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Tradition and Innovation in the Poetry of Gary Snyder, 1952-1982

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Previous studies of the poetry of Gary Snyder have frequently concentrated upon the surface, esoteric nature of his work, claiming for it a uniqueness which overlooks his debt to tradition. This thesis proposes that Snyder's poetry can be divided into two modes, the mythic and the lyric, each a contribution to well-established modern American poetic traditions. The discussion of the mythic poems traces Snyder's indebtedness to the Modernist long poem and, in particular, sees T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land as an important structural model for Myths & Texts, a poem which is also closely related to Joseph Campbell's delineation of the quest monomyth. In the chapter on the lyric poems, it is suggested that Snyder is one of the inheritors of an experimental lyric tradition initiated by the work of Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams. Both chapters also indicate how such past models have given Snyder's poetry a stability which allows for a measure of profitable innovation. Examples which are isolated are the extensive use of American Indian oral literature in the mythic poems, and the original application of aspects of Chinese poetry and poetics in the lyrics. These two chapters take the study of the poetry up to 1968. This date, which marks Snyder's return to the United States after a long period of residence in Japan, is seen as a watershed after which his work enters a critical and problematical phase. The principal objective of the chapter on the later poems is to show that when Snyder turns away from his Modernist inheritance to seek the role of overt social prophet, he sacrifices much of his earlier technical accomplishment, thus making further innovation more questionable. As part of its researches, the thesis also provides the first comprehensive bibliography of Snyder, including a complete list of his uncollected work.

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Abbreviations

Standard American editions of the poetry of Gary Snyder are used throughout. The following abbreviations have been adopted to give references to them in the text:

- MT Myths & Texts (New York, 1960). This poem is divided into three sub-titled sections, each with up to seventeen numbered parts. Where it is discussed in detail, additional references will be given reflecting this, for example, 'Logging', 1, or 'Hunting', 8, or 'Burning', 17.
- RCM Riprap, & Cold Mountain Poems (San Francisco, 1965).
- BC The Back Country (New York, 1968).
- MR Six Sections from Mountains and Rivers without End Plus One (San Francisco, 1970).
- RW Regarding Wave (New York, 1970).
- TI Turtle Island (New York, 1974).

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I. INTRODUCTION

(i) The Mythic and Lyric Modes

In the past, diverse approaches have been adopted to comment upon and interpret the poetry of Gary Snyder. His eclectic range of interests readily lends itself, for example, to expositions focused upon Buddhist philosophies or Zen aesthetics, on American Indian religion and mythology, on his relationship with the Beat writers of the nineteen fifties or, more recently, on his radical ecological and conservationist concerns. Such constituents as these are indisputably important in any consideration of his work, but none of them can proffer a uniquely comprehensive account of it. Moreover, discussions of Snyder's poetry which rely excessively on the extensive social, cultural, and intellectual influences which have helped to shape it, and in doing so allocate comparatively little attention to the poetry's formal qualities, tend to result in perceiving both Snyder and his work as unduly distinctive and unique, that is, occupying a position outside the American tradition.

The thesis which structures this study is that Snyder's poetry has a central place in definable twentieth-century American poetic traditions; that, in fact, two distinct modes exist and develop in tandem in his work and that each can be related to a dominant poetic mode in modern American writing, with Snyder adding an original contribution drawn from his own particular sense of place and experience.

The existence of these two modes or classes of poem has been apparent since his first two volumes, Riprap (1959) and Myths & Texts (1960), were available for direct comparison, although it should be noted that the poems which form the basis of both books, particularly Myths & Texts, have their origins in the early and middle nineteen fifties.¹ Snyder himself has never contradicted the idea of two

parallel streams in his poetry and, more recently, has begun to acknowledge their importance:

I see my poetry as falling into two classes. I write lyrical poems which are shorter and which are pretty easy to understand on one level....such as those in Riprap and The Back Country. The other type is that which I did in Myths & Texts and which I am doing in Mountains and Rivers without End which is more on the order of working with myths and symbols and ideas. Working with old traditions and insights.

Later in the same interview, Snyder concisely contrasts these two classes as "a myth-making order" and "a lyric order".² The delineation of these two modes is crucial: each serves Snyder in achieving certain goals in his poetry; each has its characteristic elements of formal construction; and each, once established, acts as a constant despite the changing attitudes and interests which are brought to the poetry as a whole. In this study, these two modes will be termed 'mythic' and 'lyric', and a thorough discussion of each will occupy respective main chapters. In both cases, these terms will be defined with reference to the poetry written up to 1968, with the poems composed after this date the subject of a separate treatment. The rationale for this chronological division is discussed below. Some brief, preliminary guidelines as to what constitutes the mythic and lyric in Snyder's poetry may be useful at this point.

Lyric will be used as a term to explore those poems which are most typically to be found in Riprap and The Back Country, that is, poems which are characterized by their relative brevity, their use of natural settings, and their recognizably lucid and concrete style; poems, as Snyder suggests, of "a pure song order".³ These poems will be compared to the received definitions of lyric, as that term has been traditionally used to designate a poetic genre, in order to

establish their position in a more contemporary lyric tradition which has sought to remove, or at least modify, many conventions of form and subject matter in the orthodox lyric, whilst still producing a poetry which is undeniably lyric in its nature and intent. Another important model for Snyder's lyrics - his work as a scholar and translator of Oriental poetry - will also be considered, since it has significant repercussions for both the style and general presentation of his own poems in the lyric mode.

