to enrich people’s mind with a new culture. Murphy remarked, “it is perhaps no coincidence that a year before the publication of *Axe Handles*, Snyder participated in the construction of a ‘community-built Zendo’ (a meditation hall)”(Murphy, 1992: 123). By building such a meditation hall, Snyder intends to impart clarity to people about their environment and enrich their spiritual life.

Snyder provides an even more realistic description of life and widens readers’ perception of reality in *Regarding Wave*. The great confusion and emptiness in people’s lives are presented in “In the House of the Rising Sun.” Confronted with the confusion, Snyder chooses to meditate. The background of this poem is the Vietnam War and its life-destroying effects. The title alludes “to a song by Eric Burden and the Animals” (appropriately so), in which the first-person speaker is trapped in abrothel in New Orleans. Clearly, Snyder is stating that the Vietnam War is destroying not only those who fight in the war, but the nation as well”(Murphy, 1992: 94).

Sleeping out all night
in warm rain.
Viet Nam uplands burned-off jungles
 wipe out a few rare birds
Fish in the rice paddy ditches

stream a dry foul taste thru their gills.
(Snyder, 1970: 9)

Painfully stunned by humankind's ignorance and the worsening environment, Snyder feels as if he has "drunk some filthy poison" (9) and doubts whether he will learn to love. In terms of the crisis of humans' spiritual ecology, Snyder emphasizes the transmission of a new kind of culture to change humans' spiritual state. In an interview in 1998, he commented that his poetics "is a description of coming into the community and coming into the place in many subtle ways" (qtd. in Calonne, 2017: 123). However, it pains him to see people who lack a sense of "how to be," and humankind's spiritual emptiness forces him to consider the inner health of human beings. In this poem, Snyder wants to call upon humans to learn "how to be" from animals in their land. The poem was written nearly a month after Snyder attended the United Nations conference on the human environment in Stockholm. As Hwa Yol Jung and Petee Jung have noted: "It began with a terse foreword in which he said that everyone came to Stockholm not to give but rather to take, not to save the planet but to argue about how to divide it up... The poem meant to defend all the creatures of the earth" (Jung and Jung, 1990: 76). The "civilized" governments are represented by robots and compared to "vultures," which is belching and gurgling near a dying Doe and wants to pluck out the eyes of a "slain knight." They do not show any honor or respect to others who exist in that land. Painfully, he hopes that humans can return the owl, the lizard, and the whales their land of community.

Far from the noise of modern society, one is able to achieve internal peace for becoming enlightened. The Fifth Patriarch of Buddhism Hong Ren was once asked, "Why should people live in mountains to learn the Way of the Buddha instead of doing so in cities?" He replied:

When the trees are far from the crowds, they are not cut or bruised by the axe and the knife, and so grow to their full strength to be used for pillars and beams for a house. So when one learns the Way of the Buddha, one should nurture one's spirit in

secluded valleys, [...]. Away from the trivialities of the world, untroubled by the mundane things in one's sight, one will naturally have peace in one's heart. (qtd. in Tan, 2009: 54)

Maybe Hong Ren's reply helps explain why Snyder chose to live at the foot of Sierra Mountain where he and his family live and practice Buddhism. Snyder considers the Buddhist meditation as a perfectly simple, ordinary activity to be silent. In an interview, he said, "there is no question that spending time with your own consciousness is instructive. You learn a lot..." (Snyder, 1980: 328). By paying attention to his own consciousness and breath, he allows things to pass through without listening or looking at them.

Snyder constructs a new culture to arouse people's ecological awareness. His *Turtle Island* (1974) that won the Pulitzer Prize in 1975 serves as an essential guidebook for the environmental wing of the American counterculture. This volume was written in the midst of the first widely perceived ecological crisis, criticizing the ravages of the bulldozer, the ship-miner, and the nuclear reactor. This book reveals the grossest limitations of humans' mindless consumption of nature's store. He reminds people repeatedly: "This living flowing land/ is all there is, forever/ we are it/ it sings through us- / We could live on this Earth/ without clothes or tools!" (Snyder, 1974: 41). Murphy has indicated the social background as follows: "At the end of the 1960s, revolution was in the air and that a major social transformation was on the horizon. Snyder and many others in the United States felt a tremendous letdown in the 1970s when no such revolution materialized" (Murphy, 1992: 123). Snyder claims definitely in "Revolution in the Revolution" that nature is the most exploited.

Chinese ecologist Lu Shuyuan divides ecological criticism into three levels: natural ecology, social ecology, and spiritual ecology. Natural ecology refers to the natural world in the form of substance, while social and spiritual ecology are in the realm of the inner ecology of human beings. Thus, ecocriticism is extended

to human inner ecology, including reevaluation and modification in many ways such as lifestyle, ways of thinking, and action. Natural crisis and the loss of balance between natural and social ecology will undoubtedly influence the inner world of people, causing ecological problems of the spirit. There is no doubt that today's society has witnessed the worsening state of people's spiritual state such as money worship, self-interest, personality alienation, and lack of belief. Therefore, the primary task of ecologists is to protect and restore people's spiritual state. Snyder has made contributions to draw people's attention to humankind's spiritual crisis and their inner health of spiritual ecology. Maintaining inner harmony is an important requisite for the whole ecological system. Therefore, ecological holism emphasizes the health of both the whole ecology and the sub-ecology of human beings.

Only a few months after he returned from Japan, Snyder inspired American environmentalists with the following mantra: "Find your place on the planet, dig in, and take responsibility from there" (qtd. in Gray, 2006: 271). Humans cannot live healthily in noisy and filthy conditions that even "animals" would not tolerate. The deterioration of the natural world will surely worsen humans' spiritual state. Humans are destroying not only nature but themselves. Therefore, he takes up the active role, as indicated by the following: "I would like to think of a new definition of humanism and a new definition of democracy that would include the nonhuman, that would have representation from those spheres. This is what I think we mean by an ecological conscience" (Snyder, 1974: 106). Through his poems, he beseeches people to reknit their connections with each other and with the natural world, hoping that the world may manifest its normal state.

2. 2 Space and Place in *Mountains and Rivers Without End*

The 20th century Chinese-American geographer Yi-Fu Tuan discusses space and place in terms of cultural geography, whose ontological principles of space and place lay a fundamental role in Gary Snyder's works, illuminating his own

theoretical principles on space and place, particularly in *A Place in Space*, *The Practice of the Wild*, and *The Real Work: Interviews & Talks 1964–1979*. Yi-Fu Tuan, in his book *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, provides a prologue and highlights three main themes: the biological facts, the relations of space and place, and the range of experience or knowledge. He says the following: “place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other” (Tuan, 2001: 3) and “from the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa; furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place” (6). It is emphasized that space and place are a dyad within the context of physical and cultural worlds. “Developing a sense of place for human beings depends on how they individually experience the spatial positions that they temporally come to occupy” (Göçmen, 2017: 4).

Snyder extracts a set of theoretical principles on space and place from the perspectives of philosophy and ecology. However, Snyder acquires his inspiration from Yi-Fu Tuan to define his own principles on space and place from new perspectives. In an interview with Snyder about his special attachment to California, he states, “my sense of place is the whole West Coast. No, not the whole West Coast, Northern California, Oregon and Washington are where I feel most at home. On the west slope. Plus the mountains” (Snyder, 1980: 59). It shows that Snyder has set some limits to his place. Snyder considers his place on earth to be:

where I know most of the birds and trees and where I know what the climate will be right now, roughly ... and where I have spent enough time to know it intimately and personally.... So that place for me goes from around Big Sur on the California Coast all the way up the Pacific Coast through British Columbia, through Southeast Alaska, out onto the Aleutian chain, and then comes down through Taiwan. Now that's the territory I have moved and lived in and that I sort of know. So that's my place. (Snyder, 2012:106)

It shows that space is more abstract than place, and space with actual experience is a place. It proves Snyder's words in *The Practice of the Wild*, "to talk about place as an experience" (Snyder, 1990: 25). He further states that "the heart of a place is the home, and the heart of the home is the firepit, the hearth" (26). It reveals that his home Kitkitdizze is the heart of his place. Snyder further explores his sense of space. As he says in *Mountains and Rivers Without End*, "the notion of emptiness engenders compassion," meaning that everything in the universe is connected to everything else; space is understood as where everything and unrelated places are connected. It is expected that space is open and free within inner and outer worlds.

Snyder's writing and layout expand his sense of space. He explains, "the placement of the line on the page, the horizontal white spaces and the vertical white space for how it is to be read and how it is to be timed" (31). Based on his experiences, Snyder further merges the effects of exploring space and place into his ecopoetry, which is the essence of reinhabitory. Snyder defines the term "reinhabitory" as follows:

It refers to the tiny number of persons who come out of the industrial societies and rational and scientific realization of inter-connectedness, and planetary limits. But the actual demands of a life committed to a place, and living somewhat by the sunshine green plant energy that is concentrating in that spot, are so physically and intellectually intense, that it is a moral and spiritual choice as well. (qtd. in McClintock, 1994: 65)

Snyder expresses thus that being grateful and responsible for everything nearby and having a close relationship with nature are reinhabitory practices. As James I. McClintock states, "to re-inhabit a place, one must have an ecological perspective that extends beyond the intellectual to an ethical and spiritual vision" (McClintock, 1994: 114). Further explaining the interpenetration of space and place, Snyder makes a commitment to the community:

We are called by nature and history to reinhabit in good spirit....responsibility is to choose a place. To restore land one must live and work in a place. To work in a place is to work with others. People who work together in a place become a community, and a community, in time grows a culture. To work on behalf of the wild is to restore culture. (qtd. in Clingerman and Dixon, 2011:75)

His wildness is of the whole world and not restricted to a specific region. Human society is just a part of it. The emphasis on place and space is significant in interpreting ecology. Since the definitions of space and place have been proposed, the process of exploration appears valid.

Snyder states, “our relation to the natural world takes place in a place, and it must be grounded in information and experience” (qtd. in McClintock, 1994: 114). It highlights that one’s relationship to and interaction with place is very important to forge thought. In an interview, Snyder further emphasized, “it is a great extension of one’s awareness of place. You should really know what the complete natural world of your region is and know what the complete natural world you are interacting with it yourself. This is just part of the work of becoming who you are, where you are” (Snyder, 1980: 16). Snyder’s experiences thus clearly have a great impact on him. His enthusiasm for nature, his love for American Indian lore, his fascination with Chinese culture, and his allegiance to American wilderness are vital factors that shape his notion of space and place.

Mountains and Rivers Without End is quite literally a verbal landscape painting. It “is literally and figuratively framed by a meditative approach to a painting that in its own production was an artist’s meditative exercise” (Gonnerman, 2015: 6). Anthony Hunt comments that, “to read its pages poem by poem—either front to back or back to front—is to travel through thirty-nine sections with distinct settings and a strong sense of space” (Hunt, 2004: 27–28). It is an unusual poem full of space. The aesthetic relationship established by sound and song changes from one form to another based on comparisons of different measures: differences in size, structure, spatial distances, and timespans (Arnold, 2000: 133). Jody Norton comments on Snyder’s poetry as below:

Snyder's poetry incorporates, in addition to the Buddhist(non)conception of the Void, which constitutes its unstated ontological ground, numerous elements of the poetics and stylistic procedures of the shih poetry of T'ang Dynasty China and the Japanese haiku. Snyder combines these assumptions and practices with his own experience, imagination, and voice to compose a characteristic elliptical mode, whose aim is to make form not an extension, but an expression, of content. (Norton, 2000: 74)

This underscores the prominence of space in his thinking. For Fenollosa, poetry is a means of attaining knowledge (Yee, 1987: 245), and for Pound, the ideogrammic method is a compositional technique: a writer expresses a certain idea through an accumulation of particulars (243). One cannot easily conclude that Snyder would base the methods on the two predecessors. For Snyder, textual space is created to draw the reader "into an imaginative actualization of situations and events that have been minimally suggested by the selected, juxtaposed images of the text" (Norton, 2000: 45). In *MRWE*, many places present the textual space. He describes his idea of textual space between lines as follows:

The placement of the line on the page, the horizontal whitespaces and the vertical white spaces are all scorings or how it is to be read and how it is to be timed. Space means time. The marginal indentations are more an indication of voice emphasis, breath emphasis. (Snyder, 1980: 31)

Snyder's notion of collaboration de-emphasizes individual entities and instead focuses on relationships between them. The first lines of "Endless Streams and Mountains" suggest that the poem will be a collaborative experience:

Clearing the mind and sliding in
to that created space,
a web of waters streaming over rocks,
air misty but not raining,
seeing this land from a boat on a lake
or a broad slow river,
coasting by.

(Snyder, 2008: 5)

The “created space” here has two kinds of meaning. On one level, it refers to the space in the scroll, and on another, it refers to the space cleared in the mind as one gazes at the scroll. In this space, without pronouns, the identity of speaker, viewer, and reader are ambiguous. As is common in Snyder’s poetry, he always uses the present participle construction to demarcate the specific selfless in Chinese culture, which brings speaker, viewer, and reader into the landscape simultaneously (Tan, 2009: 57). Verbs such as “clearing,” “sliding,” “seeing,” and “coasting” could describe the actions that speaker, viewer, and reader could realize. Withholding the marks of a specific first-person’s narrative for several pages until after the scroll has been described—when “I walk out of the museum” (Snyder, 2008: 8) — Snyder blurs the distinction between the speaker of the poem and the reader. The first lines of the poem thus bring speaker and reader into collaboration with the landscape on the scroll, all within the cleared space—the emptiness—of “the mind” (Smith, 2000: 16). It emphasized the suitable ellipsis of subject “I,” which explains Snyder’s textual space. Similarly, “We Wash Our Bowls in This Water” is a poem about water, or rather about raw energy. In the beginning, it also uses multiple “-ing” forms to express its textual space:

A day on the ragged North Pacific coast get soaked by
whipping mist, rainsqualls tumbling, mountain mirror
ponds...high hanging glaciers... streams looping through the
tidflats, spume of brine, distant soft rain drooping from a
cloud.

(Snyder, 2008: 7)

The words “whipping,” “tumbling,” “hanging,” “looping,” and “drooping” emphasize the movement and the reader’s ears and eyes are assaulted by water. The second section of the poem, “Old Bones,” begins with hunting:

Out there walking round, looking for food,
A rootstock, a birdcall, a seed that you can crack
Plucking, digging, snaring, snagging,
barely getting by

(10)

Snyder is used to the absence of a lyric “I,” in order to realize the imaginativelatitude. The ambiguity of time, place, andcharacter is notable in the above lines. Although the pronoun “you” is used in the second line, what remains ambiguous is who takes all these actions such as “walking round” and “looking forfood.” However, “you” is in fact a hunter-gathererwho is not identified as“looking out for food.” As the narrator is “barely getting by,”finding “no food out there on dusty slopes of scree,” the narrator has to “go for a hungry dream” (10). This imagery evokes a fundamental aspect of samsaric existence: desire causesus to always feel hungry for something we cannot find (Smith, 2000: 22). “Hungry dream” can becomprehended as “Deer bone, Dall sheep. / bones hungerhome” (Snyder, 2008: 10). The last line “bones hunger home” consists of three nouns: bones, hunger,and home. These summarize the condition of the world: theworld is all bones and hunger but home. Home in this case is a state ofbeing rather than an object of desire. Snyder has speculated that hunting is related at adeep historical level to the deep meditative state realized in zazen — a state in whichdistinctions between subjects and objects fall away in a realization of emptiness(Smith, 2000: 23). The above analysis reveals that spaces are created both in theimagery and in the poem’s syntactical and structural chains, to make readers into animaginative actualization.

Snyder is also distinguished by “the influences of experience of actual landscapes and cities, mountains and rivers” (Gonnerman, 2015: 139). His poem is full of what is sometimes called “information,” but it is information that has become real knowledge,knowledge worn in by experience (150). The topographic space plays a very important part in shaping his interim thoughts about *MRWE*.In the poem “The Hump-backed Flute Player,” Snyder traces Chinese monk and traveller Hsuan Tsang’stravel from China across mountains ranges and deserts to the holy rivers of India:

the Pamir the Tarim Turfan
the Punjab the doab
of Ganga and Yamuna.
(Snyder, 2008: 79)

The flowing parts record Hsuan Tsang's journey from the Asian Amur to the North American Tanana and Mackenzie through Beringia:

Sweetwater, Quileute, Hoh
Amur, Tanana, Mackenzie, Old Man,
Big Horn, Platte, the San Juan
(79)

It is a long journey across geographical space from Asia to North America, across the topographic space that stretches from the earth to the stars, and across the emptiness that exists between our inner and outer worlds. Snyder's poem about space can appeal to many readers for a long time to come because the poet can make the "fusion of language and experience" and be "dependent as it is on consummate yet self-effacing verbal art and complete absorption in the world's particulars" (Gilbert, 1991: 208). When Snyder viewed the Chinese Landscape Scroll, he viewed mountains and rivers in landscape, as well as "little" persons, such as men in boats, persons in hills, riders, and walkers on the roads. The first poem, "Endless Streams and Mountains," opens as follows:

Clearing the mind and sliding in
to that created space,
a web of waters streaming over rocks,
air misty but not raining,
seeing this land from a boat on a lake
or a broad slow river,
coasting by.
(Snyder, 2008: 5)

In maps, the poet views the landscape across sections. It appears that the poet moves following the men in boats. Not until Snyder views and describe

landscapes and figures through imagination did he see the end of the landscape painting. Then his boat floats off the page:

Hills beyond rivers, willows in a swamp,
a gentle valley reaching far inland.

The watching boat has floating off the page
(6)

Despite viewing the landscape painting, both the painting and poem have not ended. As the Chinese painting has the tradition of colophons, Snyder chooses five “rather mundane comments” (Hunt, 1999:31) as his own poem-colophons, and he also makes a colophon at the end of the poem himself:

Old ghost ranges, sunken rivers, come again
stand by the wall and tell their tale,
walk the path, sit the rains,
grind the ink, wet the brush, unroll the
broad white space:

lead out and tip
the moist black line.
Walking on walking,
under foot earth turns.

Streams and mountains never stay the same.
(Snyder, 2008: 9)

Anthony Hunt discovered that the Chinese landscape significantly influenced the formation of *MRWE*. He thought of this book as “quiet literally, an extended verbal landscape painting,” and all these thirty-nine poems “appear as an interconnected extension of that horizontal turning” (Hunt, 1999:7). Furthermore, he noted that Snyder’s collection of poems echoed Chinese landscape in Cleveland Art Museum; each poem in every

part can be analyzed and enjoyed independently, and its structure can be divided into several parts. Overall, it extends a sense of topographic space in maps. The last poem “Finding the Space in the Heart” also uses the same image of a brush as follows:

Walking on walking,
under foot earth turns

Streams and mountains never stay the same.

The space goes on.
But the wet black brush
tip drawn to a point,
lifts away.

(Snyder, 2008: 152)

Anthony notes that the closure of the long poem *MRWE* “flattens out geographically into the horizontal space of a Great Basin playa and drops off in poetic intensity, just as surely as the last section of the Cleveland scroll levels out visually” (Hunt, 1999: 17). We can apparently see the opening and closure of this work — “brush / space / walking” becomes “walking / space / brush. The different ways in which the landscape unfurls across places is a finite representation of infinite natural process.

Most poems of *MRWE* refer to waters, rivers, hills, and mountains crisscrossing East and West. They open out to great space, with the rock formations, plants, and trees, river and stream systems flowing through magically realistic spatial transitions. Snyder appears to walk into the spaces in the landscape painting, even into spaces further than that of the painting, as those poems are a reminder of the vivid world of clear water, patient rocks, intensely focused trees, lively coiling clouds, and mists in places on maps.

