

ACTS OF OBJECTIFICATION AND THE REPUDIATION OF DOMINANCE

*LEOPOLD, ECOFEMINISM, AND THE
ECOLOGICAL NARRATIVE*

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ABSTRACT

None dispute that Aldo Leopold has made an invaluable contribution to environmental discourse. However, it is important for those involved in the field of environmental ethics to be aware that his works may unwittingly promote an attitude of domination toward the nonhuman world, due to his frequent and unregenerate hunting. Such an attitude runs counter to most strains of environmental ethics, but most notably ecofeminism. By examining Leopold through the lens of ecofeminism, I establish that the effect of such narrative is to portray the natural world as an object available for exploitation, thereby casting it as the “other” referred to in feminist writings. Thus I conclude that Leopold’s work, if accepted uncritically, may actually reinforce the very notions that have been revealed as damaging to the nature/culture relationship.

INTRODUCTION: LEOPOLD AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

As an environmental figure, the name of Aldo Leopold is well-known in such diverse fields as forestry, wildlife ecology, outdoor recreation studies, and environmental philosophy, and the influence of his ideas in the environmental movement is even more widespread. A prolific, and all agree, eloquent writer, his works have had a tremendous impact on the genesis and continued development of what is now called environmental ethics. As the author of "The Land Ethic," Leopold (1949) is widely recognized as one of the first contemporary environmental writers to actively and directly advocate a different understanding of the relationship between human beings and the natural world, an understanding not predicated on utility and "wise use"¹ but centered instead on a more humble awareness that the biota is an integral whole in which humanity participates as "plain member and citizen."

Leopold's essays, books, and other contributions to the fields of forestry and game management (now called wildlife ecology) have been instrumental in forging cross-disciplinary links between the science of ecology and the ethics and aesthetics of philosophy. As such, Leopold has been a deeply inspirational figure to generations of environmentalists. However, those with environmental sensibilities are not united in their untempered enthusiasm for all that Leopold has said and done. One particularly controversial aspect of Leopold's writings has centered around his self-avowed love of hunting. Many have rightfully questioned the propriety and consistency of a position such as Leopold's, in which a fierce attitude of protectionism for wildlife and wildlife habitat is coupled with—indeed apparently *gotten* from—the enjoyment derived from the hunting experience. Nowhere else in Leopold's writings are intimate descriptions of the land detailed to such a high degree than in journal sections written while reflecting on awarenesses gained during hunting excursions. No other passages describe as clearly and articulately the close relationship between the different parts of the biota—trees, soils, scents, wind, fallen leaves, waters; and no place in the writings of Leopold does he more effectively convey that in order to have a proper ethic toward the land one must have an active and participatory relationship with it.

There are two kinds of hunting: ordinary hunting, and ruffed-grouse hunting. There are two places to hunt grouse: ordinary places, and

Adams County. There are two times to hunt in Adams: ordinary times and when the tamaracks are smoky gold. . . . The tamaracks change from green to yellow when the first frosts have brought woodcock, fox sparrows, and juncos out of the north. Troops of robins are stripping the last white berries from the dogwood thickets, leaving the empty stems as a pink haze against the hill. The creekside alders have shed their leaves, exposing here and there an eyeful of holly. Brambles are aglow, lighting your footsteps grouseward. (Leopold 1949, 54–55)

This passage is but one example of the depth and intensity of Leopold's prose, unrivaled in its descriptive ability, evoking a keen image of the features of the natural environment, and a true sense of the felt meaning, importance, and necessity of contact with the natural world. None dispute that Aldo Leopold's *Land Ethic* contains much ecological wisdom and insight and that his work as a whole has made an important contribution to environmental discourse and the dissemination of ecological ideas into popular consciousness. Leopold enabled future generations of environmental philosophers to expand upon his notion that "the land" encompasses much more than mere inert earth but includes "soils, waters, plants, and animals" and is not a commodity that we own but a "community to which we belong" (204, viii). And, perhaps most important, Leopold's work makes us aware that an ethical stance toward natural creatures and environments is necessary in order to change "the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it" (204). Furthermore, Leopold was one of the first scientists to recognize and publicly affirm that environmental problems must be addressed as questions for ethics and philosophy as well as science and technology, and that a precondition for solving our environmental problems is a change in our attitudes and values. And finally, the impact of Leopold's thinking has been particularly potent among environmental professionals and scientists, who see him as "one of their own" and are able to readily relate to his supplications to treat the land as though it has value of an intrinsic sort.

Leopold, Hunting, and Environmental Philosophy

It is because Leopold enjoys such strong approval and even adulation from a wide range of environmental audiences that the legacy of Leopold may present a problem for those interested in the very project Leopold advances: the repudiation of an attitude of anthropocentric superiority

and the cultivation of respect for the moral standing of natural entities.² In what follows I develop the thesis that it is important for those involved on a theoretical level in the project of environmental ethics to be aware that the ideas of Leopold have been heavily influenced by his life-long love of sport hunting. And I argue that in order for one to participate in hunting one must have accepted a principle of human domination over the nonhuman world, a principle antithetical to those strains of environmental ethics—most notably ecofeminism—which affirm that humans and members of the more-than-human world possess comparable moral worth.

J. Baird Callicott (1989) has argued in his piece, “Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair,” that there is no moral inconsistency evinced by the fact of Leopold’s unregenerate hunting³ because the Land Ethic is “holistic.” But I contend that the ideas of Leopold nonetheless insidiously, although certainly unintentionally, convey an attitude that the natural world is a noble and ennobling object for human enjoyment and exploitation. What I am suggesting here is that through the many, *favorably* portrayed depictions of hunting a more subtle but equally as powerful message is being fashioned, one that is likely to be received by Leopold’s readers on a much more visceral and thus less critical level. I develop this idea in more detail later. Also, I establish (with the support of authors who have examined the ethics of hunting) that the point of the “good sportsmanship,” which Leopold advocates is not to convey respect for one’s prey as is commonly argued by defenders of hunting, but rather serves to refine one’s skills in a “gentlemanly” fashion. This marks hunting as largely an elite activity practiced mainly by those with privileged cultural and economic status, a status possessed by Leopold as well as the majority of hunters in North America. Ecofeminists have effectively pointed out the ways in which gender, class, racial, and environmental oppression are intertwined;⁴ thus I believe that analyzing Leopold’s teachings from this perspective exposes the ways in which hunting and justifications of hunting promote the discourses of dominance upon which ecological degradation depends. I also believe that, though it goes unrecognized by the many who have written on Leopold, he has in at least one instance linked nature to the feminine—it is significant, I think, that Leopold makes it a she-wolf who is shot in the famous essay, “Thinking Like a Mountain” (1949). This resonates with the claims of ecofeminist writers like Carolyn Merchant, Val Plumwood, and Susan Griffin, who say that women have been linked to nature and nature has been personified as female because in a patriarchal and phallo-

gocentric world both women and nature must be posited as “other” in order to justify their domination. Thus my contention is that what knowledge and understanding of the biota that Leopold has (and indeed it is extensive for a person of his time, when the empirical and normative implications of the science of ecology had barely been heard of) is founded on a privileged perspective—the privileged insider’s point-of-view of the hunter peeking through the peephole of the thicket, casting nature (in the form of the quarry) as the objectified other.

