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Ecology in the Poetry of Gary Snyder**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem magisterskou diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla v ní předepsaným způsobem všechnu použitou literaturu.

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Introduction

The aim of this work is to analyze the theme of ecology in the poetry of Gary Snyder. In order to accomplish this task I chose four poems; “Control Burn,” “Front Lines,” “Mother Earth: Her Whales” and “Tomorrow’s Song.” All of these poems are included in Gary Snyder’s collection of poetry *Turtle Island*. Published in 1974, it won the author the Pulitzer Prize in the following year.

The analysis of the poems relies mostly upon information coming from Gary Snyder’s two collections of essays *Practice of the Wild* and *A Place in Space: Ethics, Aesthetics and Watersheds* published in 1990 and 1995, respectively. The advantage of this method lies in the fact that it enables us to exactly find out what are the poet’s views and what he wanted to say in his poems or even in their single lines. Especially, the content of the four poems I chose widely reflects throughout Gary Snyder’s essays of both collections. Furthermore, when additional information for adequate analysis was essential, I decided to search for information mostly in reliable up-to-date online sources.

The central concept of Gary Snyder’s poems and essays is life in a place. The fact that the poet named his collection of poetry *Turtle Island* is not a coincidence. *Turtle Island* is a Native American name of North America. Its origin lies in creation myths in which one of the main characters is a turtle and which Native Americans narrate on both West and East Coast of the United States. In “The Rediscovery of *Turtle Island*” Gary Snyder writes that in winter 1969 he attended the meeting of Native American activists who discussed cultural and ecological renovation of North America which would be inspired by the culture of Native Americans. The poet furthermore mentions that it was at this event when he heard about *Turtle Island* for the first time and that in the following months the name widely spread in Native American communities and their media because they perceived it as a source of inspiration which would help us create the future of North America.

As Richard Nelson writes in “An Elder of the Tribe” the part of Native Americans’ culture are teachings about a certain place in which people live closely interconnected with its surrounding landscape and its plants and animals. Native Americans had precise knowledge about ecosystems of their territories. Nature was part of their life and culture. From Gary Snyder’s “The Place, the Region, and the Commons” we learn that the cultural areas of the main Native American tribes were identical with regions which we today call bioregions. These are regions which we view in terms of their natural features. Their boundaries may be formed by, for instance, mountain ranges, rivers or deserts. Bioregions differ from each other

by the type of soil, the amount of precipitation or plant and animal species. However, as Gary Snyder writes in introduction to *Turtle Island*, the boundaries of current individual states of the United States do not respect these natural territories.

Bioregion with both its natural boundaries and specific features of its ecosystem makes its inhabitants think in terms of landscapes and nature. In every part of the world the tribes and communities of indigenous people thought and somewhere still think in this way. Nevertheless, after the establishment of political states, people began to think mostly in terms of the territories of these states. Thus, they gradually alienated from nature. The consequence of this change of thinking is worldwide environmental destruction which will continue unless people start to perceive the Earth surface as nature again. Turtle Island is the name which embraces the long history of Native Americans' experience in North America, its watersheds with their ecosystems and vast opened future. That is why Native Americans regarded this name as the source of inspiration for ecological and cultural renovation of North America. Soon after the meeting of Native Americans, there emerged the first group of people who embraced the name Turtle Island and began to perceive North America in terms of its natural territories and landscapes. Following the example of Native American tribes they returned to the land, settled down in places of their choice and began to work for environmental protection. In 1970 Gary Snyder joined them when he moved with his family to the Sierra Nevada to a place he called Kitkitdizze. As he writes in "The Rediscovery of Turtle Island" the new perception which this group of people shared influenced everything they did. This was the reason why Gary Snyder called his collection *Turtle Island*. In its introduction he calls on people both to pay attention to North America's natural territories and to return to its land which is, like plants, animals or people, also a living being. To return to the land means to settle down in a place. This is a very important step because it helps people to renew the close relationship with nature they lost. Our relationship towards nature develops in a place. People who inhabit some place for a long time gradually gain thorough knowledge of its ecosystem and landscape which enables them to feel as the part of the place and perceive it as their real home. Such a relationship towards one's place was typical for Native Americans who, as Gary Snyder illustrates in "Control Burn," were able to apply proper care of their land on the basis of their profound knowledge. Another advantage of life in a place is that it involves a high degree of environmental protection. People who are to spend a part or even their whole life in a certain place behave carefully towards local environment and defend it against development projects which might damage it. On the contrary, there are people who, as we will learn from "Front Lines," do not have relationship towards any place. As a result, they perceive local

nature of every place they operate in only as a source to earn money. They do not pay attention to negative consequences their activities might have on local environment. This poem particularly makes us think about the advantages of local administration. Nevertheless, as Gary Snyder illustrates particularly in the third stanza of “Mother Earth: Her Whales” which concerns Brazil, while our task is to find a way back to the land, we must also support indigenous people who have lived in a close connection to it for generations. Unfortunately, nowadays these people are endangered by big development projects as a result of which they lose their ancestral territories. The indigenous people possess precious knowledge about their places. There is so much we can learn from them. Moreover, each of their tribes has unique culture and traditions. If we let these people disappear, it will represent irreparable loss not only for us now but also for our future generations. Finally, it is in “Tomorrow’s Song” where Gary Snyder stresses that it is very important for people to begin to perceive the surface of our planet in terms of its landscapes and their ecosystems. If they continue to neglect the nature, it might happen that our future generations will inherit the planet with seriously damaged environment. On the contrary, if in the whole world people settle down in their places and begin to work for environmental protection in each of them, then the future of the environment of our planet will look positive.

Analysis of poems

“Control Burn” (*Turtle Island*)

In the first stanza of “Control Burn” Gary Snyder describes the way in which Native Americans used to take care of forests in the region of the Yuba River where he lives now.

What the Indians
here
used to do, was,
to burn out the brush every year.
in the woods, up the gorges,
keeping the oak and the pine stands
tall and clear
with grasses
and kitkitdizze under them,
never enough fuel there
that a fire could crown.¹

In “Kitkitdizze: A Node in the Net” the poet writes that the forests of the Sierra Nevada were, like all the dry forests of California, originally formed by low-level fires. These would come approximately every 25 years burning the forests’ underbrush and making its tall trees fire-proof. In addition to these fires, local Native American tribe, the Nisenan, would deliberately set the forests on fire. Thus they contributed to fire-proof of these forests by burning the underbrush composed of grasses and kitkitdizze, a shrub whose name comes from the language of the Wintun tribe living in a lower location, and keeping it on a low level. Consequently, there was a small amount of fuel and that is what prevented any huge fire from burning the whole forest. Furthermore, the forests looked like parks composed of tall robust trees and, as Gary Snyder mentions in “Ancient Forests of the Far West”, they were also described like that by the first settlers.

Nevertheless, nowadays the situation is different. As we learn from “Good, Wild, Sacred” local Native American tribe, the Nisenan, were either murdered or chased out of their territory during the first years of the Gold Rush. As Gary Snyder writes in “The Place, the Region, and the Commons,” generally, new settlers who came after them gained vast territories of which they did not know how to take care. This land became public property under the supervision

of institutions like “the Forest Service, the Park Service, and the Bureau of Land Management.”² It was “the well-intended but ecologically ignorant fire-exclusion policies of the government agencies over the last century”³ that “have made the forests of California an incredible tinderbox.”⁴ In “Ancient Forests of the Far West” Snyder informs us that destructive fires appeared as a result of the first logging. In the following period institutions concerned with forestry would suppress the fire and this situation has not changed. As a result of the absence of fires the underbrush, whose another component, manzanita, Snyder introduces in the following stanza, became dense and full-grown. Therefore, there exists the danger of fire.

Now, manzanita,
(a fine bush in its right)
crowds up under the new trees
mixed up with logging slash
and a fire can wipe out all.⁵

In an interview with Lew Sitzer Gary Snyder said that it is necessary to prune low branches of trees together with dense underbrush to prevent huge fires which, as he writes in “Kitkitdizze: A Node in the Net” could on the one hand bring the local ecosystem to its wild state but on the other destroy numerous houses and farms in the area.

However, Gary Snyder admitted that it would be appropriate to gradually bring the Sierra Nevada forests to their original state characterized by low underbrush and tall, fire-proof trees. He presents the same idea in the third stanza and then also in “Kitkitdizze: A Node in the Net” where he discloses his plan to prune the underbrush and make use of fire on certain portions of his forest with the hope that his neighbors will employ similar procedures.

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.

(manzanita seeds will only open
after a fire passes over
or once passed through a bear)⁶

Gary Snyder mentions the work with fire also in his essay “The Rediscovery of Turtle Island.” He writes that, generally, the deliberate use of fire was a significant interference into a wild nature before the agriculture was fully developed and that it seems that by deliberately making a fire native people imitated natural processes.

In the last stanza Snyder says that if the fire procedures bring success, the Sierra Nevada forests will be restored into its original state in the future and they will look like they did when Native Americans were taking care of them.

And then
it would be more
like,
when it belonged to the Indians

Before.⁷

Gary Snyder believes that there is still time to save and restore local wild nature and to influence positively its future:

“It is in our power, as people of the place, to shape the future here. Even though it has been logged hard and burned hot, an old-growth forest with a fire ecology can be brought back, and we will be trading a few marvelous knot-free sawlogs to the valley people in about two centuries.”⁸

After all, as the poet writes in “The Rediscovery of Turtle Island” “there is no “original condition” that once altered can never be redeemed.”⁹

The Sierra Nevada forests are worth saving. In “Ancient Forests of the Far West” Gary Snyder writes that they are one million years old. In the interview with Lew Sitzer the poet describes California’s climate as Mediterranean one. One half of a year is rainy while the other is dry. The Sierra Nevada forests remain dry for six months. They are adaptable to drought. Not only do they absorb fire but they also retain water and do not wilt. Furthermore,

these forests possess the ability to survive periods when they are attacked by insect. Last but not least they form a large ecosystem in which animals and plants live in mutual dependence:

“Acorns feeding deer, manzanita feeding robins and raccoons, Madrone feeding Band-tailed Pigeon, porcupine gnawing young cedar bark, bucks thrashing their antlers in the willows.”¹⁰

The composition of these forests varies according to both altitude and “the ice age temperature fluctuations.”¹¹ For example while the forests of the middle elevation are “composed of Sugar Pine, Ponderosa Pine, Incense Cedar and Douglas Fir, Jeffrey Pine, White Fir and Red Fir”¹² are rather typical for the forests of higher elevation. All the above mentioned trees are long-lived. The Sugar Pine and Ponderosa Pine are the largest species of a pine.

Nevertheless, to restore the forests’ original state by applying proper procedures may take a lot of time to complete. After all, in “Reinhabitation” Gary Snyder writes that “proper forest management or game management means doing things with the far future in mind.”¹³ We must work on the land properly so that the environment on this planet remains untouched by any serious damage. Only then the next generations will be able to continue in our work.

The ability to apply proper procedures to take care of the land involves the knowledge of one’s place. In “Reinhabitation” Gary Snyder writes that when he was a child, an elderly Native American from the Salish tribe used to come to the farm of his parents to sell smoked salmon. When he came, Snyder talked to him. He realized that the old Salish man knew very well where Snyder was. Influenced by these meetings at that time, he, as a child, built his identity on the place where he came from. The poet says that only later did he gain complex historical and cultural knowledge. Nevertheless, he has never forgotten that the basis of his identity is the place where he comes from.

The old Salish man passed on young Snyder the concept which permeates through both his poems and essays: the life in a place.

As Gary Snyder writes in “Amazing Grace” already “the people of precivilized times or places knew their specific watershed ecosystems and mastered those details with beautiful and empirical precision.”¹⁴ In dependence on local ecosystems people developed specific ways of living which enabled them to dwell in a certain place. “The land is all small places”¹⁵ and in each of these places people have specific methods of agriculture and certain way of living. They know local plants and animals and have their own culture. There are also numerous

stories relating to their places which bear names in their languages. For example, in Alaska all the mountains and lakes used to have names in the languages of indigenous tribes. Then, white settlers renamed these places after “transient exploiters, or their own girlfriends, or hometowns in the Lower 48.”¹⁶

Like most of indigenous people Native Americans have the experience of living in their particular place for generations. Native American tribes know their places. In “The Yogin and the Philosopher” Snyder writes that “the Cahuilla Indians”¹⁷ who used to inhabit both the desert around Palm Springs and nearby mountains knew precisely all the plants. Native Americans have “a long history of subtle and effective ways of working with their home grounds.”¹⁸ Furthermore, they had “an exuberant variety of cultures and economies and some distinctive social forms...”¹⁹ Spiritual teachings about relationship between people and nature form an important part of various forms of their religion. Moreover, through particular practices individuals could attain a state in which they were able to see the world around with the eyes of non-human being. Every year Pueblo Indians in Northern America perform a ritual drama during which the whole society seeks advice from non-human forces. Performing individuals leave their human roles and “put on the mask, costume, and *mind* of Bison, Bear, Squash, Corn, or Pleiades; to reenter the human circle in that form and by song, mime, and dance, convey a greeting from the other realm.”²⁰

In “Reinhabitation” Snyder writes that “there are many people on the planet now who are not “inhabitants.”²¹ They live “far from their home villages”²² or they were “removed from their ancestral territories.”²³ Some of them were “moved into town from the farm,”²⁴ some “went to pan gold in California, work on the pipeline or work for Bechtel in Iran.”²⁵

In “The Place, the Region, and the Commons” Gary Snyder writes that it would be quite unusual task for most Americans to say which place is their home. Only a handful of them spend the whole life in a place and work with people they have known since their childhood.

Generally, in his essays Gary Snyder stresses the importance of a return to a place and to land. Besides the idea of life in a place he introduces bioregionalism which “calls for commitment to this continent *place by place*, in terms of biogeographical regions and watersheds.”²⁶ Bioregionalism encourages people to perceive the Earth surface in terms of its landscapes, plants or weather. As to place Gary Snyder himself considers important its location and altitude, vegetation zone and rainfall, rivers and creeks and their impact on the locality and last but not least its original vegetation. The central concept of bioregionalism is a bioregion. In “The Place, the Region, and the Commons” Snyder writes that bioregion refers to a region which is judged according to its natural criteria. A region is a territory whose

borders are defined by climate that determines vegetation zones, types of soil and the character of landscape. It is deserts, mountain ranges or rivers which form the borders of a region:

“We can stand at the edge of a big river, or on the crest of a major ridge, and observe that the other side is a different soil, a change of plants and animals, a new shape of barn roof, maybe less or more rain.”²⁷

These borders are not precise and unchanging. Although they definitely could not be marked in a map by a line, they demarcate natural territories to whose conditions its inhabitants adapt their way of life. In each such territory people developed certain types of cultivation or clothing. In the interview with Lew Sitzer Gary Snyder said that it is useful to know how indigenous people lived in a landscape because this will give us additional information about a place.

What Gary Snyder calls for in his essays is that people settle down in a place which they will know and with which they will remain connected into future. To inhabit a place brings a number of advantages and opportunities. People make long-time friends and neighbors; they can also get involved in local projects and municipal life:

“Being so placed, people will volunteer for community projects, join school boards, and accept nominations and appointments.”²⁸

Last but not least the life in a place will make people care about local issues. As local elections deal with these issues, electoral participation will increase. In interview with Juliet Harding Gary Snyder mentioned that local people will always come to vote for the head of county and when they come, they will also vote for president.

In “Coming into the Watershed” Gary Snyder writes that the life in one’s own place or bioregion is independent on the concept of nation and state. It enables us to feel as inhabitants of a particular place where local plants and animals are our neighbors. To live in a place means to get involved and work with other local people. After some time these people create a community from which the culture of a place may develop.