In his essay, “The Place, the Region, and the Commons,” Snyder quoted Dogen’s famous sentence, “when you find your place, where you are, practice occurs” (qtd. in Snyder, 1990: 27). It skillfully pinpoints Snyder’s own understanding of place

and the important status of place in one's life. Furthermore, in the essay, he makes an analogy that a place like a mirror can hold anything on any scale. In his view, "place is an experience" (29) and "each place is its own place, forever (eventually) wild. A place on earth is a mosaic within larger mosaics — the land is all small places, all precise tiny realms replicating larger and smaller patterns" (29). With his idea of place, the long poem *MRWE* penetrates large parts of places he has visited or heard of in his life; in fact, it is a life of practice exactly like his place as an experience.

2.2.1. Kitkitdizze: Node of the Bioregion

The term "bioregionalism" was first coined by Allen Van Newkirk in 1974 in an essay entitled "Bioregions: Towards Bioregional Strategy for Human Culture". Though the word was popularized by Peter Berg and Raymond Dasmann in the mid-1970s, it seems to have been circulated within a community of persons engaged with the regionalist environmental movement. In 1981, bioregionalist Jim Dodge offered the first concise explanation of a bioregional view:

the importance placed on natural systems as a reference for human agency, reliance on an anarchic structure of governance based on interdependence of self-reliant and federated communities, and rediscovery of connections between the natural world and the human mind. (qtd. in McGinnis, 1999: 25)

In 1985, Kirkpatrick Sale published his *Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Vision*, the first book exploring the subject of bioregionalism. *Home! A Bioregional Reader*, the first anthology edited by Christopher Plant and Judith Plant appeared in 1990. In order to comprehend bioregionalism, we may ask at first what a bioregion is. Bioregions underline natural boundaries and emphasize the role of human subjectivity. While Sale prefers natural boundaries, Donald Alexander believes that bioregions cannot be defined by natural boundaries. Sale defines a bioregion as "a life-territory, a place defined by its life forms, its topography and its biota, rather than by human dictates; a region governed by nature, not legislature" (Sale, 1985: 43). In contrast to Sale, Alexander, underscoring that regions are continuously connected to other regions, states that

“the boundaries of a watershed can be objectively determined, but watersheds are nested within watersheds. Thus, human subjectivity plays an important role in determining which level of aggregation is meaningful” (Alexander, 1990: 12). It is not easy to find an intersection between Sale’s viewpoint and Alexander’s. We may consider, however, Berg and Dasmann’s suggestion that “the final boundaries of a bioregion are best described by the people who have lived within it” (qtd. in Alexander, 1990: 168). Although Alexander quotes Berg and Dasmann to emphasize the role of human subjectivity, the quoted statement implies that we may see Berg and Dasmann’s “people” as the people-in-the region. In other words, the attempt to describe a bioregion should result from the belief that human subjectivity cannot be separated from a region. Christopher Plant and Judith Plant sketch out a general shape of bioregionalism:

Bioregionalism calls for human society to be more closely related to nature (hence, bioregionalism), and to be more conscious of its locale, or region, or lifeplace (therefore, region). . . . [B]ioregionalism is essentially a recognition that, today, we flounder without an adequate overall philosophy of life to guide our action toward a sane alternative. It is a proposal to ground human cultures within natural systems, to get to know one's place intimately in order to fit human communities to the Earth, not distort the Earth to our demands. (Plant and Plant, 2008: 2)

This passage contains three keys for understanding bioregionalism. First, bioregionalism is concerned with a principle of what our life should be; we should elevate our consciousness from ignorance to awareness of nature through interest in specific places where we live. Second, the passage diagnoses the environmental degradation of our present reality and implies that bioregionalism is a philosophy to protect our cultural and natural environments simultaneously. Third, the passage suggests that the philosophy of bioregionalism would fit humans to natural objects. These three factors can be integrated into the statement that bioregionalism is, in Christopher McGrory Klyza’s terms, “a philosophy of living that stresses harmony with nature and the integration of humans as part of the natural ecosystem” (Klyza, 1994: 92).

As quoted above, Jim Dodge offers three elements composing bioregionalism. The first element is the mutual integration of the physical and the spiritual. Dodge argues that “a central element of bioregionalism is the importance given to natural systems, both as the source of physical nutrition and as the body of metaphors from which our spirits draw sustenance” (qtd. in McGinnis, 1999: 25). To grasp the importance of natural systems is to construct a prerequisite that we should understand a natural system. According to Dodge, “a natural system is a community of interdependent life, a mutual biological integration on the order of an ecosystem, for example” (25). The first element of bioregionalism that Dodge provides, therefore, is to understand humans and nonhumans as the mutually constitutive actors of composing a community. It is impossible to locate humans independently of nonhumans without any consideration of mutual interaction. Dodge believes that the health of natural systems directly results in the health of humans. The second element of bioregionalism given by Dodge is “anarchy” (28). Dodge refuses the traditional political conceptions of anarchy. “Anarchy,” according to Dodge, “doesn't mean out of control; it means out of their control” (28). He goes on to suggest the meaning of anarchy:

Anarchy is based upon a sense of interdependent self-reliance, the conviction that we as a community, or a tight, small-scale federation of communities, can mind our own business, and can make decisions regarding our individual and communal lives and gladly accept the responsibilities and consequences of those decisions. (28-29)

Dodge implies in this passage that the process of decisionmaking should be practiced at a local level without resorting to the system of bureaucratic hierarchies. What is significant in Dodge's notion of anarchy is that the process of decision-making is not humans' own business but the task in which both humans and nonhumans should be equally benefitted by the decision-making. We humans thus should act in accordance with natural systems because our decision-making influences not only our own everyday lives but also the existence of nonhumans as communal members. Dodge contends that the third element composing bioregionalism is “spirit” (29). He does not limit his view of spirit to a religious conception. What he means by the word spirit is “a profound regard for life--all

life” (29). Dodge apparently refuses to accept the culturally enforced dichotomy between humans and nonhumans and between the spiritual and the practical. He believes that “there is a connection--even a necessary unity--between the natural and the human mind” (30). Dodge’s thought of interdependent connection is based on his faith in the importance of cultural and natural diversity. Dodge’s sense of bioregional spirit seems not to be fixed to a single culture or a single natural phenomenon; that is, his sense of bioregional spirit results from his respect for all cultures and all natural entities. It may be necessary, here, to emphasize that Dodge’s theory of bioregionalism requires a thorough awareness of place. His conception of bioregional spirit, for example, presupposes that natural and cultural phenomena are taking place in places. Thus, to know a place may be to know natural diversity, which in turn becomes a better path to grasp the specific place. “To know the spirit of a place,” Gary Snyder aptly points out, “is to realize that you are a part of a part and that the whole is made of parts, each of which is whole” (Snyder, 1990: 38). Just as a human individual is a part of the cultural community and at the same time the individual itself is whole, so a place is a part of the whole natural system and at the same time it itself is whole. It should be noticed that we cannot presume that a human individual can exist without a place. Bioregionalism speaks of this inevitable human situation and proposes that our society will benefit only when our conscious relationship to a specific place is improved. The features of bioregionalism described Christopher Plant, Judith Plant and Jim Dodge give access to the possibility of a habitable self, since the features underscore a human individual’s mutable relationship to a particular place. Thus, bioregionalism tends to resist the modernist totalization that stresses an essentialized self.

Gary Snyder’s granite house in the foothills of Sierra Nevada is called Kitkitdizze, suggesting that his local bioregion is a distinct part of the vast, single, whole of Indra’s net. Snyder returned to Northern California late in 1968 and with family and friends, migrated to the San Juan Ridge where he began to build Kitkitdizze. Snyder allowed it to become a wild terrain to the extent possible, and considered it as a practice-realization place or an energy-flowing workplace of family love,

Buddhist compassion, and eternal delight (Tan, 2009: 17). In an essay that describes the initial work of organizing his life on the Ridge—the land was ritually opened on June 19, 1969—Snyder indicates the fundamental importance of his library for his life and craft. He set up his library and wrote poems and essays by lantern light, and then went out periodically, lecturing and teaching around the country. He thought of his home as a well-concealed base camp from which he raided university treasuries, explaining the following: “we named our place Kitkitdizze, after the aromatic little shrub” (Snyder, 2003: 233).

Snyder’s poem “The Blue Sky” written in 1968 expresses his intention for setting up his home in American Southwest. Three years later, he published another poem “The Hump-backed Flute Player” to emphasize his bioregional thinking. Based on history and wilderness, home was defined as a natural world of plants, animals, and land to which archaic people were bound (Oelschlaeger, 1992: 14). Both poems embodied Snyder’s strong sense of regional landscape and indicated a feeling of his settling in to the Great Basin of the American Southwest. In an interview, Snyder says that he was “dealing from, not with, the West Coast and the Great Basin so that locality is very important to me as far as the specifics go, but the specifics do get translated also into an interior landscape” (Snyder, 1971:6–7). Nevertheless, he reemphasized that the power of region was very important. The smaller and more deeply noted the region, the better it was. Both “The Blue Sky” and “The Hump-backed Flute Player” conveys Snyder’s bioregional thinking. “The Blue Sky” is an exploration of some of the lore of healing as found in Mahayana Buddhism and in Native North America. The poem moves towards cross geographic cultures to express the Master of Healing:

Bhaishajyaguru
Yao-Shih Fo
Yakushi Nyorai,
“Old Man Medicine Buddha”
(Snyder, 2008: 43)

Bhaishajyaguru is Sanskrit, Yao-Shi Fo is Chinese, Yakushi Nyorai is Japanese, and Old Man Medicine Buddha is Snyder's merger of the Native American Coyote Old Man with the Buddha. It clearly conveys Snyder's intention to return to his own place or home. The last several lines present Snyder's "geological rhythms" (qtd. in Tan, 2009: 59):

The blue sky
the blue sky.
The blue sky
is the land of
OLD MAN MEDICINE BUDDHA.
(Snyder, 2008: 44)

It reveals that the knowledge of specific places leads to a good understanding of a large whole. The word "blue" is powerful here because of "the ancient lore of the protective and healing powers of the color blue and of certain blue stones" (160). It is easy to associate Snyder's home Kitkitdizze made of granite. "The Hump-backed Flute Player" takes us from Asia to North America in geography similar to "The Blue Sky." Further, to explain his sense of particular place, Snyder composed an essay "Kitkitdizze: A Node in the Net" about his home. The node in the net is the relationship of the singularity to the university, or the local to the regional: "Lessons learned in the landscape apply to our own lands, too. So this is what my family and I are borrowing from the watershed work as our own Three-Hundred-Year Kitkitdizze Plan" (Snyder, 2003: 237).

The responsibility for such long-range planning is necessitated, Snyder argues here, by the recognition that "my home base, Kitkitdizze, is but one tiny node in an evolving net of bioregional homesteads and camps" (237). This net can be understood quite fruitfully as a mandala, in which Snyder is referring both to the physical world-space of various homesteads and community-based organizations and to sacred space. Each of these homesteads and camps reflects upon the others, and each is participating in the practice of realization and mutually reinforcing others. As Robertson contends, "we can then consider a bioregion as a unit of

space where, by locating ourselves there, we place ourselves in a physical, mental, and spiritual relationship with the whole. At the moment that relationship is felt, not just grasped with the intellect, the moment it is realized, not merely postulated, bioregional will become sacred space” (Robertson, 1984: 1022).

2.2.2. Urban Cities and Backcountries

Snyder says, “the world is places” (Snyder, 1990: 25). Urban cities are certainly places as well according to this understanding. In *MRWE*, the names of urban cities worldwide are listed in the poems. Snyder displays cities crisscrossing East and West, which plays an important role in conveying his life experiences. Particularly, two city poems “Night Song of the Los Angeles Basin” and “Walking the New York Bedrock” concentrate on the wilderness to be found within the heart of the megalopolis. The urban city landscape signaled a broadening place of Snyder’s focus.

Through its opening lines “Heart of the city/ down town/ the country side” (Snyder, 2008: 47), “The Market” inserts the countryside into the very heart of the city from Snyder’s native places San Francisco (America) and Seattle (America) to eastern cities such as Saigon (Vietnam), Kathmandu (Nepal), and Varanasi (India). Each city is naturally divided into a separate subsection without absolute independence. With reference to a market-oriented economy:

“The Market” may be seen as an ironic diatribe against the capitalistic market economics that pervades modern life. In particular, it is emphasized that it causes the wealth gap that leads to poverty. The opening subsection “San Francisco” indicates that John Muir accompanies Gary on a market trip. The second subsection of “Seattle” emphasizes the importance of the food chain: to drink high-quality creamy milk, one must begin with animals, manure, confusion, and darkness. (Hunt, 2004: 114)

These thematic conceptions are embedded in other subsections of “The Market” and throughout *MRWE*. The following subsections cannot be separated from Snyder’s own experiences, as they are composed with his feelings. From

December 1961 to May 1962, Snyder visited Vietnam, which he described as follows:

Coasting South Vietnam—come into muddy waters, the smell from ashore—go in a bay and up the river French bread everywhere, right along with funny-looking broiled animal innards, fruits and kinds of fish and vegetables which knowing the name wouldn't help you....for a very rare truck going through with soldiers in jungle outfits, but no weapons visible....Government of South Vietnam is bunch of catholic elite westernized prudesanyhow, completely out of touch with "the people."
(Snyder, 1983:5–6)

Snyder thus strongly criticizes the values and nature of the market system by attaching importance to the specifics of urban cities. The subsection "Saigon" reflects what he saw during his trip:

Papayas banana sliced fish grated ginger
fruit for fish, meat for flowers
french bread for ladle.
(Snyder, 2008:48)

Despite having enough fruit, fish, and French bread, the common people continue to live in "valley thatch houses / palmgroves for hedges" (48). The subsection of "Saigon" ends with "changes,how much / is our change," (48) which describes not only the coins left over in his hand after a purchase, but also a powerful force in the marketplace. The subsection of "Kathmandu" is a meditation on the concept of value: "was it worth it? / How can I tell" (50). The description of the short trip to Nepal is three pages long in the journal, but the reference to Kathmandu's market is brief:

The market, early morning, in the open on the stoneflagged square: young men bring in enormous loads of firewood on their backs to sell; they are barelegged and barefoot, though the hills around town and right down to our level almost are covered with snow....Cracked barefeet, calloused thick stubby toes. (Snyder, 1983: 44)

Snyder bought an orange that was so bright and juicy looking, but turned out to be bitter and all seed. It became a symbol for his hate for modern cities again. The following indicates the irony:

Seventy-five feet hoed rows equals
one hour explaining power steering
equals two big crayfish =
all the buttermilk you can drink
= twelve pounds cauliflower
= five cartons greek olives = hitchhiking
From Ogden Utah to Burns Oregon
= aspirin, iodine and bandages
= a lay in Naples = beef.
(Snyder, 2008: 49)

In the subsection of “Kathmandu,” Snyder is interested in the global market. With greed, need, and desire at the root of human existence, the “market” becomes the symbolic locus of our fundamental nature.

& wash down hose off aisles
reach under fruit stands
green gross rack
meat scum on chop blocks
old knives sharpened down to scalpels
brown wrap paper rolls, stiff
push-broom back
wet spilled food
when the market is closed
the cleanup comes
equals
a billygoat pushing through people
stinking and grabbing a cabbage.
(50)

The final subsection “Varanasi” describes food and health. According to Snyder, India was not comfortable, nor was the food really good enough to remain healthy in the long-term. The following lines conclude “Varanasi”:

They eat feces
in the dark
on stone floors
one-legged monkeys, hopping cows
limping dogs blind cats
crunching garbage in the market
broken fingers
cabbage
head on the ground.
(51)

Snyder’s description of urban cities describe visible places full of human activities, and mountains and rivers are not merely physical elements. As Snyder walks through the West and the East, backcountries are important parts that cannot be neglected. In his poems, he highlights the backcountries that impressed him deeply. Backcountries are natural places far away from cities that provide fresh air and water. Backcountries are associated with two types of meanings: from the physical aspect, it means the real places far away urban cities, and from the spiritual aspect, it refers to the imagined places or ideal places coming from his insight. In *MRWE*, backcountries penetrate the entire text, and the poem “The Flowing” is a typical example. “The Flowing” was divided into four parts: watershed, riverbed, floods, and mouth. As the last line of “Journeys” with “this the way to the back country” (56), Snyder has associated the “backcountry” of the wilderness with the depths of the mind accessible through meditation. In the article “The Words Nature, Wild, and Wilderness,” Snyder writes, “the depths of the mind, the unconscious are our inner wilderness areas” (Snyder, 1990: 16). As a result, to follow “the way” in the “back country” for Snyder means to explore one’s consciousness with meditation and to realize that

one's own mind is part of the "original mind" connected to all other beings. From the whole, "The Flowing" explores the interpenetration of the self and the other in the back countries. The first part "Headwaters" emphasizes that the headwater came from the "dragon-mouth jet" near Fudo. In the poem, Fudo as the "Lord of the Headwaters" is "making Rocks of water, Water out of rocks" (Snyder, 2008:68). In *The Practice of the Wild*, Fudo and Kannon were presented as a dyad:

Mountains have mythic associations of verticality, spirit, height, transcendence, hardness, resistance, and masculinity. For the Chinese they are exemplars of the "yang": dry, hard, male, and bright. Waters are feminine: wet, soft, dark "yin" with associations of fluid-but-strong, seeking the lowest, soulful, life-giving, shape-shifting.... Mountains and waters are a dyad that together makes wholeness possible: wisdom and compassion are the two components of realization. (Snyder, 1990:101)

Hence, the "headwaters" indicate a sense of "walking on walking," or walking from place to place along rivers over back countries. It appears that the waters and mountains of back countries have ascetic discipline and relentless spirituality balanced by compassionate tolerance and detached forgiveness. "Riverbed" focuses on the people who live on the banks of the river and think of the urban country as their home. "The riverbed depicted here is a place for the unfettered life traditionally associated with gypsies," Hunt says, "those whose dancing wives and clownish children happily accept impermanence, those whose 'rags and tatters' signify that the commodities of the material world are of lesser importance than their attitude toward living" (Hunt, 2004: 141). The following excerpt depicts this:

At Celilo all the Yakima
Wasco, Wishram, Warmspring,
catching salmon, talking,
napping scattered through the rocks.
(Snyder, 2008: 69)

It is emphasized that other native American tribes, such as gypsies, consider this locale as their home. Urban countries, to Snyder, appear to be a spiritual place that

can clear one's mind and make one's life comfortable. It retains old traditional customs that strengthen people's sense of place or of region. The third part of the poem "Falls" is inspired by the leap of the Yosemite River. The Yosemite River flows out from the base of the Yosemite Falls, which appears beautiful and spectacular from the center cities. It is a place that Snyder pursues because of his magical sense of wilderness. In *West of Eden*, David Robertson quotes Snyder's saying describing Yosemite Falls as follows:

I meditated by the falls from different angles. I had just finished writing a poem about the water cycle in the Sierra Nevada, so I was full of thinking in those metaphors. And so the poem just came. I was moved very deeply to actually pray somehow by being there. (Robertson, 1984:160–61)

It proved Snyder's idea of "talking about place as an experience" (Snyder, 1990: 25) again. In this part, it describes that the natural freedom of the wild is merged into the river's total abandon, as it says "lets it all go" (Snyder, 2008:69). Throughout the river's journey, it appears that the water cycle is of no practical use without mountains. In other words, waters cannot be separate from mountains, and mountains cannot exist alone without waters, which presents his backcountry step by step. The water cycle remains functional with the assistance of partner mountains:

Sierra Nevada
could lift the heart so high
fault block uplift
thrust of westward slipping crust—one way
to raise and swing the clouds around—
thus pine trees leapfrog up on sunlight
trapped in cells of leaf — nutrient minerals called together
like a magic song
to lead a cedar log along, that hopes
to get to sea at last and be
a great canoe.
(70)

These heights engender water, allowing waters and rocks to be considered as a dyad. It further intensifies the natural freedom of back countries. For Snyder, his sense of back countries is explained by the cycle of waters and mountains. “Rivermouth” focuses on a rebirth through a metaphor whereby Snyder makes love to the River Goddess. It is his ideal place in spiritual world through his imagination for physical world. The interpenetration of the self and the other is apparent. Furthermore, it highlights the relationship between humans and nature through back countries. In effect, water has offered a way of understanding the economy and values of nature:

Throughout history, the water cycle has served humans as a model of natural world. Early civilizations saw in it a figure of the basic pattern of life, the cycle of birth, death, and return to the source of being. More recently...the movement of water in an unending, undiminished loop can stand as a model for understanding the entire economy of nature. (Worster, 1988: 57)

Within the back countries, Aldo Leopold made the principles of the economy clear and vivid. He suggested that nature is a “round river” similar to a stream flowing into itself, going round and round in an unceasing circuit, through all the soils, the flora, and the fauna of earth (58). By focusing on the river and its surroundings, Snyder conveys what ecology did in the back countries and reemphasizes the status of places around rivers, particularly the places far from centercities. “Haida Gwai North Coast” and “Raven’s Beak River” set in the Pacific Northwest then have obvious links with the poem “Afloat” set in Glacier Bay, which as well discussed his sense of back countries along rivers and mountains.