Mythic will be used as a term to encompass work best illustrated by Myths & Texts, that is, poems which are in general longer, more discursive and fragmented, and characterized by an often intense and involved presentation, frequently incorporating amounts of extraneous material in the form of quotation or adaption of passages from other sources. Central to this discussion will be the placing of the mythic poem in a twentieth-century long poem tradition and, more specifically, in indicating the ways in which it is modelled on certain Modernist long poems. It is clear that Snyder's readings of such works as William Carlos Williams' Paterson, Ezra Pound's The Cantos, and particularly T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land, have been a major influence in the shaping of his mythic poems. What will be discussed in a later chapter as the Modernist poetic furnished Snyder as a young poet (Myths & Texts was completed when he was twenty-six years old), with an adaptable and proven model through which he could manipulate a body of often complex material. Although both lyric and mythic poems can be related to establish modes in modern American poetry, Snyder is always prepared to modify or extend those traditions to reflect his own interests and personality. If, in the case of the lyric poems, it is his thorough grounding in certain Oriental poetry which provides a sense of innovation, in the mythic poems it is his lasting fascination

with American Indian oral culture which prevents a poem such as Myths & Texts from becoming a simple pastiche of its Modernist predecessors.

Running parallel to a reading of Snyder's poetry in terms of lyric and mythic must be a consideration of his particular interests, way of life, or occupation at any given time during his writing career. When he wrote that "poetry must sing or speak from authentic experience",⁴ the most literal meaning was probably as important as any. Snyder's poetry invariably reflects the major preoccupations of any particular period of his life whether obviously, in terms of subject matter or, less apparently, in terms of influence upon his poetics. In 1959 he wrote: "I've just recently come to realize that the rhythms of my poems follow the rhythms of the physical work I'm doing and life I'm leading at any given time - which makes the music in my head which creates the line."⁵ And later, in 1965:

As much as the books I've read the jobs I've had have been significant in shaping me. My sense of body and my sense of language and the knowledge that you have to continually be reminded of the realization that intelligence and insight, sensitivity, awareness, and brilliance - these qualities are not limited to educated people.... That's why I dedicated Riprap to that list of people. Those were all men I knew as seamen... or men I'd worked with as loggers. I felt that I owed them as individuals, as persons, as much as I owed any books. 6

To make any exaggerated case for Snyder's inclination to root his poetry in personal experience, or to suggest that his work is a simple transformation of a life into poetic form, would not reflect its chief purpose or intent. It is rarely a simple diary or record of personal observation and reaction; for example, both lyric and mythic poems employ a wide range of narrating voices and the relationship of Snyder as poet to any one of them is often complex, a point which will be

discussed fully in later chapters. However, there is with Snyder a case for some emphasis on the frequent close correlation he makes between his life and his writing, for it is possibly only in this context that any appreciable 'development' in his poetry can be detected.

In Snyder's writing, there is little evidence of a changing and perhaps maturing style. Having established relatively early the two formal vehicles of lyric and mythic, Snyder rarely departs from them; they are made to serve, with little alteration, over the thirty years, and more, of his career. If anything, the only discernible movement may well have been a retrograde one. There are clear indications in the more recent poetry that when Snyder attempts to break free from his established modes - that is, when he strays from his basic Modernist inheritance - his poetry enters a period of crisis in which its normally careful and precise structuring is the first element to suffer. With Snyder, then, any later development as such expresses itself in the changing social and political attitudes brought to the poems : an overt politicizing of his ideas, a changing concept of his role as a poet, and the impact of his work on a wider audience are among the factors which produce the tangible differences between the early and later poetry.

These differences are most pronounced in volumes such as Regarding Wave and Turtle Island, that is, in the poetry published since 1968, the date which marked his permanent return to America after a decade spent in the study of Zen Buddhism and Oriental culture in Japan. A central proposal in the treatment of these later poems will be that, although Snyder retains his basic lyric mode, he attempts to manipulate it so as to convey often radical ecological and conservationist polemics which, while certainly implicit in earlier poems such as Myths & Texts, now assume a much more dominating role. A resultant focus for discussion will be Snyder's struggle between a desire to use his poetry

as a political medium and the realization of the demands which this imposes on its purely aesthetic appeal.

If the later short poems become problematical in challenging the lyric norm established by Snyder prior to 1968, then a similar process can be observed in the later mythic poem, Mountains and Rivers without End. This long poem-in-progress was conceived as early as 1956 but, over twenty-five years later, still appears to be far from completion and has evidently posed its author many problems. It can be seen to demonstrate an analogous pattern then, since, when Snyder decides to challenge the structure of the Modernist long poem model which he had successfully adopted for Myths & Texts - and thus again deviates from those traditions which he had absorbed in his early career - his poetry loses much of its usual purpose and direction. Although Mountains and Rivers without End was begun in the middle nineteen fifties (its first section was published in 1961), it will be considered essentially as a poem of the post-1968 period. Of the seventeen sections already in print, nine were published in 1968 or later and, obviously, further sections and the eventual length and shape of the final poem will be a phenomenon of the nineteen eighties, since there is little evidence that the structure which Snyder initially imagined for the poem has been realized. To suggest that both the poems in the mythic and the lyric modes since 1968 have taken Snyder's writing into a critical and problematical period would indicate that he can be read as a poet in the ascendent to that date, and as a poet in decline since. To reflect this, proportionally more space has been allocated to the earlier poetry and to the establishing of the two modes which characterize his work as a whole.

The study of Snyder's poetry which is outlined above - one

which is basically formal in its emphasis and anxious to place Snyder in the context of modern American poetry as a whole - is at odds with a body of critical writing which stresses the value of his work largely in social and cultural contexts and, in particular, links him with the socio-literary phenomenon of the Beat Generation of the American nineteen fifties and sixties. With the rise of the beatnik stereotype, the terms 'beat' or 'beat poet' have gradually assumed either outright pejorative connotations - implying an undisciplined and frivolous verse - or have been used to imply that the author in question writes in a similar vein to an established Beat figure such as Allen Ginsberg. In retrospect, the continued yoking of Snyder to the Beat stereotype has led, at best, to a partial and highly selective examination of his poetry and, at worst, to the dismissal which is normally reserved for those writers unfortunate enough to have been associated in any sense with popular or sub-cultural movements. It would seem relevant then, at this introductory stage, to discuss such connections in order to clarify the grounds for a reconsideration of Snyder's poetry as existing independently of the Beat.