This, then, is my general position: while the particular insights of Aldo Leopold have, on one level, proven to be very useful in getting the debate about environmental ethics “on the table” and into scientific and philosophical discourse, environmental philosophers, ethicists, and professionals should exercise great caution in relying too heavily on the works of Leopold as a source of conceptual guidance, because the work of this “seminal figure” is impregnated with ideas which may be reinforcing of the very notions that have been revealed by feminist and nonfeminist environmental ethicists⁵ as damaging to a harmonious nature/culture relationship.

In order to establish my claim, the claim that Aldo Leopold’s role as model for contemporary ecologists and environmental ethicists is at least morally ambivalent, I first examine the issue of hunting itself. By doing so I intend to show that in order to have participated in the act of hunting a person⁶ must first have accepted and endorsed anthropocentrism to a degree that is incompatible with the sort of large-scale reform of attitudes toward nature which environmental ethicists⁷ hope to bring about. In a related fashion, I will simultaneously connect the act of hunting to the kind of objectification of the “other” that ecofeminists claim links the oppression of women with the domination of nature.

Hunting and Morality

Hunting is to be here understood as the seeking out of an animal in its (more or less) natural habitat for the intent and purpose of taking its life. When hunting is done for sport, and not for subsistence, it is done for the sake of the “experience” obtained. The experience many, if not the majority, of hunters seem to agree⁸ is not to be understood as merely the act of killing an animal and watching it die and then harvesting the meat. Rather, it includes “communing” with nature; getting close enough to other creatures to anticipate their patterns and habits, keenly observing wind, weather, and terrain and knowing what these things indicate about the interactions

between the biotic and abiotic components of the land. Indeed, the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset (1972) writes in his *Meditations on Hunting*, “One does not hunt in order to kill. One kills in order to have hunted”(121). Leopold frequently wrote of the joys of hunting, and forcefully expressed his disdain for those who were overly-enamored of utilizing the latest in technology to enhance their hunting prowess. Leopold considered the overuse of new-fangled gadgetry and failure to adhere to a self-imposed code of ethics to be “slob hunting,” and it had no place in the Leopoldian schema of appreciation of things “natural, wild and free.”

[C]onsider the duck-hunter, sitting in a steel boat behind composition decoys. A put-put motor has brought him to the blind without exercise. Canned heat stands by to warm him in case of a chilling wind. He talks to the passing flocks on a factory caller, in what he hopes are seductive tones; home lessons from a phonograph record have taught him how. The decoys work despite the caller . . . [h]e opens up at 70 yards, for his polychoke is set for infinity, and the advertisements have told him that Super-Z shells, and plenty of them, have a long reach. The flock flares. A couple of cripples scale off to die elsewhere. Is this sportsman absorbing cultural value? Or is he just feeding minks? The next blind opens up at 75 yards; how else is a fellow to get some shooting? This is duck shooting, current model. It is typical of all public grounds, and of many clubs. Where is the go-light idea, the one bullet tradition? (Leopold 1949, 180–181)

But it is important to understand the reasons *why* Aldo Leopold found such styles of hunting deplorable. According to him the reason for hunting was to obtain the

trophy, whether it be a bird's egg, a mess of trout, a basket of mushrooms, the photograph of a bear, the pressed specimen of a wild flower, or a note tucked into the cairn on a mountain peak . . . It attests that its owner has been somewhere and done something—that he has exercised skill, persistence, or discrimination in the age-old feat of *overcoming, outwitting, or reducing to possession*. These connotations which attach to the trophy usually far exceed its physical value . . . Very intensive management of game or fish lowers the unit value of the trophy by artificializing it. (Leopold 1949, 169; emphasis added)

To Leopold, hunting was a potential means of cultivating high moral character, although again, it was not for the sake of the animal that he was concerned with such things. In *Sand County Almanac* he rails against deer hunters who shoot and abandon the carcasses of does in their quest for an

acceptable buck, stating in tones reminiscent of Kant that “such deer-hunting is not only without social value, but constitutes actual training for ethical depravity *elsewhere*” (Leopold 1949, 179). What this suggests, of course, is that the animal itself possesses no intrinsic worth, but rather its being constitutes a testing ground for human moral development. Hunting, Leopold asserted, aids in the development of the sorts of “cultural values” necessary to properly appreciate wild things. For Leopold, the virtues of the hunt (and hunter) were many:

Is it impious to weigh goose music and art in the same scales? I think not, because the true hunter is merely a non-creative artist. Who painted the first picture on a bone in the caves of France? A hunter. Who alone in our modern life so thrills to the sight of living beauty that he will endure hunger and thirst and cold to feed his eye upon it? The hunter. Who wrote the greatest hunter’s poem about the sheer wonder of the wind, the hail, and the snow, the stars, the lightnings, and the clouds, the lion, the deer, and the wild goat . . . Poets sing and hunters scale the mountains primarily for one and the same reason—the thrill to beauty. (Leopold 1953, 170)

Leopold claimed that, “(T)here are cultural values in the sports, customs, and experiences that renew contact with wild things. . . . There is value in any experience that exercises those ethical restraints collectively called ‘sportsmanship’” (1949, 177–78). He even went so far as to say that, “Hunting for sport is an improvement over hunting for food, in that there has been added to the test of skill an ethical code” (Leopold 1933, 391).

The problem with such a means of augmenting one’s moral mettle (and, for that matter, “communing” with nature), however, is that it does so at the expense of another creature, a creature who undeniably has an interest in remaining alive. To persist in deliberately stalking an animal who poses little or no threat to one’s person and whom one does not *need* to kill in order to be assured of being fed is to sublimate the interests of the animal to one’s own for a purpose which is justifiable on strictly anthropocentric and self-serving grounds. Killing the animal becomes, in effect, entertainment, a means of escaping the pressures and rigors of civilized life. Or it is done in order to promote or enhance one’s own moral development, as Leopold claims, and to refine one’s skill at behaving in a manner befitting a “gentleman.” Thus such an action would be, according to the traditional standpoint of an ecocentric environmental ethics, *prima facie*

wrong, since these environmental ethicists⁹ deny that human beings ought to be permitted to exploit the natural world for reasons such as these. To choose to hunt in the modern era is to assume an attitude of domination over the animal being sought. The hunter in his or her arrogance presumes to decide (with the help of a little luck and skill, of course) whether the animal will live or die.

To connect this even further to the project of ecocentric environmental ethics, a field of which Leopold is often considered to be a “founding father,” one might remark that to hunt in the aforementioned manner, to hunt for the sake of the “experience” is to use the animal as a means to one’s own end, to treat it as though it has only *instrumental* and not *intrinsic* worth,¹⁰ a type of valuing that many environmental ethicists rightly identify as being at the root of our environmental troubles. When one hunts one is seeking a particular experience and using the hunted animal as a means of fulfilling one’s desire for this experience.¹¹ Thus one is viewing the animal as an instrument to one’s pleasure or satisfaction, and not considering (or is choosing to ignore) the notion that the animal has a good of its own, and a perception of the world. To do this the animal must be objectified, treated as something external to one’s self, not as a co-participant in what Leopold would call the “circuit” of life. Furthermore, and most damaging to the cause of environmental ethics, a conclusion must be reached that the animal is somehow “lower” or “lesser” than oneself in order to justify sacrificing its (vital) needs to one’s own (nonvital) wants.

At this point I will mention two objections that can be raised in regard to the position which I am sketching out here. Others, including moral issues related to the eating of animals, will be considered later.