Snyder’s sense of place in *MRWE* is thus entirely revealed from kitkitdizze to urban cities and then to back countries. He made his home one tiny node in an evolving net of bioregional homesteads and camps, emphasized his sense of place and people from authentic experience with regard to urban cities, and eulogized picturesque landscape in nature that calls for protectiveness with regard to backcountries. Furthermore, it is only in wilderness that the world can be preserved.

CHAPTER THREE: W. S. MERWIN'S ECOLOGICAL WISDOM

As previously stated, the second half of the twentieth century witnessed a renaissance of American poetry that underlines human beings' connections to the natural world. Poets like Gary Snyder, Wendell Berry, Robert Pack, Adrienne Rich, W. S. Merwin and others have written many volumes of poetry exploring the ways that humans interact with nature. For these poets, nature is not treated as a background for human convenience but as a self-contained system that exists independently from human beings. Most of these nature poets are also environmental poets who hold considerable esteem among the reading public and have gained far-ranging recognition. This chapter focuses on the poetics of the contemporary American poet W. S. Merwin, whose poetry has demonstrated sensitivity to ecological thinking, especially in the aspects of the equality of human beings and non-human beings, the interdependency of all organisms within an ecosystem.

W. S. Merwin was born to a Presbyterian family in New York City in 1927. He spent most of his childhood in Union City, New Jersey, and in Scranton, Pennsylvania. In 1947, Merwin studied English at Princeton University. During his stay in Princeton, he was fortunate enough to receive instruction from critics Richard Palmer Blackmur and advice from Ezra Pound. Merwin began his poetic career in the 1950s: three books published during the 50s, three during the 60s, five during the 70s, four during the 80s, six during the 90s, and two in the new century. In addition, he has produced more than twenty books of translations and prose.

After graduating from Princeton, Merwin worked as a tutor in France, Portugal, and Majorca, teaching Robert Graves's son in Majorca and the children of the Princess de Braganza in Portugal in the 1950s. He then lived in London and in southwestern France, where he bought and renovated a small farmhouse. During this time, he produced plays and also translations of Spanish and French plays and poetry, often for broadcast on BBC television. In 1956 and 1957 he was playwright-in-residence for the Poet's Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In

the late 1950s he wrote poetry and book reviews for *The New York Times* and *The Nation*. By this time his understanding of environmental and nuclear catastrophes found expression in prose. In the early 1960s Merwin returned to New York City.

Merwin has earned steady positive recognition and encouragement from the public. As a man of strong character, he is not interested in making critical statements on the art of contemporary poetry; in addition, he seldom reads literary reviews and avoids being grouped into any particular school of poetics. Neal Bowers comments that “if Merwin defies classification, it is because we have failed to view him from the right distance, through a lens only recently available to us in this waning century” (Bowers, 1990: 246). Merwin has always been hard to locate. He himself refuses such tags as “surrealist,” “beat generation,” or “deep imagist.” However, the poet quite enjoys being called an environmentalist. From his earliest writings, Merwin has demonstrated his ecological consciousness and nature is always his persistent theme.

3.1. A Challenge to Anthropocentrism: Animals in Merwin’s Ecopoetry

The concern for ecological crisis spurs Merwin to probe into the ultimate causes of ecological crisis: anthropocentrism. Posing a challenge to traditional anthropocentrism, Merwin takes a strategy consisting of two steps to deconstruct it. The first step is to disintegrate human-centered ideology by criticizing the moral superiority of humans to non-human beings. This includes affirming the moral status of animals in his poetry. The second step is to assert the intrinsic value and interrelatedness of all beings.

Anthropocentrism, holding human beings as rulers of the world, is considered a worldview of human chauvinism and acknowledgement of human ontological boundaries. Its related implications have strongly influenced the formation of human ideologies and the ways in which humans comprehend their relationships with non-human beings, nature, and the whole ecological system. According to the anthropocentric standpoint, the individual, cultural, and technological skills that are supposed to belong to humans alone are among the attributes that make

our species. These qualities empower humans to a degree that non-human beings have never achieved during the history of life on Earth and establish man's brilliant status as the most successful species in the universe. The anthropocentric viewpoint contains an additional implication that humans, standing at the acme of the natural evolutionary progress of all species, have greater intrinsic value than non-human beings. This view affects ethical judgments about interactions with other organisms, while at the same time are used to legitimate treating other species in ruthless and brutal ways.

Many writers have found in biblical injunctions about man's right to master the earth an essential source for the devastation brought by Western society upon the earth. This viewpoint was originally stated by the famous historian Lynn White, Jr., whose short but explosive essay *The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis* explores the historical roots of our environmental disaster and lays the blame for the forthcoming ecological crisis firmly at the feet of Christianity. White draws the conclusion that it is Judeo-Christian thinking that provides human beings with the original motivation to exploit nature without limit. According to White, the Judeo-Christian notion that humans are created in the image of God radically separates humans from nature. He argues that "since God had made nature, nature also must reveal the divine mentality," and nature is nothing but a "symbolic system through which God speaks to men" (White, 1996: 11). White expounds the theme that the arrogance of stewardship in the Bible consists in the idea of the superiority of human beings. His article offers a religious basis for deep ecological advocacy and has long been considered a watershed in religious thinking regarding the environment.

The Judeo-Christian tradition of anthropocentrism has long exercised a predominant influence on the ideologies of Western people over the centuries. In addition, in the history of Western philosophy, the anthropocentric argument that human beings are primary and central in the order of things has dominated Western philosophy for over two thousand years. According to the philosophical corollary, human beings are destined to be the only subjects of moral

consideration, or at least should be considered first in moral calculations. The pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Protagoras expresses his view of the position of human beings: “Man is the measure of all things, of things that are that they are, and of things that are not that they are not” (qtd. in Russel, 2004: 283). Protagoras’ words are considered as the awakening of the subjective sense of the ancient Greeks; however, it also expresses an anthropocentric perspective that regards human beings as superior to all other beings.

The Greeks developed a way of understanding the world that dominated Western thinking for over two millennia to the present day. The world was conceived by them to be “an orderly system in which everything has its proper place and function. A central feature of this conception was the idea that everything in nature exists for a purpose” (Rachels, 1997: 33). From Plato and Aristotle to Francis Bacon, René Descartes, and Immanuel Kant, most of the classical Western philosophers have stressed the super-position of human beings and called upon multiple capacities of human beings, including language, reason, logic, and self-awareness, to distinguish human beings from nature and thus elevate human beings above the other-than-human beings. In an address delivered in 1911, the American-European philosopher George Santayana claimed that since the time of Socrates, the Western philosophical systems could be considered as “egotistical (...) anthropocentric, and inspired by the conceited notion that man, or human reason, or the human distinction between good and evil, is the center and the pivot of the universe” (Santayana, 1926: 214).

While the ideology of anthropocentrism has always dominated Western philosophy, it has also encountered dissent and public denunciation from environmental ethicists in recent decades. Anthropocentrism has been seen as the major concept in its field and has been considered the root of the problems created by human interaction with the environment. Since the early 1970s, a great number of environmental ethicists have written influential articles and books to criticize anthropocentrism from diverse perspectives.

Merwin's denunciation of anthropocentrism can be traced in his early writings. In his essay *On the Bestial Floor*, Merwin generalizes that all his first four books are about man, "the same who once heard his deity exhort him to be 'fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth'" (Merwin, 1987: 205–206). Merwin holds the view that though now man's "convenience alone is not taken as ample justification for his manipulations and erasures of other species, it is his intelligence, or some aspect of it, that is held up most regularly as the great exoneration" (206), man's intelligence is the property that gives him superiority over other creatures. While, on the contrary, the animals "will not have appreciated, either, that it is this same faculty of intelligence that has given man the power of life and death over his own species, thus relegating him to a position which until now he and his gods had reserved for beasts devoid of reason" (206). Merwin deplores that human's power over other beings has become his dominion over himself and that he will eventually take "the route of the departed divinity" (206).

Merwin is deeply aware of the perniciousness of anthropocentrism. In the essay *Notes for a Preface*, he declares that "among my peculiar failings is an inability to believe that the experience of being human, that gave rise to the arts in the first place, can continue to be nourished in a world contrived and populated by nothing but humans" (Merwin, 1987: 271). Merwin compares humans to "an emergent and epidemic species which scorns all life except its own withering existence" (272). In his poems, he often expresses his attitudes toward this emergent and epidemic species through moral indictment.

In "The Robin" from *The Compass Flower*, "the robin invented / the day / in order to escape from the owl"; while human beings "killed cock robin" (Merwin, 1977: 16):

The robin
entered the next world
when the world he knew was utterly destroyed

many worlds before ours
and he invented the day
for a new reason
and again we survived
we survivors
without knowing why.
(Merwin, 1977: 16)

Robin is depicted as the creator in this poem, to whom human beings bear no gratitude. On the contrary, they mercilessly killed the robin and destroyed his world. Merwin deplores the fact that although we human beings survive, we never know why we are still able to dwell on the earth.

In his memoir *Summer Doorways*, Merwin talks about his experience of killing a groundhog and his remorse for doing so. It was in Merwin's last year in college, "as a gesture of liberation from such prohibitions" (Merwin, 2005: 103), that he bought himself a target rifle and went to a ravine in the woods, where he killed a groundhog. When Merwin saw the dead groundhog lying on its back, one paw in the air, he felt disgusted at what he had done; "I stood looking down at the body already receding in death, and wanted to ask its pardon, and felt ridiculous about that and its uselessness, and the shame burned into me" (Merwin, 2005: 104). Merwin's repentance for his foul murder may remind the readers of Aldo Leopold's essay *Thinking like a Mountain* in which Leopold recounts a day he saw a wolf die under their guns:

When our rifles were empty, the old wolf was down, and a pup was dragging a leg into impassable slide-rocks. We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes—something known only to her and to the mountain.... I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters' paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view. (Leopold, 1989: 130)

Both writers feel similar regret for their arbitrary deprivation of the animals' lives. It is an undeniable fact that for species-centric human beings, the existence of

animals is to serve humans. Humans have already taken their deeds of killing animals for granted, having no sympathy or remorse. In “Toro,” Merwin indicts humans for slaughtering creatures to meet their own ends. The men in the poem are scared of the darkness. In order to overcome this fear, they concoct a ritual in which the bull is ceremonially murdered. After the brutal ceremony, the men proudly proclaim, “Now we are all together / And seem brave in the light, let the challenging shadow / Show itself among us; now, that we may shame it, / Let there be dark” (Merwin, 1977: 42). Giving no opinion on humans’ fear of the dark, Merwin asserts that this ritual of depriving the “toro” of life is just a stylized encounter which will never solve the problem of fear.

Many of Merwin’s poems demonstrate non-anthropocentric views. Just as the environmental ethicists have posed a challenge to traditional anthropocentrism, Merwin employs his poetry on animals to disintegrate the human-centered ideology. The fact that human beings create their gods in their own image reveals the fundamental view of anthropocentrism. Western philosophers conceive the position of human beings as “a middle station between animality and divinity” and maintain that “of all earthly beings, human beings are closest to the gods” (Steiner, 2005: 1). Therefore, it is not surprising for us to hear Kant’s anthropocentric dictum that human beings are lords of nature and that nature exists only for humans’ sake. It is also normal that many anthropocentric thinkers assert that animals are created definitely for the sake of human beings. Anthropocentric arguments on animals have long existed in Western philosophy:

These arguments have their roots in Aristotle, and particularly in the thought of the Stoics, Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, and Kant. These philosophers’ views about animals are linked by an underlying logic: that all and only human beings are worthy of moral consideration...[while] As nonrational beings, animals are due less moral consideration than human beings, and on some accounts animals are due no moral consideration whatsoever. (1)

It is this honor of the “lord of nature” that leads to our common sense of animals and entitles human beings to exercise their privilege of exploiting nature and treat animals cruelly. On the contrary, most environmentalists are inclined to agree

with our ancient ties with the natural beings. The word “animal” comes from Latin *anima* ‘soul’. To ancient thinkers, the soul was the mysterious force that gave life and breath to all the creatures of the earth. From prehistoric caves containing tremendous paintings of animals such as horses, deer, and oxen and the totems crafted by native peoples which served as an emblem of their clan, to the Chinese calendar, in which each year is symbolized by an animal, animal imagery has been created in all times and places in human culture.

Holding the archaic values of the earth, the magic of the animals, and the love of natural beings, Merwin maintains no anthropocentric ideas. On the contrary, during his lifetime, he has always tried to get along well with the animals surrounding him. In his memoir *Summer Doorways*, Merwin depicts his life in his early twenties, living with his student Peter in Deer Park. Both of them were “fascinated by wild creatures of every kind” and wanted to “watch them, to learn about them, not to intrude upon them” (Merwin, 2005: 75). They read many books about animals and old copies of *National Geographic*. They even tried to raise the animals they were observing, “water striders, dragonflies, other water insects, small water snakes, more turtles, newts, salamanders” (77). Merwin and Peter made a rule “not to keep anything in captivity for more than ten days...We knew that in the long run we could not provide them with what they needed, and that they were bound to suffer, and perhaps not survive, as a result.” This fascination with animal life is to Merwin “a thread running through our days” (77). Expressing himself distinctively in the midst of a predominantly anthropocentric tradition, he has always endeavored to prove his non-anthropocentric beliefs by depicting the moral status of animals in his poetry.

In May and June of 1954, the BBC Third Programme broadcast *Physiologus*, a selection of fourteen animal poems Merwin had been writing since early 1953, with the fifteenth poem “Bear” excluded from the final script due to time limitations. Two years later, Merwin composed brief prose-like pieces on each of the poems in *Physiologus* and entitled this mixture of prose pieces *The Ark of Silence*. The epilogue of the book concludes as below:

Maybe everything that we cannot understand and cannot speak to us is ourselves.
Our delight and our shame and our necessity. They [animals] make us wonder.
When we wonder and have no words we seem closer to them, and yet farther away.
Because they know all that they need to know. But in the end, we say, they are not
ourselves. They are everywhere. The world turns through their breath. You can hear
them in your sleep. The night is full of their eyes. They never ask why. (qtd. in
Brunner, 1991: 49– 50)

The title itself, *The Ark of Silence*, implies much: the earth is actually a huge ark
on which all the beings—human beings and animals—dwell. These animals
represent the marvelous abundance of the natural world. However, being a realm
of silence, this world is beyond human comprehension because the animals are
mute. Compared with humans who always say too much, the animals never say
any word, never ask why; but they know all that they need to know. Merwin ranks
the animals on a much higher status, endowing mysterious deity on them.

One peculiar feature of Merwin’s creatures in *Physiologus* is their divinity. In
“Bear,” the poem excluded from the BBC program, the bear wonders in an
uncharted realm and moves in a place “beyond maps, before maps” about which
nothing is known to others. “So that where there was nothing / He breathes the air
of origins” (40). The bear, satisfied with the freshness of the new realm, enjoys
the pleasure of standing on the tip of the world and welcomes a new day:

Like the love
Of heaven upon blankness musing, he slumps
In slow circles, remote, conceiving, staring
Upon the other side of light, into that cave and cradle
Shadow and the first filtering whiteness
Sleep dreamless together and only in his stare
Move toward their waking: where, oh before
All dawn and division, forever the world begins
(qtd. in Brunner, 1991: 40)

In this poem, the bear is more like a scholar or a sage, probing into a realm that no
others enter and breathing the fresh air of origin. “Before / All dawn and division,
forever the world begins” suggests Merwin’s concern with the prophetic bear who

witness the world of Genesis and whose “sensibility guarantees that every option will be kept open, that territory will never be reduced to arrows on a chart” (40).

These connotations of Genesis remind the readers of another poem, “Leviathan”. A primal sea monster, Leviathan appears as a black brute. The poem leads the readers to look into the creature, not only how it appears but what it means:

Frightening to foolhardiest
Mariners, his size were difficult to describe:
The hulk of him is like hills heaving,
Dark, yet as crags of drift-ice, crowns cracking in thunder,
Like land’s self by night black-looming, surf churning and trailing
Along his shores’ rushing, shoal-water boding
About the dark of his jaws.
(Merwin, 1988: 141)

“Leviathan” received high praises from the critics for its imitation of Anglo-Saxon alliterative strong-sense meter. Brunner holds the view that the poem is “wonderfully crude, its syntax a list of attributes, its diction a heap of neologisms, its rhythm held fast in a lurching alliteration” (Brunner, 1991: 44). It is a great pleasure to read such lines aloud as “the hulk of him is like hills heaving” and “crags of drift-ice, crowns cracking in thunder.” The regular application of alliteration and the rhythmic progress of the poem reflect a primitive, joyous poetic consciousness. However, the attraction of this poem may also come from the implied information that Merwin intends to convey to the readers: the description of the whale—its age, its size, and its frightening motion establish the divinity of the whale and its relation to other beings in the world.

Merwin emphasizes the naming of the awful whale and bestows holiness on it: “He is called Leviathan, and named for rolling / First created was he of all creatures, / He has held Jonah three days and nights / He is that curling serpent that in ocean is” (Merwin, 1988: 141). Leviathan emerges and presents his metaphysical double roles as a frightening sea monster and first-created being endowed with dignity and deity, who “watches / dark of night sinking last, with

one eye dayrise” and “waits for the world to begin” (142). The description of Leviathan watching the sun rise over the ocean establishes its relation to the whole world. The sea monster makes no noise but quietly waits for the beginning of the world. His quiet posture is not the emblem of his awfulness but of the harmony of animals with the rest of nature. Like humans, it can look before and after, but unlike humans, it does not try to interrupt the progression of nature and impose its will on nature for nature; instead, it waits for the world to begin.

In the kingdom of Merwin’s bestiary, most of the animals are holy and sacred. The hydra, however, in the eponymous poem “The Hydra,” is not a mythical figure but a generic underwater creature, wholly identified with the watery world. Merwin emphasizes the possibility of recognizing animals, trying to convey through his poem that the serpent can only be known by the way it escapes the human grasp. Similarly, the leopard, described as a surpassing creature, is also presented with admiration.

Moreover, many other totemic animals emerge in Merwin’s poems, conveying the poet’s admiration for the power of nature. Amber Wolfe, in her book introducing shamanism and totem animals, summarizes the qualities of some totemic animals: wolf is the symbol of “earth wisdom, protection,” fox “elusiveness, agility, cleverness,” hawk “perception, focus, protection,” horse “stability, courage” and owl “symbolic wisdom, shadow work” (Wolfe, 2004: 16). Wolf is listed among the totem animals as the first who represents earth wisdom and protection. A similar motif may be detected in Merwin’s poem “Lemuel’s Blessing” in the volume *The Moving Target*. In this poem, Merwin treats wolves in relation to the sacred. He chooses Lemuel as his spokesman, requiring him to invoke a spirit, possibly a wolf-spirit or totem animal spirit.