(ii) Snyder and the Beat

Jack Kerouac's roman-à-clef, The Dharma Bums, in which Snyder appears as a central character under the pseudonym of "Japhy Ryder", has in the past provided the major evidence for the classification of Snyder as a Beat.¹ In the novel, Kerouac, as "Ray Smith", documents a brief friendship with Snyder which covers a period of about eight months before Snyder's departure to study in Japan.² What emerges from the novel, if not the indisputable truth, is a sympathetic, but somewhat sentimental portrait of Snyder which has firmly established his credentials as a Beat, if only for the fact of this passing acquaintance with the acknowledged chief chronicler of the Beat Generation. Snyder, once categorized, has become subject to the habitual dismissals of Beat literature as negatively rebellious, superficial, and indulging in "mail-order orientalism".³ In order to extricate Snyder from such a category, it is instructive to review the debate as to the veracity of Kerouac's novels, in particular The Dharma Bums, which traditionally have been read as containing a high proportion of undiluted autobiographical detail.

In a biography of Kerouac which makes an extensive use of the novels as primary source material, Ann Charters states that "from his earliest writing he preferred to stay close to things that had actually happened to him. His talent as a writer was not his inventiveness...but rather his power to dramatize the spirit of his own life into romantic fantasy".⁴ Although Charters records that Kerouac possessed a perfect memory and the ability to recall past conversations practically verbatim, it would appear that he indulged frequently in the 'dramatizing' of factual events, a habit which must call into question the use of his novels to supply literal accounts of past incident. The Dharma Bums

itself contains a number of good instances of this. In one interview, for example, Snyder was asked to confirm a passage in the novel in which Kerouac had described him as literally having to throw a reluctant girl-friend from the ship, on which he was departing for Japan, to be caught by a man on the pier. The interviewer, however, records that

Snyder, en privé, ne raconte pas la scène de la même façon; il dit qu'elle se passa d'une manière plus amicale et moins romanesque, que Kerouac ne rapportait pas dans ses romans la vérité totale, qu'il la transformait à sa fantaisie et qu'en fait lui, Snyder, accompagna très calmement la jeune fille sur le quai, en passant par la passerelle. 5

In Charter's biography also, Snyder is quoted as saying that Kerouac made "factual changes...in his books for 'novelistic purposes' "⁶ and such comments as these would seem to undermine still further the use of The Dharma Bums as conclusive evidence in the trial of Snyder as a Beat. Snyder's own final judgement was to refer to the whole of the novel as "a kind of American fairytale".⁷ However, The Dharma Bums is not the sole reason for Snyder's enlistment into the ranks of the Beat and a closer examination of what is implied by that term is necessary in order to establish whether there exists any more substantial evidence of his connections with the movement.

The Beat stereotype arose as an expediency to encompass an uncomfortably large and, at the time, a generally unconventional body of writing. As with any other, the validity of such a stereotype is constantly open to question. Kenneth Rexroth, an often acerbic observer of modern American culture, saw the Beat movement as a self-propagating creation of popular publicity: "A popular myth has been built of bearded savages who shoot themselves full of dope in public places - preferably on television - and take off their

clothes at fashionable soirees. Nothing could be further from the truth. Of course, once a vulgar stereotype has been manufactured, plenty of people will appear, anxious to conform to it."⁸ Such a popular image is described by Kerouac in his novel, Desolation Angels, in a scene in Tangiers where he is visiting the novelist William Burroughs:

And just like in New York or Frisco or anywhere there they are all hunching around in marijuana smoke, talking, the cool girls with long thin legs in slacks, the men with goatees, all an enormous drag after all and at the time (1957) not even started yet officially with the name of "Beat Generation"....all I could do was sit on the edge of the bed in despair...listening to their awful "likes" and "like you know" and "wow crazy" and "a wig, man" "a real gas". 9

The date, 1957, marks the publication of Kerouac's novel, On The Road, which was eventually to assume the status of a key text for the Beat Generation;¹⁰ here, he is experiencing the growth of the popular stereotype of the Beat, for which he would soon be held responsible. It is an image of Beat which, in his own mind, bears little resemblance to the one he had understood when writing in On The Road of the events of the late nineteen forties and early nineteen fifties. A brief account of the background to the publicity focused on San Francisco from 1956, which effectively launched the Beat movement, may help to clarify this apparent confusion of time and date, and also further the discussion of the literary implications of the Beat.

Any definition of Beat must begin by distinguishing two parallel movements in post-Second World War American writing. In San Francisco, from the nineteen forties, existed an established and thriving literary community led by Kenneth Rexroth who has described the pervading atmosphere of the period :

During and after the war there grew up in San Francisco poets with no connections with the dominant cliques and tendencies of American poetry but with anarchists and pacifists, and New Romantics of London, the youngest French surrealists and the past of Classic Modernism, especially with poets like Mallarmé, Reverdy and Desnos....As in France, but quite spontaneously and independently, there was a tremendous outburst of oral poetry....In the war years and for five years thereafter...San Francisco had an anarchist-pacifist movement with regular meetings, larger than all the factions of Socialists and Bolsheviks combined. These meetings alternated discussions aimed to give the historic libertarian tradition contemporary relevance, with larger meetings for readings of poetry....Those years of tremendous excitement produced a number of tremendously exciting poets - Robert Duncan, William Everson (Brother Antoninus), Philip Lamantia, Jack Spicer, amongst others. They made poetry a social force in San Francisco. 11

Much of this activity was focused on the San Francisco Poetry Centre, financed and managed by Ruth Witt Diamant, which not only provided a wider audience for indigenous poets but also was responsible for bringing poets such as W. H. Auden and Dylan Thomas to read on the West coast. Rexroth's comments on the revival in interest in oral poetry are confirmed by such readings and also by his own experiments in the fusion of jazz and poetry. This active community was enlarged still further in the early nineteen fifties by a younger generation of writers who were either native to San Francisco, or who were attracted by this strong sense of literary community. These included Philip Whalen, Lew Welch, Michael McClure, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Snyder himself.