The main Native American tribes used to inhabit territories whose borders overlapped with those of major bioregions. This is another proof how excellent their knowledge of their places was. People in Europe and Asia used to live within bioregions, too. The situation changed

when the first states were established. Generally, their borders did not respect both bioregions and ethnic zones. The same thing happened also in the United States Gary Snyder illustrates this problem on the case of California:

“What is “California”? It is, after all, a recent human invention with hasty straight-line boundaries that were drawn with a ruler on a map and rushed off to an office in D.C.”²⁹

Furthermore, he adds that “the political boundaries of the western states were established in haste and ignorance.”³⁰ People who were responsible for their demarcation had parceled the land out before they could get to know it properly. Landscapes have their own structures and shapes and it is necessary to respect them. According to Gary Snyder, California consists of six regions. Each of them has its own specific organization which determined the way of life of its inhabitants as well as the type of agriculture which is possible to do there.

As a result of the political establishment of states, people gradually began to lose ecological knowledge and connection to community. If native tribes used to consider landscape with its plants and animals as a part of their culture, today the situation is rather opposite. If we want to regain these old values, we should discover characteristic features of the landscape we live in and realize that the world consists of bioregions rather than politically determined states.

Some of the first settlers in North America knew their places, too. In “The Incredible Survival of Coyote” Snyder mentions that his grandmother from Kitsap County in Washington would pick local wild plants and mushrooms. However, the next generation started to buy food in supermarkets and nowadays, most of people commute to work and to buy food hundreds of miles. Nevertheless, there are people who decided to turn to the tradition of Native Americans and to the life in a place. In “The Rediscovery of Turtle Island” Gary Snyder writes that in 1969 he attended a meeting of Native American activists in Southern California. It was there where he heard about Turtle Island, name which Native Americans have for North American continent. During the meeting its participants discussed the idea of cultural and ecological revival of the whole North America which would be inspired by tradition of Native Americans. Turtle Island, as Gary Snyder describes, has its origin in creation myths one of whose characters is a turtle and which are narrated by Native Americans on both West and East Coast of North America. Following this meeting Turtle Island began to appear in Native American magazines and other media. At that time there emerged a group of Americans who decided to turn to the life in a place, to discover its

landscape and work to protect environment. Gradually, these people settled down in the mountains and rural areas of the West Coast. In 1970 Gary Snyder, too, moved to his place Kitkitdizze in the Sierra Nevada. In 1974 he published his collection of poetry *Turtle Island*. In its introductory note the poet appeals to his readers to perceive North American continent in terms of its “watersheds and life communities – plant zones, physiographic provinces, culture areas: following natural boundaries”³¹ in order to discover the place they are living in and to enter into close connection with it. This will enable them to feel more at home on both North American continent and in their place.

Last but not least, if we want to find information about our place it is also necessary for us to explore the tradition of Native Americans who have been living on North American continent for 35 000 years or more. There is none else who could teach us better about it. Nevertheless, a lot of people do not realize this fact. On the other hand it is little surprising. As Gary Snyder writes in “The Rediscovery of Turtle Island” the history of the U.S.A. concentrates mostly on American white population. A lot of facts about history and culture of North America were omitted. Nevertheless, the difference between saying the U.S.A., America and Turtle Island will always remain:

“Speak of the United States, and you are talking two centuries of basically English-speaking affairs; speak of “America” and you invoke five centuries of Euro-American schemes in the Western Hemisphere; speak of “Turtle Island” and a vast past, an open future, and all the life communities of plants, humans, and critters come into focus.”³²

In 1990 Gary Snyder was asked to make a speech on the occasion of Earth Day celebration meeting in South Yuba River in Northern California. The poet started his speech with the introduction of the Nisenans and the area they lived in. He told the audience that this local Native American tribe had their culture, stories, music, festivals and deep knowledge of plants and animals. Finally, Snyder expressed his hope that people living in the Sierra Nevada will once narrate their history from the Nisenans, who are now their teachers and spiritual ancestors, and not from the short era of gold miners of 1849 as is stated in official history. In spite of the fact that the lives of gold miners were courageous and witty, it is necessary that they explore the whole history of the region including local indigenous people to be able to establish deep connection to the land.

Ten wet days and the log trucks stop,
The trees breathe.
Sunday the 4-wheel jeep of the
Realty Company brings in
Land seekers, lookers, they say
To the land,
Spread your legs.²

In the third stanza a reader is informed that the site is worth buying. By doing so with the objective to make use of the site sources at maximum and earn as much money as possible, the action of these people represents the rotten pulse about which Gary Snyder speaks in line 2 of the following stanza. Hence, they contribute to the further spread of the cancer.

The jets crack sound overhead, it's OK here;
Every pulse of the rot at the heart
In the sick fat veins of Amerika
Pushes the edge up closer –³

In the first three lines of the fourth stanza Gary Snyder describes the process of logging and the devastation which accompanies it. The poet concentrates on the painful destruction which the bulldozer emitting unpleasant sounds inflicts upon the bushes which are still alive. In this description Gary Snyder may have drawn from his knowledge of Native American cultural and ethical values concerning nature. Native Americans perceive plants and animals as people who can, through rituals and dances, join political debates in a tribe. Thus, they are represented in a human society. This fact makes us ask what trees or deer think, which sounds strangely in our society where nature and land are taken for granted. Generally, indigenous people and especially hunters and pickers are aware that in nature plants, animals and human beings exist in dependency on each other. It is them who perceive ecosystems as sacred and who express gratitude to land and living beings in the most beautiful manner. While hunters venerate souls of animals, pickers of wild plants pay reverent attention to their lives.

In the last two lines we learn that the logging is done for a man living in a town who seems not to have any relationship towards the site. In “Earth Day and the War Against the Imagination” Gary Snyder writes that there is a similar situation in the Sierra Nevada where

gold mining and logging corporations develop their activity. The poet says that these people and companies “are often based elsewhere in the state, and they have no loyalty to *any* community or place.”⁴

A bulldozer grinding and slobbering
Sideslipping and belching on top of
The skinned-up bodies of still-live bushes
In the pay of a man
From town.⁵

In the last stanza of the poem Gary Snyder calls for the end of the destruction of nature. The poet demands that the destruction of nature does not go beyond the point where both the forest and the desert start.

Behind is a forest that goes to the Arctic
And a desert that still belongs to the Piute
And here we must draw
Our line.⁶

The nature is not a place where we come for a visit. It is a home that we share with plants and animals and hence it deserves our protection. Therefore, the first thing people should do is to stop “taking the natural world for granted as a kind of hardware store and lumberyard, to be used and exploited to the maximum—a realm with no intrinsic value of its own.”⁷ Furthermore, it is necessary to leave the concept of human superiority to plants and animals and instead of it to receive the ecological one which says that in nature nothing exists independently. Every element of an ecosystem has its place and plays an important role. Although it may seem to us that there exists a hierarchy among them, in fact all the elements of an ecosystem have an equal position. Moreover, if we focus on our language and society which we believe to distinguish us from animals, we can surprisingly find out that in nature we are nothing exceptional. As Gary Snyder writes in “The Etiquette of Freedom” animals also communicate with each other, therefore they possess some kind of communication system. Both “language and culture emerge from our biological-social natural existence, animals that we were/are. Language is a mind-body system that coevolved with our needs and nerves.”⁸ Language develops spontaneously like body and imagination and it transcends our

rational and intellectual capacity. Our vocabulary has its source in our unconscious and it comes to our mind spontaneously. Our language is not ability for which we should feel superior to other species and for which we should be honored. In its essence it is similar to “the way clouds divide and mingle”⁹ or to “the way the many flowerlets of a composite blossom divide and redivide.”¹⁰ Therefore, what we need to realize is that in nature our position is equal to those of plants and animals. In “Exhortations for Baby Tigers” Gary Snyder writes that “the beautiful world of nature is for this marvelous sensitive human creature we are, but *also* and *equally* for the sleepy baby bat hanging in the eaves or the hummingbird on a courtship dive.”¹¹ While in our society we concentrate mainly on its problems and successes, Native American tribes and other indigenous people live in their places in a close relationship with nature. Let them be our inspiration in finding a way which will enable us to create a closer relationship with nature in our place. In “A Village Council of All Beings” Gary Snyder writes that “the actualization of the spiritual and political implications of ecology—ensuring that it is more than rhetoric or ideas—must occur place by place. Nature happens, culture happens, somewhere.”¹² The poet further adds that bioregional politics of villages works on this basis. The idea of the Village Council of All Beings proposed by Joanna Macy and John Seed also works with the concept of the life in a place. According to this proposition every village would count also local plants and animals among its inhabitants. This means that they would have the opportunity to voice their opinions on local issues.

What is also necessary for us to do to keep nature around us in a good condition is to be politically and socially active. Particularly, we should learn how to influence public issues in our place. This may involve our attendance of meetings where we can voice our opinions, calling on our elected representatives and governmental offices or study of long-term plans concerning forest management. Gary Snyder, too, got involved in local issues in his place in the Sierra Nevada. In “Good, Wild, Sacred” he writes that in his locality gold mining was resumed and logging is spreading into higher altitude. As a result of this, local people began to join committees examining both plans concerning mining and reports about impact on the environment. They also “stand up to certain county officials who would sell out the inhabitants and hand over the whole area to any glamorous project.”¹³ In “Kitkitdizze: A Node in the Net” the poet describes how he and his neighbors participated in many forestry cases and especially in the case concerning plans for the nearby Tahoe National Park in which logging industry became interested. During these cases Gary Snyder and his neighbors attended many hearings, discussed with forestry specialists, local gamekeepers and employees

of the Forest Service. Like Gary Snyder writes in “Kitkitdizze: A Node in the Net” in the Sierra Nevada land is owned by various subjects. Some estates are private while some others are public. Like anywhere else in the United States the public estates include the areas of national parks, national forests, the estates belonging to the Bureau of Land Management and many others. These public estates, “particularly in the arid West, hold much of the water, forest, and wildlife that are left in America.”¹⁴ In spite of the fact that they are a property of all Americans, it happens very often that they are dealt with according to the interests of logging and mining industries. At this point it might be useful to mention a few facts about the evolution of forestry in the United States of America.

In “The Ancient Forests of the Far West” Gary Snyder writes that the commercial logging on the West Coast began in 1870s. From the mid-1930s till late 1950s specialists on forestry would reject a clearcut and emphasize the importance of selective logging instead. The selective logging would be carried out under strict regulations and permitted logging volume was low. Thus long-term sustainable harvests were assured. From Gary Snyder’s point of view this was the last period during which forestry in the United States of America was managed in an appropriate manner. In late 1940s a chain saw became used in logging. At the end of the Second World War big logging companies, that is to say private owners of forests, found their forests devastated due to their inappropriate forest management and especially excessive logging. Consequently, they became interested in public estates like national parks. It was in 1961 when new management of the Forest Service established a close relationship with industry and decided to follow the fast pace of economic development. Its employees who preferred the policy of sustainable forestry were gradually dismissed during 1960s and 1970s. The volume of logged wood increased from 82 million cubic meters in 1950 to 319 million cubic meters in 1970. As the logging rotations became faster and faster, logged trees were smaller and younger and logged area significantly increased.

Laws concerning the Forest Service assign this organization duty “to manage the forest lands as forests.”¹⁵ Therefore, logging presents one of many options of forest management. To avoid their devastation caused by excessive exploitation, forests should be managed in a sustainable manner. This means that, as Gary Snyder explained in interview with Lew Sitzer, from these forests no animal or plant species that have always lived there will not disappear. The poet writes that many employees of the Forest Service would agree with this type of forest management. Nevertheless, it is Congress, the Ministry of Agriculture and business that have their own plans and hence they seek ways how to avoid it. Thus, they, for instance, tend to confuse sustainable with renewable. However, as Gary Snyder mentions “just because

certain organisms keep renewing themselves does not mean they will do so – especially if abused – forever.”¹⁶ Moreover in “Unnatural Writing” Gary Snyder calls attention to one more term which is widely used in business and governmental circles. It is a sustainable development. The problem of this term is that development does not go hand in hand with sustainability and diversity in nature. Therefore, if we want to work in a sustainable manner, we must give up development.

In spite of the fact that various ecological organizations reported about an inappropriate forest management of the Forest Service, the institution has resisted the calls of public for a change.

What public calls for is not only slower logging rotations and the return to a selective logging. People also demand that rivers and streams are protected from pollution, fewer roads are built and endangered species are protected. Last but not least, it is of utmost importance that logging in ancient forests, original forests of the West Coast, is forbidden.

These ancient forests are all around us in the form of buildings. We live under their protection. As Gary Snyder writes in “The Ancient Forests of the Far West” all the houses in San Francisco, Eureka, Corvallis, Portland or Seattle are made of them. To become convinced of it, it is sufficient to remove paint of an old house in San Francisco. What we will find is sequoia planks of a high quality. Gary Snyder mentions this fact also in lines 5 and 6 of the first stanza of the second part of “Logging” (*Myths and Texts*):

San Francisco 2 X 4^S
were the woods around Seattle ¹⁷

While current society lives in these wooden houses, there arises a question of where future generations will live if forests continue to be managed in an unsustainable manner. Actually, it might happen that once forests will be logged and future generations, as Gary Snyder warns, will have to live “in the shelter of riverbed-aggregate.”¹⁸ To prevent this situation it might be useful to transfer public estates under local administration. Gary Snyder presents this concept in “The Place, the Region, and the Commons,” where he speaks about commons, land which belongs to a local community. The use of this land is possible for all members of a community but not without any limitations, for everyone is bound by rights and obligations. This system protects the common land and prevents its owners from using it excessively. There is no wonder that the usage of the land is possible under such strict conditions. A community that inhabits their territory tends to avoid causing any damage to their surrounding environment as

their lives depend on it. Therefore, these people prefer to manage their agriculture and forestry in a sustainable manner. This means that they, for instance, will not log all their forests and let water to wash away all soil. Nowadays, “any resource on earth that is not nailed down will be seen as fair game to the timber buyers or petroleum geologists from Osaka, Rotterdam, or Boston.”¹⁹ Every little-inhabited area that is or is supposed to be rich in sources becomes exploited no matter in which part of the world it is located. Hence, the transfer of land under local administration which will manage it in a sustainable way seems to be a reasonable step which will protect the land from the destruction by business and industry. Moreover, it will contribute to the protection of environment, self-sufficiency of local communities and preservation of regional cultures.

“Mother Earth: Her Whales” (*Turtle Island*)

Environment faces destruction worldwide. In “Earth Day and the War Against the Imagination” Gary Snyder speaks about some of the main ecological threats to our planet. They are the shrinkage of forests and rainforests, the loss of fertile soil, decrease in biological diversity and water and air pollution.

While in “Front Lines” Gary Snyder concentrates on environmental destruction in the United States, in “Mother Earth: Her Whales,” a poem composed of thirteen stanzas written in prose, he describes ecological problems in Brazil, China and Japan. Apart from this he also deals with the theme of the interdependence of elements in ecosystems and the way primitive cultures perceive nature.