The name “Lemuel” evokes other images of Lemuel in sacred and religious literature. In the Old Testament, “Lemuel seems to be an archetype or model of all that is moral, just and prudent, and he guides people with law and order. Lemuel is, in effect, the symbol of the civilized community” (Hix, 1997: 48). However, Merwin’s Lemuel has much closer rapport with the Lemuel in Christopher

Smart's *Jubilate Agno*. In the epigraph of the poem, Merwin quotes from Smart's religious poem and provides a point of vital entrance into the poem: "Let Lemuel bless with the wolf, which is a / dog without a master, but the Lord hears his / cries and feeds him in the desert" (Merwin, 1967: 12). This Lemuel is never the symbol of a civilized community but rather is the symbol of a longing to escape from the community. "Merwin's Lemuel holds a paradoxical position: One who is an archetype of civilized tribal values petitions in a traditionally communal form of prayer that he be allowed to exist outside of civilized communal values, categories, definitions, approval and rewards, and come to share as deeply as possible the nature and characteristics of the wolf" (Hix, 1997: 49). Lemuel does not indulge himself in the comforts of civilization, and does not care about the moral energy tamed out of him. He humbles himself before the spirit of his totem wolf: "I am nothing but a dog lost and hungry" (13), and begs his totem wolf spirit to grant him purity and strength in his independent and solitary exile:

Let my nails pour out a torrent of aces like grain from a threshing machines;
 Let fatigue, weather, habitation, the old bones, finally,
 Be nothing to me.
 Let all lights but yours be nothing to me.
 Let the memory of tongues not unnerve me so that I stumble or quake...
 Let my ignorance and my failings
 Remain far behind me like tracks made in a wet season,
 At the end of which I have vanished,
 So that those who track me for their own twisted ends
 May be rewarded only with ignorance and failings.
 But let me leave my cry stretched out behind me like a road
 On which I have followed you.
 And sustain me for my time in the desert
 On what is essential to me.
 (Merwin, 1967: 13– 14)

Merwin successfully expresses his own wishes through the image of Lemuel in quest of freedom and wilderness. For Merwin, the spirit of the totem wolf is omnipotent, able to deliver Lemuel from the ruth of kindness, from the ruth of

prepared comforts, from the ruth of approval and from the ruth of known paths. The wolf never appears in the poem as a real animal but as a spiritual image that Merwin presents as an idealized totem that he himself favors.

Lemuel's wolf-spirit, invisible in "Lemuel's Blessing", appears in a substantial form in the poem "The Paw", published several years later, this time as a she-wolf named "Perdita," Latin for "lost one." At the beginning of the poem, the narrator describes a peculiar transcendental reunion with his own body. "I return to my limbs with the first / gray light" (Merwin, 1967: 214). Then another reunion with she-wolf Perdita occurs simultaneously:

and here is the gray paw under my hand the she-wolf
Perdita has come back to sleep beside me
her spine pressed knuckle to knuckle
down my front
her ears lying against my ribs
on the left side where the heart beats.
(214).

The narrator merges physically with Perdita's physical body and imagines himself staying with Perdita, "coursing the black sierra...racing over the dark aurora / you and I with no shadow / ... / in the same place" (214). The two, without bodily shadows, metamorphose into pure spirit.

When Perdita returned in the black hours, the speaker finds that she is bleeding. Perdita is badly wounded, her haunches "hollowed and stretched out," and "her blood wells through my fingers" (215). With the approach of daylight, "the void wakes / and it is day / but we are gone" (215). The ambiguous diction of the ending makes it difficult for the readers to guess whether Perdita survives or dies. But it is undeniable that the two have merged in spirit eventually—both are gone, leaving the fallen stare, the mountains, and the void behind. According to Cheri Colby Davis; "as he (the speaker) comes to inhabit her body, he becomes the wolf herself at the moment before each vanishes. Man falls once more from his Eden where he was in communion with his God. As the speaker loses the immediacy of this pure contact, he loses his very existence to" (Davis, 1981: 51).As "The Paw"

reveals, the animal soulmate Perdita precipitates moments of sacred consummation. According to Merwin, human beings should keep communion with animals because these totem animals are keys to the human soul and the life beyond.

In the poem “Words from a Totem Animal,” silence becomes a central theme. Just as the poems in *Physiologus*, Merwin’s animals are always dumb because they need not resort to speech to understand the natural world: “I can put my words into the mouths / of spirit / but they will not say them” (Merwin, 1988: 143). In addition, the totem animal is also aware that the names human beings make for them do not apply and would fit anything:

caught again and held again
again I am not a blessing
they bring me
names
that would fit anything
they bring them to me
they bring me hopes
all day I turn
making ropes
helping.
(142)

The deliberate link of “hope” and “rope” makes the situation ironic: human beings bring the animal names in the name of bringing hopes, while what the animal needs is not these so-called hopes but ropes to help him find the chance to escape the mastery of human beings. “The totem animal appears to be caught between what he considers as fruitful lives; he is a spirit who is sought by humans for aid, but playing a part in the world of humans is not what he was meant for” (Frazier, 1999: 38). According to the totem animal, the inapplicability of the fallen names humans give him only testify to the animal’s inaccessibility and mystery. What is more, for the totem animal no name can fit aspects of nature: “there are no names for rivers / for the day for the nights” (Merwin, 1988: 142).

In the poem, the totem animal is also aware of the present situation of the world, a world “full of prayers /.../ a voice full of breaking / heard from after wards” (143). In a symbolic scene of illusion, the animal has a dream of premonition:

I dreamed I had no nails no hair
I had lost one of the senses not sure which
the soles peeled from my feet and
drifted away
clouds
It's all one
feet
stay mine
hold the world tightly.
(144)

His present life in the world is growing faint and hopeless. Confronting a bleak and ominous future, the totem animal prays to silence, the lord who would call him when he is lost, to “send me out into another life / lord because this one is growing faint / I do not think it goes all the way” (144).

Fox is also a totemic animal in Merwin's poetry. The first appearance of the image of fox may be found in “Plea for a Captive” in *The Drunk in the Furnace*, in which it is a symbol of fortitude and indomitability. In this poem, Merwin tries to persuade a woman who caught a fox by the scruff to let it go. For Merwin, no matter what methods humans take to tame the fox, the fox will only “trot to and fro, with vacant eye” (Merwin, 2000: 252). It will not indulge itself in the comfort provided by humans, but only in human's “delicate meats tasting / Nothing but its own decay” (252). The last line of this poem is a blow: “Kill it at once or let it go” (252). Any attempt to subdue or tame the fox will prove worthless because its intrinsic value can only be found in the wilderness.

In 1997, Merwin published *The Vixen*, for the second time taking an animal's name as the title of his book. The first poem in this volume is “Fox Sleep,” accounting the speaker's recollection of a ruined place and a mythical female fox

or vixen. In the background of a ruined place where “a few relics of the life before had been arranged” (Merwin, 1997: 3), the vixen first appears in the form of a sleeping fox carved on the top ring of a worn-out hand mill, “lying nose in tail” (3). Then the vixen makes its second appearance in a mythical story: an old man who has been a fox for five hundred lives gets an epiphany from a man’s words and is released from the body of the fox. The third time the fox appears to the speaker, who had passed the ruined place again where “nothing had changed” and saw “the body / stretched in the grass and it was a fox a vixen” (4– 5). The vixen is dead but with no sign of injury—“nothing broken or lost or torn or unfinished” (5). The speaker carried her dead body home to bury her in the garden, “in the morning of the clear autumn that she had left / and to stand afterward in the turning daylight” (5). Being depicted as the incarnation of an immortal soul, the totemic image of fox emerges in this poem three times in different morphological patterns “that broadly represent an awakening from false and simplistic assumptions about reality. Without denigrating animals or humans, Merwin has used a combination of literal and metaphorical fox imagery to register not only loss, but a movement toward clarity of perception, essential to the poet’s trade as well as to the life well lived” (Pettit, 2010: 95).

In “Vixen,” the second to last poem in the volume *The Vixen*, the female fox is praised by Merwin as a “comet of stillness,” “princess of what is over,” “keeper of the keep secrets,” and “sibyl of the extinguished” (Merwin, 1997: 69). In the poem, the poet eulogizes the deified quality of the vixen:

You are still warmer than the moonlight gleaming on you
 even now you are unharmed even now perfect
 as you have always been now when your light paws are running
 on the breathless night on the bridge with one end I remember you
 when I have heard you the soles of my feet have made answer
 when I have seen you I have waked and slipped from the calendars.
 (69)

In the end, the speaker beseeches the vixen's guidance, which reminds the readers of the beseeching Lemuel in the poem "Lemuel's Blessing": "let me catch sight of you again going over the wall / and before the garden is extinct and the woods are figures / guttering on a screen let my words find their own /places in the silence after the animals" (69). The speaker directly points out the present situation of the world: the animals fall into their silence and gradually depart from human beings. What the speaker implores is to find the real place where he can find the garden, the woods, and the animals. The vixen here becomes a totemic soul mentor, who would help human beings to step out of their confusion and desperation and to rediscover the utopian place in which human beings coexist with other beings harmoniously.

Birds are also common images in Merwin's works. It may be observed that for Merwin, the survival of birds implies the survival of human beings. He points out that "I am talking about the survival of human beings as well as of birds, and I am using the word survival in its familiar contemporary sense. One of the essential things that separate us from the other animals is our awareness of our mortality" (Merwin, 1987: 203). In the eighteen-line "Lark" from *The Carrier of Ladders*, "presents a speaker who wants to get out of the body, who wants to relieve himself of his humanity in his desire for a more integrated being and understanding" (Frazier, 1999: 54). Merwin addresses the lark as below:

In the hour that has no friends
above it
you become yourself
voice
black
star burning in cold heaven
speaking well of it
as it falls from you
upward

Fire
by day

with no country
where and at what height
can it begin
I the shadow
singing I
the light.
(Merwin, 2000: 158)

In the first ten-line stanza, the song of the lark appears “in the hour that has no friend,” like a “star burning in cold heaven / speaking well of it.” In the second eight-line stanza, the song gains its renewal: the song is “fire,” a lively and warming image. It appears “by day” and “with no country,” signifying that the song is distinctive and free of superficial constraints. There can be no answer to the question “where and at what height / can it begin,” because any definite constraint will despoil the lark’s song. And with “I the shadow / sing I / the light,” Merwin unites “I” with the lark, the shadow and the light together, making the whole poem a final consummation. It is the transcendental power of the idealized lark that enables the speaker to liberate the self from spatial and temporal restrictions. In the song of the lark, the speaker is able to find his own identity and future in no place and no time. “Having no outward identity, the narrators are subsequently liberated to express their desire to join the self with the universal” (Frazier, 1999: 55). For Merwin, the lark is also endowed with metaphysical perfection, signifying freedom and exhilaration. The application of the image of lark not only embodies Merwin’s deep love for nature but also conveys the poet’s identification with boundless nature. The lark frequently emerges in Merwin’s poems as a symbol of eternity and enlightenment. In “The Poem,” the narrator begins by complaining about his inability to remember what he has heard and also his inability to find “the light” (Merwin, 2000: 37). Falling into a sense of delusion and complexity, the narrator is deeply aware that entrance to his eventual enlightenment is invalid because he has “heard the locks close” (37). However, it is “the lark [that is to] take the keys / And hang them in heaven” (37). The keys are on the lark, and it is in the lark that the poet can find real hope.

Besides the lark, most flying creatures of all kinds in Merwin's poetry appear as images of redemption, endowed with divinity. In the short poem "The Room," Merwin writes of a frail bird who bears the responsibility for redemption:

I think all this is somewhere in myself
The cold room unlit before dawn
Containing a stillness such as attends death
And from a corner the sounds of a small bird trying
From time to time to fly a few beats in the dark
You would say it was dying it is immortal.
(Merwin, 1992: 111)

Merwin inclines to depicting birds as divine spirits. Under his pen, the birds are immortal, with their songs capable of providing humans with consolation and peacefulness. For Merwin, the bird is an incarnation of redemption. In a brief poem, he writes, "At midsummer before dawn an orange light returns to the mountains / Like a great weight and the small birds cry out / And bear it up" (Merwin, 1992: 113). The poem's title is "How We are Spared." Merwin projects himself into a day of redemption on which all human tongues would have reentered the innocent realm of the primal and lost speech—"an orange light returns to the mountains" (113). However, the real salvation comes not from human beings but from some little creatures who "cry out / And bear it up" (113). The birds save us with their voices, designating "how we are spared" (113).

It should be mentioned that not all the birds in Merwin's poetry symbolize eternity and redemption, for his poems also portray real birds. The songs of thrushes, wrens, orioles, shore birds, and some unknown birds linger around many of his poems, representing the celestial beauty of the natural world. However, domestic birds portrayed in Merwin's poems are not signifiers of beauty and redemption. A crucial twist appears in the poem "Fly" from *The Lice*. The domestic bird in the poem, a pigeon, is not depicted as the incarnation of salvation or beauty, but instead as an imprisoned pet bird that would die immediately after leaving the dovecote. In this narrative poem, Merwin tells the readers the story of

what once happened between him and a fat pigeon. The poem begins with lines filled with remorse:

I have been cruel to a fat pigeon
Because he would not fly
all he wanted was to live like a friendly old man.
He had let himself become a wreck filthy and confiding
Wild for his food beating the cat off the garbage
Ignoring his mate perpetually snotty at the beak
Smelling waddling having to be
Carried up the ladder at night content.
(Merwin, 1992: 125)

The dove, having stayed too long in the dovecot, only wants to live “like a friendly old man” (125). However, one day, the speaker throws him into the air to get him to fly. “But he would drop and run back expecting to be fed” (125). The speaker does not give up trying to get the pigeon to fly, “again and again throwing him up” (125). The pigeon gets worse after the speaker’s flinging and tossing him—“He let himself be picked up every time / until I found him in the dovecote dead / of the needless efforts” (125). The story does not end at this point. Merwin continues to reflect:

So that is what I am
pondering his eye that could not
conceive that I was a creature to run from
I who have always believed too much in words.
(126-27)

Merwin speaks in the voice of an ordinary human, who makes an effort of kindness to help the pigeon; yet his kindness hastens its death. “So that is what I am” is a direct identification of the speaker as the killer of a weak and trusting bird. The speaker is eventually aware of the reason: “I have always believed too much in words.” It is this arrogance that leads to the death of animals, and Merwin has to acknowledge that as a representative of human species, he is not immune from the failings he ascribes to others. What the speaker cannot deny is

the “human paradox of being a ‘creature’ and yet having the power to ‘ponder’ and believe in words” (Ramsey, 1987: 25). The contrast with human beings’ belief in words is the silence of the imprisoned animals. Similar to Robert Frost’s poem “A Minor Bird”, in which lyrical I fails to appreciate nature, the speaker in Merwin’s poem wishes his pet to fly, ignoring the fact that this fat pigeon has been kept too long in a dovecote and has lost its ability to fly.

The images of birds in Merwin’s poetry are multifaceted: the immortal lark and unknown little bird that bring the narrator spiritual attainment; the birds flying in the sky symbolizing the boundless beauty of nature; and the pet birds deprived of freedom and unable to escape their irreversible doom. Ultimately, for Merwin, it is only in the wilderness that birds can obtain celestial joy and freedom.

3.1.1. The Intrinsic Value of Animals

In ecological philosophy, especially in deep ecology, the intrinsic value of animals can be defined as a value placed on the inherent worth of a species, independent of its usefulness to humans. Natural scientific descriptions of animals grew out of Aristotle’s books on animals. According to Aristotle, “man was divided from animals by reason and the power of speech and held a unique position, while the animals were all imperfect” (qtd. in Gilhus, 2006: 39). In the centuries that followed, the Stoics held a view of natural hierarchies of living beings: plants exist for the sake of animals, and animals for the sake of men. Epictetus claims, “each of the animals God constitutes, one to be eaten, another to serve in farming, another to produce cheese” (40). For them, animals’ usefulness is restricted to serving human beings, and they are made a foil to human reason and superiority.

In modern Western philosophy, the intrinsic value of animals has also been denied or restricted. However, there are also many philosophers who admit the intrinsic value of all living beings. Albert Schweitzer states, “a man is ethical only when life, as such, is sacred to him, that of plants and animals as well as that of his fellow man, and when he devotes himself helpfully to all life that is in need of

help” (Schweitzer, 1998: 188). The main idea of Schweitzer’s ethics of reverence for life is that life is sacred; all living beings have their intrinsic value and there is no hierarchy in nature. “Developed humanity leads to identification with animals and nature, all life forms having intrinsic value in the wide sense of life” (Vilkka, 1997: 60). The value of life is the fundamental principle of deep ecology. The first principle of deep ecology is “the well-being and flourishing of both human and non-human life” (Devall, 1985: 70). This locates intrinsic value in the well-being and flourishing of all life on earth. For the deep ecologists, “ethical extensionism finally accords intrinsic value to people, animals, all living beings, and to forests, rivers, and mountains, which are respected and preserved as such. They are not instruments for human purposes but taken into moral account” (Vilkka, 1997: 60).

The animals in Merwin’s poetry have their own individual intrinsic value. Apart from the afore-mentioned divine and totemic animals such as bear and fox, or birds symbolizing eternity and spiritual attainment, many living beings considered loathsome by common people are depicted and affirmed in Merwin’s poetry for their individual significance. In the poem “Toad” the narrator ponders why humans always consider the toad disgusting:

No logic for our loathing?
The world is our image.
What is there within us that we
Deny, deny, yet tell tales of, yet shudder at.
Yet cannot explain, yet invoke to excuse
Errors and worse.
(Merwin, 1997: 42)

In the latter part of the poem, Merwin embellishes the image of the toad with positive expressions like “the jewel in its forehead” (43), and suggests that if human beings could make an effort “in recognizing and naming it / Ours, might we see our veritable / Beauty there” (43). The poet’s intention is to remind us that the abused toad is also loved by the Creator and that the brilliance of the human mind lies not in its ability to defy but in its capacity to understand.

Indeed, for Merwin even insects like flies, lice, and fleas that disgust humans have their own value. The flies depicted in “Flies” live in the garden of death, a garden “without walls / without apples / with nowhere to look back to” (Merwin, 1992: 291). The flies live independently in this unrestrained garden of death and enjoy their freedom: “in the eyes of flies / and the only sound was the roar of the flies / .../ and they flew in it happily all day” (291). The flea in Merwin’s poem, as such in John Donne’s “Flea”, also has its own individuality and its own value. In “A Flea’s Carrying Words” a flea is carrying “a bag of diseases” (204) but feels doubtful about the diseases: “I don’t even know who made them / I don’t know who’ll use them / I don’t use them myself” (204). The flea is aware of the fact that it is plainly unwelcome in the world: “Nobody likes me / nobody wants to change places with me” (204). However, the flea does not anguish over its fate: “I don’t mind I get away bag and all something needs me everything needs me / I need myself / and the fire is my father (204). The flea is confident in its own value. Even though human beings do not like it, it is still aware of its own significance.

The sound of the cricket lingers in Merwin’s poem “The Black Jewel”. The narrator listens in the dark to the solitary sound of the cricket. He is familiar with this cricket that never sleeps. For the narrator, the cricket is “the pupil of one eye / it can run it can leap it can fly” (Merwin, 1998: 169). In the poem, the cricket that “lives in the unlit ground / in the roots” becomes “the image of origin” (169) in which everything is contained and has its basis. Its value lies in the fact that its existence and voice are able to arouse listeners’ awareness of the surrounding nature, “mice too and the blind lightning / are born hearing the cricket / dying they hear it” (170). The listeners include the narrator, the “mice,” and “the blind lightning,” who listen to the song of the cricket from their birth to their death. Entering the secular universe as a “reminder of our beginnings,” the voice of the cricket has become a consolation for other parts of creation (Frazier, 1999: 34). According to Merwin, the insects are “the tongues of the future”:

Their vocabularies describe buildings as food they can depict dark water and the veins of trees they can convey what they do not know and what is known at a distance and what nobody knows they have terms for making music with the legs

they can recount changing in a sleep like death they can sing with wings the
speakers are their own meaning in a grammar without horizons they are wholly
articulate they are never important they are everything. (Merwin, 1987: 50)

For the narrator, the natural language of the insects is different from that of humans. Living in complete harmony with their natural surroundings, insects grasp a unique language of primal knowledge to communicate with the rest of the nature. Not only can they use this language to depict the physical natural world, but also they can apply this language to making heraldic music and sing with wings. The last sentence in this poem appears to downplay the importance of the insects while actually emphasizing their ubiquity. The intrinsic value of insects does not lie in humans' evaluation but lies in the fact that they are everything, independent of human beings' criteria of judgment.