On the East coast of America, Jack Kerouac's novels, The Subterraneans, On The Road, and Vanity of Dulucuz, document in retrospect the rootless existence of a number of writers based in New York and including, as well as Kerouac himself, Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, Gregory Corso, and John Clellon Holmes. This group similarly flourished during and just after the war but quite quickly began to fragment,

possibly through the lack of any real success in publication.

Certain of them, Kerouac, Ginsberg and Corso in particular, began to make regular visits to San Francisco lured by the promise of a better reception, although there, as with this original New York group, some difficulties had been experienced in finding national outlets for publication; as Rexroth put it "the American quarterlies prevented anything which did not meet their specifications".¹²

However, such setbacks as these two groups may have encountered individually did not prevent their mixture being volatile enough to cause the explosion of literary activity, and subsequent national publicity, which followed the Six Gallery reading of 1955 and the eventual publication of the two key texts of the period, Kerouac's On The Road and Ginsberg's Howl.¹³ Although initially resented by such established figures as Rexroth, who described both Kerouac and Ginsberg as having "an inflexible Madison Avenue orientation",¹⁴ it was the brash energy of such transplanted East coast writers which was the real impetus of the movement.

In the aftermath of the McCarthy Communist witch-hunt, and during the entrenched conservatism of the Eisenhower administration, the suggestion of a youth rebellion (ironically led by Kerouac, almost forty, and Ginsberg, well over thirty) brought copious publicity to this large and still, in the main, unpublished group of writers. The Howl obscenity trial of 1957 did little to lessen this. The popular press, searching for a blanket term with which to encompass the numerous writers involved, eventually culled the term 'beat' from Kerouac's novel. The time which had elapsed between the publication of On The Road in 1957 and the events which the novel describes, often up to ten years earlier, meant that a term which Kerouac had coined to describe the frenetic characters of the immediate post-war years -

typified by "Dean Moriarty" (Neal Cassady) - was now being applied in an entirely inappropriate fashion. As Thomas Parkinson points out, it was also used with very little discrimination since "one unhappy result of the publicity attendant on the rise of the beat was, simply, the tarring of all writers with experimental motives with the single brush beat or the further implication that the only valid experimental writers were beat".¹⁵ Whether or not one of the writers involved in this stereotyping was Snyder will be discussed shortly, but Parkinson's comment raises a further important question. Although he protests at the indiscriminate use of the term 'beat', he does not deny the existence of the title or, by implication, that it could have a more accurate and proper definition. Is there, then, a concept of Beat literature, a Beat aesthetic, which can be thus determined and with which Snyder's writing would comply?

Whether such an aesthetic does in fact exist is a question which is again complicated by the sheer number and variety of the writers who have traditionally been described as Beat. Even a cursory examination demonstrates only tenuous links between, for example, the poetry of Allen Ginsberg and that of Gregory Corso, or the prose fiction of Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs, yet each of these authors has, in the past, been seen as central to the established Beat canon. If attention is focused solely on the original East coast group however, a consistent Beat aesthetic might emerge but, even then, as with many other movements - self-designated or otherwise - the matching of theory to practice is often less than perfect. In Nothing More to Declare, John Clellon Holmes talks of 'beat' as being

more than mere weariness, it implies the feeling of having been used, of being raw. It involves a sort of nakedness of mind, and, ultimately, of soul; a feeling of being reduced to the bedrock of consciousness. In short, it means being undramatically

pushed up against the wall of oneself.
 A man is beat whenever he goes for broke
 and wagers the sum of his resources on a
 single number. 16

At a later point he adds that "beat means not so much weariness, as rawness of the nerves; not so much being 'filled up to here,' as being emptied out. It describes a state of mind from which all unessentials have been stripped....To be beat is to be at the bottom of your personality, looking up".¹⁷

This quasi-existential definition does cohere in encompassing some aspects of Beat literature. Writing on Allen Ginsberg, Thomas Merrill re-emphasizes the idea of 'beat' as beaten down, oppressed physically and psychologically, "drained of the energy to compete",¹⁸ and leading to the state of raw vulnerability in which the Beat author strikes back unreservedly with Holmes' 'go for broke' attitude; as Ginsberg said of Howl: "I thought I wouldn't write a poem, but just write what I wanted to without fear."¹⁹ Kerouac's suggestion that the notion of Beat also involves 'beatitude' - the "holy goof", Dean Moriarty, in On The Road - has its counterpart in Ginsberg's celebration of "angelheaded hipsters" in Howl.²⁰ Thus, when William Carlos Williams, in the preface to Howl, concluded "hold back the edges of your gowns, Ladies, we are going through Hell",²¹ he was announcing one kind of Beat aesthetic.