In “The Politics of Ethnopoetics” the poet writes that what “goes hand in hand with ecological destruction”¹ is “the destruction of cultural diversity.”² Everywhere in the world local ethnic groups whose history, languages, culture and traditions are thousand years old face extinction. Generally, “the village and tribal people who live in the tropical forests are,”³ as Gary Snyder writes in “The Place, the Region, and the Commons,” “literally bulldozed out of their homes by international logging interests in league with national governments.”⁴ This action is usually accompanied by explanation that local indigenous tribes’ rainforest territories are either private property or they are placed under public administration. At the end of previous chapter we mentioned that in order to be able to protect environment in every particular place in the world from the interests of business and industry, it is vital to transfer its land under local administration. Nevertheless, in case of indigenous people the situation is different. They already have their common land which is taken from them by both their own governments and international logging and mining companies. So, while our task is to renew our relationship towards nature through the return to the way of life in a place like our ancestors did, the one of theirs is to fight that “underprivileged and underfunded fight against unimaginably wealthy corporations to resist logging or oil exploration or uranium mining on their own land”⁵ in order to defend their territories and preserve both their way of life and thousands years old cultures and traditions.

In the third stanza of the poem Gary Snyder describes the situation of indigenous tribes in Brazil. In that country it is particularly sensitive due to two following reasons. Firstly, the Brazilian government that has its own development plans fully supports business activities of international corporations in its country. Other allies of the government are poor peasants. The government and its allies are opposed by people rejecting deforestation. Among them we can

find foresters, scientists and ecological organizations, small local logging companies and peasants living on the edge of a jungle and last but not least indigenous tribes inhabiting their forest territories. Secondly, it is in Brazil where a few of the last primitive tribes who have not made any contact with a civilized world until nowadays live. In 1900 there existed 250 tribes in Brazil. From 1900 to 1957 the population of indigenous tribes declined from more than one million people to approximately 200 000. Currently, there are less than 50 000 indigenous people living in Brazil. Their number has been falling due to the business activities of international corporations in the country. One of these companies is Volkswagen which is the second major investor in Brazil. In Amazonian jungle Volkswagen invested into the development of cattle farms which supply people of North America with beef. Thus this company contributed to the deforestation of the jungle which was a necessary step to establish pastures for the livestock.

Other companies that operate in Brazil are Georgia Pacific and Caterpillar Tractors. Both of them are concerned with logging. Caterpillar Tractors, especially, is authorized to pass through the territory of the Xingu National Park.

Why is Brazilian government supporting the activities of these companies? As Gary Snyder writes in “The Politics of Ethnopoetics” the government of the country officially declares that it is only development that can increase the quality of the lives of indigenous people. Nevertheless, these people have a different opinion on this development which should improve their lives.

To illustrate social and political situation in Brazil in a more complex way I decided to describe a cause which not only draws attention of both Brazilian and worldwide public but also confirms what has already been generally said about the behavior of national governments and corporations towards indigenous people.

Nowadays the whole world is closely watching the situation around controversial project of the Belo Monte Dam on the Xingu River in the Brazilian state of Para. If the dam is completed, Brazil will become owner of the third largest dam in the world with flooded area of 6 140 square kilometers. The first turbine should start to generate electricity in 2015 in a quantity which will enable Brazil to become the fifth largest economy in the world.

The Belo Monte Dam has both its supporters and opponents. The project is strongly supported by Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, the government, Congress and the country’s business and industry representatives. On the other hand, it is rejected by indigenous tribes and local people of the Xingu River Basin, environmentalists and several non-governmental organizations.

The 1 979 kilometers long Xingu River is a tributary of the Amazon. Their waters meet in the Xingu River Basin, an area of rainforest islands and river canals which is a home to 25 000 indigenous people belonging to 18 tribes. These people have lived in the basin for generations. They not only love their place, but also know its every detail. Their lives depend on the good health of the local ecosystem which they have managed in a sustainable way. The Xingu River is of utmost importance for these people who hold it in a deep reverence and celebrate its beauty and generosity. Its waters enable them to go to other places or to nearby town Altamira for supplies. On the Xingu the indigenous people are also dependent for fish and water to drink and plant their crops. In the rainforests people gather its products.

Besides the indigenous people the Xingu River basin is also inhabited by a non-indigenous population living in rural and urban areas.

Recently people who live on the shores of the Xingu have been threatened by mostly big development projects which cause damage to local ecosystem. Besides the building of hydroelectric dams these projects include, for instance, mining polluting the river, illegal logging, agriculture based on monoculture plantations or foundation of cattle farms accompanied by deforestation. The local indigenous tribes strongly oppose these activities as they impose destruction on the environment of their territory.

For the first time the project of Belo Monte was presented in late 1970s and since then it has been repeatedly strongly opposed by indigenous tribes living in the Xingu River Basin. The local people reject the dam for several reasons. Firstly, according to the results of a research carried out by a respected Brazilian environmental organization an area of 800 up to 5 316 square kilometers will be deforested due to the dam construction. Secondly, it is estimated that up to 40 000 local people will lose their old territories and way of life due to the construction. Some of the local communities have already begun to be displaced. These people are paid compensations. Nevertheless, the amount of money is not enough to purchase a piece of land in nearby localities because since the beginning of the construction the prices of land increased significantly. Those who do not want to leave are made to do so by the government who declares their territories a public property. Mr. Elio Alves da Silva, a displaced fisherman from Santo Antonio community, says:

“Belo Monte is finishing our community. We had no option. For me, the saddest part of this story is to know that everything I helped create here I’m now seeing it all be destroyed.”⁶

Mr. Alves da Silva furthermore stated that due to insufficient compensations he is obliged to move 70 kilometers away from his former community to a locality where the land is sold

for affordable prices. However, he will not be able to go on fishing there.

Furthermore, scientists warn that the dam will flood a large area of rainforests. Not only will animals living there be killed, but also the decomposition of organic material in the dam waters will cause the release of methane, greenhouse gas effective in holding heat in atmosphere, in large portions and thus contribute to a negative global climate change. Sheyla Juruna, an indigenous leader, says:

“If the Belo Monte is really completed, future of our region will be a desert. A desert of dead trees, animals, fish. It will be a disastrous future for all of us.”⁷

Last but not least, the people of the Xingu River Basin worry that a 100 kilometers stretch of their river may dry out due to the diversion of its waters at the Xingu’s Big Bend. And on the other hand, the same diversion will cause permanent flooding in upstream localities.

The construction of the Belo Monte was initiated in 2011 in spite of the fact that there exists strong opposition from the Xingu Basin inhabitants, warnings from scientists about its negative impact on environment and disagreement expressed by Brazilian people in a 2010 petition against the dam which received more than one million of their signatures in less than a week.

While indigenous people are concerned with the preservation of their territories, cultures and ways of life, the above mentioned supporters of the project are rather interested in the development of the region which, as they claim, will improve the quality of life of all its inhabitants. Hence, they do not want to give the completion of the dam up.

President Dilma Rousseff considers the project environmentally friendly producing energy in a clean, ecological way. Big hydroelectric dams are indeed considered to be the sources of clean energy worldwide. Thanks to Dilma Rousseff. It was her who represented Brazil at the World Renewable Energy Conference in Germany as the minister of mining and energy in 2004 and insisted on the inclusion of this type of dams to a clean renewable energy category. Furthermore, the President stated that the construction of the dam is vital for the country as it will help to solve its long time problem with energy shortage which causes frequent blackouts.

Joao Pimentel, a relations director of Norte Energia, a consortium of mostly Brazilian construction, engineering and mining companies, which is responsible for the dam construction, is convinced that Brazil needs Belo Monte. He emphasizes that the dam will generate cheap, clean and renewable energy with a low environmental impact on both local

population and general Brazilian public. As to relocation of local and indigenous people from the area, Pimentel says that around 24 000 people whose homes are in an area where the reservoir will be built will be paid compensations and asked to leave. He furthermore added that the number of displaced people is small. As to the emission of methane, Pimentel assures that this greenhouse gas will be released in small portions. As far as the worries of indigenous tribes are concerned, Pimentel stressed that their territories are not to be affected and that they will be able to live like they have always done. There is also no need to worry about the drying out of the 100 kilometers stretch of the Xingu as the corporation will create spill ways to maintain the current level of its waters.

At the beginning of 2012 the people of Arara tribe complained that the stretch of the Xingu in their territory became polluted due to the dam construction. It was in August 2012 when the construction was suspended by a federal appeals court due to inappropriate consultation of indigenous people as to the project. While Norte Energia claims that they inform the indigenous people properly, they deny it. In their declaration *the Xingu Forever Alive* from May 26, 2008 the representatives of indigenous tribes of the Xingu Basin stated that they “have not been respected by the Brazilian government and private dam-building groups planning dams on the Xingu and its tributaries, principally Belo Monte dam.”⁸ Furthermore, they complained about the lack of a proper consultation:

“At no time have they asked us what we think regarding the building of hydroelectric dams and not even the indigenous people were consulted – a right guaranteed to them by law.”⁹

In late August 2012 the Supreme Court of Brazil overturned the decision of the lower instance court and thus permitted the resumption of works on the dam. Nevertheless, the Xingu Basin indigenous people are determined to continue their struggle against the project.

“We will not accept the construction of dams, large or small, on the Xingu and its tributaries, and we will continue fighting against the imposition of a development model which is socially unjust and environmentally destructive...”¹⁰

It seems that when it comes to the development, the government of Brazil insists on the realization of its projects no matter how serious environmental damage they may cause and how strong disagreement they may provoke. Gary Snyder implies the same idea in the first line of the third stanza of the poem where he quotes Brazil’s willingness to exploit its natural

resources in an unlimited way apparently due to the development.

Brazil says “sovereign use of Natural Resources”¹¹

It is also necessary to remind that the government of Brazil gives licenses to international corporations to realize their business projects in the country. When the current President Dilma Rousseff served as the minister of internal affairs, she was responsible for the government plan concerning growth. It was at that time “when almost every infrastructure project – from offshore oil drilling to roads in the middle of the forest – were given licenses, despite civil society criticism.”¹²

Nevertheless, this kind of development, which Brazil favors, has its negative consequences. In the second line of the stanza Gary Snyder speaks about a huge number of still unknown plant species which seem to be endangered by unsustainable projects supported by Brazilian government.

Thirty thousand kinds of unknown plants.¹³

It is not only plant species but also animal ones which face possible extinction. In “Survival and Sacrament” Gary Snyder writes that the extinction of a species which went through a four billion years long evolution presents a serious loss as once it disappears, it never returns again. According to the poet such a loss is unacceptable.

In both the third and fourth lines of the stanza Gary Snyder speaks about Brazilian indigenous people whose ways of life, cultures and traditions are endangered by the development projects of the country’s government. Actually, due to these projects they are often obliged to leave their ancestral territories which represent the basis for overall existence of their tribes. The way of life, culture, history and knowledge of the indigenous people are deeply connected to their territories. Thus, when Brazilian government authorizes any project which affects the indigenous people’s lands, they, in fact, sell out their entire cultural heritage to a financially interesting business activity of a Brazilian or an international corporation. Consequently, the indigenous people who have to leave their ancestral lands to which their tribes have been connected for generations suffer from a deep unrecoverable loss.

The living actual people of the jungle
sold and tortured—¹⁴

As far as the indigenous people are concerned Brazilian government does not seem to fully respect their rights. As we mentioned previously in the case of Belo Monte Dam the indigenous tribes complained that they were not properly consulted which is their right. Moreover, in their declaration *the Xingu Forever Alive* from May 26, 2008 the indigenous people complain about the government's indifferent and disrespectful behavior towards them:

“We, who have protected our Xingu River do not accept the invisibility with which they wish to impose decisions upon us, nor the way we are treated with disdain by public officials.”¹⁵

The representatives of indigenous tribes end their declaration by demanding that the government respect the dignity of their people and the knowledge and teachings they inherited from their ancestors.

Why does Brazilian government behave towards the indigenous people in this way? It was them who have always managed the environment of the Xingu in a sustainable way that did not cause any serious damage to it. The indigenous tribes know their area so precisely that they could teach Brazilians how to take care of it or give advice to people involved in projects as to their possible impact on the local environment. Nevertheless, in spite of their precious knowledge and cultures, they are treated with disdain like they described. Apparently, for Brazilian government their cultures and knowledge which enabled them to maintain the Xingu environment healthy for generations mean nothing. Therefore, we must ask together with Gary Snyder whether this government, in the poem represented as a ruthless robot programmed to automatically follow his lucrative objectives without paying attention to their impact on both nature and indigenous cultures, does have any right to represent them.

And a robot in a suit who peddles a delusion called “Brazil”
can speak for *them*?¹⁶

What could possibly explain the attitude towards indigenous people in Brazil and anywhere else in the world as well is their different way of life. In “Poetry and the Primitive” Gary Snyder writes that, generally, primitive societies have developed in areas that civilized world has tended to ignore. Primitive people's minds concentrate on the present. Their culture is largely based on oral tradition. They usually do not pursue social success. These people live

their everyday lives surrounded by their families and friends in a deep connection to their land about which they have a complex knowledge. For instance, those who live by gathering in a jungle perceive it to be a rich source of “fibers, poisons, medicines, intoxicants, detoxicants, containers, water-proofing, food, dyes, glues, incense...”¹⁷ Actually, we can say that for primitive people the natural system of the jungle is both their economy and education and therefore whenever they feel it might be threatened, they are always ready to defend it.

On the one hand Brazil, as a country with rapidly developing economy, needs energy. Currently, frequent blackouts represent a widespread problem all over the country which needs to be solved. But on the other hand, although the dam is to generate electricity in an ecological way, it is essential to consider whether the benefits of the project which will be built in such a sensitive locality as the Xingu will not be outweighed by its negative social and environmental impact. Currently, in Brazil 75 % of all the energy is generated by renewable sources. Nevertheless, with another five large dams being approved in the Amazon one must ask whether Brazil is not concentrating too much on hydroelectric dams. After all, energy can be generated also by wind and solar power stations which would have considerably lower impact on local communities and environment.

Another country which drew Gary Snyder’s attention as to environmental destruction is Japan. In the fifth stanza of the poem he criticizes the country for its continuous whaling in spite of the fact that commercial whaling was officially banned worldwide in 1986 by the International Whaling Commission. Japan has always maintained that it whales for scientific research which is possible under the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling. Thus, every year Japan kills around 1 000 whales. Nevertheless, not everyone believes it. In May 2010 Australia announced that it will sue Japan at the International Court for Justice in Hague for breaking the 1986 ban on commercial whaling.

His disagreement with Japanese whaling Gary Snyder expresses in the first two lines of the stanza where he expresses his indignation over the fact that Japan would like to choose which whale species it will catch.

And Japan quibbles for words on
what kinds of whales they can kill?¹⁸

This fact has been valid up to nowadays. On the annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission in July 2012 Japan asked for permission for catching minke whales near its shores. It was in 1982 when commercial whaling of this species was banned.

In lines 3 to 6 of the stanza Gary Snyder expresses his disappointment over Japanese whaling policy. Japan, a country with a rich Buddhist culture, is forgetting ahimsa, a Buddhist principle against killing, when it continues to be involved in the dirty destructive activity of whaling which Gary Snyder likens to poisonous methyl mercury that spreads in a sea like gonorrhoea.

A once-great Buddhist nation
dribbles methyl mercury
like gonorrhoea
in the sea.¹⁹

Although as far as Japan is concerned Gary Snyder fully concentrates on the country's whaling in the poem, in his essays he describes another aspects of its environmental destruction. In "Ancient Forests of the Far West" Gary Snyder writes that due to continuous logging throughout centuries the Japanese original deciduous trees are rare and their remains can be found in remote mountains. Some tree species became even extremely rare in Japan. For instance, "Hinoki, the Japanese chamaecypress"²⁰ which is known as "Port Orford Cedar"²¹ in the United States, is a tree from whose wood shrines and monasteries are built in Japan. Nowadays, however, this tree is so rare in Japan that in order to be able to reconstruct the shrines and the monasteries, Japanese are obliged to buy its wood in the United States. There the tree grows in Oregon and the Siskiyou Mountains in California. Port Orford Cedar wood is the most expensive conifer wood in the world. Last but not least, it is also necessary to mention that nowadays, due to excessive logging, the employees of Japanese sawmills work with the logs whose average is approximately 20 centimeters.