In the beautiful and uninterrupted garden portrayed in "Distant Morning," many creatures live harmoniously with each other, enjoying time on their own: "the redstart," the "black kite" flying "high over the river," "the weasel" who "slipped like a trick of light," "the wryneck" who pretends "to be a shadow." "the tawny owl," "the nuthatch," "the gray adder," "the cricket," "the nightwalkers," "the hedgehogs," "the badgers," the "foxes," and "the bats" (Merwin, 1998: 68). Merwin speaks on behalf of these creatures and announces that "we were a time of our own" (68). At the end of the poem, the narrator says, "none of it could be held or denied or summoned back / none of it would be given its meaning later" (68). In a garden distant from humanity, where living beings coexist harmoniously, their existence should not be denied. We should not impose human meaning on them, because their life is itself meaningful.

W. S. Merwin always intends to convey the idea that all beings, sentient and insentient, are interdependent. He expands interspecies' communication to a spiritual awareness of the interconnectedness of all beings, bringing us closer to a deeper understanding of the intrinsic value of all life. Merwin holds the conviction that there is in the natural world a structure "in which every species is related to every other species. And they're built up on species, like a pyramid. The

simpler cell organisms, and then the more complicated ones, all the way up to the mammals and birds and so forth. The whole thing depends on every part of it” (Bowers, 1990: 50). For Merwin, all beings in nature are interconnected; human and non-human beings are constituted by their relations with each other.

In “The Black Plateau”, Merwin writes about the kestrel and lark, “like two brothers who avoid each other / on the cliff comer I met the wind / a brother” (Merwin, 1988: 159). The phrase “a brother,” treated as a separate line, introduces ambiguity. Is the wind a brother of mine or a brother of kestrel and lark? Or perhaps a brother of all three? No matter whose brother it is, the interrelatedness of nature and beings is undeniable. A similar motif of the kinship of natural beings occurs in the four-line poem “Tale”: “After many winters the moss / finds the sawdust crushed bark chips / and says old friend / old friend” (183). Merwin repeats “old friend,” emphasizing the kinship of the moss and the bark chips that were originally trees in the forest.

The most persuasive portrayal of this interconnectedness can be found in the poem “The Horse”:

In a dead tree
there is a ghost of a horse
no horse
was ever seen near the tree but the tree was born of a mare
it rolled with long legs in rustling meadows
it pricked its ears it reared and tossed its head
and suddenly stood still beginning to remember
as its leaves fell.
(Merwin, 1988: 13)

Residing in the tree is the soul of a mare implying maternity. These two amalgamate into spiritual oneness with the mutual qualities of tree and horse. The motions of rolling, pricking its ears, rearing, tossing, and standing, apparently referring to the motion of a horse, also pertain metaphorically to a tree. Eventually, this horse in motion “suddenly stood still” and enters into its true

essence of being a tree, “beginning to remember / as its leaves fell” (13). It is only through Merwin’s true compassion for all beings that the spiritual fusion of living beings can occur in his poetry. In addition, the scope of this spiritual fusion is extended by Merwin into a broader realm in which the spiritual fusion of human beings and non-human beings also emerges, showing the interrelatedness of all the beings in the universe.

In “The Horses,” the tree resembles a mare in its motion, while in the next poem, “A Contemporary,” the narrator imagines himself turning into an illusory old tree, supposedly his contemporary. Merwin writes with profound affection, “What if I came down now out of these / solid dark clouds that build up against the mountain / day after day with no rain in them / and lived as one blade of grass” (12). Becoming the tree, the speaker can feel the bounty of nature: “frost would design me and dew would disappear on me / sun would shine through me” (12), and he would also grow in the cycles of the tree’s life:

I would be green with white roots
feel worms touch my feet as a bounty
have no name and no fear
turn naturally to the light
know how to spend the day and night
climbing out of myself
all my life.
(12)

Being a nameless tree, the speaker would feel no fear. On the contrary, he would learn the essence of life and know “how to spend the day and night” (12). Turning into a tree is just an idealized illusion of the poet, while this symbolic union of human and nature further shows that the interconnectedness of all life forms is critical to the recovery of human reciprocity with nature.

Affirmation of the moral status of animals and emphasis on the interrelatedness of natural beings constitute the non-anthropocentric motif in Merwin’s poetry. In the kingdom of nature, Merwin endeavors to intermingle harmoniously with nature

and natural beings and finds the intrinsic value of all beings and an aesthetic appreciation of nature. However, Merwin is deeply aware that as a human involved in society, he is inevitably engulfed by the human world, and his songs of nature are doomed to be sung in the shadow of our modern world.

3.2. The Ecological Dimensions of Society, City, and Humans

Most ecocritical scholars affirm that ecological exploitation is closely tied to social exploitation and they wish us to attend to criticism of social-historical and urban forces. This section deals mainly with the ecological dimensions of society, city, and modern humans in Merwin's poetry. In his *American Sequence* of poems, Merwin elucidates the interactions between human society and nature. In his city poems, Merwin intends to inform the readers that the city is not separate from nature but is itself a part of nature. Finally, in his division poems, Merwin laments that modern people are separated from the natural world and trapped in a spiritual wasteland.

In his book *The Song of the Earth*, Jonathan Bate explains the relationship between ecology and society, affirming that "ecological exploitation is always coordinate with social exploitation" (Bate, 2000: 48). This eco-social critique is one of the main points in ecocriticism, showing concern for gender, race, and class and the ills of urban existence. According to German social theorists Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno:

The enslavement to nature of people today cannot be separated from social progress. The increase in economic productivity which creates the conditions for a more just world also affords the technical apparatus and the social groups controlling it a disproportionate advantage over the rest of the population. The individual is entirely nullified in face of the economic powers. These powers are taking society's domination over nature to unimagined heights. (Horkheimer and Adorno, 2007: xvii)

For Merwin, the environment is "the most crucial issue facing human beings" over the years (Frazier, 1999: 86). Merwin is aware of the ecological crisis resulted from social problems. In an interview with Michael Clifton in 1983,

Merwin expresses his pessimism toward the ecological crisis: “the destruction of the natural world, the really insane exploitation of the whole environment, the pollution of the elements, and an economy that’s really based on war and greed—we just seem to be heading straight for complete physical destruction” (qtd. in Clifton, 1983: 17). In many of his works, Merwin elucidates the interactions between human society and the natural world and discusses the destruction of nature in modern society. His poems examine the destructiveness in society and individuals, associating ecological propositions with his penetrating view of social and individual problems.

The Carrier of Ladders, for which Merwin was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for poetry, illustrates the great affliction caused by modern civilization. In his effort to develop a systematic approach to historical truth, Merwin mentions many prominent figures, including his contemporary, Richard Nixon, and historical figures like William Bartram and Andrew Jackson. Major events are also mentioned, ranging from historical events like the removal of Native American tribes from the eastern United States to contemporary events like the Vietnam War. In addition, like Native Americans being pushed westward, *The Carrier of Ladders* is geographically arranged, passing from east to west across the North American continent. This passage from east to west is also a “passage through the darker side of the United States history, the most prominent feature of which is the westward expansion of the country” (Hix, 1997: 78). It is not surprising that most of the political poems in *The Carrier of Ladders* reveal a strong ecological awareness and consciousness. Hix holds the view that “Merwin’s evaluation of society is linked to his ecological views, and in this his model is Henry David Thoreau” (Hix, 1997: 77). Just like Herbert Marcuse, who argues that “the violation of the earth is a vital aspect of the counterrevolution” (Marcuse, 1972: 10), Merwin considers the battles in the westward expansion to be ecocide against the natural environment as well as genocide against the native peoples.

The Carrier of Ladders is identified by Ed Folsom as the “American sequence” due to the fact that they depict major American history and ecological events. It is

in this American sequence that “Merwin involves himself in a poetic search to discover also what America was, to face and assume the guilt of the destructive American expansion across the continent, to invoke the vanished native and face the implications of his absence” (Folsom, 1978: 57). The first poem of this sequence is “The Approaches”:

When I wake
I say I may never
Get there but should get
Closer and hear the sound
Seeing the figures I go toward them waving
They make off
Birds
No one to guide me Afraid To the warm ruins Canaan
Where the fighting is.
(Merwin, 1992: 161)

In the Hebrew Bible, God describes Canaan, the area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, a spacious land flowing with milk and honey. It is also the place that God commissions Moses to lead the Israelites to. The symbolic Canaan to Merwin is the former paradisaical homeland of the Native Americans. However, war comes to turn it into warm ruins. The land of milk and honey disappears. When the speaker wants to get near the place of those “figures,” “they make off.” Merwin strongly senses the split between whites and Native Americans: “no one to guide me / afraid” (161). From “The Approaches,” the poet makes the first step on his journey to the past and wonders aimlessly and helplessly, hoping to find signs of the past.

The next poem, “The Wheels of the Trains,” begins with train wheels “unnoticed for years / on dark tracks at the foot of the mountains” that wait “unmoved in their rust / row of suns / for another life,” while in front of them are the tracks “leading out through tall milkweed / untouched,” and behind them are “holes in the hill / endless death of the sky” (162). The invasion of the modern civilization of white Americans desolates the natural landscape.

“Other Travelers to the River” is dedicated to William Bartram, the heroic American naturalist who embarked upon a four-year journey in 1773 through eight southern colonies and made drawings of the native flora and fauna and the Native American Indians. In the beginning, the poet asks Bartram “how many / Have appeared in their sleep / Climbing like flames into / Your eyes” (164). Merwin’s rhetorical question needs no answer but reveals that if there are other travelers approaching the past wilderness that Bartram has described in his *Travels*, they can only see the wilderness through Bartram’s eyes and descriptions. They can understand the world only through Bartram’s depiction, whether it is right or wrong. These travelers stand in the east, “gazing out over the sire of waters / with night behind them” (164). The darkness overtakes them and gradually expands towards the west. The travelers “would wake not remembering / and on the river / that same day / was bearing off its empty flower again” (164). Cary Nelson argues that at the end of the poem, “the river of history is bearing off its empty flower again, inexorably carrying away to the dim past any hope of a glimpse of the wilderness, or of the native who is forever retreating west, forever engulfed in the descending eastern night before he can be apprehended” (Nelson, 1987: 85). For Merwin, the early description of the virgin land recorded by the white man is distorted, and anyone approaching the real natural world and the natives through this biased description will be disappointed.

Following this American sequence, readers then come to “The Trail into Kansas,” a further westward movement in Merwin’s imaginative journey. In this poem, the poet fails to gain a first glimpse of the virgin land because “the early wagons left no sign” (Merwin, 1992: 164). The poet then continues his journey into the western world, only to find that the journey is never easy. The “line pressed in the grass we were here” attests to a journey full of torture and bitterness. As he enters Kansas, the poet is deeply aware that they are watched, “nothing that lives waits for us / nothing is eternal” (165). Although the white Americans sense that they are watched, they proceed. As they move westward, the natives are no threat because in this westward progression they (the natives) continually vanish as the frontier pushes against them. The ironic confident words Merwin applies here

remind us of “The Last One” in *The Lice*: “Well they made up their minds to be everywhere because why not / Everywhere was theirs because they thought so” (Merwin, 1988: 86). For the people in these two poems, their movements are inexorable and any threat should be relieved sooner or later. However, for the Native Americans born in this virgin land, the white Americans are actually intruders trespassing on their paradisiacal garden. The immigrating white intruders have no affection for the land and its residents:

we have been guided from scattered wombs
all the way here choosing choosing
which foot to put down
we are like wells moving over the prairie
a blindness a hollow a cold source.
(Merwin, 1992: 165)

The invaders despoil everything in their way, scarring the natural landscape unrecognizably. At the end of the poem, Merwin asks rhetorically: “will any be happy to see us / in the new home” (Merwin, 1992: 165). Wherever the white Americans go, they conquer the natives and take their land. The natives have gradually disappeared and none will be there to greet the whites.

Following the westward movement, the readers move in the “Western Country.” In this poem, Merwin watches the Natives who “stayed by their antique faith that no one / can die in exile / when all that is true is that death is not exile” (166). The Natives move westward in the hope they can live, not realizing that the ultimate West they are heading for is death. The speaker “I” is aware of the fact that “my countrymen are more cruel than their stars / and I know what moves the long / files stretching into the mountains” (166). For Merwin, it is through violence that the white Americans drive the Natives westward and encroach upon their motherland: “each man with his gun / his feet / one finger’s breadth of the ground” (166).

In “The Gardens of Zuni,” one of the most famous poems in the volume, the protagonist is John Wesley Powell, the national figure recognized for meritorious

service in the American Civil War as well as exploration of the West. For Merwin, Powell is another “emblem of the white man’s encroachment into the wilderness” (246).

The one-armed explorer
could touch only half of the country
in the virgin half
the house fires give no more heat than the stars
it has been so many these many years and there is no bleeding
he is long dead with his five fingers and the sum of their touching
and the memory of the other hand his scout
that sent back no message
from where it had reached
with no lines in its palm
while he balanced
balanced
and groped on
for the virgin Land
and found where it had been.
(166-67)

The “one-armed explorer” is John Wesley Powell, who lost one arm in the Battle of Shiloh and suffered from the raw nerve endings for the rest of his life. Merwin’s attitudes to Powell are shaped by the fact that “Powell led the geologic survey from 1881 to 1894 that mapped out the west, imposed American lines upon the wilderness; it was while he was issuing these maps that Frederick Jackson Turner announced the closing of the frontier, the end of wilderness” (Folsom, 1978: 246). It is worth pointing out that as an ethnologist and anthropologist, “Powell divided human societies into three levels, savagery, barbarism, and civilization, based on levels of technology, family and social organization, property relations, and intellectual development” (Folsom, 1987: 337). He argued that “the age of savagery is the age of kinship clan, when maternal kinship is held most sacred; the age of barbarism is the age of kinship tribes, when paternal kinship is held most sacred; the age of civilization is the age

of nations, when territorial boundaries are held most sacred” (337). For Powell, all societies progress toward civilization. “It was his conviction that part of the natural progression of society includes efforts to maximize and make the best use of resources” (337).

To Merwin, John Wesley Powell was never a national hero but a man with a physical handicap and spiritual defect. His one arm could only touch half of the country. His other arm—the missing one—becomes “his scout” that reached into the wilderness but “sent back no message / from where it had reached / with no lines in its palm” (Merwin, 1992: 167). As Folsom states, “like the lines on Powell’s many maps, the hand he kept on the eastern side of the frontier was familiar, known, lined, visible. But no white man knew the western side of the frontier; like an invisible hand, it was unlined, unmapped, unknown, unseen” (Folsom, 1978: 246). Powell “balanced / and groped on / for the virgin land”; but what he found was just the place “where it had been” (Merwin, 1992: 167). His endeavor is never repaid because the virgin land he was groping for could only be found with his missing arm, an image of illusion.

Powell realizes that the wilderness is unapproachable no matter how hard he tries to portray it. This echoes Merwin’s attitudes toward wilderness. For Merwin, wilderness is always far from civilization and white Americans. In the poem “The Wilderness” he begins, “Remoteness is its own secret /... / Mystery is no more lucid for being near” (Merwin, 1988: 156). Merwin insists that the secret of the wilderness is its remoteness. No matter how far into the “horizon’s virginity” we penetrate, “we are where we always were” (156). Powell’s aim in touching the wilderness was only to conquer it, to make it disappear, to “have it become known at the very touch, to be fused to the American creation” (Folsom, 1978: 246). However, Powell must face the fact that the virgin land he is attempting to conquer could only be reached with his missing hand, which only exists in the realm of imagination. This the poet endeavors to do—to touch the virgin land via the missing hand of his imagination. With the development of the American sequence, Merwin approaches his destination, gradually facing the fact that “The

Natives beckon him, but dead, they can offer no help, no real knowledge; their extinction guards the invisible wilderness that Merwin cannot touch” (246).

In the last poem of this American sequence, “The Removal,” Merwin depicts the tragic fate of the natives. Dedicated to the endless tribe, the long poem consists of six cantos: “The Procession,” “The Homeless,” “A Survivor,” “The Crossing of the Removed,” “A Widow is Taken,” and “The Reflection.” For Merwin, the natives are “The Homeless,” deprived of their virgin land and driven into exile. They “move in files” with lost faces. In “The Crossing of the Removed,” nature tries to soothe her pathetic children in exile, “the water tries to soothe them / the mud tries to soothe them / the stones turn over and over trying / to comfort them” (Merwin, 1992: 174). However, these natives who suffer a lifetime of hardship can never recover from this tribulation: “they will not be healed” (174). The white Americans destroy not just the natives but their mother, their virgin land. They ravage the wilderness, cutting the trees “on which we were leaves” (174), polluting the rivers, and stripping the natives of their motherland. In the fifth canto, “A Widow is Taken,” the speaker becomes a widow who speaks of her wretched life with deep grief:

I call leave me here
the smoke on the black path
was my children
I will not walk
from the house I warmed
but they carry me through the light
my blackening face
my red eyes
everywhere I leave
one white footprint
the trackers will follow us into the cold
the water is high
the boats have been stolen away
there are no shoes
and they pretend that I am a bride on the way to a new house.
(175)

The image of the widow may remind readers of another poem, “The Widow,” one of Merwin’s best poems about the relationship between humans and nature. “The Widow” begins with a description of how the natural world operates with the simple turning of the planet:

How easily the ripe grain
Leaves the husk
At the simple turning of the planet
There is no season
That requires us.
(Merwin, 1992: 101)

Nature operates according to its own rules. However, human beings who are “masters of forgetting” accumulate evil which “gets itself the face of the norm” and “contrives cities” (102). These actions bring disastrous consequences to nature: “The Widow rises under our fingernails / in this sky we were born we are born” (102). The title compares the earth we dwell on to a widow who has lost her husband to death and not remarried. In the later part of the story, the widow feels desperate toward her children—human beings, who “confide / in images in things that can be / represented which is their dimension.” She is not willing to hear the cries of human beings: “The widow does not / hear you and your cry is numberless” (102). According to William H. Rueckert, “The Widow” is about “how we have always been deceived by our conception of nature as mother-wife-helper-succor-female; in reality nature is a Widow...by choice she does not need us; she does not hear our cry; yet she rises under our fingernails and it is we who need her, for we were born out of her, and can have no life without her” (Rueckert, 1987: 60). It is not only the tragic story of this woman but also that of the Western land. Just as the natives carried the print of the white man’s civilization, the virgin land has also been changed from its original state by its “civilized” residents.

Following the American movement westward, Merwin witnesses the gradual disappearance of the natives and the deterioration of their virgin land. “Unlike Gary Snyder in *Turtle Island*, Merwin does not return to the present replenished with native ways; he returns only with an affirmation of American destructiveness, of man’s stupidity and inhumanity, and of an irreplaceable emptiness lying beneath this continent” (Folsom, 1978: 245).

3.2.1. City and Nature

New York City is Merwin’s birthplace. As a child, Merwin spent much of his time in Union City, New Jersey, growing up within sight of Manhattan skyline. For most of his life, Merwin has continued to maintain a residence in New York City. It is unquestionable that Merwin is quite familiar with this city and its urban scenery. In the preface to the collected volume *The Second Four Books of Poems* (1992), he writes about his own life in the sixties, which “seemed to be made of contradictions: city life and rural life; Europe and America; love of the old and a craving for change; public issues and a disposition to live quietly” (Merwin, 1992: 2). Merwin confesses his fondness for New York: “I felt bound to that city and time by ties that I was trying to fathom, and the poems reflected something of that and perhaps some of its excitement. They also testified to the deep foreboding that shadowed those years and which has not gone away since” (3).