In response to criticisms of their activity, hunters frequently point out that predation is natural in the wild, that death is as natural as life, and suggest that as evolutionarily driven beings we too are “entitled” to participate in the deathly dramas of nature. However, in the view of many theorists, this line of reasoning carries little moral logic. I agree with Brian Luke’s observation that, “The sportsman’s code, by distinguishing better from worse reasons for killing and by enjoining hunters to minimize their infliction of pain, recognizes that less violence is better than more . . . it makes no sense to suggest that because some bloodshed in nature is inescapable, we might as well just wade right in and *add to it*” (Luke 1997, 41; emphasis added).

The second objection concerns the right of members of indigenous

groups to continue practices which maintain their cultural integrity, even (or especially) if these practices include hunting. Although this is certainly an important point, it is beyond the scope of this paper to fully examine issues related to acts of cultural imperialism—such as the need for indigenous peoples to maintain cultural identity in the face of western hegemonization—in their entirety. For my purposes here, however, it seems sufficient to note that while non-Western or indigenous peoples may have a stronger claim of access to particular “hunting grounds” than do whites from the dominant culture, Aldo Leopold was *not* a member of a such a group, nor did he entertain ideas about “sacred game” as a matter of group identity in the same way that a modern-day member of an American Indian tribe might. I do not wish to deny that Leopold, relative to his contemporaries, colleagues, and peers, held animals and their function in the ecosystem in high regard. But this argument, if cogent, serves to show that an activity like hunting is ethically defensible if it preserves the cultural integrity and autonomy of a disenfranchised group. Leopold was *not* a member of such a group. Leopold was a member of a class of socially and economically privileged elites, graduated from one of the most exclusive universities in the nation, and had ties to German aristocracy (Meine 1988). Thus it is an ill fit to attempt to use arguments designed to defend the cultural practices of a historically oppressed or disadvantaged group to justify sport hunting as practiced by a member of the dominant group.¹²

A Defense of Leopold

Environmental philosopher J. Baird Callicott, who has written numerous essays examining the conceptual underpinnings of Leopold’s Land Ethic, addresses the issue of the apparent inconsistency of Leopold’s hunting. In his article, “Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair,” Callicott anticipates that some may object to the fact of Leopold’s hunting on the grounds that such activities run counter to the general aims and goals of an ecocentric environmental ethic. He asks,

What sort of reasonable and coherent moral theory would at once urge that animals (and plants and soils and waters) be included in the same class with people as beings to whom ethical consideration is owed and yet not object to some of them being slaughtered (whether painlessly or not) and eaten, others hunted, trapped, and in various other ways seemingly cruelly used? (Callicott 1989, 21)

Callicott concludes, however, that the land ethic does not prohibit sport

hunting, because the land ethic is *holistic*; that is, it is not concerned with the welfare of individual plants and animals so much as it attempts to promote the “integrity, stability and beauty” of the biotic community *as a whole*. “Thus,” states Callicott, “to hunt and kill a white-tailed deer in certain districts may not only be ethically permissible, it might actually be a *moral requirement*. . . . Thus, the land ethic is logically coherent” (21). In the next section I argue that this view is highly problematic, as it ignores certain deeply embedded assumptions that condition the nature/culture relationship and produce ecosocial crisis.

An Ecofeminist Critique of Leopold: Domination and Dualism

Hunting and Nonhuman Others

The attitude of domination and the reinforcement of a nature/culture dualism lurking in the narrative of Aldo Leopold’s life and work can be better spotted if viewed through the lens of ecofeminism. Ecofeminism is an emerging theoretical and praxis-oriented field which insists that there are important conceptual connections between the oppression of women and the domination of nature. Many ecofeminists claim that what lies at the heart of contemporary Western culture’s ecodestructive practices is what Karen Warren (1990) terms the “logic of domination”—the notion that there exist some ontological entities that are “above” others, and that said superiority then entitles them to dominate and oppress those “below.” Because both women and nature have historically been¹³ relegated to the inferior realm of the lower, the same logic or kind of reasoning serves to justify the oppression of both. An important corollary of the ecofeminist position is that since the domination of women and nature is conceptually twinned, whatever serves to oppress one acts similarly on the other. Likewise, whatever liberates nature will relieve the oppression of women as well (Davion 1994).

Sport hunting is an inherently oppressive act. When one hunts in the manner of a Leopold or an Ortega one does so not to put food on the table (although most hunters’ credos dictate that the hunter consume what he or she kills¹⁴) or to protect one’s own right to life, but to refine one’s skills and sentiments in what could be called a “gentlemanly” manner. According to Leopold,

. . . there are two points about hunting that deserve special emphasis. One is that the ethics of sportsmanship is not a fixed code, but must be

formulated and practiced by the individual with no referee but the Almighty. The other is that hunting generally involves the handling of dogs and horses, and the lack of this experience is one of the most serious defects of our gasoline-driven civilization. There was much truth in the old idea that any man ignorant of dogs and horses was not a gentleman. (Leopold 1953, 172)

Thus we can see that Leopold largely views hunting as an important experience which helps him to cultivate the qualities that are the mark of nobility, thereby positioning himself as a privileged elite with the right to exercise mastery over nature. Val Plumwood terms this the “colonizer identity,” and states that, “The colonizer identity is positioned as an eater of Others who can never themselves be eaten, just as the unmarked gaze of the colonizer claims the power to see but not to be seen . . . [the colonizer] aims to make the Other over into a form that eliminates all friction, challenge, or consequence” (1996, 43).

Hunting and Holism: Reproducing Dualism

Another defense of hunting which can, and has, been mounted, in particular by Baird Callicott and Holmes Rolston¹⁵ is that environmental ethics is concerned not with individuals *per se* but with the diversity of species and the environment which they inhabit. It is in this sense that Callicott refers to the Land Ethic as “holistic”: the individual animal, plant, and so forth, is a functioning member of a greater system, and it is the system itself which constitutes the locus of moral concern. The individual is only valuable insofar as it carries the genetic coding to perpetuate the species, which in turn is evolutionarily adapted to its surroundings and helps to perpetuate the healthy functioning of the ecosystem. When the value that a natural entity such as a duck, a deer, and so forth, exhibits is conceived of in this way, it becomes quite logical to regard the individual as superfluous (granting that the species is not endangered), and if the species in question is placing environmental pressure on other populations (e.g., deer are stripping a habitat of vegetation through overgrazing), killing several individuals may even become the “moral requirement,” Callicott claims. Thus there does indeed appear to be an insoluble tension between those who find that the suffering and erasure of perception caused to individual animals by hunting is morally unacceptable and those who say that such suffering is necessary and thus justified if done in the name of ecological sustainability: one is forced, it appears, into killing

particular animals; or sparing their lives but in so doing allowing the denudation of the habitat upon which they ultimately depend. Fortunately, an ecofeminist approach can help clarify how this dilemma may be reconceived, and ultimately obviated, as I will present in the following discussion.