Japanese environment has also suffered the decrease in species diversity. In "Poetry and the Primitive" Gary Snyder mentions that one hundred years ago dozens of bird species used to live in Kyoto. Nevertheless, nowadays one can find only sparrows and swallows in that city.

The sixth stanza of the poem Gary Snyder dedicated to China. As he mentions in "Nets of Beads, Webs of Cells" the environment of this country became seriously damaged already between 5th and 15th centuries when it suffered from deforestation and subsequent decrease in the number of species. Moreover, as far as the deforestation is concerned, Gary Snyder provides information about it also in "Ancient Forests of the Far West" where he writes that Chinese lowland forests composed of deciduous trees would gradually shrink and finally

disappeared already 3 500 years ago due to the spread of agriculture.

The poet illustrates the above mentioned facts in the following stanza. While in its first three lines he narrates the story about the Elaphure who lost its habitat due to the spread of rice cultivation two thousand years ago and has remained extinct in wilderness since then, in lines 4 and 5 Gary Snyder describes how the forests around Lo-yang disappeared after they had been completely logged out in 1200.

Père 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—²²

In lines 10 to 14 of the stanza Gary Snyder reproaches China its concentration on development due to which the environment became so damaged that a number of species completely lost their habitat and became suddenly extinct in the country. In the following lines the poet regrets that in China it is no more possible to encounter tigers, wild boars and monkeys whose habitat was transformed into a large parking lot.

Ah China, where are the tigers, the wild boars,
the monkeys,
like the snows of yesteryear
Gone in a mist, a flash, and the dry hard ground
Is parking space for fifty thousand trucks.²³

Finally, in line 15 Gary Snyder asks whether a man is the most precious species on our planet.

IS man most precious of all things? ²⁴

The answer to this question we find not only in the two immediately following lines where he calls all living beings his brothers

—then let us love him, and his brothers, all those

Fading living beings—²⁵

but also in the second and the eighth stanzas of the poem. From the point of view of interconnectedness in ecosystems all of their elements are equal. Gary Snyder expresses this idea in the following lines of the second stanza where he describes interdependence between sun whose light and heat enable plants to grow, ripen and finally serve people as their food.

The grasses are working in the sun. Turn it green.

Turn it sweet. That we may eat.

Grow our meat.²⁶

People of primitive cultures have always been aware of the interconnectedness and the equality very well. In “Poetry and the Primitive” Gary Snyder writes that they perceive animals as people who move in a different way. He, too, speaks about “the standing beings, the walking beings, the flying beings, and the sitting beings”²⁷ in “Smokey the Bear Sutra.” As is apparent from line 2 of the eighth stanza the poet extended his perception of equality of all beings also to plants which are represented by trees in the stanza.

Solidarity. The People.

Standing Tree People!

Flying Bird People!

Swimming Sea People!

Four-legged, two-legged, people!²⁸

"Tomorrow's Song" (*Turtle Island*)

In 1969 when Gary Snyder was writing "Four Changes," he warned that "the soil is being used up"¹ and that the next generations might inherit the planet with a seriously damaged environment if current society continues to live "in a kind of addict's dream of affluence, comfort"² and "eternal progress..."³ It was in "The Place, the Region, and the Commons" where Gary Snyder sent another warning, this time especially to American society, that the United States "will lose their mandate if they continue to abuse the land."⁴

Unfortunately, as we learn from the first five lines of the first stanza of the poem "Tomorrow's Song," the United States finally lost the mandate during the second half of the twentieth century because they had not given a right to vote to their landscapes and plants and animals living in them. In line 6 Gary Snyder says that people left them alone.

The USA slowly lost its mandate
in the middle and later twentieth century
it never gave the mountains and rivers,
 trees and animals,
 a vote.
all the people turned away from it⁵

In other words the poet tells us that most of Americans did not change their approach to nature. They still do not perceive themselves as its part. Therefore, no wonder that people still do not consider landscapes with their plants and animals as their equally positioned partners which is the reason why they do not ponder upon what they might think about people's activities that have direct impact upon them. Not only in the United States but also in other parts of the world most people tend to neglect nature and their approach has its consequences. Gary Snyder names some of them in "Four Changes, with a Postscript" and a few of them we have already mentioned in previous chapters. Generally, one of the most significant problems of current global society is overpopulation. It does not concern all countries but on the other hand there are those where the situation is serious. Overpopulation has direct impact on environment of these countries. As the number of people is rising, area of wilderness is shrinking. Animal and plant species gradually lose their habitat and there is danger that they might finally become extinct. Nevertheless, the overpopulation does not endanger only our environment but also human society itself. Gary Snyder writes that everywhere in the world

the quality of life of people diminishes; air and water are polluted and we live in noise and “filth that no “animal” would tolerate, while advertising and politicians try to tell us we’ve never had it so good.”⁶ Everywhere in the world local indigenous people who have managed their land in environment-friendly sustainable manner are chased out of their territories to create space for development projects that very often damage local landscapes. Large number of animal and plant species is endangered or face even extinction. Last but not least, forests are logged in unsustainable manner worldwide.

In “Four Changes” Gary Snyder stresses that if human society is to continue to live on this planet, it is essential that they “transform the five-millennia-long urbanizing civilization tradition into a new ecologically sensitive harmony-oriented wild-minded scientific-spiritual culture.”⁷ The poet suggests that people study and get inspired by the culture of primitive tribes who have lived in nature for generations up to now and combine this knowledge with helpful information brought to them by science. This will enable them to create a community that lives “harmoniously and dynamically by employing various sophisticated and unobtrusive technologies in a world environment that is “left natural.”⁸ Gary Snyder envisions that this society would be composed of healthy people of all races whose number is, however, lower than nowadays. Furthermore, such community would pay attention to features of regions to which they would adapt their way of life and encourage demarcation of territories by “natural and cultural boundaries.”⁹ Instead of investing the effort in getting power and accumulation of wealth, “exploration and challenge in things like music, meditation, mathematics, mountaineering, magic, and all other ways of authentic being-in-the-world”¹⁰ would be encouraged as well as education, “quiet transportation,”¹¹ sustainable forestry, preservation of cultural diversity, protection of animal and plant species and environmentally-sensitive pesticide-free agriculture based on small farms.

In order to change our current society, it is necessary for us to transform not only its foundations but also our minds which represent the source of our perception of the world. It is essential that we find a way or technique that will enable us to join our human world with the one of nature in our minds. What could help us in doing so is education. Gary Snyder recommends us that we raise our children to be aware that they are part of nature. The poet shows us how important role education plays in this in “Amazing Grace.” Here, he writes that both the foundations of our society and the way of our thinking have their origin in “civilized educations”¹² that emerged with the evolution of script. This type of education is responsible for the emergence of “an urban cosmopolitanism”¹³ and “the loss of a keen sense of the integration of human and natural systems.”¹⁴ Within this system of education people gain

most of their knowledge from books, their teachers or television without having any direct experience with the world outside which they tend to perceive “ as a rolling outdoor space with weather above, obstructions underfoot, and plants, people, animals, buildings, and machines occupying various niches.”¹⁵

On the contrary, people who were raised in a society whose culture and education are based on oral tradition have direct experience with the world around. Within this educational system people acquire their knowledge by listening to stories transmitted from generation to generation. Gary Snyder mentions that the motifs of these orally transmitted stories come out from one’s mind closely connected to the mountains and rivers of a certain place. This reveals to what extent the people whose culture is or was based on oral tradition are or were connected to their place and nature in general. For instance, Pintubi people living in desert areas of central Australia sing traveling songs while walking from one place to another. These songs that recount stories about places along journey serve them as a map with whose help they can safely reach the place they are traveling to. This illustrates how myths, landscape and information are interconnected in the culture of primitive people. Another example comes from the northern side of the Sierra Nevada. Here, local Native American tribes, the Nisenan and Maidu, narrate the story about the creation of the world. One of its main heroes is Coyote. The story tells how Coyote created landscapes and how he gave plants and animals their names. These landscapes still exist. In “The Rediscovery of Turtle Island” Gary Snyder writes that he narrated this story to his children and that it “gave them their own immediate landscape, complete with details, and the characters were animals from their own world.”¹⁶

It is the direct contact with outside world that modern civilized societies lack. In the past people used to live in a close connection to surrounding environment. Their population was smaller and towns and cities lied amid wilderness with its rich fauna and flora. When traveling, people used to walk, ride a horse or go by boat. No matter which way of traveling they opted for, they were always moving in countryside. Nature was a part of their life. Similarly, in myths, as Gary Snyder writes in “Unnatural Writing,” animals appear in the role of actors side by side people and supernatural beings and their worlds interpenetrate.

Nowadays, as we have already said, the situation is different. While people of previous centuries used to live amid wilderness encountering animals frequently in their habitat, nowadays most of them know animals rather from books or documentary films. Nature, thus, ceases to be part of their everyday life and experience. Most people rather concentrate on the issues of human society and leave nature behind. Thus, as Gary Snyder says in the last line of the stanza, the myths die as nothing is permanent. Even continents face impermanence.

myths die; even continents are impermanent¹⁷

Nevertheless, Gary Snyder does not introduce the theme of impermanence in this line in order to comfort us that in fact it is not necessary to transform our approach to nature because, after all, nothing lasts forever so if it is not us who will, for instance, cause extinction of a plant species, then it will surely once disappear itself. Just on the contrary, the poet aims to encourage human society to change their attitude to their environment because the fact that everything is impermanent represent the reason why we should do everything we can “to move gently and cause less harm.”¹⁸

In line 1 of the second stanza of the poem Gary Snyder speaks about late 1960s and the beginning of 1970s when Native American name of North America, Turtle Island, became used again among Native Americans.

Turtle Island returned.¹⁹

This event represents an important milestone in the evolution of people’s perception and approach to nature on the West Coast and therefore a certain kind of optimism is connected to it; it was at that time when a group of Americans “who were seeing their life in the Western Hemisphere in a new way”²⁰ emerged. These people who opted for the life in a place combined with environmental protection and the support of Native Americans settled down in “the mountains and hills of the Pacific slope”²¹ as well as in area stretching “from the San Diego backcountry north into British Columbia.”²² They represented the first wave of reinhabitation.

The optimism we find in the second stanza Gary Snyder transfers to the third one. In line 1 the poet speaks about his optimistic view of the future which is based on the fact that in American society there appear people who decided to inhabit a place and get involved in environmental protection. If the number of such people in American society increases, then future prospects concerning the care and protection of nature in the United States are very positive. In this stanza Gary Snyder plays the role of representative of the people belonging to the first wave of reinhabitation.

We look to the future with pleasure²³

The way of life in a place is connected to thorough knowledge its inhabitants have about it

and also with their self-sufficiency. In lines 2 and 3 Gary Snyder says that people involved in reinhabitation do not need fossil fuels as they themselves are their sources of energy.

we need no fossil fuel
get power within²⁴

Gary Snyder rejects the usage of fossil fuels in his essays. In “The Politics of Ethnopoetics” he writes that basic energy we receive and which enables us to live on our planet is the one coming from the sun. Fossil fuels are responsible for economic growth and consumption which do not exist in harmony with the health of our environment as they contribute to its pollution. In “Nets of Beads, Webs of Cells” Gary Snyder mentions that agriculture based on the usage of fossil fuels causes lower quality of soil, water and air. That is why he suggests that our society rather concentrates on generating electricity from environment-friendly sources like sun or wind instead of relying on fossil fuels.

In “Energy is Eternal Delight” Gary Snyder ponders upon the question how to transfer the energy supporting the above mentioned economic growth and consumption to the extension and deepening of our knowledge of ourselves and nature that surrounds us and thus switch our concentration on destructive material growth to the non-destructive spiritual one. We need to realize that our lives are “fully dependent on an interpenetrating network of wild systems.”²⁵ To become aware of this solidarity is equal to one’s realization of enlightened mind in Buddhism. It is our mind being aware of the interconnectedness of all phenomena that is the source of our inner energy about which Gary Snyder speaks in line 3.

In the last line of the stanza Gary Snyder writes that he and his fellows need only a small amount of resources to gain strength.

grow strong on less.²⁶

Here, the poet may refer to the way of life of indigenous people who have at disposal only sources provided by landscape of a place they inhabit. On the contrary people living in modern civilization have an opportunity to buy comfortably everything they need and even things they do not at all. They can choose from a wide range of products. However, as Gary Snyder mentions in “Four Changes” excessive production does not bring much benefit to our society:

“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.”²⁷

And the poet furthermore adds:

“True affluence is not needing anything.”²⁸

In lines 2 and 3 of the fourth stanza Gary Snyder portrays people aware of interdependence of all elements as beings radiating wit and silent knowledge which they share quietly with their fellows by looking to each other’s eyes. Generally, to describe spiritual experience is difficult because our language does not possess means of expression which would be able to depict it. Moreover, here, in the stanza, we encounter with a group of people who walk on the same spiritual path. They all went through its various stages and reached the final one on which they share the same experience. There is no more need for words. These people understand each other and share their wisdom in quite community that holds together in their place where they live and work together.

Flash gleams of wit and silent knowledge
 eye to eye
sit still like cats or snakes or stones
 as whole and holding as
 the blue black sky.²⁹

In “The Rediscovery of Turtle Island” Gary Snyder writes that such “a community, in time, grows a culture.”³⁰ And he furthermore adds:

“To work on behalf of the wild is to restore culture.”³¹

In the last stanza of the poem Gary Snyder reminds us that wherever we settle down and whatever work we perform we must always bear on mind the importance of protection and restoration of the wilderness.

At work and in our place:

*in the service
of the wilderness*³²

Our aim is “to be a good member of the great community of living creatures.”³³

Summary

“Control Burn” (*Turtle Island*)

In the first stanza of “Control Burn” Gary Snyder describes fire procedures employed by the Nisenan, local Native American tribe, to take care of the forests of their territory in the Yuba River watershed in the Sierra Nevada where he has lived since 1970.

The forests of the Sierra Nevada were originally shaped by low-level fires. These would come every 25 years burning the forests’ underbrush consisting of grasses and shrubs kitkitdizze and manzanita and making its trees fire-proof. In order to both prevent huge fires and increase the fire-proof of the trees, the Nisenan would deliberately set their forests on fire. Thus, they managed to keep the underbrush on a low level. As a result of this there was not enough fuel and this is what prevented any huge fire from burning the forests.

In the second stanza Gary Snyder introduces us into current state of the forests which has its origins in the first years of the Gold Rush. Then, the Nisenan were either murdered or chased out of their territory and finally replaced by new settlers who knew nothing about the land they gained. The new settlers began to administer it as a public property under the supervision of state institutions. This involved the suppression of regularly occurring fires as a result of which the underbrush became dense and full-grown. Combined with logging sawdust the dense full-grown underbrush caused numerous destructive fires. As institutions concerned with forestry have not stopped the suppression of fires until nowadays, there still exists the danger of the huge fires.

In the third stanza Gary Snyder discloses his wish to restore the original state of forest on his estate by pruning its underbrush and burning some of its portions.

Finally, in the last stanza of the poem the poet says that due to the fire procedures the forest will look like it did when Native Americans took care of it. That is to say, as large parks of tall robust trees.