Merwin’s poetry in the 1960s fully explains his attitudes to the city. The industrial city is depicted negatively under his pen, presenting a horrific and disgusting image. His depiction of New York City intensifies Thoreau’s description of the city as a place of “preserved death,” “catacomb,” “workhouse,” “a labyrinth without a clew, a museum, an almshouse, a prison, or a splendid mausoleum” (Toliver, 1997: 128). Merwin chronicles his own decision to leave New York and move to the countryside of Southern France in *The Moving Target*. It is during this period that he began to develop the “far-reaching critique of modern urban existence that serves as the foundation for everything he has written since” (128). Living in the city, Merwin becomes the irresolute narrator of “Home for Thanksgiving,” who sees himself “like money” and alienates himself from the

outside world, in which the streets “open like long / Silent laughs” (Merwin, 1992: 9). The image of city in this poem is never positive or even moderate. In “Acclimatization” the narrator describes his misfortunes in the city. In this poem, “I” entered the city and encountered “they,” which refers to the indifferent city dwellers:

They gave me
Their praise and left me mute
I saw that their smiles were made of gold,
and their Hands and their wives.
They gave me Their thanks
and left me penniless
They gave me their credit
And left me with little hope
When I woke I discovered
they had taken my legs leaving me the shoes.
(19)

The city is depicted as a huge cage or prison boxing up the narrator, who cannot stop yelling out his desperation, with buildings like bars. “Oh priceless city, the buildings / Rising at dawn to grip the first light / Like bars, and the mornings shattered / With trees into all the shapes of heartbreak” (19). When the sun rises, the buildings prepare to welcome the first rays of sunshine, while on the other side of the city are the organic shapes of shattered trees. It is apparent that for Merwin, the price of the city is the cost of every other thing, including the human spirit and soul and the natural world. By titling the poem “Acclimatization,” Merwin wants to inform the reader that the process of acclimatization is actually the process of forcing living beings to adapt to the distorted city. With no other choice, the narrator offers his “degradation as a blind beggar offers his palm” and is given “this glass eye to set in the place of tears” (19– 20). The deal between humanity and city is never fair. No matter what human beings render to the city, their recompense is desperation. However, they are still willing to devote themselves to this acclimatization, even though what waits for them is only endless torture and imprisonment.

In “Departure’s Girlfriend”, the narrator is an idealized woman who finds a sympathetic identity with natural beings: “Some leaves of the wreath were holding my hands / And the rest waved good-bye as I walked, as though / they were still alive” (Merwin, 2005: 125). She is going to leave, imagining that “I was going / down to my boat, my boat, / to see it off, and glad at the thought” (124). However, when she comes to the wharf, she finds only an acquaintance, a young man “in some uniform.” The man refuses to let her take the boat. At the end, “I” am still not able to leave that “other and hated city” (124) which is portrayed as about to devour the narrator. In this hated city, the flickering and blazing lights are like flies crawling on the stone, and there are actually “fat chances” existing in this apparently glorious place. This poem values the courage and purity of “Departure’s Girlfriend,” who presents a sharp contrast to the image of the unpleasant and hated city.

For Merwin, the unhealthy and pale city is a ghostly graveyard, appalling and hopeless. “City,” in Merwin’s poem, becomes a synonym for “necropolis” (Toliver, 1997: 130). In “The Widow”, Merwin describes his tragic vision of the city. The “ciphers wake and evil / Gets itself the face of the norm / And contrives cities” (Merwin, 1992: 102). Merwin thinks that the cities are full of artificial ciphers and evil that appears normal from the outside. It is human beings that contrive cities using ciphers, moralizing, and constructing norms. Their stylized and scheduled actions run counter to nature, which operates according to its own rules and needs no help from humanity. What Merwin intends to do is draw readers’ attention to the contrast of nature and city. For nature, “there is no season / that requires us” (101), while for the city it is human beings who insist in “threading the eyeless rocks with / a narrow light” and who waken ciphers and evil, contriving cities (102). The next two lines bring us back to our origination from the nature: “The widow rises under our fingernails / In this sky we were born we are born” (102). Human beings contrive the city and widow the earth. However, “no matter how many great cities we contrive—and we must remember that the city is our most denial of nature. We may think we have transcended

nature. We may think we have widowed her, but it is we who are the losers” (Rueckert, 1987: 60).

When Merwin returned to New York City after his year-long residence in rural France in the 1970s, he was struck once again by the blighted condition of New York City. Though Merwin no longer portrays the city as a necropolis, it still has too many negative qualities: ignorance, numbness, indifference, and cruelty. In “The Counting House”, Merwin depicts the city of numbness and the bleeding nature:

Where do the hours of a city begin and end among so many the limits rising
and setting each time in each body
in a city how many hands of timepieces
must be counting the hours
clicking at a given moment
numbering insects into machines to be codified
calculating newsprint in the days of the living
all together they are not infinite
any more than the ignored patience
of rubber tires day and night
or the dumbness of wheels or the wires of passions.
(Merwin, 1977: 21– 22)

The city, filled with countless hands of timepieces, rubber tires patiently working but ignored, dumb wheels and passionate wires, is a place without beginning or ending. It also seems filled with busy beings but is actually full of nothingness. The city is expanding; its avenues cannot reach its horizon. However, the expansion of the city is at the cost of deforestation and destruction of the natural environment. The avenues of the city expose the bleeding places that human beings have destroyed. When people fall asleep, they will remember those trees they chopped down. When the lights of civilization push through the human residences unlit in the night, they show hanging pictures of nature, reminding human beings of the former existence of nature.

The second section of *The Compass Flower* mainly deals with the paradigmatic concentration of society, New York City. The first poem of the section “City” begins:

I have been here before
I have entered through a glass door
at the end of a corridor
surprised to find nothing locked
but knowing that someone was watching
I have arrived through a hospital
I have steered in through the tightening outskirts
In the morning crowd
I have undergone inspections been counted have believed
I have learned the streets like seasons
I have forgotten whole years.
(Merwin, 1977:19)

The speaker is much too familiar with the urban scenery. In his years in the city he has become numb—“have forgotten whole years.” However, when one day he drives on the avenue,

never have I seen it with so few people showing
not even at this hour before daylight so little traffic
never so like held breath
all the traffic lights dark
never such temptation to drive too fast.
(19)

The city, with “so few people,” “so little traffic,” and “all the traffic lights dark,” tempts the speaker “to drive too fast” (19). For Merwin, who was accustomed to observing the city in the crowd, it is a rare opportunity to experience a totally different city at peace. The image of the city is not so disgusting and appalling in this poem. On the contrary, it reveals its other side of peace and calm. Merwin begins to realize that no matter which side the city demonstrates, clamor or tranquility, they both belong to the city. If there are not so many people and not so

much traffic, the city will present its benign characteristics. According to Thomas Beall Byers:

Merwin's urban poetry in the 1970s suggests more ambivalence about the human, and particularly a greater willingness to value human beings and their activities, than are to be found in the antihumanist poems of the sixties. These directions are most apparent in the poems of *The Compass Flower* and *Opening the Hand* which treat urban settings...They portray the horrors of the city and the degree to which it cuts us off from each other and from nature...but on the other hand Merwin realizes and admits that in the city "I am home." (Byers, 1987: 269)

The observation that human society is not only part of the history of nature but also part of nature drives the central poem in *The Compass Flower*, "St. Vincent's," Merwin's best-known urban poem. The speaker first admits that he has "lived daily and with / eyes open and ears to hear / these years from St. Vincent's Hospital" (Merwin, 1977: 25). However, despite living close to St. Vincent, the speaker pays little attention to it. He now records the arriving ambulances that he and the passers-by have all ignored, acknowledges his negligence, and realizes that he is one of the witnesses who taught themselves to turn a deaf ear to the sirens and emergency arrivals. He had witnessed many scenes in the hospital but ignored them, but now intends to list what he can recall: "the nurses ray out / through arterial streets," "interns blocks away / on doorsteps one foot in the door," "the men in gloves taking out / the garbage at all hours / piling up mountains of / plastic bags white strata with green intermingled and black" (26-27). He has also seen the "molded containers" either of "meals from a meal factory made up with those / mummified for long journeys by plane" or of "specimens for laboratory / examination sealed at the prescribed temperatures" (27). The poem accrues a series of recollections through consecutive descriptions of memories of what he has seen: the "faces staring from above / crutches or tubular clamps / out for tentative walks," the "hot dogs...mustard ketchup onions and relish," the "police smelling of ether and laundry" (27). However, his memories reinforce how little he knows:

I have known them all less than the papers of our days
smoke rises from the chimney do they have an incinerator
what for
how warm do they believe they have to maintain the air
in there
several of the windows appear
to be made of tin
but it may be the light reflected

I have imagined bees coming and going
on those sills though I have never seen them

who was St Vincent.
(27– 28)

Merwin is aware that being one member of a city, he has always been standing outside of it, paying little attention to what happens around him. As an inadequately involved witness, Merwin realizes that he is complicit in the city's blindness to suffering. The closing line is a query without question mark. St. Vincent de Paul is well known as the patron saint of all works of charity, who also founded the Daughters of Charity, one of the first female orders to move from the cloister out into the world to do good works. The name of Vincent de Paul is synonymous with compassion and practical help for the needy. It is impossible for Merwin not to know who St. Vincent was; his rhetorical question is actually a "compelling question about forgotten origins, and in its answer an implicit but intense self-criticism" (Byers, 1987: 270). Merwin realizes that kindness and engagement are what he lacks. They are also "what Merwin rejected in the harsher poems of the sixties, where he chose instead to celebrate our distance from men. Now as he closes this distance, he must heed Emerson's prescription for satisfying 'all the demands of the spirit. Love is as much its demand as perception'" (270).

“St Vincent” shows the transformation of Merwin’s attitudes towards the city and human beings. In *Opening the Hand*, the city becomes for Merwin “home”. In the poem “In a Station of the Metro”, a reference to Ezra Pound’s the same titled imagist haiku in which the city and nature are intertwined, the speaker sees the faces as cool leaves still lucent before summer. He records the great changes happening in New York and declares New York City to be the “most beautiful of cities,” in which “the stars are flaking in the apartment ceiling / and the lights of lives / are reflected crossing the floating night” (Merwin, 1988: 143). Tenderness of night consoles the city, in which people who “in groups walk more slowly” (143), a symbol of relaxation and safety.

For Merwin, the city is no longer one-sided but double-edged. It is neither the city in which human beings’ pioneering spirit surpasses every other thing, nor the city, a labyrinth without a clew, a museum, an almshouse, a prison, or a splendid mausoleum. Human beings have contrived the city while ruthlessly separating it from nature and severing its original root in nature. What Merwin endeavors in his later poetry is to pursue the origin of the city, which is deeply rooted in nature and closely connected with human beings. Humans, cities, and nature are no longer separated. Human beings begin to recognize this link between urban existence and nature. “Even though the link is overlaid and concealed, the city remains grounded on the bedrock of nature” (Byers, 1987: 269).

3.2.2. On Modernity: Humans and Nature

In his later works, Merwin explicitly protests against “modernity’s destruction of primordial nature and primitive community” (Costello, 2003: 132). Concerning the mental predicament of modern people, he begins to question the connotations of modernity and being a modern man. In the poem “What is Modern” he asks a series of questions to call the reader’s attention to the encroachment of modernity into all comers of experience:

Are you modern
Is the first Tree
that comes to mind modern

Does it have modern leaves.

(Merwin, 1988: 164)

The questions are asked without question marks attached, suggesting that the questions are all rhetorical. “Merwin already knows what is modern—and he doesn’t like it” (Costello, 2003: 132). In the first two stanzas, Merwin raises questions about the modernity of the tree and its leaves, appealing to “experiences that might lie outside history—elemental human traits that might tie us nature” (132). “The first tree” reminds us of the tree of knowledge in Garden to Eden; it symbolizes the original and primordial relationship between humans and nature. This tree in Adam’s mind is just a common tree in nature no different from the trees we know. “So it must be absurd to think of ‘modern’ leaves, since the cycles of nature are ahistorical. If the tree in the mind is ‘modern,’ it is only because we have cut ourselves off from eternal beings and allowed images to supplant experience” (132).

Merwin asks more questions about modernity, setting essential humanity against the modern condition. Merwin guides the readers into considering what modern is. In Merwin’s view, modern means “separation (glass door), anesthesia (drug store), dislocation (airport), and routine violence toward nature (gassed animals)” (132). These qualities of modernity deprive human beings of their original and primitive virtues. Being engulfed in this modern condition, human beings are certainly alienated, indifferent, dumb and cruel. Merwin implies that in accepting these qualities from modernity, human beings lose their humanity and are forever forbidden to enter the Eden of nature. Merwin does not stop questioning; in his later stanzas, he ponders “when / was modern born” and “who first was pleased / to feel modern” (Merwin, 1988: 165). Humans are blinded by the superficial and shallow brilliance of worldly possessions, fame, and fortune. For Merwin, our attention to transitory over eternal values leaves our consciousness bankrupt. At the end of the poem, he asks, “is today modern / the modern sun rising / over the modern roof / of the modern hospital / revealing the modern water tanks and aerals / of the modern horizon” (165). In this six-line stanza, each line contains

the word “modern,” signifying the universality of modernity. Merwin implies that modernity has encroached into all corners of experience. In modern times and in modern cities, everything has the tag “modern”: the “modern humans” in the modern times are “solitary and without speaking / buying the morning paper / on the way to work” (165).

It is obvious that the tag of “modern” does not merely belong to external possessions. Even human beings have a modern label and have become modern humans, solitary and speechless, separated from each other and alienated from nature. Through the long series of rhetorical questions in this poem, Merwin intends to “call us back from our alienation to the eternal values and presences that lie in our original connection to the earth” (Costello, 2003: 132).

In “Chord”, Merwin condemns the rapacity of a money-driven technological modern society willing to sacrifice the natural ecosystem for economic interests. In the poem, Merwin compares the spiritual and aesthetic activities of John Keats and the money-driven activities of the traders of Keats’s day who clear-cut the native forests for wood:

While Keats wrote they were cutting down the sandalwood forests
while he listened to the nightingale they heard their own axes
echoing through the forests
while he sat in the walled garden on the hill outside the city they
thought of their gardens dying far away on the mountain
while the sound of the words clawed at him they thought of their wives
while the tip of his pen travelled the iron they had coveted was hateful to them
while he thought of the Grecian woods they bled under red flowers
while he dreamed of wine the trees were falling from the trees
while he felt his heart they were hungry and their faith was sick
while the song broke over him they were in a secret place and they were cutting it
forever
while he coughed they carried the trunks to the hole in the forest the size of a foreign
ship
while he groaned on the voyage to Italy they fell on the trails and were broken
when he lay with the odes behind him the wood was cold for cannons
when he lay watching the window they came home and lay down

and an age arrived when everything was explained in another language.
(Merwin, 1988: 66)

In the poem, every line except the last line contains a sharp contrast between Keats and the traders. Keats has throughout his whole life been pursuing the aesthetic purity of the harmonious relationship between human beings and nature. Living in the pastoral countryside far from the city, he is accustomed to the sounds of nature and to enjoying the beautiful songs of the nightingale and the picturesque landscape. He feels his heart indebted to his intimate relationship with nature and non-human beings. However, his contemporary woodcutters hold totally different attitudes toward nature. Relying on modern technology, they use every means they can to destroy the natural landscape. They level forests, leaving a huge hole in it. If the pen is Keats' tool to express his affection for nature, the axes are the woodcutters' instruments to ruin nature. If for Keats the most melodious song comes from nature and the nightingale, the woodcutters' favorite music is the sound of axes felling trees. The woodcutters indulge in the frenzied pursuit of economic interest, turning a deaf ear to the painful moans of the forests. For Merwin, "they were hungry and their faith was sick" (66). What is more, what they have destroyed is not only the forests and a balanced natural ecosystem, but also the primitive culture existing in the deep forests. Their ravage brought about the arrival of a new age "when everything was explained in another language" (66). Hix argues that "the self-despising woodcutters are only a particular instance of a danger Merwin warns against...Certain forms of living result in what Marx calls alienation...human self-destructiveness...is never exclusively self-destructiveness. Humanity is taking whole species and whole ecosystems down in its fall" (Hix, 1997: 128).

Merwin is disappointed to find that in modern society, human beings are separated from nature and avaricious, craving money and material things. In "Things" Merwin writes,

Possessor

At the approach of winter we are there.

Better than friends, in your sorrows we take no pleasure.

We have none of our own and no memory but yours

We are the anchor of your future.

Patient as a border of beggars, each hand holding out its whole treasure.

We will be all the points on your compass

We will give you interest on yourself as you deposit yourself with us.

Be a gentleman: you acquired us when you needed us,

We do what we can to please, we have some beauty, we are helpless.

Depend on us.

(Merwin, 1988: 19)

Human beings were originally supposed to be the possessors of things. However, with the development of materialistic society in modern times, they are alienated and dissociated from each other, exclusively craving money and treasure. Instead of possessing things, they are possessed and manipulated by them. Merwin has long been preoccupied with the spiritual impermanence of physical solid things. For him, it is an ironical and pathetic fact that human beings are controlled by the material world. Once humans are tempted and controlled by things, they will lose their original virtue and fall into a spiritual barrenness. Moreover, paying too much attention to material things, humans will neglect their detachment from each other and alienation from their natural surroundings.

In one of his most famous poems, “Yesterday”, Merwin “recounts of a friend’s confession of how he walked out on his father the last time they saw one another” (Byers, 1987: 266). The poem seems an ordinary story about a son and his father. In the poem, the narrator’s friend confesses that he was not good to his parents because he seldom went to see his father, even though they lived in the same city. He remembers the last time he saw his father. When his father gave him something to take home, he felt the cold of his father’s hand.

he says and my father turned into the doorway and saw me look at my
wristwatch and he
said you know I would like you to stay

and talk with me
but if you are busy he said I don't want you to feel that you have to
just because I'm here
I look out the window my friend is older than I am he says and I told my
father it was so and I got up and left him then you know
though there was nowhere I had to go and nothing I had to do.
(Merwin, 1988: 119– 120)

It is one of the most painful poems in Merwin's later work. "While the confessor is explicitly not the speaker, the poem is full of ambiguities of audience and address; hence we come away with the sense that the speaker and friend are disturbingly similar, that the speaker tells the story because of these similarities" (Byers, 1987: 266). More than that, these similarities may be common to all because most people can find themselves reflected in these similarities. The friend's detachment would remind every reader of his own relationship with his family members. Modern people are so detached from each other that even though they are dealing with members of their own families, they cannot find a common language to communicate with each other. The detached relationships among modern people make a sharp contrast to the reciprocal relationship among people in primitive and traditional societies that are closely linked with nature.

As the epigraph of *The Lice* states, "all men are deceived by the appearance of things" (Merwin, 1988: 80). For Merwin, modern people are always deceived by the unreliable appearance of things. When they become accustomed to the superficial appearances of external things, they themselves become unreliable and hypocritical. In "Thanks", Merwin writes that human beings are accustomed to saying "thank you" when they are "stopping on the bridges to bow from the railings," "running out of the glass rooms," "back from a series of hospitals back from a mugging / after funerals," "over telephones," "in doorways and in the backs of cars and in elevators," "in banks.../ in the facts of the officials and the rich / of all who will never change" (Merwin, 1988: 46). The needless repetition of "thank you" reveals not sincerity but revulsion. If the phrase "thank you"

always lingers on humans' lips, it will lose its original function of expressing gratitude to become a hypocritical expression. In the next stanza, Merwin says,

with the animals dying around us taking our feelings we are saying thank you
with the forests falling faster than the minutes of our lives we are saying thank you
with the word going out like cells of a brain
with the cities growing over us we are saying thank you faster and faster
with nobody listening we are saying thank you thank you
we are saying and waving dark though it is.
(46)

Merwin spares no pains in repeating “thank you” in the second stanza, which successfully aggravates the readers’ strong aversion. Confronted with the extinction of animals and the gradual disappearance of forests, *Homo sapiens* is not regretful. On the contrary, they “are saying thank you” and saying it “faster and faster” (46) even though nobody is listening. The expression of “thank you” is a perfunctory and pretend kindness that further testifies to the insincerity, hypocrisy, and cruelty of human beings. “Merwin’s disgust at his own species is at times, as in ‘Thanks,’ so strong, so vexed with anger and dismay” (Brunner, 1991: 284).