According to Karen Warren, Val Plumwood, and other “critical ecofeminists,”¹⁶ one of the projects with which ecofeminism is most concerned is the exposure and elimination of “false dualisms”: conceptual pairings which operate so as to perpetuate a cultural belief in a radical discontinuity between men and women, as well as humans and the more-than-human world. Such dualisms also include the dyads of mind/body, reason/emotion, and culture/nature, as well as related others. Within each of these pairings is a hierarchical ordering (Warren [1990] calls this process “normative dualism”) in which the item occupying the second position is thought to be inferior to and thus eligible to be subjugated by the first. This kind of oppositional thinking contributes immensely to environmental oppression and degradation, say ecofeminists, by allowing humans, driven by patriarchal ideology, to think of themselves as operating outside of nature (since the human is defined as that which is *not* nature), and thereby entitled to exploit, oppress, and degrade it. In an article appearing in a recent issue of *Hypatia*, Ronnie Zoe Hawkins (1998) discusses at length the problematic nature of the “holistic” approach to environmental ethics in regard to the ecofeminist project of dismantling dualism. Drawing information from fields within the biological and ecological sciences, Hawkins notes how evolutionary biology points away from the notion that animals are by nature “typed,” that is, fixed in a particular pattern that remains universally true across members of a given species. Hawkins argues that this amounts to a sort of essentialism, in that it makes one individual in a (nonhuman) population exchangeable for any other, while denying that there are real differences not just between species but within them. Holists, says Hawkins, claim to be taking the environment to be valuable *as a whole*, but in doing so are thus denying that specificity occurs inside animal groupings as well as human ones. But since the holist does not refute the notion that human beings “count” individually (e.g., holist philosophers would not advocate the killing of sexually active human males as a means of moderating human populations [my example, not Hawkins’s]), the holist is actually embracing a normative human/nature dualism which privileges humans. Hawkins explains that,

If the “holist” who attempts to deny nonhumans any individual standing at all is following a rationalist line that is ultimately off base biologically, the “holist” who insists that “only species count” when considering environmental concerns is likely to be—unless willing to apply the same reductionistic approach to the human species in ecological contexts—seriously guilty of adhering to a double standard, one that is yet a further manifestation of human/nature dualism. (Hawkins 1998, 169)

The problem here, as Hawkins points out, is that such holism states that either animals can be conceived of as “individuals” or as “members of a group” but never both simultaneously, or alternately, as the situation may demand. “As long as the underlying dualistic framework persists,” she notes, “little has been achieved by the adoption of this sort of ‘holistic’ outlook, since the conceptual construct of ‘the ecosystem’ is simply standing in for the explicit hegemony of the human in an ongoing process of domination” (170). In the case of hunting to reduce overpopulation, the “holistic” approach of killing individuals for the sake of the herd or the habitat (or legitimating hunting on these grounds) without acknowledging the circumstances which lead to the environmentally deleterious situation merely reinforces the idea that humans and nature are separate. Thus, says Hawkins,

Holists who justify “culling” nonhuman animals that have become superabundant in their habitats, for example, without clearly acknowledging the role of human populations in creating that superabundance through such effects as elimination of predators or compression of nonhuman populations into unsuitably small land areas, and without taking responsibility for the need to reverse such dynamics by altering our human activities, will never get to the roots of our ecological crises and hence will have no chance of resolving them. (170)

Empirical objections to the necessity of hunting

An alternate, and complementary, analysis of the question of animal overpopulation and habitat deterioration has been provided by ecofeminists active in the animal liberation movement. According to research, deer overpopulation is not exclusively, or even mainly caused by loss of habitat (although this certainly remains an important factor). Rather, say these sources, hunting itself is responsible for the excess of deer now experienced regularly in several areas. This phenomenon, say such activists, did not occur before the advent of “scientific game management,” (a field which

Leopold, incidentally, is said to have founded) a practice designed to ensure the “maximum yield” of certain species in order to accommodate the desires of hunters. Animal liberation activist Bina Robinson explains how the process works:

Hunting seasons cause a (temporary) population crash which results in more does breeding at a younger age and the production of more twins and triplets. This effect is aggravated by rigging hunting regulations to limit the killing to bucks, or at least mature bucks, in most areas. This leaves more food for the does during the winter and results in more fawns being born in the spring. Viola! The population is right back where it was, or even higher. In New York State, 80% of the bucks are killed every year . . .

Does normally breed when they are one and one-half or two and one-half years old. The stress of hunting touches off an innate herd survival mechanism that cause some to ovulate and breed when only six months old, just what the wildlife managers want. . . . In nature, the food supply determines how many does ovulate and how many multiple births occur. . . . Deer also have the ability to reabsorb embryos when food is scarce, just like rabbits, believe it or not, but it seems the stress of being hunted outweighs food considerations at least some of the time . . . If hunting were to stop, the deer population would maintain a reasonable balance with its food supply. (Robinson 1998)¹⁷

The point here, then, established both theoretically and empirically, is that a reconceiving of the so-called animal rights/environmental ethics “debate” in radically different terms than it has conventionally been presented leads us even further into an appreciation for the ways in which traditional discourses occurring both within and outside of environmental philosophy are riddled with notions of dualisms and domination. These notions must be confronted in order to achieve the aim of subverting the hegemony of our dominant anthropocentric moral frameworks. Again, it is precisely this reconceiving which an ecofeminist approach enables environmental philosophy to do, since it itself is born from the experiences of those marginalized and effaced. Therefore any presentation of the materials and quandaries faced by environmentalists without serious attention to the insights of ecofeminism is inadequate and does a disservice to the many engaged in the project of environmental repair, as the next section will continue to illustrate.

The Atavism Argument: Hunting and Gender

Neither is Leopold's hunting justifiable by observing that Leopold believes hunting to be motivated by a fundamentally atavistic drive.¹⁸ In *Round River* Leopold implores the American public to practice conservation for the reason that "I have congenital hunting fever and three sons . . . I hope to leave them good health, an education, and possibly even a competence. But what are they going to do with these things if there be no more deer in the hills, and no more quail in the coverts?" (1953, 173). In this remark there is something that should be of interest to those seeking to overcome discourses of domination. Leopold and his wife, Estella, actually had five children, two of whom were female! For what reason are they explicitly excluded from such a consideration? Are not "deer in the hills" the birth-right of girls as well? Of course one does not wish to reach the uncharitable conclusion that Leopold considered his sons to be more important than his daughters, but it is clear, from this passage and others, that Leopold considered hunting to be a predominantly masculine pursuit, a holdover from our 'paleolithic' days passed on through the male line only, apparently. Although such a direct exclusion of women in what he repeatedly calls the "instinctive" pursuit of "game" is relatively rare in Leopold's writings, it is not unprecedented. At one point, readying to move to Madison from Albuquerque, Aldo writes Estella to report that there were "dozens of boys . . . catching sunfish" in a nearby lake, a fact which reassures him that "there are a lot of things like that [in Wisconsin] which are going to please our boys very much" (Meine 1988, 232). As to how his girls, or women more generally, are to receive this vital and pleasurable contact with nature, Leopold leaves us with no answer.

In his field-founding work, *Game Management*, Leopold contends that "men" possess an "instinctive zest" for "physical combat." "Physical combat between men and beasts," Leopold insists, "was an economic fact." He continues:

Since first the flight of years began, it was part and parcel of the daily business of getting something to eat. Gradually agriculture and commerce supplied other and better means of subsistence. But the *hunting instinct*, the love of weapons, the zest in their skillful use, did not disappear with their displacement by economic substitutes. Hence sport with rod and gun. (Leopold 1933, 391; emphasis added)