Gary Snyder believes that there is still a chance to save the forests of the region and restore their wild original state with the help of fire. Although it may take a lot of time, the one million years old forests of the Sierra Nevada are decidedly worth saving. Not only do they represent a large ecosystem, but also they possess remarkable characteristics. These forests, for instance, are adaptable to drought. Furthermore, they are capable of absorbing fire and surviving periods when they are attacked by insect.

To take care of one’s own land properly requires its thorough knowledge. In order to gain such knowledge it is necessary that people settle down in a place which will become their

home. This might be an unusual idea for most of Americans who move often. Nevertheless, it was not always like that. Some of the first settlers knew their places very well.

When he was a child, Gary Snyder encountered a man from the local Salish tribe on the farm of his parents. The poet felt that the man knew everything about the place and its ecosystem. Under the influence of these several meetings with the Salish man Gary Snyder built his identity on the place he came from. Although he acquired complex cultural and historical knowledge later, the place where he lives represents the basis of his identity. The idea of the life in a place permeates Gary Snyder's essays. As far as a place is concerned the poet considers important not only its altitude, vegetation zone or rainfall but also the way in which indigenous people lived there. The life in a place brings advantages. Besides having long time friends, it offers opportunity to participate on local projects and influence local issues.

Native Americans and indigenous people in general spend their whole life in their territories whose borders are created by, for instance, mountain ranges or rivers. Nowadays, we call these territories bioregions. Each of these bioregions has its specific climate that determines the type of local soil, vegetation zones or the amount of precipitation. To the natural conditions of each bioregion local tribes adapted their way of life. The type of cultivation, house building techniques or clothing may thus differ from one bioregion to another. Being settled down in their territories for generations Native Americans naturally possess vast knowledge about their land.

In 1969 Gary Snyder attended the meeting of Native American activists in Southern California whose aim was to discuss the idea of ecological and cultural revival of North America which would be inspired by Native Americans' culture. During this event the poet heard about Turtle Island, Native American name of North America, for the first time. It was at that time when the first wave of people decided to settle down in their places in the mountains and countryside of the West Coast. Among them was also Gary Snyder who moved to the Sierra Nevada to his place Kitkitdizze named after a shrub growing in local forests. In 1974 he published his collection of poetry *Turtle Island* in whose introduction he informs readers that this Native American name of North America should induce them to perceive their continent like its indigenous people; in terms of its watersheds and bioregions with their landscapes, plants and animals. Gary Snyder points out to the fact that the boundaries of politically established states of the United States do not respect those of bioregions. The same situation is found in other parts of the world. Generally, as a result of the foundation of the states, people began to gradually lose not only their ecological

knowledge but also solidarity with their communities. While Native Americans consider nature a part of their lives and cultures, current society concentrates rather on its own affairs, successes or icons. Gary Snyder believes that if people begin to perceive North America as a mosaic of bioregions with their natural boundaries and specific landscapes, they will be able to feel more at home there. The only people who are able to teach it to us are Native Americans who have lived in North America for more than 35 000 years. There is no one else from whom we can learn it.

“Front Lines” (*Turtle Island*)

In the first stanza of “Front Lines” Gary Snyder deals with cancer slowly devouring a hill. As we learn from the last line of the stanza describing a chainsaw emitting unpleasant growling noise on the other side of the hill, the cancer symbolizes logging in the poem. In the following stanzas, however, the cancer takes on a wider concept; it represents people’s belief in their superior position to nature in combination with the desire of human society for economic development and wealth. In the second stanza the poet describes people coming in a car of a real estate agency in order to explore the site and find out how much money they might earn if they bought it. In the third stanza we are informed that the site, which is, in fact, perceived only as a profitable source, is worth buying. This perception represents that rotten pulse which is responsible for the further spread of the cancer. In the fourth stanza we find out that logging is already underway at the site and that it is done for a man from town who considers the place and its nature as a source to earn money. In the last stanza Gary Snyder calls for the ultimate end of environmental destruction by determining a boundary behind which it must not continue.

If people are to put an end to the environmental destruction, they must, first of all, give up their erroneous view of nature that represents the root of the problem. Whether people like it or not, they live in nature in mutual dependence on plants and animals and therefore their position is equal to theirs. Some people might think that their language is what distinguishes them from animals. Animals, however, also communicate with each other so they must have some kind of communication system. Our language is part of our unconscious, comes to our mind spontaneously and in the end we do not know much about them both. In seeking a way back towards nature people can get inspired by either Native Americans and other primitive cultures who live in harmony with their environment or by the idea of the Village Council of All Beings proposed by Joanna Macy and John Seed. This concept considers plants and

animals to be, together with people, inhabitants of a village who can voice their opinions on local issues.

What is also essential for people to stop the destruction of nature is their involvement in making important decisions concerning public issues in their locality. This kind of activism includes participation of local people on meetings where they have opportunity to voice their opinions, study of long-term plans concerning projects in a locality or negotiation with their elected representatives. Gary Snyder got involved in local issues of his place in the Sierra Nevada, where gold mining was resumed and logging began to spread. There also existed the danger of the beginning of commercial logging in the nearby Tahoe National Park. National parks belong, together with, for instance, national forests, to the category of public estates. Although they are the property of American public, it happens often that they yield to the interests of logging and mining industries. This situation has lasted since the end of the Second World War when private owners of forests, that is to say logging companies, directed their attention to forests of public estates because they had devastated their own forests by excessive logging. At the 1961 new management of the Forest Service began to co-operate closely with industry. The volume of logged wood increased significantly and logging rotations became faster. Those employees of the Forest Service who supported sustainable forestry were gradually dismissed. Sustainable management of forests is not something with which employees of the Forest Service would disagree. Nevertheless, they are directed by Congress and the Ministry of Agriculture who have their own economic plans. This fact might explain the reason why the Forest Service did not respond positively to the calls of American public for a change after ecological organizations have reported repeatedly about the unsustainable management of forests in their hands.

In order to avoid the complete devastation of the environment of public estates by business and industry, Gary Snyder suggests that they are transferred under local administration. This system will ensure that they are managed in sustainable manner because no community will recklessly devastate their environment upon which their lives depend. In addition, the system will substantially support not only environmental protection but also the self-sufficiency of local communities and the preservation of their cultures.

“Mother Earth: Her Whales” (*Turtle Island*)

While in the previous chapter we dealt with the destruction of environment in America, this time we will concentrate on this phenomenon worldwide.

In the third, fifth and sixth stanza of poem “Mother Earth: Her Whales” Gary Snyder speaks about environmental destruction in Brazil, Japan and China.

In the third stanza the poet outlines what problems local indigenous tribes and nature face in Brazil. In no other stanza of the poem did Gary Snyder better illustrate interconnectedness between environmental destruction and the cultural one. Generally, local indigenous ethnic groups face extinction worldwide; they are displaced from their ancestral lands by usually environment unfriendly development projects that are profitable for companies involved in them as well as for governments of respective countries. Indigenous people of Brazilian Amazonia are found exactly in this model situation. In line 1 the poet depicts the materialistic attitude of Brazilian representatives towards nature whose resources they are willing to exploit in unlimited way in order to finally sell them for an attractive price. In the following line he speaks about still unknown species of plants whose existence might become influenced negatively by that approach. Therefore, there exists danger that they will disappear before they are studied. Lines 3 and 4 Gary Snyder dedicated to Brazilian indigenous tribes whose population significantly decreased over the last 100 years. It is above all Brazilian government who sells their ancestral lands and cultural heritage out to the business projects of both home and international companies whom they support and therefore is to blame. Among the home and international companies operating in Brazil we can name Norte Energia and Volkswagen, respectively. While Volkswagen, the second major investor in the country, is responsible for the foundation of cattle farms and deforestation in Amazonian jungle, Norte Energia is currently building Belo Monte Dam on the Xingu River in the Brazilian state of Para.

When Belo Monte is completed, Brazil will become the owner of the third largest dam in the world. The dam will flood the area of the Xingu River Basin where the waters of the Amazon and its tributary, the Xingu River, meet. The basin is home to 25 000 indigenous people from 18 tribes as well as to non-indigenous population dwelling in rural and urban areas. The indigenous tribes have lived in the area for generations. They know it thoroughly. Their lives depend on good health of local ecosystem. While the Xingu River which the tribes hold in a deep reverence renders them water to drink and irrigate their fields, fish and possibility to travel, in local rainforests the indigenous people gather their products.

The people of the Xingu River Basin are not threatened only by Belo Monte but also by another development projects like illegal logging or mining polluting the river. These projects are supported by Brazilian government who is convinced that only development can improve the quality of the local people’s lives. Nevertheless, these people have completely different opinion on these projects which damage their fragile environment.

The same situation prevails also around Belo Monte. Those who speak in its favor are Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, the government and Congress and finally business and industry representatives. According to Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff Belo Monte will not only generate clean ecological energy but it will also help solve the country's problem with energy shortage. Relations director of Norte Energia, Joao Pimentel, is convinced that the dam will provide cheap renewable energy with minimal environmental impact.

On the other hand, Brazilian public, environmentalists, some non-governmental organizations and indigenous tribes and local people of the Xingu River Basin are those who form strong opposition to the dam. They mind that due to the construction large area will be deforested, tens of thousands people will have to leave their homes and ancestral territories, greenhouse gas methane will be released in large portions and, last but not least, that a 100 kilometer-long stretch of the Xingu will dry out as a result of the diversion of its waters. On the contrary, Joao Pimentel from Norte Energia assures that there is no need to worry so much. Those people who will have to leave their houses will receive adequate compensations. Indigenous tribes will find their territories untouched by the construction and they will be able to live like they have always done. The Xingu will not dry out because Norte Energia will build spill ways, so the level of its waters will not surely drop. Finally, methane will be released but in negligible portions.

The construction of Belo Monte began in 2011. At the beginning of 2012 Arara tribe complained about the pollution of the Xingu waters in their territory. The construction of the dam was suspended in August 2012 by a federal appeals court; the indigenous people were not consulted adequately which is the fact they affirm in their declaration *the Xingu Forever Alive* from May 26 2008. Nevertheless, the construction was soon resumed; the Supreme Court of Brazil overturned the decision of the federal appeals court. In spite of this fact, the indigenous tribes are determined to go on fighting for their ancestral territories. As they complain in *the Xingu Forever Alive* Brazilian government does not treat them with respect and silently impose on them important decisions concerning their existence without informing them in advance. As Gary Snyder says in lines 5 and 6 of the stanza the government acts like a robot which automatically issues licenses to lucrative projects without paying attention to their impact on both people, in this case especially indigenous tribes, and environment. Finally, the poet asks whether such government has any right to represent these people.

In the fifth stanza of the poem Gary Snyder expresses his indignation over the fact that Japan, a Buddhist country, goes on commercial whaling banned in 1986 by the International Whaling Commission under the guise of scientific purposes. In the first two lines the poet

criticizes not only Japan's apparent determination to not to stop whaling but also its impudence to demand the permission to hunt certain whale species. Finally, in lines 3 to 6 Gary Snyder likens Japan's commercial whaling to poisonous methyl mercury that diffuses in oceans and seas like gonorrhea.

In the following stanza Gary Snyder concentrates on environmental destruction in China. Nature of this country suffered major destruction already between 5th and 15th centuries. At that time China experienced decrease in biological diversity as a result of deforestation and the development of agriculture. In the first three lines of the stanza Gary Snyder describes the fate of the Elaphure that lost its habitat due to rice cultivation and became extinct in wilderness two thousand years ago. In lines 4 and 5 the poet informs us about the forests around Lo-yang which were logged out and then finally disappeared around 1200. In lines 10 to 14 Gary Snyder expresses his disappointment over China's concentration on development as a result of which animal species, in the stanza especially tigers, wild boars and monkeys, lose their habitat which leads to the decrease in their numbers or even their extinction. In line 15 the poet asks us question whether a man is the most precious of all beings on our planet. In the following two lines we find him calling all living beings, which are generally endangered by his activities, his brothers. This is the view which Gary Snyder shares with primitive people who are aware of the fact that in ecosystems nothing exists independently. Human beings, plants and animals live in mutual dependence on each other and therefore they are equal. That is the reason why the poet calls for our solidarity with plants and animals that he, like the people of primitive cultures, perceives as people who move in a different way in the eighth stanza of the poem.

"Tomorrow's Song" (*Turtle Island*)

In the first stanza of poem "Tomorrow's Song" Gary Snyder writes that in the middle of 20th century the United States lost their mandate as a result of their neglect of nature. While nature is a part of indigenous people's life, our current modern society rather concentrates on its own issues. Generally, in the whole world people do not pay much attention what impact their activities might have on environment. This approach reflects in the current condition of nature worldwide. Nowadays, human society faces several serious problems. The first of them is overpopulation which contributes to both pollution which diminishes everyone's quality of life and the shrinkage of wilderness as a result of which animals and plants lose their habitat and might become endangered or even extinct. Besides biological diversity it is also the

cultural one which is found in danger. In every part of the world local indigenous people lose their ancestral lands, ways of life and cultures in favor of often ecologically destructive development projects. This situation is unsustainable.

Therefore, what is essential is that people transform the foundations of their predominantly urban society into environmentally friendly one which would adopt some of the features of the way of life and culture of indigenous people and combine them with ecologically-friendly technologies and similar new scientific knowledge. In order to be able to transform our society, it is also essential that people do the same with their minds that represent the source of their approach to nature. What is particularly necessary is that people find a way how to realize that human world and the one of nature are inseparable. In the past when population was smaller, towns were surrounded by wilderness. Wherever people traveled, they moved in nature. Therefore, nature had its place in their lives. However, since then the number of people living on our planet has significantly increased which reflected in the condition of our environment. People live mostly in towns and cities which have spread at the expense of the wilderness. Therefore, it is not so easy for them to get into direct contact with nature, let alone feel as its part. Thus, people alienate from nature and the condition in which the world's environment is found is the result of it. Our approach to nature is also influenced by education. People who were raised in a society whose culture is based on oral tradition get their education by listening to stories passed from one generation to another. The motifs of these stories are closely connected to the landscape of a particular place through the mind of their teller. This illustrates how closely these people are connected to their places and landscapes. On the contrary, people living in society where information and knowledge is spread in a written form rely on books, their teachers, television or internet to acquire information and education. Thus, they lack direct experience with nature. This is what we need to stop. We must begin to make children aware that they live in nature and that they are part of it. This is the way how to ensure that at least future generation will change their approach to nature and establish society which is ready to learn from indigenous tribes how to live in environmentally-friendly way and which supports education, culture, sustainable agriculture and forestry, preservation of cultural and biological diversity and quiet transportation instead of the pursuit of power and wealth.

The second stanza of the poem reflects Gary Snyder's optimism connected to the fact that in late 1960s Native Americans began to call North America Turtle Island again and that in American society there emerged a group of people who decided to leave the way of life of the majority of Americans and settle down in a place, get involved in local issues and work for

the protection of local environment. Gary Snyder joined them in 1970s when he moved to the Sierra Nevada.

In the first line of the third stanza Gary Snyder describes his delight with which he awaits future. If the number of people who are willing to live in a place and protect its environment increases, then the future prospects are very positive.

One of the concepts that are linked to the life in a place is self-sufficiency. It is connected to one's knowledge of local environment. Gary Snyder says that he and his fellows do not have the need of fossil fuels which, moreover, pollute environment, as their minds aware of interconnectedness of all elements in nature render them enough energy. In the last line Gary Snyder says that they prefer to live like indigenous people do. That is to say, in a modest way rather in dependence on sources provided by local ecosystem. Nowadays, people living in cities have a wide range of products to choose from. Nevertheless, the huge volume of production and consumption to which we are accustomed does not benefit our society. It causes only problems. What Gary Snyder suggests is that we transfer the energy we put in production, economic growth and consumption into deepening of our knowledge of both ourselves and nature. It will help us to perceive ourselves as a part of nature and enable us to spontaneously restore, protect or take care of wilderness properly in our places in the whole world.