However, there is another perspective on Beat literature which may help to explain the diversity of writing often included under that heading. Gregory Corso defined the Beat character thus:

The hipster dressed in ermine in the golden halls
 of the Beat Generation will be the slayer of society,
 it is told in his enthusiastic eye. He will sack
 society with his sword of old prunes, climb the
 fortress with armies of penguins and fly away with
 the daughter of society. He will wed the daughter of
 society, and throughout all the nights of their marriage,
 he will drive her mad with descriptions of her father. 22

This is evidently a concept of Beat which does not find the writer face to face with despair or "at the bottom of [his] personality, looking up". By any definition, the Beats did signal the first recognizable elements of a counter-culture which was to gather momentum and reach a climax in the middle and late nineteen sixties. However, the severity of the Holmes 'go for broke' nakedness of mind is continually diluted by one aspect of Beat, exemplified here by Corso - and confirmed in the whimsicality of much of his poetry - which sought merely to provoke a reaction from the Establishment, to ridicule what he considered to be widespread, conventional moral and social attitudes. A dichotomy appears, then, between a Beat movement which would have itself as oppressed, drained, ready to explode with the angry reaction of a Howl, and a Beat movement which simply set out to goad and guy 'square' society by methods totally lacking the raw severity of the former. A good deal of Beat writing seems to waver between these two poles. Much of the poetry of Corso and Lawrence Ferlinghetti revels in a sense of whimsy which, more often than not, reflects aspects of modern French poetry: in the case of Ferlinghetti, particularly that of Prévert, Queneau, and Desnos. Kerouac's popular fiction, On The Road and The Dharma Bums are good examples, has a wildly romantic, idealistic, and sentimental strain which excludes the harsh and often naturalistic flavour of 'serious' Beat writing. Parallel to these are examples of Beat literature which do comply with Holmes' more dramatic interpretation. A case could certainly be made for Kerouac's less well-known novels, including The Subterraneans, Tristessa and Visions of Cody. This latter novel, in fact, relates the truer story of Neal Cassady and includes the physical, often sordid, elements which were excised from On The Road by its publishers, and which might have given the Beat Generation a

more authentic text. Much of the poetry of Ginsberg and the early prose fiction of William Burroughs - Junkie and The Naked Lunch, for example - are also well within Holmes' delineation of Beat. In fact, to adopt a definition which is centred on a particular aesthetic rather than on a chronological period, can be useful to describe the poetry and prose of slightly later writers such as Charles Bukowski, who can thus appear as significantly more 'beat' than many of the more accepted Beat writers of the nineteen fifties.

However, whether Beat literature is to be defined by historical period or by the submission of a certain aesthetic, Snyder's relationship to it is never more than tenuous. In many senses he is a writer who, to use Parkinson's metaphor, has been tarred with the brush of Beat. Purely in chronological terms, his affiliation with the movement has been created very much in retrospect. It is plain enough that he could not have been involved in the activities of either of the two early groups described above. In 1947, for example, when On The Road opens, he was seventeen and about to graduate from high school. He did not settle in San Francisco until 1952 at the earliest and, when the greatest publicity was focused on that city during the Howl obscenity trial of the summer of 1957, he was already in Japan and was to remain there for most of the following decade. It is not surprising then to find that few, if any, of the contemporary accounts of the Beats mention him at all, and that early reviews of The Dharma Bums seem oblivious that "Japhy Ryder" had any actual counterpart.²³

It is not until retrospective anthologies began to appear in the nineteen sixties, collections which attempted to launch the Beats as a cohesive literary movement, that Snyder became linked to them in any purposeful fashion. Such connections can be of little use in any serious discussion of Snyder as a Beat writer. One anthology, Elias Wilentz's The Beat Scene, includes Robert Creeley, Diane DiPrima,

LeRoi Jones, Kenneth Koch, Philip Lamantia, Michael McClure, Frank O'Hara and Jonathan Williams: 'beat', in this case, is less a well-defined literary aesthetic and more an indicative reading list for American poetry in the post-war period.²⁴

There is also little in Snyder's poetry which would comply with the tentative interpretations of the Beat aesthetic described above. Without an unnecessary prolongation of the argument, several basic dissimilarities are immediately apparent. Beat literature tends to be urban in its setting and emphasis: the New York of the novels of Burroughs and Holmes, the New York, Denver, San Francisco and Mexico City of Kerouac, the urban squalor of Howl; Snyder's poetry is unremittingly rural and natural. The forthright anger of the most effective Beat literature of the nineteen fifties has no real counterpart in Snyder's poetry of the same period : the "nakedness of mind, and ultimately of soul" described by Holmes is to be found neither in the tranquillity of the early lyrics, nor in the occasionally angry, but more often imploring plea of Myths & Texts for a more enlightened relationship with nature. The whimsicality of the most marginal Beat writing has few parallels in Snyder's work: any reader of his poetry is likely to be struck by its moral earnestness, however awkwardly it is expressed at times. In terms of form and style, comparisons are perhaps even more difficult to locate: Kerouac's espousal of spontaneity as a literary mode, Ginsberg's adoption of the Whitmanesque breath unit as poetic structure, the largely unshaped free poems of Corso, these have little in common with the tight structure and discipline of Snyder's verse whether in the lyric or mythic mode. If a final word were needed, it might be left to Snyder himself who, some twenty years after, maintained that he "never did know exactly what was meant by the term 'The Beats' ".²⁵

That Snyder did have some acquaintance with many of the writers who have come to be designated as Beat is certainly not disputed (his friendship with Ginsberg, for example, begun in 1956, has endured to the present day), but a closer investigation reveals such links to be of only marginal importance to his actual poetry and certainly not substantial enough to warrant the label of Beat, which cannot help but raise the spectre of the facile 'beatnik' stereotype and obscure the real value of his writing. To continue the search for some definition of Beat which might provide more tangible evidence of his affiliation is to attempt to discover an interpretation of that phenomenon which, in a literary context at least, does not, and probably did not, exist. Perhaps the one significant mark left by Snyder's role in The Dharma Bums is the notion of him as a 'culture-hero'. In that novel, Allen Ginsberg, as "Alvah Goldbook", speaks of "Ryder"/Snyder as "a great new hero of American culture".²⁶ Snyder's position as a polemicist and spokesman has grown steadily since the nineteen sixties and has, in turn, affected the one other area which warrants some preliminary discussion, that is, previous critical work on his poetry.