The problem with the atavism argument from an ecofeminist standpoint is twofold. One is that the model which Leopold uses to express the phenomena occurring in nature is founded upon a rather Hobbesian approach that asserts that all beings are fundamentally in conflict with one another. "An ethic, ecologically, is a limitation on freedom of action in the struggle for existence" (Leopold 1949, 202), as opposed to a more 'feminine' and/or ecological model of organisms cooperating and symbiotically interacting. The other is that the presumption that *Homo sapiens* evolved primarily as a hunter¹⁹ and thus that members of the species genetically carry this 'instinctive' drive is fallacious, as it ignores the historical contributions of women as gatherers and overstates the role of hunting and the consumption of meat in human evolution. It is now widely acknowledged that in traditional societies, it was the *gathering* of botanical foodstuffs and not the hunting of meat that supplied the group with the greatest amount of calories, thereby enabling it to survive. Respected historian of science and ecofeminist philosopher Carolyn Merchant informs us that in pre-colonial New England, for instance,

women were responsible not only for horticulture, but also for gathering nuts, berries, and probably birds' eggs. Feminist anthropologists suggest that gathering may have been the quintessential process through which human evolution originally took place. . . . Male labor predominated in hunting, [which] contributed about ten percent of the Indian diet. . . . Female horticulture, gathering, and fishing contributed approximately 85 percent of the total caloric intake. (Merchant 1989, 80–81)

This point deserves to be clarified further. In attempting to find a historical/evolutionary basis for hunting, some argue that predation is "natural." Comparisons are made between ourselves and other animals, especially primates, our closest genetic relatives, in order to justify hunting and meat consumption. Thus, states ecofeminist theorist Carol Adams (1996), "Some feminists have argued that the eating of animals is natural because we do not have the herbivore's double stomach or flat grinders and because chimpanzees eat meat and regard it as a treat." The flaw in such an argument, says Adams, is that it involves "selective filtering," because it fails to note that meat comprises less than 4 percent of a chimpanzee's diet. "In fact," she notes, "all primates are primarily herbivorous." Adams continues:

It is true that chimpanzees act as if meat were a treat. When humans lived as foragers and when oil was rare, the flesh of dead animals was

a good source of calories. It may be that the treat aspect of meat has to do with an ability to recognize dense sources of calories. However, we no longer have a need for such dense sources of calories . . . When the argument is made that eating animals is natural, the presumption is that we must continue consuming animals because this is what we require to survive, to survive in a way consonant with living unimpeded by artificial cultural constraints that deprive us of the experience of our real selves. The paradigm of carnivorous animals provides the reassurance that eating animals is natural. But how do we know what is natural when it comes to eating, both because of the social construction of reality and the fact that our history indicates a very mixed message about eating animals? Some did; the majority did not, at least to any great degree. (Adams 1996, 123–24)

Adams, in the same article, specifically denies that hunting, even so-called “relational hunting”²⁰ can be reconciled with an ecofeminist consciousness, because such an activity is marked by power and domination, in which “the ontologizing of animals as edible bodies creates them as *instruments of human beings; animals’ lives are thus subordinated* to the human’s desire to eat them even though there is, in general, no need to be eating animals” (126, emphasis added).

What the information provided by Merchant and Adams indicates is that hunting and meat consumption are not, nor were ever, essential to human survival. Therefore Leopold is mistaken about his facts at least, and perhaps can be forgiven for being a “man of his age.” The larger point I have been making, though, is that sport hunting of the kind practiced by Aldo Leopold is an act of domination which is inconsistent with what is taken to be a basic claim of environmental ethics: the claim that humans are not morally superior beings who are entitled to subjugate members of the more-than-human world. This, I assert, needs to be taken into account when examining one so central to the foundations of environmental ethics as Aldo Leopold. The hunted animal is being treated as a means and not an end for reasons that do not outweigh the *prima facie* case against killing other living, sentient²¹ beings. In this way the act of hunting differs substantially from say, the cultivation of vegetables and plant products.

Hunting and vegetarianism

This is an important point, and alludes to an objection which must be addressed. In discussions such as these, hunting advocates often ask why it is not equally iniquitous to consume plants as to consume animals. “But

everything needs to eat *something*,” rejoins the hunters’ apologist to the antihunting critic, “and you are thereby being inconsistent to your own espoused reverence for life to state that the taking of animal life is wrong while you accept and even rejoice in the destruction of defenseless, living, plants.” The attempt here is to turn the vegetarian’s argument into a *reductio ad absurdum*, but is itself founded on the fallacy that all ways of getting something to eat possess moral parity; that gardening and hunting are the same sort of thing. The proper response to this, in my view, consists in recognizing that unless one wants to argue that human beings are *completely* unjustified in continuing to live upon the earth (a point I presume few would want to defend), then it is necessary for humans to use and consume members of the natural world. In other words, eating is a biological necessity, and cannot be foregone, even if someone suggests that a squash plant is being held in a state of bondage by the practice of gardening (unless one is literally willing to give up one’s own life). Fortunately, however, having a proper relationship with the land does not seem to require that one relinquish one’s right to eat *anything*; it merely suggests that some ways of “getting a living”—eating, dwelling, working, recreating, becoming edified, and so forth—are better than others. In other words, we ought to pursue the course of action which inflicts the least amount of suffering and damage upon natural creatures and systems, and ought significantly interfere with the more-than-human world only after its interests have been given proper consideration.

In light of the foregoing discussion one may well argue that a system of monocrop farming which relies heavily on the application of toxic pesticides and petroleum-based fertilizers and puts significant stress upon the land is as indicative of an attitude of domination as is sport hunting, and I would agree. The major difference between eating animals and eating plants, however, seems to be related to the type and degree of damage done to natural systems. Farming—for instance, by utilizing organic methods²²—*can* be conducted in a way which is compatible with the way that plant communities actually exist, whereas sport hunting requires that violence be done to a natural creature for a reason *that is unrelated to a human being’s biological need to survive*. (Although one could object that most modern agri-businesses do not conduct their operations in an ecologically sound manner, it does not follow from this fact that sport hunting is morally acceptable. It simply points to the need to end farming-based environmental oppression as well.) In short, the *reasons* for interfering with natural

entities and the underlying *attitude* taken toward them when doing so are of principal importance in determining whether an act is ethically permissible. Leopold appears to have hunted in order to achieve the sort of vital contact with natural systems that allow human beings to thrive and flourish. But in doing so, Leopold negated the hunted animal's concomitant entitlement to live and flourish. Although he denies that it would be as satisfying, Leopold could have chosen (and did at times choose) other ways to experience nature "first hand." The deer and the grouse, in contrast, are left with no choice as to whether or not to be shot at.

The Denial of the Other

Another potentially serious problem with the work of Aldo Leopold relates to the feminist contention that historically men, in order to establish their identities as subjective selves, have repudiated and denied the "other." As could be inferred from the earlier Plumwood analysis, the other is one to whom one stands in antagonistic opposition, not in cooperative relation.²³ The other threatens to annihilate the individuated self unless the other is overcome. Since under patriarchy it is women, who, along with nature have been posited as the other, both are seen as something to conquer and subdue.²⁴ Ecofeminist theorist Marti Kheel (1990) writes, "Men have historically transcended the world of contingency through exploits and projects, that is, through attempts to transform the natural world" (129). It is this desire to overcome, to dominate and transform the natural environment that many environmental philosophers, such as the ones cited here, have pointed to as being fundamental to our ecological dilemmas. Although it is claimed by many who hunt that the meaningfulness of hunting is actually in identifying with one's prey and experiencing an ultimate closeness²⁵ (certainly it is the vehicle through which Leopold experienced his more sublime moments), an ecofeminist perspective provides the insight that, in hunting, the "other" is in actuality being negated so that the subjective, independent male self can emerge. Elaborates Kheel:

In order to understand how the act of identification can coexist with the desire to kill a being with whom one identifies, it is important to understand the ambivalent nature of the hunt. . . . The hunter is thus driven by conflicting desires to both identify with the animal and to deny that he is an animal himself. The "drama" of the hunt thus enables the hunter to experience both the yearning for a return to unity, while ensuring, through the death of the animal, that such a unification

is never attained . . . *animals have become objects in the eyes of these men*. In fact, Leopold openly expresses this urge to reduce animals to object status: "Critics write and hunters outwit their animals for one and the same reason—to reduce that beauty to possession." Interestingly, the original title of his famous *Sand County Almanac* was 'Great Possessions'. (Kheel 1990, 133; emphasis added)

What Kheel, in strongly de Beauvoirian tones, makes explicit in the above quote is the way in which "animal" is defined as the negation of "human" in the same sense that "woman" is defined as the negation of "man." Because both "woman" and "animal" are associated with the realm of the natural, that is, that from which human physiology and consciousness arises and that which places limitations on human existence, both are seen as something to simultaneously embrace and resist. In order to overcome the sense of limitation or restriction placed on him by biological necessity, "man" must remove himself as much as possible from the realm of what is identified as "natural"—chaotic, situated, and finite—and place himself in the world of culture—the abstract, the universal, the timeless. He typically does this through the process that Kheel identifies, by objectifying the other, thereby denying that it is a part of himself on which he depends and must interact, and then transforming or effacing it through "exploits and projects" such as hunting. "The significance of the reduction of the animal to object status," says Kheel, "is that . . . [t]he feelings of yearning for union, the urge to "outwit" [the animal]—all these take precedence over the living being that will be killed. The animal is swallowed up [the other negated] in the act of merging" (133). The animal, instead of being acknowledged as a site of subjective experience, is transformed into an object or symbol designed to confirm the existence of the independent, human, male self.

Hunting and Eros

Hunting and its descriptions carry erotic undertones as well. In the act of hunting the prey is "captured" and "conquered," or as Leopold put it, "that beauty reduced to possession." These same terms and ideas can be found to express male/female interactions under patriarchy. As Susan Griffin (1978) writes in ironic metaphor in "The Hunt":

She has captured his heart. She has overcome him. He cannot tear his eyes away. He is burning with passion. He cannot live without her. He pursues her. She makes him pursue her. The faster she runs, the stron-

ger his desire. He will overtake her. He will make her his own. He will have her. (The boy chases the doe and her yearling for nearly two hours. She keeps running despite her wounds.) . . . She is wild. He is an easy target, he says. He says he is pierced. Love has shot him through, he says . . . Now, he must conquer her wildness, he says, he must tame her before she drives him wild . . . (103–104)

In the above passage Griffin is drawing a comparison to the way in which the hunter is “respecting” the wildness of the animal and imagines himself to be reciprocally caught in the hunt and the way in which men often claim that women “provoke” sexual harassment and rape by “making” him “pursue” and later “possess” her. One need not, however, turn to literature or poetic philosophy to discover the cultural currency of the notion of the erotic hunt. One need only open the front page of a major newspaper, where the comparison has been expressed directly. In an article appearing in the *Dallas Morning News*, a hunter is quoted as saying, “There is a [basic]²⁶ drive within us that makes us hunt—it’s like trying to explain a sex drive” (1996, 42A).

Of course, this is a comparison only; the hunter is not claiming that hunting *is* sex, only that the urge to hunt is *like* the urge for sex. But why this particular analogy? Why of all the many possible drives which could be selected—hunger, thirst, affection, and so forth—does this person choose the sex drive? Again, I would argue that in hunting one assumes an attitude of domination over the thing being pursued, just as in patriarchal cultures such as our own men as a class assume an attitude of domination over women as a class, and gratify their needs and wants at women’s expense. Sexual relations are, according to feminists, an area of life where the deep social inequality between men and women manifests itself deeply. (Interestingly, males exhibiting the most egregious behavior are referred to as “sexual predators.”) However, feminists such as Catharine MacKinnon (1989) have convincingly argued that there is nothing terribly unusual about the actions of men who are convicted of rape, pedophilia, and so forth, since these behaviors are in many ways encouraged by the culture at large. It is only the *degree* to which they act out their conditioning that society finds aberrant. Women are “pursued” while men are the “pursuers”; submissiveness and powerlessness are part of the cultural definition of femininity while masculinity is largely defined in accordance with aggressiveness, physical power, and the ability to do violence. These dynamics are reproduced in the hunt. As Griffin expresses in the above

quote, the hunter is trying to capture, while the “game” is trying to get away, but both the hunter and the Don Juan is projecting on to the objectified other those drives which he himself is experiencing.²⁷ In either case, if successful, the “hunter” has made a “conquest.” With the explicit recognition of this in mind, it now seems perversely logical for the hunter quoted above to have found a (probably subconscious) conceptual connection between his desire for sex and whatever sentiments motivate him to hunt.

At this point we want to ask: did Leopold eroticize hunting? Probably not, at least not in any direct way that we know of. But my claim is that the larger effect of Leopold’s work on the professionals, philosophers, and students engaged in environmental ethics who draw so heavily on him is that it reproduces, keeps alive certain notions—to wit, domination and objectification—that hamper the project of environmental ethics. Ecofeminists have shown how the same reasoning that works to oppress women also works to oppress nature. Thus when women or nature are oppressed, the oppression of the other is undergirded. Given the current cultural connotations (i.e., sexuality in a context of gendered power-imbalance) attaching to the hunt, it is dangerous to allow any narrative that approves of and seems to encourage hunting to escape a careful critical analysis which brings to bear the most recent scholarship. Instead, Leopold, like other authors forming the “canon” of any field or discourse, must be subjected to the process of critical deconstruction, that we may reconstruct the narrative in such a way that our aims can be more inclusively and justly achieved.

Nature and the Feminine

A final ecofeminist insight which can be brought to bear is that Leopold, in at least one instance, feminized nature, a conceptual phenomenon related to the discourses of dominance which feed environmental degradation. In his famous essay, “Thinking Like A Mountain,” Leopold writes about his remorse at killing a wolf and its pups during his days as a forest manager:

In those days we had never heard of passing up a chance to kill a wolf. In a second we were pumping lead into the pack, but with more excitement than accuracy: how to aim a steep downhill shot is always confusing. When our rifles were empty, the old wolf was down, and a pup was dragging a leg into impassable slide-rocks.

We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying

in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes—*something known only to her and to the mountain*. (Leopold 1949, 130; emphasis added)

One possible analysis of this episode is that it is properly understood as a literal report of Aldo Leopold's own experience. Leopold expert J. Baird Callicott, however, has suggested on at least one occasion²⁸ that the story was contrived by Leopold as a means of capturing and conveying through narrative his own protracted epistemological transformation regarding the importance of natural predators. By validating the she-wolf's right to exist is it possible that Leopold was attempting to come to terms with the earthy, "feminine"²⁹ contingency of his own existence? If I am correct in suggesting that Leopold on some level intended the wolf to represent the omniscience—that is the "all knowingness"—of nature (remember, he is asking us to "think like a mountain," something the wolf is already able to do), and if one accepts that nature has been fundamentally construed as feminine, then this may indicate that by hunting Leopold was paradoxically trying to both repudiate and celebrate his own dependence on the tumultuous, bountiful, inescapable natural world. Putatively, it is precisely this nature/culture interdependence which Leopold wished to affirm, as the corpus of his works attest. It is not untenable to imagine, however, that Leopold, like us all, struggled internally with confronting his own (and our own) lack of ultimate control over the forces that drive the universe, and thus may have coded another meaning into the message.