Résumé

„Control Burn“ (Želví ostrov)

V první strofě básně „Control Burn“ popisuje Gary Snyder způsob jakým místní kmen původních Američanů, Nisenané, pečoval o les na svém území v povodí řeky Yuba v pohoří Sierra Nevada. V této oblasti básník žije od roku 1970 na své lesní usedlosti, kterou pojmenoval Kitkitdizze po keři, který se hojně vyskytuje v místních lesích.

Lesy Sierry Nevady byly původně utvářeny požáry, které do této oblasti přicházely přibližně jednou za 25 let a pomáhaly udržovat podrost, tvořený různými druhy trav a keřů jako jsou kitkitdizze či manzanita, na nízké úrovni. Tyto požáry vypálily lesní podrost, nezničily však vysoké stromy. Původní Američané úmyslně zakládali požáry, aby zamezili vysokému vzrůstu podrostu a tím i nadměrné tvorbě paliva, snížili riziko příchodu ničivých požárů a zvýšili tak ohnivzdornost lesa.

Ve druhé strofě se Gary Snyder věnuje popisu současného stavu lesů Sierry Nevady. V prvním desetiletí zlaté horečky byli Nisenané buď vysídleni nebo vyvražděni. Jejich území se zmocnili osadníci, kteří neznali charakter místního ekosystému a tudíž nevěděli, jak se o něj správně postarat. Tato území postupně přešla pod správu státních institucí, které v následujících letech potlačovaly pravidelně přicházející požáry. Následkem toho traviny a keře lesního podrostu značně vzrostly a s nimi i riziko ničivých požárů, které se oblastí přehnaly v důsledku prvního kácení.

Ve třetí strofě vyjadřuje básník své přání obnovit původní stav lesa. V současné době je lesní podrost značně vzrostlý a hustý, proto je nutné jej pravidelně prořezávat, aby se zamezilo vzniku ničivého požáru, který by stávající podrost vypálil a umožnil tak obnovu původní vegetace. Na druhé straně by však mohly shořet usedlosti v okolí. Proto se Gary Snyder rozhodl pro bezpečnější postup. Jeho cílem je prořezávat podrost a vypalovat určité části lesa, aby se oheň příliš nerozšířil. Básník rovněž doufá, že podobný postup zvolí nejen jeho sousedé, ale také správci okolních veřejných pozemků.

V závěrečné strofě Gary Snyder píše, že s pomocí tohoto postupu bude možné postupně obnovit původní stav, ve kterém se les nacházel, když o něj pečovali Nisenané. Představu o tom, jak takový les vypadal si můžeme vytvořit na základě jeho popisu prvními přistěhovalci, kteří podle svých slov projížděli lesy, které byly složeny z mohutných stromů a svým vzhledem připomínaly parky.

Gary Snyder věří, že šance na obnovu místního divokého ekosystému stále existuje. A byla by škoda ji nevyužít. Jeden milion let staré lesy Sierry Nevady totiž tvoří velmi zajímavý a významný ekosystém, který je domovem celé řady rostlin a živočichů. Tyto lesy zůstávají

suché po celou polovinu roku, avšak nevysychají a jsou odolné vůči požárům. Dokáží přečkat dlouhá období, kdy jsou napadeny hmyzem. Lesy Sierry Nevady jsou složeny převážně z dlouhověkých druhů jehličnanů, mezi nimiž najdeme i největší druhy borovic, borovici těžkou a Lambertovu.

Abychom byli schopni správně pečovat o životní prostředí na určitém místě, musíme velmi dobře znát jeho ekosystém. Takovými hlubokými znalostmi však oplývají především lidé, kteří jsou na takovém místě dlouhodobě či trvale usazeni. Ve Spojených Státech to platí především o jejich původních obyvatelích, kteří obývali svá kmenová území po celé generace. Stejně jako původní obyvatelé v různých částech světa měli i původní Američané hluboké znalosti o ekosystémech svých kmenových území, jejichž hranice tvořily vodní toky, pohoří či pouště. Dnes tato území nazýváme bioregiony, tedy regiony, které posuzujeme podle přírodních kritérií. Nejdůležitější úlohu v rámci každého bioregionu hraje podnebí, které má vliv na typ půdy, faunu a flóru či množství srážek každého z nich. Přírodním podmínkám každého bioregionu lidé přizpůsobili svůj způsob života, a tak se od sebe jednotlivé oblasti odlišují typem zemědělství, způsobem oblékání či architekturou.

Zatímco původní obyvatelé Spojených států prožili celý svůj život na svém kmenovém území, o většině Američanů, kteří se často stěhují, bychom mohli říci pravý opak. Nicméně, situace se začala postupně měnit na počátku sedmdesátých let minulého století. V roce 1969 se Gary Snyder zúčastnil shromáždění aktivistů z řad původních Američanů v jižní Kalifornii. Během této akce poprvé slyšel původní Američany nazývat severoamerický kontinent Želví ostrov. Původ tohoto názvu najdeme v mýtech původních Američanů o stvoření světa, ve kterých jednu z ústředních rolí hraje právě želva. Během setkání rozvinuli účastníci diskuzi na téma ekologické a kulturní proměny severoamerického kontinentu inspirované kulturou původních Američanů. Želví ostrov, jméno, které dali Severní Americe její původní obyvatelé, se stal její ústřední myšlenkou. Při jeho vyslovení se před námi otevírá 35 000 let dlouhá historie původních Američanů na tomto kontinentu, dále jejich hluboké znalosti o přirozených územích či bioregionech Severní Ameriky a jejich živých společenstvích a konečně také blízká i vzdálená budoucnost.

Na počátku sedmdesátých let začalo jméno Želví ostrov užívat stále více lidí. Řada z nich se rozhodla usadit v horských a venkovských oblastech, poznávat místní ekosystémy a pracovat pro životní prostředí. V té době se přestěhoval i Gary Snyder, a to do pohoří Sierra Nevada. O čtyři roky později vydal svou sbírku *Želví ostrov*, za níž obdržel Pulitzerovu cenu. Pro Garyho Snydera ovšem život v místě nepředstavoval nic nového. Své dětství strávil na farmě svých rodičů ve státě Washington. Zde se několikrát setkal se starším mužem

z místního kmene Sališů. Tato setkání, během nichž poznal hluboké znalosti a moudrost toho starého muže, jej ovlivnila natolik, že si svou identitu vybudoval na základě místa, z něhož pochází. Téma života v místě můžeme najít ve většině jeho esejů. Tento způsob života má celou řadu výhod. Nejen, že lidem umožňuje důkladněji poznat prostředí, ve kterém žijí, vybudovat si k němu blízký vztah a cítit se v něm opravdu jako doma, ale rovněž jim nabízí i možnosti zapojit se do místních projektů a v neposlední řadě navázat trvalé sousedské a přátelské vztahy.

„Front Lines“ (Želví ostrov)

V první strofě básně „Front Lines“ přirovnává Gary Snyder těžbu dřeva k rakovině, která pohlcuje kopec, na jehož stráních a v jehož okolí tato činnost probíhá. V této básni tato zákeřná nemoc nesymbolizuje pouze těžbu dřeva. Rakovinou se zde rovněž stává představa lidské společnosti o své nadřazenosti vůči přírodě spolu s touhou po bohatství a blahobytu. Lidé mají sklon vnímat přírodu pouze jako neomezený zdroj nejrůznějších položek, které lze zpeněžit. Názorný příklad tohoto přístupu najdeme v následující strofě, kde Gary Snyder popisuje příjezd vozidla realitní kanceláře přivázející klienty, kteří hledají pozemky, jejichž přírodní zdroje skýtají možnosti atraktivního výdělků. Jediné, co tyto lidi po příjezdu na místo zajímá, je množství a kvalita jeho přírodních zdrojů. Tyto parametry jim napoví, kolik peněz budou moci vydělat, pokud tento pozemek koupí, tyto zdroje vytěží a prodají. Ve třetí strofě básně se dozvídáme, že klienti jsou s kvalitou pozemku spokojeni. A tak lze očekávat, že v brzké době rakovina materialistického přístupu k přírodě pohltní ve Spojených státech další místo, jehož ekosystém padne za oběť obchodním zájmům svého nového majitele. Ve čtvrté strofě zjišťujeme, že jsme se ve svých odhadech nemýlili. Na pozemku, jehož majitelem se stal muž z města, je těžba dřeva již v plném proudu. V závěrečné strofě Gary Snyder požaduje, aby společnost skoncovala se svým destruktivním přístupem k přírodě. Básník zde navrhuje, aby byla přijata a respektována hranice, která v určitém bodě odděluje území poznamenané současným přístupem lidí k životnímu prostředí od toho, jenž zatím zůstalo ušetřeno. Nicméně, tato hranice v sobě ukrývá ještě jeden význam; představuje předěl mezi dosavadním přístupem společnosti ke krajině a novým vnímáním životního prostředí a jeho ekosystémů. Základem tohoto nového přístupu k našemu životnímu prostředí je skutečnost, že žijeme v přírodě. Je to náš domov, který sdílíme s obrovským množstvím rostlinných a živočišných druhů. Naše životy, stejně jako životy rostlin a živočichů, závisí na zdraví okolních ekosystémů. Proto je nutné, abychom si uvědomili a pochopili fakt, že není žádoucí

je při honbě za ziskem zničit. Právě naopak, ekosystémy vyžadují naši ochranu. Tento smysl pro ochranu krajiny, ve které žijeme, můžeme získat prostřednictvím zkušenosti trvalého života v místě. Asi bychom jen stěží našli místní komunitu, která by se ke svému životnímu prostředí chovala nezodpovědně a ve své lokalitě například vykácela či nechala vytěžit všechny lesy a riskovala tím třeba následné sesuvy půdy. Místní lidé, jejichž život je úzce spjat s okolní krajinou, by něco takového těžko někdy dopustili. Sami členové místní komunity jsou vázáni pravidly týkajícími se užívání půdy, kterou společenství vlastní. Můžeme tedy říci, že život v místě v sobě zahrnuje vysoký stupeň ochrany životního prostředí. Dokazuje to i fakt, že s půdou, která se nachází ve vlastnictví místního společenství, nemohou počítat obchodní a průmyslové subjekty. Podíváme-li se na to, jak je ve Spojených státech nakládáno s veřejnými pozemky, uvědomíme si, jaké výhody skýtá tato místní správa.

Ve Spojených státech mezi veřejné pozemky patří například území národních parků či státní lesy. Ačkoliv jsou ve společném vlastnictví americké veřejnosti, často podléhají zájmům průmyslu. Na konci druhé světové války velké dřevařské podniky zjistily, že si zničily své lesy nadměrnou těžbou. A tak se začaly poohlížet po lesích nacházejících se na veřejných pozemcích. V roce 1961 došlo v Lesní správě k výměně vedení. Noví čelní představitelé této organizace začali úzce spolupracovat s průmyslem, což se brzy projevilo na objemu vytěženého dřeva, který se v období od roku 1950 do roku 1970 až ztrojnásobil. Těžební rotace se postupně zrychlovaly, kácely se stále menší a mladší stromy a rozloha vytěžené plochy se tímto neustále zvyšovala. Zaměstnanci Lesní správy, kteří s touto těžební politikou nesouhlasili, byli propuštěni.

Za neudržitelné lesní hospodářství již Lesní správu kritizovala celá řada ekologických organizací. Americká veřejnost, rovněž nespokojena s hospodařením této instituce, požaduje, aby se těžební rotace zpomalily a upřednostnila se výběrová těžba namísto holoseče. Mezi požadavky najdeme rovněž zákaz těžby v původních lesích, ochranu řek a potoků před znečištěním či ochranu ohrožených druhů. Lesní správa na tyto požadavky, nicméně, nereaguje. Vysvětlit by to mohl fakt, že tato instituce podléhá těžebním plánům, které určuje Kongres a průmysl. Američanům nezbývá nic jiného, než pokračovat ve svém úsilí změnit způsob hospodaření Lesní správy.

Také Gary Snyder se spolu se svými sousedy ve svém domovském regionu snaží usměrnit počínání místních úřadů týkajících se obnovené těžby zlata či těžby dřeva, která se rozšiřuje do vyšších nadmořských výšek. Dřevařský průmysl dokonce projevil zájem o kácení v nedalekém národním parku Tahoe.

Jestliže místní správa chrání před průmyslovým a obchodním využitím půdu obce či

komunity, pak společenský a politický aktivismus představuje prostředek, který nám umožňuje chránit veřejné pozemky. Musíme se naučit ovlivňovat záležitosti v naší lokalitě. Tato činnost může zahrnovat naši účast na schůzích, kde se nabízí příležitost vyslovit vlastní názor, jednání s námi zvolenými představiteli, členství v místních výborech či studium dlouhodobých plánů týkajících se například těžby dřeva.

Myšlenka „Obecní rady všech bytostí,“ jejíž autoři jsou Joanna Macy a John Seed, počítá s tím, že se do ovlivňování místních záležitostí zapojí i rostliny a živočichové, kteří jsou pokládáni za členy místní komunity.

Rostliny a živočichové mají podobnou pozici i ve společnosti původních Američanů, kde jsou pokládáni za lidi, kteří se mohou prostřednictvím obřadů a tanců zapojit do politických debat kmene.

Nechme se tedy inspirovat kulturní tradicí a etikou původních Američanů a primitivních sběračských a loveckých kultur obecně a naučme se vnímat vzájemné vztahy mezi námi, krajinou, rostlinami a živočichy v jednotlivých ekosystémech. Snáze si pak uvědomíme, že jsme součástí přírody, na jejímž zdraví závisí i naše přežití.

„Matka Země: Její velryby“ (*Želví ostrov*)

V této kapitole se spolu s Garym Snyderem zaměříme na stav životního prostředí v Brazílii, Japonsku a Číně. Těmto zemím se básník věnuje ve třetí, páté a šesté strofě této básně.

V prvním verši třetí strofy tlumočí Gary Snyder záměr Brazílie neomezeně využívat své přírodní zdroje. Brazilská vláda podporuje obchodní a průmyslové projekty domácích i nadnárodních firem, a to i přes protesty brazilské společnosti či původních obyvatel, jimž vadí negativní dopady těchto projektů na životní prostředí.

Ve druhém verši básník mluví o třiceti tisících neznámých druhů rostlin, které mohou vymizet dříve, než je vědci budou moci studovat, pokud bude brazilská vláda pokračovat v podpoře projektů, které významně zasahují do ekosystémů jednotlivých oblastí země.

V následujících dvou verších Gary Snyder upozorňuje na to, že velké projekty realizované s podporou brazilské vlády mají významný dopad rovněž i na původní obyvatele této země. Původní obyvatelé brazilské Amazonie čelí stejným či podobným nesnázím jako domorodé kmeny v ostatních částech světa. Obecně lze říci, že v celém světě je existence místních domorodých kmenů, jejichž historie a kultura jsou staré tisíce let, ohrožena. Největší podíl

viny na tom mají vlády, které ve svých zemích podporují obchodní či průmyslovou činnost nadnárodních korporací. A tak často dochází k tomu, že původní obyvatelé jsou nuceni opustit svá území, která i po několik tisíciletí obývali jejich předkové, aby uvolnili místo projektům nadnárodních firem. Stejně jako v případě původních obyvatel Brazílie jsou i jejich způsoby života, hluboké znalosti oblastí, ve kterých žijí, kultura i tradice obětovány lukrativním projektům, které navíc poškozují životní prostředí. Vezmeme-li v úvahu, že kulturní dědictví těchto domorodých kmenů je neoddělitelně spjata s jejich tradičními územími, teprve potom pochopíme, jak nepředstavitelnou ztrátu tito lidé prožívají, když je musí opustit.