(iii) Critical Responses to the Poetry

Much of the previous criticism of Gary Snyder's poetry, which has increased rapidly since the award of the 1975 Pulitzer Prize to Turtle Island, is of an ambivalent nature. In many cases, it has been afflicted by a dichotomy between unreasoned praise and equally unreasoned hostility reflecting an over-indulgent interest in discussing his work in the context of categories such as the Beat, or in reaction to his willing or unwilling role as a cultural spokesman.

Until the publication of The Back Country in 1968, only the pseudonymous "Crunk" in Robert Bly's magazine, The Sixties, had recognized those qualities in Snyder's poetry which have since become standard reference points in later criticism of his work.¹ "Crunk" praised the clarity and quality of the natural perception in Snyder's writing and located what he termed as his "Western" imagination, a perspective which produced poetry deeply rooted in the Western landscape of America. He also stressed the Eastern influences on the poetry and was alert to the fact that these were essentially Chinese, not Japanese, despite Snyder's long period of residence in Japan, a point which will be seen as of particular importance in establishing the lyric mode in Snyder's poetry.

In the year of the publication of The Back Country, Thomas Parkinson's 'The Poetry of Gary Snyder' also did much to establish a series of basic approaches to Snyder's writing which have become commonplace. He named Pound and Rexroth as two of the poet's major Western influences: Pound for the style and structure of poems such as Myths & Texts (although in this study, Eliot rather than Pound will be proposed as the chief influence on the mythic poems), and Rexroth for more general orientation. Parkinson also raised one issue, which

will be expanded here in later chapters, in identifying the close link in Snyder between the poem's appearance on the page and its oral delivery:

What poets like Snyder...ask is that readers take the poem as indicator of physical weight. Until the day, not far off, when poems are related to taped performances as musical scores now are, the poem on the page is evidence of a voice and the poetic struggle is to note the movement of that voice so that it can be, as is music, followed. ²

That the poem on the page is "evidence of a voice" is an important factor in both lyric and mythic modes. A vital element of definition in the lyric poem, for example, is the re-establishing of such a form's roots in music and song, and what effect this might have on the structure of a poem intended for performance. In the mythic poems, Snyder's concerns with a large body of oral literature, and the societies which produced it, will be discussed in the context of his relationship with the modern Ethnopoetics movement. At some points, however, Parkinson's comments tend towards that approach to Snyder which emphasizes his 'culture-hero' status. Snyder is thus praised as a modern "Renaissance Man", socially and creatively adept in the peculiar atmosphere of "Pacific Basin Culture", which Parkinson perceives as an eclectic blend of Buddhism, anarchist and I.W.W. political attitudes, American Indian lore and mythology, and a concentration on the "mystique of the wilderness".³

Wright's earlier attempt to place Snyder as essentially a poet of the American West was taken up by Thomas Lyon whose intention was to locate Snyder in a direct tradition of Western writers who, he believed, had a similar relationship to nature and the wilderness.⁴ Authors such as John Muir, Robinson Jeffers, and Frank Waters are quoted in illustration and, to an extent, some aspects of their work

have clearly been important to Snyder. In an interview with Nathaniel Tarn, for example, Snyder talks of Jeffers' importance to him as "the man who claimed for the values of nature as against those of technology".⁵ The significance of John Muir's writings will be seen in the later discussion of Myths & Texts. The category which Lyon created, however, is not flexible enough to encompass influences such as Eliot, Pound, and Williams, that is, a Modernist tradition which is more cosmopolitan than simply Western American in its nature.

Sherman Paul's lengthy two-part analysis of Snyder's work in 1970 introduced the poetry through the medium of Earth House Hold, and in particular the journal sections of that collection of prose writings. Insistent on the role of Snyder as a cultural leader, Paul attempted to account for his qualities as a writer as much in terms of a growing personal reputation as in terms of the poetry itself:

The poetry is immediately interesting in an exotic way, like Snyder himself, for both tell us, as Thoreau said of the best poets, that here is someone who has gone beyond "the tame and civil side of nature"....Snyder is learned, he has been to the academy, to Reed, Indiana, and Berkeley; but he is not an academic poet. His is not "whiteman's poetry" but the "Indian's report." 6

This is an appropriate example of the tendency to overlook the crucial formal influences on Snyder. Although the "exotic" nature of some of the material he employs does give the poetry a surface appearance of uniqueness, it should not conceal the fact that he is also very much "an academic poet": a writer schooled thoroughly in well-established Modernist traditions of both lyric and long poem.

One aspect of Snyder's verse usefully isolated by Paul was the quality of "stillness" in the lyric poems. This point has been further developed by Charles Altieri, in an essay devoted to the lyrics,

which discussed what he perceived as a lack of tension in such poems; that is, the sense in which their development is often a casual one, depending not so much on the accumulated tension created between the disparate elements of the poem as on the mutual support which they offer each other. Although Altieri, following earlier commentators, praised the 'non-intellectual' qualities of Snyder's lyrics, his explication of many of them itself depends on a high degree of sophistication. Hence a simple, practically transparent, lyric such as 'A Walk' (BC, p. 11) becomes a poem where

the balanced elements each achieve their full significance, obtain their fullest life, only when seen as a dialectic unity....the concluding detail in the poem, the lunch...is redeemed from its quotidian triviality and reconstituted as one of the most fulfilling aspects of one's normal life. Snyder restores some of the sacramental significance of a meal....like the Christian sacrament, the event is both particular and universal. 7