The psychological destructiveness that modern people confront may also be presented as human indifference. “Happens Every Day” tells of a particularly absurd street theft. In broad daylight in a midtown area crowded with pedestrians, a man carrying a gun grabs a passerby’s briefcase and runs away. “Everybody around is in a hurry” and nobody helps the man who has been robbed of his briefcase (Merwin, 1988: 144). It is ridiculous that in the end the briefcase is taken by someone unknown and the gun belonging to the robber is also picked up by someone else. Both the robbed and robber lose their belongings, and the throng of people “moving through him from no beginning” pays no attention to the series of happenings (144). The title “Happens Every Day” informs the readers that this apparently impossible street theft is in no way exceptional but happens every day

and is actually “made possible by the total disconnectedness and detachment of the passersby” (Byers, 1987: 268).

For Merwin, modern people are deeply trapped in a spiritual wasteland. They are separated from nature, forgetting their origins. “The Fields” contains Merwin’s “condescending criticism of an ethnic street festival whose participants lack firsthand knowledge of their origins” (Byers, 1987: 270). In the poem, the young participants of the festival cook stuffed cabbages, sauerkraut, and potato dumplings as “those dishes were cooked on deep / misty plains among the sounds of horses / beside fields of black earth on the other side of the globe” (Merwin, 1988: 147). Only “the oldest” can remember cooking those dishes on the plains. Merwin first compares the dishes of the young participants with those cooked by the oldest. He then points out that the young lack the depth of emotion their ancestors felt in the past: “none of the young has yet wept at the smell / of cabbages” (147). In contrast with their ancestors, the young participants would never be touched by the smell of cabbages; they would not recognize the steam of sauerkraut. The trivial changes in nature can never arouse their attention. All in all, they are the “masters of forgetting” (148), with their deep-rooted origin in nature torn up:

they play the music
of what they do not remember
they sing of places they have not known
they dance in new costumes under the windows
in the smell of cabbages from fields
nobody has seen.
(148)

As the young participants would not appreciate the greatness and bounty of nature, the festival seems meaningless because there is no one there who can really cherish and understand the past.

Under Merwin’s pen, humans in modern society are avaricious, hypocritical, self-alienated, indifferent, and ungrateful and, living in modern landscapes that are all

homogenized and made “placeless,” they have been separated from their original state, stripped of their original identity and their deep roots in the nature. In “Airport,” Merwin depicts the state of people involved in such a placeless landscape—the airport. He compares the airport to “a facility / devoted to absence in life” (Merwin, 1998: 55). In Merwin’s view, the airport is “not inhabited it is not / home except to roaches / it is not loved it is serviced” (55). It cannot be called a place but only a “container with signs” representing the mechanisms of the modern world. However, in such a building where “there is neither youth in the air / nor earth under foot,” people do not feel uneasy; on the contrary, they are “glad to be here / thinking of being somewhere else / hurrying at great expense / across glass after glass” (55). Merwin presents his own opinion at the end of the poem: “we travel far and fast / and as we pass through we forget / where we have been” (55). Most people enjoy their journeys by plane and look forward to arriving at other places, while for Merwin the experience of having been through the airport leaves only emptiness to us. “The hallmark of the airport is its impersonality. Even the human contact that one may find there is no more personal than that which a machine could give” (Frazier, 1999: 51). Merwin may agree with Howarth’s opinion that in modern landscapes such as the airport and the supermarket, “people and place are not connected and then alienation occurs” (Howarth, 2001: 55).

The spiritual destructiveness that human beings are encountering is best presented in the poem “Glasses.” In this poem, Merwin depicts in detail the urban life of modern men and displays almost all dimensions of the spiritual crisis that humans in modern society are experiencing: the city of cement, the construction of skyscrapers decorated with steel fountains and carpets, the homogenously tedious work, the comfortable and convenient life, the indifferent throngs on the street, people’s sense of placelessness and their destruction of the earth and lust for money. “Having lived so long in the artificial, people behave mechanically...their behavior is so dehumanized” (Frazier, 1999: 52). For Merwin, those people are “real glass and thin” (Merwin, 1988: 11). Merwin deliberately compares humans

to thin glass, a vivid image that may remind us of artificiality, coldness, separateness, and fragility.

Although Merwin deliberately applies a third-person pronoun “they” in “Glasses,” the readers are all aware that this “they” refers to all of us involved in the secular world. Frazier calls Merwin’s poems of this type “division poems” and generalizes as follows:

The division poems indicate much hope that we will try to divest ourselves of the barriers—the physical obstructions and the perceived distances—that we have established between our lives and the natural world. Our membership in the planet, absent of global concern and bioregional focus, has become tenuous to the point of extinction, and the poet’s work on environmental loss demonstrates the real-world danger of not bridging these gaps that we have established. (Frazier, 1999: 53)

Confronting the crisis of nature and human spirituality, Merwin is aware of the gaps between human beings and nature. Just as he acknowledges in his essay “Notes for a Preface” that “absolute despair has no art,” he endeavors to pursue through his poems a remedy to fill in this nature-human rift (Merwin, 1987: 272).

CONCLUSION

The last century has witnessed an unparalleled decline in the health of natural environments across the globe. Agriculture has been widely corporatized; watersheds and larger bodies of water regularly suffer contamination from pesticide run-off, sewage, invasive species, industrial waste, and fuel spills; global warming has accelerated as a result of increased greenhouse gas emissions; wilderness reserves have come under economic pressure from burgeoning human populations; and the planet appears to have entered its sixth and most accelerated extinction cycle. Among the many literary responses to these local and global threats is the ecopoetry, which appeals to nature's capacity to provide individual spiritual insight and psychological regeneration, thus asserting a quasi-religious bond with the natural world that may motivate activist responses to these threats.

This dissertation has addressed the question of how the poets Gary Snyder and W. S. Merwin attempted to fashion an environmentally informed ecopoetry in the twentieth century. The study has focused on the narrative ecological poetry developed by these major poets working within the ecopoetic tradition. One important approach to such poetry is to introduce the reality of current environmental conditions while maintaining a pastoral façade in order to unsettle common conceptions of nature and of the ways that humans relate to it. The works of the two poets address current environmental crises in order to articulate new relations between humans and their environments.

Snyder's philosophy on nature and man relies on the ecology of Buddhism, which is in fact a syncretism. He has absorbed a variety of influences of subcultures including Chinese Confucianism, Taoism, different branches of Buddhism, and Shamanism. Barnhill regards him as "an intercultural environmental writer, because he integrates the views of nature found in various cultures into a single ecological vision" (Barnhill, 2002: 112). These multicultural influences are integrated with Buddhism which acts as the core of Snyder's philosophy.

Snyder's close contact with nature since childhood contributes to his ecological philosophy and writings about natural things and phenomena. Snyder's poems connect readers with the natural scenes of North America such as the creeks, mountains, and birds. However, his nature poems are not merely concerned with aesthetics. They usually involve tasks that mediate between humans and the material world.

The environmental threats and ecological crises brought about by industrial revolution and humans' lack of ecological consciousness have caused Snyder's works to be evoked as the leading voice for nature and the wilderness. He uses poetry to protest against the environmental pollution and the damages to the natural world. By painfully depicting humans' destructive behaviors, Snyder attempts to draw people's attention to the present environmental state. He has played an active and constructive role in the protection of the wilderness and creating an ecologically harmonious living state. He notes:

The value and function of poetry can be said in very few words. One side of it is in-time, the other is out-of-time. The in-time side of it is to tune us in to mother nature and human nature so that we live in time, in our societies in a way and on a path in which all things can come to fruition equally, and together in harmony. And the out-of-time function of poetry is to return us to our own true original nature at this instant forever. (Snyder, 1980: 73)

In the construction of the ecological harmony, Snyder intends to inculcate a new culture. Snyder claims that "there also is some evidence that civilized life isn't good for the human gene pool. To achieve the changes we must change the very foundations of our society and our mind" (Snyder, 1974: 99). He begins to think about the "how to be" question in his land. Since the 1970s, he has increasingly used the terms "reinhabitation" or "reinhabitory," and his house Kitkitdizze serves as a model for a reinhabitory life. Snyder believes that all of industrial/technological civilization is on the wrong track, so he intends to transform people's cultural concepts, teaching that the real values are within nature, family, mind, and they lead into liberation (104).

Snyder's *Mountains and Rivers Without End* circles the planet in terms of space and place. His unusual blend of materials such as mythological references, East Asian landscape painting, Buddhist philosophy and ritual, Native American customs and folkways, and his way of interweaving such content into a whole cosmos makes his poem unique. The interplay between Snyder's passion for Buddhist wisdom and his compassion for transpacific landscapes generates the energy for the narrative progression of the volume. Snyder's direct experience of the natural world appears to merge with his artistic representations in *MRWE*, further implying the interrelatedness of nature and culture. The work is composed of four sections, which unfold like the mountains and rivers themselves, verbally as well as visually. The horizontal dimension of this long poem may be seen as symbolizing not merely Snyder's personal journey crisscrossing Asia and America, but also human historical and cultural journey from the Paleolithic era to the present postindustrial era. Moving across the different sections, readers can discover a pattern of interconnection and interpenetration embodied in the whole poem.

Snyder creates a bioregion at the core of his book. Bioregionalism is central to Barnhill's view of great earth sangha, "a new, extended form of Buddhist community" (Barnhill, 2002: 191). Snyder defines the aim of bioregionalism as harmonizing our human cultural, political, and social structures with natural systems. In other words, "human systems should be informed by, be aware of, be corrected by, natural systems" (qtd. in Murphy, 1992: 13). First, he urges us to recognize that there are more appropriate boundaries based on bioregional characteristics than arbitrary political ones. To accomplish the bioregional undertaking, he suggests that we learn our region, stay there, be at home in it, take responsibility for it, and treat it right (14). Snyder defines bioregionalism in Buddhist/Systems terms:

The most important Buddhist point is that human nature is empty, and that we are each personally not a simple ego but a system. Each of us is a system, of many selves, many memories, of many desires, many intentions, many lovers, many futures, and in understanding ourselves to be systems, we understand that there is no

hierarchy of dominance in ourselves, either. ...Realizing the arbitrariness of our several egos makes it possible not to wish to constitute an external version of authority. (16)

The goal of bioregionalism, in simple terms, is to create a society in which “a people and a place become one” (Snyder, 1990: 95). It can be realized in the practice of “reinhabitation.” Reinhabitory people are those who are committed to a life based in place, “making common cause” with the lifestyles of the original inhabitants (191). Over time, “people who work together in a place become a community, and a community, in time, grows a culture” (250). This culture is called an ecosystem-based culture, “whose life and economies are centered in terms of natural regions and watersheds” (Drengson and Inoue, 1995: 69). According to these principles, analysis of space and place in his great ecological poetry account for projecting his eco-poems into the social and cultural background. *Mountains and Rivers Without End* begins with “walking on walking /under foot earth turns /streams and mountains never stay the same” and ends with “the space goes on/but the wet black brush/ tip drawn to a point/ lifts away,” which guides his long poem to three aspects: where we are, how to behave, and the true nature of reality.

A prestigious poet who has written over twenty books of poetry thus far, nature has always been the main motif in W. S. Merwin’s poetics. From the early stages of his writings, Merwin’s poems have revealed tracks of ecological consciousness, which is represented in his portrait of the desolate and depressing scene of the end of the world. He depicts the deteriorating ecological status and the coming extinction we human beings are confronting in order to show the readers that the apocalypse he is portraying is not only the prediction of a future event but the description of the current state of the world. This deep concern for the deteriorating ecological disaster forces Merwin to introspect and probe into the ultimate cause of the crisis: anthropocentrism. The literary vision Merwin propounds, both in earlier collections of poetry and in his most recent volumes, in many essays and articles, and in his four books of creative prose, directly challenges and rejects as environmentally ignorant and ecologically disastrous the

exclusively anthropocentric attitudes and values that Western intellectual and literary traditions apotheosize. Instead of devoting himself to an unrestrained celebration of the supremacy of humanity, Merwin, over the greater part of his career and with increasing urgency, has been attending in his writings to the exploration of humanity's contingent, reciprocal role in the planet's interconnected natural community of biodiverse living things. As a central burden of his work, Merwin reprobates traditional and contemporary human cultural practices for their fundamental failure to nourish and sustain human beings as they render themselves increasingly isolated from the rapidly vanishing biological diversity of the natural world. Merwin writes continually about the inestimable diminishment of human existence as a consequence of humankind's accelerating separation from and unconscionable annihilation of other species of life on earth. And while exposing the deadening effects of anthropocentrism on human and on other-than-human life alike, Merwin urgently promotes the adoption of a cooperative, ecologically rational approach to the natural world and a sustainable reintegration of humanity with other-than-human nature.

Deeply aware of the perniciousness of anthropocentrism, Merwin targets the attitude of human superiority for criticism and underlines the moral status of animals by depicting totemic animals and deified birds in his poetry. For Merwin, all sentient and insentient beings are interdependent and correlated. He successfully expands the field of interspecies communication to a spiritual awareness of the interconnectedness of all beings, enabling the readers to penetrate to their intrinsic value. Affirmation of the moral status of animals and the interrelatedness of all beings constitutes the non-anthropocentric motif in Merwin's poetry.

However, Merwin realizes that being engulfed in the secular world, his aesthetic and ecocentric song can only be sung in the shadow of the modern world. Compared with most nature writers, Merwin is much more aware of the ecological crisis resulting from social problems. In many of his works, he associates ecological propositions with his penetration of social and individuals'

problems, lamenting the destruction of nature in the context of the general destructiveness of society and individuals: In his poems from the American sequence, Merwin elucidates the interactions between human society and the natural world, disposing the guilt of the Westward Expansion across the continent; in his poems on the city, Merwin observes that human society is part of the history of nature as well as part of nature; and in his division poems, Merwin questions the connotations of being a modern man, debunking the view that in modern society human beings are separated from nature and entrapped in a spiritual wasteland.

In conclusion, Snyder's and Merwin's poetry remain firmly grounded on the human values they see as the fundamentals of existence. As Snyder once said, "in a visionary way, what we would want poetry to do is guide lovers toward ecstasy, give witness to the dignity of old people, intensify human bonds, elevate the community and improve the public spirit" (qtd. in Serafin and Bendixen, 2003: 1061). Both poets' purpose in writing poems is to actively influence physical and spiritual, ecological, and cultural changes in communities and societies worldwide. They "think of a new definition of humanism and a new definition of democracy that would include the nonhuman, that would have representation from those spheres" (Snyder, 1974: 106). In many of their poems, they express a scientific and spiritual belief in the interdependence of all life forms. They respect non-human nature's otherness and distrust progress-oriented ethics that are disruptive to the balance of the environment. Although frustrated at continuing environmental deterioration, they believe that healing is inevitable, and that seeds for a new beginning will emerge out of the waste and destruction. What they want is not the "back to nature" motto espoused by philosophers, nor self-improvement through natural poems, or even to plant trees to help rebuild nature, but the real primitive conduct of getting back to nature. They wish to rediscover and re-experience the primitive situation wherein people cooperated with and were mutually dependent on nature. In this sense, in their intercultural poetic journey, they intend to articulate Buddhist thoughts to alleviate the social pains incurred by the senseless growth of industrial civilization in America, or on this planet at

large. Noticeably, the positive elements in their Buddhist thoughts have a therapeutic role in terms of culturally healing modern societies, both in the East and in the West. Moreover, with their intense and uncompromising pursuit of an intercultural cross-fertilization of more than half a century, their lifelong poetic journey exemplifies a paradigm of intercultural communication and complementation between the East and the West.



REFERENCES

- Alexander, D. (1990). "Bioregionalism: Science or Sensibility?" *Environmental Ethics*, Vol. 12, pp. 161-173.
- Al Jumaili, F.A.N. (2014). "An Ecocritical Reading of Gary Snyder's Select Poetry". *Researchers World Journal of Arts, Science and Commerce*, Vol.5, Issue 2. pp.60-68.
- Almon, B. (1979). *Western Writers Series: Gary Snyder*. Idaho: Boise State University.
- Ambrosius, W. (2005). "Deep Ecology: A Debate on the Roles of Humans in the Environment". *UW-L Journal of Undergraduate Research*, Vol. 8. pp.1-8.
- Aristotle. (2006). *Politics*. Teddington: The Echo Library.
- Arnold, D. M. (2000). "All in the Family: Gary Snyder's Poetics of Reinhabitation" Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Iowa: University of Iowa.
- Bachinger, J. (2013). "Gary Snyder's The Wild Mushroom". *The Explicator*, 71:1, pp. 7-10.
- Barnhill, D. L. (2002) "An Interwoven World: Gary Snyder's Cultural Ecosystem." *Worldviews*, Vol. 6, No. 2. pp. 111-144.
- Bate, J. (2000). *The Song of the Earth*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bazin, D. (2004). "A Reading of the Conception of Man in Hans Jonas' Works: Between Nature and Responsibility. An Environmental Ethics Approach". *Ethics and Economics*, Vol. 2 (2), pp. 1-17.
- Bekoff, M. (2010). *Encyclopedia of Animal Rights and Animal Welfare*. Oxford: Greenwood Press.
- Berry, W. (1970). "A Secular Pilgrimage". *Hudson Review*, 13:3, p. 423.

- Best, S. (1998). "Murray Bookchin's Theory of Social Ecology". *Organization and Environment*, Vol.11, (3), pp. 334-353.
- Bhuiyan, A. (2015). "Is Aristotle's Philosophy Anthropocentric? A Biocentric Defense of the Aristotelian Philosophy of Nature." *Biocosmology-Neo-Aristotelism*. Vol. 5, No. 2. pp. 196-212.
- Biehl, J. (1998). *The Politics of Social Ecology: Libertarian Municipalism*. Montreal: Black Rose Books.
- Bookchin, M. (1980). *Toward an Ecological Society*. New York: Black Rose Books.
- Bookchin, M. (1982). *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy*. California: Ceshire Books.
- Bookchin, M. (1992). "Libertarian Municipalism". *Society and Nature*, Vol. 1, (1), pp.94-105.
- Bookchin, M. (1994). *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*. New York: Black Rose Books.
- Bookchin, M. (1995). *Re-Enhancing Humanity: A Defense of the Human Spirit Against Antihumanism, Misanthropy, Mysticism and Primitivism*. New York: Cassell.
- Bookchin, M. (2011). "What is Social Ecology?" *Environmental Philosophy*. (Ed) Michael Zimmerman. New York: Prentice Hall. pp.354-373.
- Bowers, N. (1990). "W. S . Merwin and Postmodern American Poetry". *Sewanee Review*, 98:2, pp. 246-259.
- Bowler, P.J. (1992). *The Fontana History of the Environmental Sciences*. London: Fontana Press.
- Bressler, C. E. (2011). *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. Fifth Edition. New York: Longman.