V současné době žije v Brazílii méně, než 50 000 původních obyvatel. Od počátku 20. století, kdy jejich populace čítala více, než jeden milion lidí, se tak jejich počet značně snížil. Výrazný podíl viny na tom má brazilská vláda, která podporuje rozvojové projekty domácích i nadnárodních korporací v oblastech, kde tito lidé žijí. Brazilská vláda pro to má jednoduché vysvětlení. Podle jejího názoru představuje rozvoj jediný způsob, jak zvýšit jejich životní úroveň. Domorodé kmeny na tento rozvoj zastávají zcela odlišný názor.

V roce 2011 začala brazilská vláda ve spolupráci s domácí společností Norte Energia realizovat projekt přehrady Belo Monte ve státě Para. Přehrada má vyrůst v místě, kde se řeka Xingu vlévá do Amazonky. V této oblasti, která je známá pod názvem the Xingu River Basin, žije 18 domorodých kmenů, které dohromady čítají 25 000 lidí. Tito původní obyvatelé, kteří zde žili po generace, oplývají hlubokými znalostmi místního ekosystému. Řeka Xingu, jenž jim poskytuje nejen potravu a vodu, ale také možnost dopravy, se v jejich společenství těší hluboké úctě. Místní domorodé kmeny však kromě výstavby Belo Monte museli v poslední době čelit i dalším projektům, aby uchránili přírodu na svých tradičních teritoriích a řeku Xingu před devastací, která by pro ně život v tomto místě učinila prakticky nemožným. Jednalo se těžbu znečišťující Xingu či odlesňování doprovázející zakládání plantáží či farem chovajících dobytek.

V současné době představuje pro existenci původních obyvatel v the Xingu River Basin největší hrozbu výstavba Belo Monte. Díky ní by mělo o svá prastará území či domovy v blízkém okolí přijít až 40 000 lidí. Místní domorodé kmeny se rovněž obávají, že až sto kilometrový úsek Xingu by mohl vyschnout v důsledku odklonu proudu řeky. Se stavbou nesouhlasí ani brazilská veřejnost, která svůj své stanovisko vyjádřila v roce 2010 v petici, kterou za pouhý týden podepsalo přes jeden milion lidí. Proti projektu vystupují i vědci. Stavba Belo Monte si vyžádá odlesnění až 5 316 kilometrů čtverečních pralesní plochy. Přehrada pak následně zaplaví plochu o výměře 6 140 kilometrů čtverečních. Hrozí, že v důsledku rozkladu organické hmoty ve stojaté vodě nádrže bude docházet k uvolňování

značného množství skleníkového plynu metanu.

Projekt Belo Monte má podporu brazilské prezidentky Dilma Rousseff. Je přesvědčena, že přehrada bude nejen vyrábět elektřinu způsobem šetrným k životnímu prostředí, ale rovněž pomůže zemi vyřešit problém s nedostatkem energie, který se projevuje častými výpadky elektrického proudu. Stejného názoru je i Joao Pimentel, ředitel oddělení pro styk s veřejností společnosti Norte Energia. Podle něj bude mít přehrada minimální dopad jak na životní prostředí, tak i na životy lidí v oblasti the Xingu River Basin. Pimentel odhaduje, že své domovy bude muset opustit pouze 24 000 lidí. Místní domorodé kmeny podle něj nebudou stavbou přehrady nijak ohroženy. Původní obyvatelé budou tedy moci žít dál, tak jako doposud. Joao Pimentel dále ujišťuje, že žádná část Xingu nevyschne. Norte Energia se postará o zachování současné výšky její hladiny. Není třeba se obávat ani výrazného uvolňování metanu. Množství, ve kterém bude tento plyn unikat, bude malé.

I přes všechna ujištění o tom, že přehrada Belo Monte bude mít na brazilské hospodářství pozitivní vliv a že její dopad na životní prostředí bude minimální, se již na začátku roku 2012 objevily ohledně tohoto projektu jisté pochybnosti. Nejen, že si kmen Arara stěžoval, že v důsledku stavby došlo na úseku Xingu v rámci jeho kmenového území ke znečištění, ale realizace projektu byla v srpnu 2012 dokonce soudně pozastavena. Stavba projektu totiž nebyla řádně prodiskutována s místními domorodými kmeny. Na tuto skutečnost si původní obyvatelé the Xingu River Basin stěžovali i ve svém prohlášení *the Xingu Forever Alive* z 26. května 2008. Nicméně, ještě v témže měsíci byla stavba projektu obnovena. Místní domorodé kmeny jsou však pevně rozhodnuty v boji proti projektu pokračovat, protože, jak uvedly ve svém prohlášení, odmítají stavbu jakékoli přehrady na řece Xingu, jelikož se jedná o projekty, které významně poškozují tamní životní prostředí a bezprostředně ohrožují jejich existenci. Původní obyvatelé rovněž požadují, aby veškeré projekty, které budou realizovány v oblasti the Xingu River Basin, s nimi byly řádně konzultovány. Fakt, že je vláda o projektech, které významně ovlivní jejich životy, řádně neinformuje a rozhoduje tak o jejich budoucnosti bez toho, aniž by jim poskytla možnost se k těmto projektům vyjádřit, je pro ně nepřijatelná. Pak nás možná ani nepřekvapí, že se Gary Snyder v posledním verši strofy ptá, zda má brazilská vláda vůbec právo tyto původní kmeny reprezentovat.

V páté strofě básně vyčítá Gary Snyder Japonsku, že nerespektuje celosvětový zákaz lovu velryb z roku 1986. Japonsko tvrdí, že velryby loví pouze za účelem vědeckého výzkumu. Věřící tomu však jen málokdo. Z prvních dvou veršů strofy jasně vyznívá básníková rozhořčenost ze skutečnosti, že Japonsko, i přesto, že porušuje mezinárodní nařízení, má ještě tu drzost se přetahovat o to, jaké druhy velryb bude lovit. V červenci roku 2012 Japonsko na

zasedání Mezinárodní velrybářské komise dokonce požádalo o vydání povolení k lovu druhu velryby, který se pro komerční účely nesmí chytat od roku 1982. Ve zbývajících verších strofy vyjadřuje Gary Snyder své zklamání nad tím, že se Japonsko coby buddhistická země oddává otřesnému a nezákonnému lovu velryb, který přirovnává k vypouštění jedovaté rtuti, která se pak oceány šíří jako nakažlivá kapavka.

V šesté strofě se Gary Snyder zabývá stavem životního prostředí v Číně. V prvních pěti verších strofy se básník tímto tématem zabývá z historické perspektivy. Gary Snyder zde líčí osud jelena milu, který z volné přírody vymizel, když přišel o své přirozené prostředí v důsledku rozšíření pěstitelství rýže. Dovídáme se rovněž o vykácení lesů kolem města Lo-yang. V dalších verších strofy se Gary Snyder zaměřuje na současný stav životního prostředí v Číně. Básník této zemi vyčítá, že dává příliš velký důraz na rozvoj aniž by zvažila jeho ekologické důsledky. Z veršů vyznívá básníkův smutek nad tím, že na místě, kde dnes stojí obrovské parkoviště, se kdysi v hojném počtu vyskytovaly opice, tygři či divoká prasata. Na otázku, jestli je člověk nejcennějším tvorem, Gary Snyder odpovídá, že všechny živé bytosti, tedy rostlinné a živočišné druhy, jejichž počty se následkem lidské činnosti mají negativní dopad na životní prostředí neustále snižují, jsou jeho bratři. Opět se zde setkáváme se způsobem, jakým přírodu vnímají lidé primitivních kultur, kteří jsou si plně vědomi vzájemné propojenosti živočichů a rostlin v jejich ekosystémech. Na základě této jednoty vnímají tito lidé zvířata jako lidi, kteří mají svůj specifický způsob pohybu. Gary Snyder, jak můžeme zjistit z obsahu osmé strofy básně, sdílí tento postoj s nimi a vyzývá nás, abychom jej rovněž přijali za svůj. Vědomí naší vzájemné propojenosti s rostlinami a živočichy nás staví na cestu pochopení, že v tomto systému vzájemné jednoty jsou si všechny živé bytosti rovny a proto nemá smysl ničit jejich přirozená prostředí či jim nějakým způsobem škodit. Obecně platí, že všechno, co děláme, je doprovázeno určitými následky. Pokud budeme nadále ničit životní prostředí na naší planetě, poškodíme tím nejen celou řadu krajín, rostlinných a živočišných druhů, ale také sebe.

„Zitřejší píseň“ (*Želví ostrov*)

V první strofě básně „Zitřejší píseň“ Gary Snyder píše, že Spojené Státy ztratily v polovině 20. století mandát, protože opomíjejí přírodu a svou pozornost upínají pouze k záležitostem lidské společnosti. Nicméně, tento problém se netýká pouze Spojených Států, nýbrž i dalších zemí po celém světě. Lidé neuvažují nad tím, jaký dopad má jejich činnost na životní

prostředí. V současné době patří mezi nejzásadnější celosvětové problémy přelidnění a s ním související vysoká míra znečištění. Se zvyšujícím se počtem lidí dochází k rozšiřování měst a vesnic. Na druhou stranu se ale zmenšuje rozloha divočiny a rostlinné a živočišné druhy tak ztrácejí svá přirozená místa výskytu, což může vést až k jejich vyhynutí. Vedle biologické rozmanitosti se však ocitá v ohrožení i rozmanitost kulturní. V důsledku velkých rozvojových projektů po celém světě zanikají místní etnické skupiny spolu se svými nedocenitelnými znalostmi místních ekosystémů, specifickými způsoby života a kulturním dědictvím. Tento vývoj je dlouhodobě neudržitelný a budeme-li jej i nadále podporovat, příští generace po nás zdědí planetu s vážně poškozeným životním prostředím a vyčerpanými přírodními zdroji. Musíme tedy zvolit takový způsob života, který bude vůči přírodě kolem nás šetrný.

Gary Snyder věří, že abychom byli schopni takové změny dosáhnout, musíme postupně přeměnit základy naší současné společnosti. Naším cílem je vytvoření společenství, jehož činnost nepoškozuje životní prostředí a nepřispívá ke zmenšování rozlohy divočiny. Inspirací by nám mohl být způsob života domorodých kmenů, které žijí či žily v souladu s přírodou po generace. Rovněž bychom měli plně využívat možností, které nám nabízí věda či různé technologie. Spojení poznatků z těchto dvou oblastí nám nakonec umožní vytvořit společnost, která bude usilovat o způsob života v souladu s životním prostředím a využívat technologie, které jsou vůči němu šetrné. Gary Snyder si představuje, že počet obyvatel tohoto společenství bude nižší, než je tomu dnes. Lidé si budou všimnout charakteristických znaků jednotlivých krajín a budou se orientovat spíše podle území jednotlivých bioregionů, než podle politicky vymezených států. Spíše než na hromadění majetku a získání vlivu bude kladen důraz na vzdělání, ochranu kulturní a biologické rozmanitosti, udržitelný způsob zemědělství a lesního hospodářství a rozvoj vědy a kultury.

Zdrojem našeho materiálního přístupu k přírodě je naše mysl. Proto je nezbytné, abychom našli způsob, který nám umožní pochopit, že žijeme v krajině a že jsme součástí přírody. S tímto vědomím musíme vychovávat i naše děti. Výchova a vzdělání mají na naše vnímání a přístup k životnímu prostředí zcela zásadní vliv. Gary Snyder je přesvědčen, že naše společnost přestala žít v úzkém sepětí s přírodou poté, co bylo vytvořeno písmo a tradice ústní byla nahrazena písemnou. V rámci ústní tradice lidé získávají informace a vědomosti pomocí ústně předávaných příběhů, jejichž motivy jsou prostřednictvím mysli vypravěče úzce spojeny s krajinou daného místa. To dokazuje v jak úzkém sepětí žijí tito lidé se svým místem a jeho krajinou. Naproti tomu ti, kteří získávají vzdělání v tradici písemné, přijímají veškeré poznatky prostřednictvím knih, médií či učitelů a bezprostřední kontakt s okolní přírodou jim tímto chybí.

V dřívějších dobách žilo na zemi daleko méně lidí než dnes. Města a osady byly obklopeny divočinou a lidé cestovali nejčastěji buď pěšky, koňmo či lodí. Ať už měli namířeno kamkoliv a jakkoliv, pohybovali se v přírodě a běžně se setkávali se zvířaty či rostlinami v jejich přirozeném prostředí. Okolní příroda byla nedílnou a samozřejmou součástí jejich životů. Podobně je tomu i v mýtech, kde po boku lidí vystupují zcela přirozeně postavy z říše zvířat.

Od těchto dob se však počet obyvatel na naší planetě několikanásobně zvýšil. Města se značně rozšířila na úkor okolní divočiny a celá řada rostlinných a živočišných druhů buď vyhynula nebo se ocitla v ohrožení. Převážně městský způsob života naší společnosti nám dává velmi málo příležitostí navázat bezprostřední kontakt s okolní přírodou, o níž se dovídáme spíše z knih či televizních dokumentů. Postupně se tak přírodě odcizujeme a soustředíme se spíše na otázky naší společnosti. Příroda postupně přestává či již přestala být součástí našich životů. A totéž, jak Gary Snyder uvádí v posledním verši první strofy této básně, platí i o mýtech, jež se vytrácí, protože i ony jsou, stejně jako kontinenty a ostatní jevy tohoto světa, pomíjivé. To je však o jeden důvod více, proč bychom měli usilovat o nalezení takového způsobu života a vnímání přírody, který nám umožní nejen začlenit ji znovu do našich životů, ale také přispívat ke zdraví jejích ekosystémů.

V prvním verši druhé strofy nás Gary Snyder zavede do období přelomu šedesátých a sedmdesátých let minulého století, kdy začali původní Američané znovu užívat svůj vlastní název pro Severní Ameriku, Želví ostrov. V té době se rovněž utvořila skupina bílých Američanů, kteří se rozhodli usadit na jednom určitém místě, zapojit se do místního veřejného života s cílem pozitivně ovlivňovat místní záležitosti včetně těch týkajících se životního prostředí a případně podporovat společenství původních Američanů. Tato skupina lidí, která se postupně usadila ve venkovských a horských oblastech západního pobřeží Spojených Států, představovala první vlnu znovuosídlování. Gary Snyder vnímal skutečnost, že se v americké společnosti začínají objevovat lidé, kteří chtějí pracovat pro ochranu životního prostředí ve své lokalitě, velmi pozitivně. On sám se k těmto lidem přidal a usadil se v pohoří Sierra Nevada. Jeho optimismus lze vyčíst i ze zbývajících strof této básně.