Whether or not Snyder would wish his lunch to be "redeemed" in this manner is a moot point. More importantly, Altieri's exegesis raises general issues which figure significantly in the interpretation of Snyder's poems in the lyric mode. Whilst much of the mythic poetry is complex enough to warrant the searching criticism suggested by Altieri, the lyrics require an approach which is more designed to meet Snyder's early express intent to "write poems that do exactly the opposite of what the New Critics...were talking about, namely, texture, irony, tension, the surface of the poem and so forth, to have a poem which you didn't even see...it was so simple on the surface".⁸ Such an approach, as Donald Davie has suggested, may well transfer its emphasis towards the ways in which a contemporary lyric poet is able to utilize other elements to bear the burden of meaning in the poem:

For...different reasons, irony and paradox are features which we must learn to set less store by. We must learn...to give more weight to other features, notably to the tone in which the poet addresses us, and to the fall and pause and run of spoken American or spoken English as the poet plays it off against his stanza-breaks and line-division. In short a poet can control his poem in many more ways, or his control of it manifests itself in more ways, than until lately we were aware of. 9

Two examples of the more recent criticism of Snyder's poetry are useful in preparation for the following chapter on the mythic poems. In the first book-length study of Snyder's poetry, Bob Steuding compounds a common misconception by confusing the relative positions of the mythic and lyric modes. There is a pleasing symmetry in the view that Snyder's early writing linearly progressed from the terse and slightly naive structure of the lyric poems of Riprap to the more complex and sophisticated poetics of Myths & Texts. Whilst freely admitting that Myths & Texts, although published in 1960, was written prior to many of the lyrics of Riprap, published in 1959, Steuding is intent on arguing that the reverse is true. Discussing the example of 'The Stone Garden' from Riprap, the "usual pre-modernist fare" as he calls it, he concludes that a

desire to kick over the traces and break into new territory can be seen in Riprap, although essentially it is stylistically traditional. "A Stone Garden" offers a good example because one can see in this early poem not only the traditionalisms but the strain against traditional meter and the search for a freer form that are later developed in the elliptical experiments of Myths & Texts. 10 [my emphases]

Even a cursory glance at the texts undermines such an assumption. All published editions of Myths & Texts, as well as the manuscript, are dated in the text, 1952-1956; in Riprap, the poem, 'A Stone Garden', is also clearly dated by Snyder: 1957 (RCM, p. 23).

Steuding's analysis of the latter poem also inspires little confidence. To emphasize the claim that it displays certain "traditionalisms", he states that it is composed of four sections of equal length, when in fact they vary between fourteen and twenty-two lines; these lines are also supposedly regular and iambic, when, again, they fluctuate between three and twelve syllables.

Such assumptions as to the development of Snyder's poetry become even more misleading if they are allowed to reify into firm conclusions as to the relationship which exists between the lyric and mythic modes in his work. They begin, for example, to posit a highly confusing version of Snyder's position in the context of modern American poetry and to obscure the importance of Myths & Texts as a first poem.

In one sense, the temptation to accept the order of writing suggested by the publication dates of Snyder's first two volumes is understandable. Ezra Pound, having used the vehicle of Imagism to clarify the language of his poetry, converts such a lyric mode - through 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' - into the Modernist poetics of The Cantos; T. S. Eliot's relatively 'simple' early poems, 'Preludes' for example, are a testing ground for the 'difficult' long poem, The Waste Land; William Carlos Williams' exquisite short poems, the lyric impulse of Spring and All, give way ultimately to Paterson. It is convenient, then, and well within an established pattern, to find a similar progress in Snyder from the neo-Imagist lyrics of Riprap to the fragmented Modernist poetics of Myths & Texts.

Robert Kern has recently argued a cogent case that Riprap, in its denial of key characteristics of Modernist poetry - for example, its eschewal of the concept of the poem as "a separate autonomous object, a primary, independent reality unto itself"¹¹ - goes as far as to



constitute "a calculated response to the modernist imperative, a deliberately initiatory gesture whose purpose is to clear a space for itself and whatever might follow". Like Steuding, Kern is fully aware that Myths & Texts (a poem closer to the Modernist poetic) largely pre-dates Riprap in its writing. Nevertheless, he still feels able to conclude that Riprap "could not be anything but a first book".¹² Much of Kern's essay is valuable and astute comment on the lyric impulse in Snyder, in particular his discussion of the poet's characteristic distrust of the abstract nature of language, yet his apparent wish to re-write the literary history of Snyder's poetry can only compound an error which has the major repercussion of diminishing the importance of Myths & Texts as Snyder's true initiatory poem.

A simple survey of Snyder's success in placing his poems for periodical and magazine publication before the first commercially available volume Riprap in 1959, is sufficient to register that, although some of the lyric poems of that volume must have been written contemporaneously, it is poems in the mythic mode which were the subject of his earliest sustained efforts. Almost a third of Myths & Texts was in print by 1959, and Snyder had clearly mapped out the final form of the poem as early as 1954, since sections of it were already being published then under the poem's final title.¹³ Additionally, there is the evidence of 'The Berry Feast' which, although remaining uncollected until its appearance as the leading poem in The Back Country, is a mythic poem which virtually rehearses the form and content of Myths & Texts in miniature and was written earlier still.¹⁴

Such evidence must restore Myths & Texts, and the adoption of the mythic mode, to its proper position in the body of Snyder's work. Thus retrieved, it can be seen that, contrary to Kern's claim of Snyder's early poetry "denying all example and all precedent",¹⁵ it displays such

influences as to constitute an integral part of a long poem tradition in modern American literature. As the following chapter will propose, Myths & Texts is in all senses a 'first' poem, a poem of self-location, and one in which key themes and characteristic techniques important to Snyder's later poetry can be seen to emerge. Two such influences will be considered before a detailed analysis of the poem and the mythic mode it represents. The first, involving form and structure, will be the Modernist poetic; the second, a function of content and subject matter, will be Snyder's consistent use of American Indian culture in his poetry.