Leopold: A Narrative Perspective

The encodation of meanings other than the ostensive one is a concept which can be understood if one looks at *A Sand County Almanac* (and Leopold's other writings) from a narrative perspective. Communications theorist Walter R. Fisher (1984) has suggested that works and events can be understood according to two paradigms: the rational world paradigm and the narrative paradigm. In the rational world paradigm events and authors are understood logically, that is to say, they are evaluated according to the internal consistency and strength of the inferential structures of what is *explicitly said*. All else, including the tone and vehicle of communication, the way in which the ideas are expressed and whatever "incidentals" may accompany it, is considered superfluous, not part of the argument to be rationally evaluated. According to the narrative paradigm, however, human beings are considered to be storytellers (of which Leopold is un-

doubtedly one of the best), and rationality is not restricted to adherence to certain learned formal logical structures. In the narrative paradigm, meaning comes from the accompanying symbolism and “dramatic stories” that an author utilizes to convey his or her message as well as from its syllogistic claims. The work is taken *en toto*, with much of it operating on a nonrational level (one might do better to say *meta*-rational), and attitudes and ideas are dispersed and absorbed according to the kind of “narrative fidelity” and “narrative probability” they evince. The point I am attempting briefly to make is that the work and words of Aldo Leopold, when examined according to the rational world paradigm, are certainly coherent and consistent; in short, logically compelling. There is nothing in his explicit and direct formulation of the more philosophical sections of the Land Ethic which would suggest an attitude of domination and exploitation of the sort that has in more recent decades been strongly linked to anthropogenic environmental harm. In fact, it was these sorts of attitudes that Leopold was attempting, with fair success, to change. However, when examined narratively, the meaning of Leopold is somewhat altered. Because Leopold’s writings portray hunting so favorably, and because he himself is such a laudable figure, it is possible that persons will fail to see the connection between sport hunting and attitudes of domination. Instead his hunting may be glossed over, ignored, or written off as “natural for his time.” What is happily ironic in this regard, however, is that it is Leopold’s work itself which has been so influential in introducing into contemporary discourse the terms needed to conduct such a critique.

Concluding Remarks: Aldo Leopold and the Evolution of Environmental Discourse

If my thesis is correct, if it is the case that despite his recognition that conventional Western notions of “prosperity” and “progress” were in actuality impoverishing the quality of human and nonhuman life on earth, Aldo Leopold still harbored a view of nature as “other,” then what does this mean for the project of environmental philosophy? What does this imply about the significance of hunting to the development of the Land Ethic? Could Leopold’s profound and prophetic insights have been developed without such an activity, and if they had, would they say different things? We can’t know. At a minimum, though, we can appreciate that it is the case that Leopold found hunting to place one in a position of intimate contact with the natural world, and this contact, in turn, inspired much of

his fervent and eloquent entreaties to protect and preserve North America's wildlife and wildlife habitat. As much as any other single figure, Aldo Leopold is responsible for changing and enlarging our awareness regarding the biological importance and moral significance of the biota. Aldo Leopold entered into popular, professional, and academic discourse ideas which are with us still. Fifty-plus years after the publication of *A Sand County Almanac* his ideas continue to deepen the collective ecological narrative of our time. It is not my intention to suggest that Leopold's work is of *no* value because of notions it might contain. Instead I wish to draw attention to the cultural premises which his work and words are built upon, and the ones that will unavoidably provide the filters through which he will be received. As the combination of ethics and ecology has moved us from conservationism to environmentalism and now places us into the postmodern era where many traditional boundaries and thought-structures are being dissolved, we do well to examine critically the foundations of our inherited worldview. By exposing and confronting those narratives that undermine the health of the world, and by embracing those that we desperately need to 'ring true', we enable ourselves to forge a relationship between the human and land communities which is healthy and whole. We can accept the teachings of Leopold, and continue to draw upon his ideas, while incorporating the many critiques of hunting into the conversation. For, as Leopold himself understood, "Ability to see the cultural value of wilderness boils down, in the last analysis, to a question of intellectual humility" (1949, 200).

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NOTES

1. This, of course, is the famous conservationist doctrine advocated by Gifford Pinchot, founder of the Yale School of Forestry and first chief of the U.S. Forest Service, which asserts that the natural environment consists of "resources" to be utilized for human economic benefit and thus the best methods of conservation are those which maximize utility and provide a sustained yield over the long-term. A highly anthropocentric concept, the term "Wise Use" has in recent times been seized upon by coalitions of timber, mining, and ranching in-

dustries to maintain public support for such businesses and to attempt to counter the push by nonprofit environmental organizations to raise awareness regarding environmentally destructive corporate practices. Leopold's teachings can be credited to a large extent for providing a basis for countering these kinds of approaches to natural environments.

2. My use of the term "natural entities" applies to individual members of the biotic world such as particular plants and animals, as well as processes such as hydrologic cycles, and other, more amorphous and thus disputed things like species and ecosystems. I have chosen this term in an imperfect attempt to be as inclusive as possible without erasing the very real differences among items we consider to be a part of "nature." It should be noted that while I agree, as I will continue to develop in later sections, with contemporary ecologists and philosophers such as Michael Soulé and Holmes Rolston that the natural environment is best understood not as a collection of things but rather as a series of dynamic processes, nonetheless certain entities exhibiting a high degree of individuality such as sentient animals at some levels of moral analysis are best understood as being ontologically embedded in but distinct from other features of the environment.
3. This is the subject of Leopold's second most famous book, *Round River: From the Journals of Aldo Leopold*. According to Leopold biographer Curt Meine (1988), the book is reputed not to have sold as well as its predecessor, *A Sand County Almanac*, because "the unrelenting procession of hunting tales did not sit well with nonhunting conservationists" (525). Meine also claims that "no less a figure than Rachel Carson took Leopold to task" for emphasizing this activity so heavily in his work and writings.
4. The ecofeminist literature which details these interconnections and the political, social, and economic processes by which they occur is extensive; in fact it could be said that this is central to the project of ecofeminism. However, two representative sources on this matter are Vandana Shiva (1989) and Val Plumwood (1993).
5. See nn. 4 and 7.
6. My analysis of the ethical impropriety of hunting applies to human beings engaged in sport hunting only and not predators in general. That there is a significant moral difference between the activities of an animal which is biologically designed to capture and consume prey (wolves, lions, etc.) and human beings, who are certainly omnivorous, can survive quite healthily without meat-eating, and may actually have evolved as scavengers and not hunters of live prey, I take to be obvious.
7. As with ecofeminism (n. 4), the number of authors within environmental philosophy espousing a position which rejects conventional ethical notions of human superiority by virtue of the ability to "reason"—with reason being defined narrowly as deliberate and self-reflective examination of options and conclusions—is vast. Although the umbrella of environmental ethics is large

and encompasses many positions, the scope of my paper is designed primarily to address “ecocentric” environmental ethicists; that is, those who feel that human beings ought to adjust their thinking regarding the value of the natural world to recognize that nature possesses much more than value as a “resource” but is something in which the value is intrinsic or inherent. Representatives of this position include Holmes Rolston, Paul W. Taylor, Max Oelschlaeger, and J. Baird Callicott.