- Brunner, E. J. (1991). *Poetry as Labor and Privelege: The Writings of W. S. Merwin*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Byers, T. B. (1987). "The Present Voices: W.S.Merwin since 1970". *W.S.Merwin: Essays on the Poetry*. (Ed). Cary Nelson and Ed Folsom. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, pp. 250-275.
- Callicott, J.B., Frodeman, R. (2009). *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*. Gale Cengage Learning.
- Calonne, D. S. (2017). *Conversations with Gary Snyder*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Capra, F. (1988). *The Turning Point: Science, Society and The Rising Culture*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Capra, F. (1995). "Deep Ecology: A New Paradigm". *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*. (Ed). George Sessions. Boston and London: Shambhala. pp.19-25.
- Chung, L. (2005). "Gary Snyder's Asian-American Shamanism." *The Comparatist*, Vol.29. pp. 38-62.
- Clifton, M. (1983). "W.S.Merwin: An Interview". *American Poetry Review*, 12:4, pp. 17-22.
- Clingerman, F., Dixon, M. H. (2011). *Placing Nature on the Borders of Religion, Philosophy and Ethics*. Burlington: Ashgate.
- Clutton-Brock, J. (1995). "Aristotle, The Scale of Nature, and Modern Attitudes to Animals". *Social Research*, Vol. 62, No. 3. pp.421-440.
- Collingwood, R.G. (1945). *The Idea of Nature*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Conan, C.A. (1983). *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the World's Science*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Costello, B. (2003). "On Poetry and the Idea of Nature". *Daedalus: Journal of American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 132.1. pp. 131-135.

- Cudworth, E. (2005). *Developing Ecofeminist Theory: The Complexity of Difference*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Curran, G. (2007). *21st Century Dissent: Anarchism, Anti-Globalization and Environmentalism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Davis, C. C. (1981). *W. S. Merwin*. Boston: Twayne Publishers.
- Dean, T. (1991). *Gary Snyder and the American Unconscious: Inhabiting the Ground*. London: The Macmillan Press.
- Des Jardins, J.R. (1997). *Environmental Ethics: An Introduction to Environmental Philosophy*. Second Edition. London: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Devall, B., Sessions, G. (1985). *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered*. Utah: Peregrine Smith Book.
- Devall, B., Sessions, G. (2015). "Deep Ecology". *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*. Seventh Edition. (Eds) Louis P. Pojman, Paul Pojman and Katie McShane. Boston: Cengage Learning. pp.231-236.
- Dobson, A. (2007). *Green Political Thought*. Fourth Edition. London and New York: Routledge.
- Drengson, A., Inoue, Y. (1995). *The Deep Ecology Movement: An Introductory Anthology*. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books.
- El-Sharif, N. B. (1983). "Ecological Themes in the Poetry of A. R. Ammons, Allen Ginsberg, and Gary Snyder". Unprinted Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation. Department of English, Indiana University.
- Erten, S. (2008). "Insights to Ecocentric, Anthropocentric and Antipathetic Attitudes towards Environment in Diverse Cultures". *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*. Vol. 33. pp.141-156.
- Evans, J.C. (2005). *With Respect for Nature: Living as Part of the Natural World*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

- Felstiner, J. (2008). "Between the Earth and Silence". *World Literature Today*. 82:4, pp. 54-58.
- Fenn, V. (2015). "Roots of Ecocriticism: An Exploration of the History of Ecocriticism, A Literary Theory of the Post-Modern World". *Journal of English Language and Literature*. Vol.2. Issue 2. pp.114-119.
- Folsom, E. (1978). "Approaches and Removals: W.S.Merwin's Encounter with Withman's America". *Shenandoah*, 29/3. pp. 57-73.
- Folsom, E. (1978). "W.S.Merwin and America". *W.S.Merwin: Essays on the Poetry*. (Ed). Cary Nelson and Ed Folsom. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, pp. 224-249.
- Folsom, E. (1987). "Fact has Two Facts". *Regions of Memory: Uncollected Prose*. (Ed) Ed Folsom and Cary Nelson. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp. 320-361.
- Frazier, J. (1999). *From Origin to Ecology: Nature and the Poetry of W. S. Merwin*. Cranbury: Associated Press.
- Garrard, G. (2012). *Ecocriticism*. 2012. New York: Routledge.
- Gilbert, R. (1991). *Walks in the World: Representation and Experience in Modern American Poetry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gilhus, I. S. (2006). *Animals, Gods and Humans: Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman and Early Christian Ideas*. New York: Routledge.
- Glottfelty, C. (1996). "Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis". *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. (Ed) Cheryll Glottfelty and Harold Froom. Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press. pp. xv-xxxvii.
- Gonnerman, M. (2015). *A Sense of the Whole: Gary Snyder's Mountains and Rivers Without End*. Berkeley: Counterpoint.
- Gray, T. (2006) *Gary Snyder and the Pacific Rim: Creating Countercultural Community*. Iowa: University of Iowa Press.

- Harrison, P. (1991). "Do Animals Feel Pain?" *Philosophy*, Vol. 66, No. 255. pp.25-40.
- Hart, A. (2015). "Religious Communities of 1960s America". *The Forum, Cal Poly History Journal*, Vol. 7, pp. 59-79.
- Hettinger, N., Throop, B. (1999). "Refocusing Ecocentrism: De-emphasizing Stability and Defending Wildness". *Environmental Ethics*, Vol. 21. pp. 3-21.
- Hix, H. L. (1997). *Understanding W. S. Merwin*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- Horkheimer, M., Adorno, T. (2007). *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Howarth, W. (1996). "Some Principles of Ecocriticism". *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. (Ed) Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Froom. Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press. pp. 69-91.
- Howarth, W. (2001). "Reading the Wetlands". *Textures of Place: Exploring Humanist Geographies*. (Ed) Paul C. Adams, Steven Hoelscher and Karen E. Till. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 55-83.
- Hunt, A. (1999). "Singing the Dyads: The Chinese Landscape Scroll and Gary Snyder's Mountains and Rivers Without End". *Journal of Modern Literature*. Vol.3, No.1. pp. 7-34.
- Hunt, A. (2004). *Genesis, Structure and Meaning in Gary Snyder's Mountains and Rivers Without End*. Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press.
- Jung, H. Y., Jung, P. (1990). "Gary Snyder's Ecopoetry". *Environmental History Review*. Vol. 14, No. 3. p. 76.
- Klyza, C.M. (1994). "Bioregionalism". *Environmental Encyclopedia*. (Ed.) William P. Cunningham et al. Detroit: Gale Research. pp. 92.

- Kovel, J. (2007). *The Enemy of Nature: The End of the Capitalism or The End of the World?*. New York: Zed Books.
- Lancaster, L. (1997). "Buddhism and Ecology: Collective Cultural Perceptions." *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*. (Eds.) Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Leopold, A. (1989). *A Sand County Almanac And Sketches Here and There*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Malthus, T. (1998). *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. London: Electronic Scholarly Publishing Project.
- Manes, C. (1996). "Nature and Silence". *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. (Ed) Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Froom. Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press. pp.15-29.
- Marcuse, H. (1972). "Ecology and Revolution". *Liberation*, 10. pp. 10-16.
- Maricondi, P. W. (2010). *Framing the World: Explorations in Ecocriticism and Film*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press.
- Marshall, P. (2008). *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*. London: Harper Perennial.
- McClintock, J. I. (1994). *Nature's Kindred Spirits: Aldo Leopold, Joseph Wood Krutch, Edward Abbey, Annie Dillard and Gary Snyder*. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- McGinnis, V. M. (1999). *Bioregionalism*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Merwin, W. S. (1967). *The Moving Target*. Rupert Hart Davis.
- Merwin, W. S. (1977). *The Compass Flower*. Macmillan.
- Merwin, W. S. (1987). *Regions of Memory: Uncollected Prose*. (Ed). Ed Folsom and Cary Nelson. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Merwin, W. S. (1988). *Selected Poems*. Atheneum.

- Merwin, W. S. (1992). *The Second Four Books of Poems*. Copper Canyon Press.
- Merwin, W. S. (1997). *The Vixen*. Knopf.
- Merwin, W. S. (2005). *Summer Doorways: A Memoir*. Counterpoint.
- Merwin, W.S. (2000). *The First Four Books of Poems*. Copper Canyon Press.
- Murphy, P. D. (1992). *Understanding Gary Snyder*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- Naess, A. (1995). "Simple in Means, Rich in Ends". *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*. (Ed). George Sessions. Boston and London: Shambhala. pp.26-36.
- Naess, A. (1995). "The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects". *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*. (Ed). George Sessions. Boston and London: Shambhala. pp.64-84.
- Nelson, C. (1987). "The Resources of Failure: W.S.Merwin's Deconstructive Career". *W.S.Merwin: Essays on the Poetry*. (Ed) Cary Nelson and Ed Folsom. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, pp.78-121.
- Nhanenge, J. (2007). "Ecofeminism: Towards Integrating the Other Concerns of Women, Poor People and Nature into Development". Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis. Development Studies, University of South Africa.
- Norton, J. (2000). *Narcissus Sous Rature: Male Subjectivity in Contemporary American Poetry*. London: Associated University Press.
- Oelschlaeger, M. (1992). *The Wilderness Condition: Essays on Environment and Civilization*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- Oppermann, S. (1999). "Ecocriticism: Natural World in the Literary Viewfinder". Hacettepe University Journal of Faculty of Letters. Vol. 16 (2). pp.29-46.
- Özer, M. (2011). "On the Possibility and Necessity of the Land Ethic". Kaygı, Vol. 17. pp.91-101.

- Palladino, P. (1991). "Defining Ecology: Ecological Theories, Mathematical Models, and Applied Biology in the 1960s and 1970s". *Journal of History of Biology*, Vol. 4, No: 2, pp. 223-243.
- Palmer, J.A. (2001). *Fifty Key Thinkers on the Environment*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Pettit, R. (2010). "The Three Foxes: Animal Representation and Forms of Intelligence in Poems by James Baker Hall." *Journal of Kentucky Studies*. Vol.27. pp.93-104.
- Plant, C., Plant, J. (2008). *Home! A Bioregional Reader*. New Catalyst Books.
- Plumwood, V. (2003). *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Rachels, J. (1997). *Can Ethics Provide Answers? And Other Essays in Moral Philosophy*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Regan, T. (2003). *Animal Rights, Human Wrongs: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Regan, T. (2013). "Animal Rights and Environmental Ethics". *The Structural Links Between Ecology, Evolution and Ethics: The Virtuous Epistemic Circle*. (Ed) Donato Bergandi. New York: Springer. pp. 117-126.
- Robertson, D. (1984). *West of Eden: A History of the Art and Literature of Yosemite*. Berkeley: Wilderness Press.
- Rolston III, H. (1987). "Can the East Help the West to Value Nature?". *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 37, pp. 172-190.
- Rolston III, H. (2000). "The Land Ethic at the Turn of Millennium". *Biodeversity and Conversation*, Vol. 9. pp.1045-1058
- Rolston III, H. (2003). "Environmental Ethics". *The Blackwell Companion to Philosophy*. (Ed) Nicholas Bunnin and E.P.Tsui-James. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. pp.517-530.

- Romesburg, R. (2010). "The Fractal Nature of Gary Snyder's Mountains and Rivers Without End". *Journal of College Literature*, Vol. 37, No.3. pp. 1-25.
- Rueckert, W. (1987). "Rereading The Lice: A Journal". *W.S.Merwin: Essays on the Poetry*. (Ed) Cary Nelson and Ed Folsom. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, pp. 45-64.
- Rueckert, W. (1996). "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism". *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. (Ed) Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Froom. Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press. pp. 105-123.
- Russell, B. (2004). *History of Western Philosophy*. London: Routledge.
- Sale, K. (1985). *Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Vision*. San Francisco: Sierra Club.
- Salman, A. (2007). "Ecofeminist Movements from the North to the South". *The Pakistan Development Review*, Vol. 46, (4), Part II. pp.853-864.
- Santayana, G. (1926). "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy". *Winds of Doctrine*, New York: Scribner's, pp. 186-215.
- Schweitzer, A. (1998). *Out of My Life and Thought, An Autobiography*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Selsam, H., Martel, H. (1987). *Reader in Marxist Philosophy: From the Writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin*. International Publishers.
- Serafin, S. R., Bendixen, A. (2003). *The Continuum Encyclopedia of American Literature*. New York: Continuum.
- Shuyuan, L. (2017) . *The Ecological Era and Classical Chinese Naturalism: A Case Study of Tao Yuanming*. Singapore: Springer.
- Singer, P. (2002). *Animal Liberation*. New York: Ecco.

- Smith, E. T. (2000). "Reading Gary Snyder's Mountains and Rivers Without End." *Journal of Western Writers Series*. Vol.142. pp. 5-48.
- Snyder, G. (1970). *Regarding Wave*. New York: New Directions.
- Snyder, G. (1971). "A Conversation with Gary Snyder". With James Van Cleve. *Sallyport*, Vol. 30. pp. 6-9.
- Snyder, G. (1974). *Turtle Island*. New York: New Directions.
- Snyder, G. (1978) *Myths and Texts*. New York: New Directions.
- Snyder, G. (1980). *The Real Work: Interviews and Talks 1964-1979*. New York: New Directions Books.
- Snyder, G. (1983). *Passage Through India*. San Francisco: Grey Fox Press.
- Snyder, G. (1990). *The Practice of the Wild*. Berkeley: Counterpoint.
- Snyder, G. (1992). *No Nature: New and Selected Poems*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Snyder, G. (2003). "Kitkitdizze: A Node in the Net". *A Place on Earth: An Anthology of Nature Writing from Australia and North America*. (Ed.) Mark Tredinnick. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press. pp. 231-238.
- Snyder, G. (2005). *Axe Handles*. Washington: Shoemaker and Hoard.
- Snyder, G. (2008). *Mountains and Rivers Without End*. Berkeley: Counterpoint.
- Snyder, G. (2009). *Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems*. Berkeley: Counterpoint.
- Snyder, G. (2012). *The Gary Snyder Reader: Prose, Poetry and Translations*. Berkeley: Counterpoint.
- Steiner, G. (2005). *Anthropocentrism and Its Discontents: The Moral Status of Animals in the History of Western Philosophy*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

- Tallmadge, J. (2003). "Toward a Natural History of Reading". *The Isle Reader: Ecocriticism 1993-2003*. (Ed) Michael B. Branch and Scott Slovic. Athens: The University of Georgia Press.
- Talukder, M.H. (2016). "On Self-Realization: The Ultimate Norm of Arne Naess's Ecosophy T". *Symposion*, 3, 2. pp.219-235.
- Tan, J.Q. (2009). *Han Shan, Chan Buddhism and Gary Snyder's Ecopoetic Way*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press.
- Taylor, B. R. (2005). *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum.
- Tokar, B. (2008). "On Bookchin's Social Ecology and Its Contributions to Social Movements". *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, Vol 19, Number 1. pp. 51-66.
- Tokar, B. (2010). "Bookchin's Social Ecology and Its Contributions to the Red-Green Movement". *Eco-Socialism as Politics*. (Ed). Qingzhi Huan. London and New York: Springer. pp. 123-140.
- Toliver, C. C. (1997). *W.S.Merwin and the Postmodern Environment*. Austin: The University of Texas.
- Tovey, P. (2013). *The Transatlantic Eco-Romanticism of Gary Snyder*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tuan, Y. (2001). *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Vilkka, L. (1997). *The Intrinsic Value of Nature*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Wangu, M. B. (1993) *Buddhism: World Religions*. New York: Facts on File.
- Warren, K.J. (2000). *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters*.
- Waugh, P. (2006). *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- White, L. (1996). "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis". *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. (Ed) Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Froom. Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press. pp.3-14.
- Wimberley, E.T. (2009). *Nested Ecology: The Place of Humans in the Ecological Hierarchy*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Wolfe, A. (2004). *In the Shadow the Shaman: Connecting with Self, Nature and Spirit*. St Paul: Llewellyn Publications.
- Worster, D. (1988). *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yamamoto, S., Kuwahara, V.S. (2008) "How Does Buddhism Contribute to the Environmental Problems?" *The Journal of Oriental Studies*. Vol.18. pp. 71-80.
- Yee, C. D. K. (1987). "Discourse on Ideogrammeic Method: Epistemology and Pound's Poetics." *Journal of American Literature*, Vol. 59, No.2. pp. 242-256.
- Yip, W. (1993). *Diffusion of Distances: Dialogues Between Chinese and Western Poetics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Yount, L. (2008). *Animal Rights*. New York: Infobase Publishing.
- Yu, M., Lei, Y. (2009). "Biocentric Ethical Theories". *Environment and Development*. (Ed) Teng Teng and Ding Yifan. Oxford: Eolss Publishers. pp. 253-260.
- Zazula, P. (2013). "The Coyote is Not Inside You: Gary Snyder's Ecopoetry and Neo-Aristotelian Thought". *Brno Studies in English*. Vol.39, No 1. pp. 243-265.
- Zekavat, M. (2014). "Ecocriticism and Persian and Greek Myths about the Origin of Fire." *CLC Web: Comparative Literature and Culture*, Volume 16, Issue 4. pp. 1-8. <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol16/iss4/10>.

Zhao, D. (2014). "Zen Buddhism and American Poetry: The Case of Gary Snyder". *International Journal of Education and Research*. Vol., No 2. pp. 1-12.



ÖZGEÇMİŞ

Adnan Barış Ağır, Dumlupınar Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü'nde 2007 yılında lisans, 2010 yılında yüksek lisansını tamamladı. Osmaniye Korkut Ata Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda İngilizce okutmanı olarak çalışmaktadır.



ÖZET

Bu çalışma yirminci yüzyıl Amerikan şairleri Gary Snyder ve W. S. Merwin'in şiirlerindeki ekolojik temaları araştırmaktadır. Çalışmanın amacı, Merwin ve Snyder'in poetikalarında, yerli Amerikalı ve Budist inançlardan kaynaklanan ekolojik idealleri temel alarak, Batı kültürünün insanmerkezci ahlak ve değerlerini nihai olarak bozan yeni bir miti nasıl oluşturduklarını göstermektir. Bu anlamda, çalışma bu iki şairin ekolojik anlayışlarındaki kapsamı araştırmakta ve bu şairlerin tüm yaşam sistemlerinin birbiriyle ilişkili olduğunu bilimsel ve manevi kanaat üzerine kurulu bir inanç ile ifade ettiklerine dikkat çekmektedir. Bu bağlamda, birinci bölümde antik çağlardan günümüze insan-doğa ilişkisine odaklanan siyaset ve doğa felsefeleri ele alınmış, Snyder ve Merwin'in şiirlerinin analizi için gerekli metodolojiyi sağlamak üzere ekoeleştirel teorinin kapsamı ve tarihi ayrıntılı olarak tartışılmıştır. İkinci bölümde Gary Snyder'ın doğa ve insan felsefesi üzerinde durulmuştur. Derin ekoloji, insanmerkezcilik ve içsel ekoloji yaklaşımları Snyder'in şiirlerinin tematik anlamlarını ve şairin ekolojik kavrayışını incelemek için kullanılmıştır. Üçüncü bölüm, özellikle insan ve insan olmayanların eşitliği, ekosistem içindeki tüm organizmaların birbirine bağımlılığı açısından ekolojik düşünceye duyarlı olduğunu ortaya koyan W. S. Merwin'in poetikasına odaklanmıştır.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the ecological themes in the poetry of twentieth century American poets Gary Snyder and W. S. Merwin. The aim of this study is to discuss how Merwin and Snyder, in their poetics, created a new myth based on the ecological ideals deriving from the Native American and Buddhist beliefs which ultimately deconstructs the anthropocentric ethics and values of Western culture. In this sense, the study explores the range of the ecological understanding of these two poets and point out that they express a belief based on the conviction that all life systems are interrelated. Accordingly, the first chapter discusses political and nature philosophies from ancient to modern times focusing on the human-nature relationship. Literary ecocriticism as a theory and its history is also discussed in detail to provide the necessary methodology for the analyses of Snyder and Merwin's poetry. The second chapter focuses on Gary Snyder's philosophy on nature and humans. The theories of deep ecology, anthropocentrism, and spiritual ecology are used to study the thematic meanings of Snyder's poems and their ecological consciousness. The third chapter focuses on the poetics of W. S. Merwin, whose poetry reflects a sensitivity to ecological thinking, in terms of the equality of human and non-human beings, the interdependency of all organisms within the nature and society.