V prvním verši třetí strofy se Gary Snyder líčí radost, s níž očekává kolik dalších lidí se připojí k znovuosídlování a bude působit v oblastech, které si sami zvolí. Život v místě v sobě mino jiné zahrnuje soběstačnost jeho obyvatel. Ta do jisté míry závisí na jejich znalostech místních ekosystémů. Zatímco původní obyvatelé kdekoliv na světě mají či měli k dispozici pouze materiál či potravu, které jim poskytovala okolní krajina, my si můžeme koupit vše co k životu potřebujeme rychle. Navíc si můžeme vybírat z široké nabídky produktů. Naše společnost se soustředí na dosažení co nejlepších ekonomických výsledků, které jsou zárukou

jejího blahobytu. K dosažení tohoto cíle jí pomáhá energie získaná z fosilních paliv, jejichž využívání však přispívá ke znečištění životního prostředí. Gary Snyder je nicméně přesvědčen, že současný objem výroby a spotřeby naší společnosti neprospívá a není ani nutný. Proto se v jednom ze svých esejů zabývá otázkou, jak využít energii podporující hospodářský růst a spotřebu na prohloubení našich znalostí o nás samých a o přírodě, která nás obklopuje. Je nezbytné, abychom si uvědomili, že jsme její součástí a že na jejím zdraví závisí naše existence. Proto, ať už žijeme kdekoli a děláme jakoukoli práci, vždy musíme mít na paměti, že pro ochranu životního prostředí na této planetě musíme dělat vše, co je v našich silách.

Notes

"Control Burn" (*Turtle Island*)

- 1 Gary Snyder, *No Nature: new and selected poems* (New York and San Francisco: Pantheon Books, 1992) 219.
- 2 see Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1990) 36.
- 3 see Gary Snyder, *A Place in Space* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1995) 259.
- 4 see Snyder, *A Place* 260.
- 5 Snyder, *No Nature* 219.
- 6 Snyder, *No Nature* 219.
- 7 Snyder, *No Nature* 219.
- 8 Snyder, *A Place* 64.
- 9 see Snyder, *A Place* 240.
- 10 Snyder, *The Practice* 146.
- 11 see Snyder, *The Practice* 146.
- 12 see Snyder, *The Practice* 146.
- 13 see Snyder, *A Place* 190.
- 14 see Snyder, *A Place* 96.
- 15 see Snyder, *The Practice* 29.
- 16 see Snyder, *The Practice* 7.
- 17 see Snyder, *A Place* 48.
- 18 see Snyder, *A Place* 242.
- 19 see Snyder, *A Place* 242.
- 20 see Snyder, *A Place* 50.
- 21 see Snyder, *A Place* 184.
- 22 see Snyder, *A Place* 184.
- 23 see Snyder, *A Place* 184.
- 24 see Snyder, *A Place* 184.
- 25 see Snyder, *A Place* 184.
- 26 see Snyder, *A Place* 246.
- 27 Snyder, *The Practice* 30.
- 28 Snyder, *A Place* 232.
- 29 Snyder, *A Place* 221.
- 30 see Snyder, *A Place* 222.

31 see Snyder, *No Nature* 204.

32 Snyder, *A Place* 248.

"Front Lines" (*Turtle Island*)

1 Gary Snyder, *No Nature: new and selected poems* (New York and San Francisco: Pantheon Books, 1992) 218.

2 Snyder, *No Nature* 218.

3 Snyder, *No Nature* 218.

4 see Gary Snyder, *A Place in Space* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1995) 61.

5 Snyder, *No Nature* 218.

6 Snyder, *No Nature* 218.

7 see Snyder, *A Place* 209.

8 see Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1990) 18.

9 see Snyder, *The Practice* 26.

10 see Snyder, *The Practice* 26.

11 see Snyder, *A Place* 211.

12 see Snyder, *A Place* 79.

13 see Snyder, *The Practice* 107.

14 see Snyder, *A Place* 224.

15 see Snyder, *The Practice* 143.

16 see Snyder, *The Practice* 142.

17 Snyder, *No Nature* 35.

18 see Snyder, *The Practice* 144.

19 see Snyder, *The Practice* 39.

"Mother Earth: Her Whales" (*Turtle Island*)

1 see Gary Snyder, *A Place in Space* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1995) 136.

2 see Snyder, *A Place* 136.

3 see Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1990) 37.

4 see Snyder, *The Practice* 37.

5 see Snyder, *The Practice* 86.

- 6 Gabriel Elizondo, "Dam it: Brazil's Belo Monte stirs controversy," *Aljazeera* 20 January 2012, 2 October 2012
<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/01/201212015366764400.html>.
- 7 United Nations, "Struggle in the Amazon: The Clash between Energy and the Environment," *Amazon Watch* 20 July 2012, 2 October 2012
<http://amazonwatch.org/news/2012/0720-struggle-in-the-amazon-the-clash-between-energy-and-the-environment>.
- 8 see "Xingu Forever Alive," *International Rivers* 26 May 2008, 5 October 2012
<http://www.internationalrivers.org/resources/xingu-forever-alive-3168>.
- 9 "Xingu Forever Alive," *International Rivers* 26 May 2008, 5 October 2012
<http://www.internationalrivers.org/resources/xingu-forever-alive-3168>.
- 10 "Xingu Forever Alive," *International Rivers* 26 May 2008, 5 October 2012
<http://www.internationalrivers.org/resources/xingu-forever-alive-3168>.
- 11 Gary Snyder, *No Nature: new and selected poems* (New York and San Francisco: Pantheon Books, 1992) 236.
- 12 see Gustavo Faleiros, "Brazilian president's promises crumble under weight of Belo Monte dam," *the Guardian* 1 February 2011, 3 October 2012
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/blog/2011/feb/01/brazil-dilma-rousseff-hydroelectric-dam>.
- 13 Snyder, *No Nature* 236.
- 14 Snyder, *No Nature* 236.
- 15 "Xingu Forever Alive," *International Rivers* 26 May 2008, 5 October 2012
<http://www.internationalrivers.org/resources/xingu-forever-alive-3168>.
- 16 Snyder, *No Nature* 236.
- 17 see Snyder, *The Practice* 152.
- 18 Snyder, *No Nature* 236.
- 19 Snyder, *No Nature* 236.
- 20 see Snyder, *The Practice* 140.
- 21 see Snyder, *The Practice* 140.
- 22 Snyder, *No Nature* 236.
- 23 Snyder, *No Nature* 237.
- 24 Snyder, *No Nature* 237.
- 25 Snyder, *No Nature* 237.
- 26 Snyder, *No Nature* 236.

- 27 see Snyder, *A Place* 25.
28 Snyder, *No Nature* 237.

"Tomorrow's Song" (*Turtle Island*)

- 1 see Gary Snyder, *A Place in Space* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1995) 39.
2 see Snyder, *A Place* 39.
3 see Snyder, *A Place* 39.
4 see Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1990) 44.
5 Gary Snyder, *No Nature: new and selected poems* (New York and San Francisco: Pantheon Books, 1992) 250.
6 see Snyder, *A Place* 35.
7 see Snyder, *A Place* 41.
8 see Snyder, *A Place* 42.
9 see Snyder, *A Place* 42.
10 see Snyder, *A Place* 42.
11 see Snyder, *A Place* 42.
12 see Snyder, *A Place* 95.
13 see Snyder, *A Place* 95.
14 see Snyder, *A Place* 95.
15 see Snyder, *A Place* 94.
16 see Snyder, *A Place* 249.
17 Snyder, *No Nature* 250.
18 see Snyder, *The Practice* 188.
19 Snyder, *No Nature* 250.
20 see Snyder, *A Place* 243.
21 see Snyder, *A Place* 243.
22 see Snyder, *A Place* 243.
23 Snyder, *No Nature* 250.
24 Snyder, *No Nature* 250.
25 see Snyder, *A Place* 54.
26 Snyder, *No Nature* 250.
27 Snyder, *A Place* 38.
28 Snyder, *A Place* 39.

- 29 Snyder, *No Nature* 250.
- 30 see Snyder, *A Place* 250.
- 31 Snyder, *A Place* 250.
- 32 Snyder, *No Nature* 250.
- 33 see Snyder, *A Place* 39.

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Appendix

Biography

Gary Sherman Snyder was born on 8 May 1930 in San Francisco. Two years later his family moves to a farm in the state of Washington. Being raised in local countryside, Gary Snyder develops his close relationship to nature. He spends much time in the woods and on hiking trips to the mountains and learns the names of animals, trees and plants. In addition, Gary Snyder studies woodcraft and Native American folk traditions from books he borrows from a public library.

In 1942, his family moves to Portland, Oregon. Here, Gary Snyder continues to discover nature on hiking trips to the mountains. He becomes a member of Mazamas Mountain Climbers and climbs the most important peaks in the Rocky Mountains and the North Cascades like Mount St. Helens, Mt. Hood, Mt. Baker and Mt. Rainier.

Apart from hiking in the mountains, Gary Snyder also spends much time working in the woods. In 1943-1946 he works at a camp at Spirit Lake during summer holidays.

At the age of seventeen, Gary Snyder becomes a member of The Wilderness Society as a result of his growing interest in environmental protection. Moreover, he writes reports on the state of forests in the Olympic Mountains for the United States Congress.

In 1948 Gary Snyder begins to study anthropology and literature at Reed College in Portland. During his studies he concentrates on the ethnology of Native Americans. He graduates in 1951 presenting his thesis, *The Dimensions of Haida Myth*, which explores the myths and folk tales of Native Americans living on the North-Western coast. Later, the thesis became the basis of his second collection of poetry, *The Myths&Texts*. During his studies at Reed College Gary Snyder works not only in the woods but also on the sea.

Gary Snyder spends the summer of 1951 in the Warm Springs Indian Reservation where he works as a timber scaler. In 1952 he serves as a fire lookout on Crater Mountain in the Baker National Forest for the United States Forest Service.

In 1952 Gary Snyder comes to San Francisco where he discovers Zen Buddhism. In 1953 he begins his Chinese and Japanese studies at the University of California in Berkeley and meets Kenneth Rexroth, the poet and patron of the San Francisco Poetry Renaissance. Furthermore, Gary Snyder works as a fire lookout on the top of Sourdough Mountain for the United States Forest Service and writes *Myths&Texts*.

In 1955 Gary Snyder translates the poetry of Han Shan, the Chinese monk and Zen poet. He meets Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg. They, together with Philip Whalen, Michael

McClure and Philip Lamantia read their poetry on the evening of 13 October at the Six Gallery. It is at this event which is organized by Kenneth Rexroth that Allen Ginsberg reads his poem *Howl* at public for the first time. This year Gary Snyder works in the Sierra Nevada where he creates paths for horses in the mountainous terrain. This work becomes one of the various sources of inspiration for *Riprap*, his first volume of poetry.

In 1956 Gary Snyder is awarded a scholarship by the First Zen Institute of America to study Zen Buddhism in monastery Shokoku-ji in Kyoto under the guidance of Master Oda Seshi Roshi to whom Snyder dedicated *Earth Household*, his collection of essays, Zen tales and notes from his diary.

Before his departure to Japan, Gary Snyder publishes *Cold Mountain Poems*, his translation of Han Shan's poetry, in the magazine *Berkeley Bussei*.

In 1957 Gary Snyder travels around the world on the tanker Sappa Creek where he works as a stoker.

In 1959 Gary Snyder returns to Japan to further his studies in monastery Daitoku-ji. He also publishes his first collection of poetry, *Riprap*.

In 1960 Gary Snyder publishes his second volume of poetry, *Myths&Texts*, and goes to India to study Buddhist temples.

In 1961 Gary Snyder begins to publish poems from his collection of poetry *Mountains and Rivers Without End* which he started to write in 1956. Its complete final form was published only in 1996.

In 1964 Gary Snyder returns to America and begins to teach at the Department of English and American Studies at University of California in Berkeley.

In 1965 Gary Snyder attends a conference on poetry in Berkeley, gives several poetry readings at various American colleges and collaborates with Philip Whalen on National Educational Television programme. Finally, he leaves America to spend a study year in Japan.

In 1967 Gary Snyder attends the Human Be-In, an event at which the Hippies movement was born, and then leaves America for Suwa-nose Island in the East China Sea where Japanese poet Nanao Sakaki, his friend, founded Banyan Ashram. There, he lives in ecological community for one year participating on its activities, ranging from planting batatas and other crops, cooking the meals from these crops to collecting the wood to make a fire. For him this stay was an opportunity to experience the self-sufficient way of life of indigenous people who have lived in their territories in a close relationship to nature for generations.

In 1968 Gary Snyder, together with his wife Masa Uehara whom he married on Suwa-nose, returns to the United States. He publishes his collection of poetry *The Back Country*.

In 1969 Gary Snyder publishes the collection of essays, *Earth House Hold: Technical Notes and Queries to Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries*.

In 1970 Gary Snyder moves with his family to the Sierra Nevada where they build their house named Kitkitdizze after a local plant. As Petr Kopecký mentions in his dissertation *The California Crucible: Literary Harbingers of Deep Ecology*, while most American people followed the trend of frequent moving in order to find a better job at that time, Gary Snyder decided to get inspired by the way of life of indigenous people and our ancestors and settled down in his place in the mountains. The life in a place brings people many advantages. Its complex knowledge is one of them as it enables people to take care of it properly in a long term. People who move often do not have an opportunity to create a close relationship to a place and discover the character of its environment. As a result, they might damage local nature by inappropriate management.

Gary Snyder built his house Kitkitdizze in an area seriously damaged by gold mining. In this move two poet's principles reflect. One of them is reinhabitation. Gary Snyder presents this principle in his essay of the same name. It is included in both *Old Ways* and *A Place in Space: Ethics, Aesthetics and Watersheds*. The poet concentrates on what it means to live in a place and compares the life of settled people and those who are constantly on the move. Last but not least it is in this essay where he writes that the process of reinhabitation involves people who decided to leave industrial society and return to land and life in a place like peasants and indigenous people still do and like our ancestors did. It was at the beginning of 1970s when a number of people found out that the best thing they can do for North America is to settle down in a place and discover and protect its environment. Thus, these people became a part of the first wave of reinhabitation movement which saw an area stretching from the country of San Diego up to British Columbia reinhabited. From that time the number of people who settled down either in rural areas or in the mountains has increased and nowadays they form a local culture.

The other principle is self-sufficiency. It is closely connected to the life in a place which helps people to discover what type of crops they can plant in their area or which plants and forest products they can gather.

Under the influence of life in the Sierra Nevada in a close relationship to Kitkitdizze Gary Snyder developed his theory of bioregionalism. Later, in 1978, he also published his collection of texts on the theme of bioregionalism called *Reinhabiting a Separate Country: A Bioregional Anthology of Northern California*. Snyder's concept of

bioregionalism is based on fact that it is mountain ranges and watersheds which create natural boundaries between bioregions characterized by their specific ecosystems.

In 1970 Snyder publishes his ninth volume of poetry *Regarding Wave*.

Two years later together with Michael McClure the poet attends a conference on the environment organized by United Nations in Stockholm where he is nominated by Portola Institute.

A year later Snyder leaves for Hokkaido as a representative of Friends of the Earth to study wilderness.

In 1974 Gary Snyder's most famous collection of poetry, *Turtle Island*, is published. In the following year he is awarded the Pulitzer Prize for it.

As Petr Kopecký writes in his dissertation *The California Crucible: Literary Harbingers of Deep Ecology*, *Turtle Island* is Native American name of North American continent. Poems of this collection concern the life in a place, interdependence in ecosystems, the critique of environmental destruction and the protection of nature.

From 1974 to 1979 Gary Snyder is a member of the Board of the California Arts Council.

In the late 1970s and in 1980s Gary Snyder's collection of essays *Old Ways*, collection of interviews *The Real Work: Interviews and Talks 1964-1979*, a collection of poetry *Axe and Handles*, the travel book *Passage Through India* and a volume of poetry *Left Out in the Rain* are published.

In 1990 Gary Snyder publishes his collection of essays *Practice of the Wild*.

In 1995, another Gary Snyder's collection of essays *A Place in Space: Ethics, Aesthetics and Watersheds* is published.

Two years later, in 1997, Snyder is awarded the Bollingen Prize for poetry.

Nowadays, Gary Snyder works as professor of English at University of California in Davis.

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Anotace

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