8. For an excellent and detailed analysis of literature which examines hunters’ own thoughts and remarks regarding hunting and the inconsistencies therein, see Brian Luke (1997).
9. For example, Arne Naess (1985), founder of Deep Ecology and widely revered environmental philosopher, writes that, “There is a basic intuition in deep ecology that we have no right to destroy other living beings without sufficient reason. Another is the norm that, with maturity, human beings will experience joy when other life forms experience joy, and sorrow when other life forms experience sorrow” (75).
10. Callicott (1989) defines the distinction this way: “Something is intrinsically valuable if it is valuable *in* and *for* itself—if its value is not derived from its utility, but is independent of any use or function it may have in relation to something else. In classical philosophical terminology, an intrinsically valuable entity is said to be an ‘end-in-itself’, not just a ‘means to another’s ends’” (131). As has been pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, in the particular piece from which this definition is drawn, Callicott is not defending the intrinsic value of *individual* members of a species, but rather he is claiming that the species itself is intrinsically valuable, and that individual members may be expendable. However, I explain in later sections of this essay, the way in which this “holistic” position embraces a hidden dualism that is unacceptable from an ecofeminist standpoint, thereby illustrating why an ecofeminist perspective in general is needed in order to break down the so-called “debate” between environmental ethics and animal rights.
11. Part of the allure of hunting lies in the rejection of particular social modes and activities that are demanded of the individual in “normal” life. Hunters, for a time, fancy themselves as getting to “go native,” to re-live an imagined human past in which human ingenuity was pitted against raw nature in a struggle to survive. Callicott (1989) writes: “Civilization has insulated and alienated us from the rigors and challenges of the natural environment. . . . The land ethic, on the other hand, requires a shrinkage if at all possible, of the domestic sphere; it rejoices in a recrudescence of wilderness and a renaissance of tribal cultural experience” (34).
12. In a recent article appearing in the journal *Environmental Ethics*, a nearly identical objection, raised by an anonymous referee, is considered; interestingly, the authors’ response is very similar to the one I have independently proposed here (Moriarty and Woods 1997). For an article in the same issue

which argues that sport hunting is morally justified according to the tenets of the land ethic, see Charles List (1997). From an ecofeminist perspective, Greta Gaard, in a *Hypatia* article, addresses the question of hunting as a means of cultural survival through the specific case of the recent Makah whale hunt. Gaard argues that presuming that the Makah tribe must resume whale hunting to maintain cultural integrity relies on an unacceptable cultural essentialism. (Gaard 2001).

13. Conventionally this has been thought to be the case because women and nature evince such traits as “emotionality” and are “bodily” and “chaotic,” which has been considered by Western culture to be a less desirable way to be than the more masculine “rational,” “orderly,” and “mental” or “intellectual.”
14. Again, an excellent discussion of the problems inherent in so-called ‘hunters’ ethics’ can be found in Brian Luke’s piece, “A Critical Analysis of Hunters’ Ethics” (1997).
15. Callicott (1989) “Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair”; Holmes Rolston, *Environmental Ethics: Duties to and Values in the Natural World* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press 1988), 90–91.
16. This term, utilized in particular by Val Plumwood, is meant to contrast with the “essentializing ecofeminism” criticized by ecofeminists and nonecofeminists alike for drawing a link between women and nature in such a way that the similarities are assumed to be “natural” and thus unchangeable, and the exclusive privilege of biological females.
17. Carol Adams and Bina Robinson, personal correspondence, July 19, 1998 (some of Robinson’s information quoted here, according to her, has been taken from *The American Hunting Myth* by Ron Baker).
18. Ortega (1973) shares such an assumption: “This is the reason men hunt. When you are fed up with the troublesome present, with being ‘very twentieth century’, you take your gun, whistle for your dog, go out to the mountain, and, without further ado, give yourself the pleasure during a few hours or a few days of being ‘Paleolithic’” (116).
19. A considerable range of feminist authors have challenged the widely accepted belief that our hominid ancestors were frequent hunters, and that this always-imaged-as- male activity constituted the primary motor of evolution. Donna Haraway (1989) does an especially effective job of examining how such “origin stories” are particularly good at reinforcing narratives of (Western, white, male) human superiority and power-entitlement. Even Mary Zeiss Stange (1997), a controversial author who claims that hunting by women is a pro-feminist activity, devotes much of her book, *Woman the Hunter*, to disputing the culturally-prevalent notion that hunting was always a male occupation, and occurred frequently and ubiquitously in human prehistory.
20. About “relational hunting” (hunting in which there is a presumption of respect and reciprocity occurring between the hunter and the hunted), Adams (1996) has this to say: “But reciprocity involves a mutual or cooperative interchange

of favors or privileges. What does the animal who dies receive in this exchange? The experience of sacrifice? How can the reciprocity of the relational hunt be verified since the other partner is both voiceless in terms of human speech and furthermore rendered voiceless through his or her death? Once the question of the willingness of the silent and silenced partner is raised, so too is the connection between the relational hunt and what I will call the ‘aggressive hunt’” (127).

21. I am not here claiming that sentience—defined as the ability to experience pain—is the only or even the primary criterion for making the claim that causing an animal’s death is wrong. However, I believe that the matter should be approached in a pluralistic and contextualized way. In line with what I see as an ecofeminist approach, I believe that the project of attempting to find a single, “foundational” or universal criterion upon which to rest ethical claims is unnecessarily hegemonic, and perpetuative of a modernist and nonfeminist approach to philosophy which asserts that there is only “one” correct way of viewing a quandary. In the case of natural entities who have highly developed nervous systems are highly individualized like ourselves, perhaps sentience ought to be a consideration which is given much weight. However, in a different case involving organisms with a different physiology or place within the ecosystem, other ethical criteria might rise to the forefront.
22. Two long-term, ongoing projects investigating and developing methods of nonpesticide, machinery, and artificial fertilizer-dependent methods of farming which can be applied on a large enough scale to feed local communities of which I am personally aware are the Agroecology Program at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and the Center for Regenerative Studies at California Polytechnic University, Pomona.
23. Plumwood (1993) is apparently drawing on Hegel to develop her analysis, as an anonymous reviewer has helpfully pointed out.
24. See, for instance, Susan Griffin (1978); also Simone de Beauvoir (1989, 140–44).
25. Three authors who make this claim who are frequently cited by both pro- and antihunting theorists and activists are Paul Shepard (1973), Ted Kerasote (1993), and Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset (1973). More recently, philosopher and hunter Mary Zeiss Stange (1997) has written a book critical of the ecofeminist objections to hunting, in which she claims that “the hunter serves as an agent of awareness for society at large, both by forging that most elemental conceptual connection between human and nonhuman animals, and by locating the essence of that connection in the good food that sustains life.” Like Leopold (see “The Deer Swath” in *Round River* (1953, 126) in which Leopold states that the nonhunter “does not watch” nature), Stange implies that a truly deep, authentic connection with nature is the privileged experience of hunters; nonhunters are denied such a perception. “Such awareness is only available, though, to the extent that some people are actually hunting; otherwise, it is mere nostalgia . . . an empty metaphor” (1997, 175).

26. The word which I have here omitted is "atavistic." I have excluded it because I wish the focus of this section to be the comparison of hunting to sex, not on hunting to beliefs about human evolution.
27. Hawkins quotes Kheel as remarking that "the notion that the animal chooses to end her or his life for the benefit of the hunter has no more validity than the idea that a woman who is raped 'asked for it' or 'willingly' gave herself to the rapist" (Hawkins 1998, 170).
28. J. Baird Callicott said this in a seminar on Aldo Leopold at the University of North Texas in the Fall of 1996.
29. I am in no way suggesting here that there is a genuine, ahistorical, *essential* principle of femininity in the natural world. The association of femininity, bodily existence, and the chaos of natural forces is in my view a culturally-constructed notion which nonetheless many take to be "natural."

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