II. THE MYTHIC POEMS

(i) The Modernist Poetic

Although rarely discussed in the detail which is warranted, it is now a commonplace in criticism of Snyder's work to suggest that the poetry which constitutes the mythic mode in his writing, chiefly Myths & Texts but including isolated poems from other volumes,¹ is one which adopts the discontinuous, fragmented, and heavily allusive form initiated in the long poems of the classic Modernists, Eliot and Pound. Snyder has frequently acknowledged the impact that both Pound and Eliot had on the shaping of his own poetry in the early nineteen fifties.² In particular, Pound's translations or approximations of the Chinese of Li Po in Cathay, and his exposition of Imagist theory, are obviously important influences on Snyder's lyric poems. Yet he was equally receptive to the Modernist long poem, exemplified by The Cantos and - especially as it shapes Myths & Texts - The Waste Land, since it offered the opportunity not only for the poet to raid the past for what he considered to be significant cultural artefacts, but also to bring them into a creative relationship with the present in the new poem. It is particularly Eliot's poem and, as Snyder understood it, Eliot's admirably precise use of myth which underpins the writing of Myths & Texts. Ultimately, the two poems are very different: Snyder's rabid anti-Christian stance; the dominantly rural and natural environment of his poem; his more positive conclusion to the apocalyptic and destructive vision plotted in the poem are good examples of why Myths & Texts cannot be considered as mere pastiche of Eliot's initial achievement. Yet beneath this are striking similarities, particularly in form and structure, which place Myths & Texts firmly in the line of the Modernist long poem, a point borne out by an examination of the Modernist poetic. For the purposes of this discussion, a complete

rehearsal of the debate concerning the nature of Modernism is unnecessary. However, a consideration of some of the key structural features of a Modernist poem such as The Waste Land also reveals important aspects of the composition of Myths & Texts.³

There is perhaps no more controversial feature of the Modernist long poem than its use of the past, particularly in its characteristic transfer of earlier writings into the new text. Allegations of plagiarism, pastiche, or mere pedantry seem bound to accompany a poem whose interpreters often feel reduced to the noting of a continual record of debts and borrowings from previous writers; in the case of The Waste Land, even the author has been tempted to append over a half-dozen pages of explanatory references.⁴ Eliot's rationale for the adoption of this allusive technique is best explained in his essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', which discusses the "historical sense" of the poet and his crucial awareness "not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence", a sense which "compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order".⁵ The technique of allusion to past literatures, or the conversion of the text into a multi-layered temporal field, is an attempt to bring an acknowledgement of the past into a profitable relationship with the poet's present creative impulse. It is, above all, an act of recognition: it enables the writer to go beyond mere acknowledgement and to establish, in an act of retrieval, a vital connection with what he considers to be his cultural and spiritual inheritance. The full range of Snyder's use of the past will become apparent in the course of this discussion of the mythic poems and, in the case of Myths & Texts, it is only by seeing it in context that its

integration in the text can be fully appreciated. However, some preliminary indications may offer an idea of its scope and breadth.

In keeping with other Modernist works, it will be argued later that Myths & Texts can be read as a parallel of a body of already existing material: the widespread quest myth which Joseph Campbell believes to be the root of all mythologies.⁶ In addition to this, however, are many allusions to more direct Western sources: to Thoreau, and in particular to Walden - Myths & Texts begins with an adaption and ends with a direct quotation of the final line of Walden: "The sun is but a morning-star";⁷ the use of quotations from Keats' 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' ('Logging', 15); Pound's The Cantos (an echo of the final lines of Canto XIII in 'Burning', 6); Christopher Marlowe (a passage from his translation of Ovid's Amores in 'Burning', 7); Robert Herrick (a line from 'The Vision' in 'Burning', 12), are a few of the many examples.

Eastern sources are equally numerous and similarly varied: directly quoted passages from the Li Chi (Book of Rites) in 'Logging', 10 and 'Burning', 13; quotations from the poems of Tu Fu ('Hunting', 2 and 4); adaptations of Su T'ung Po ('Burning', 13); a rewriting, or rather an addition to the vow of Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Light ('Burning', 10); and more indirect references to a cavalcade of historical figures, writers, religious leaders, and deities such as Hsü Fang, Han-shan, Issa, Kwanami Kiyotsuga, Seami Motokiyo, Pa-ta Shan-jen, Confucius, the Buddha, Maudgalyāna, Maitreya, and Ananda.

As for the allusions to American Indian culture, the references are simply too numerous for any brief list to give a real indication: fragments of songs, poems, narratives, and myths from the Skokomish, Coast Salishan, Mojave, Haida, Tlingit, Chinook, Winnebago, Cowlitz, Bella Coola, Nootka, Kwakiutl and Shuswap tribes are among the more obvious.

'Hunting', 6 - sub-titled 'this poem is for bear' - in itself pieces together bear-cult motifs from at least seven different tribal sources. Such a profusion indicates a vital area of influence for Snyder and his use of Indian sources is extensive enough to warrant a much fuller examination at a later stage.

Some of the citations in Myths & Texts go beyond a simple single reference to reveal a complex layering of previous hands and times. Thus the lines "Today's wind moves in the pines" (MT, p. 7) and "A seed pod void of seed/We had no meeting together" (MT, p. 15) are taken from the Japanese Nō drama Nishikigi by Seami Motokiyo; Snyder quotes Ezra Pound's translation of the play which, in turn, was re-created from the manuscripts of Ernest Fenollosa.⁸ In making the lines an integral part of his poem then, Snyder is invoking three other writers, over a chronological span of five hundred years, all of whom have been important influences on his work. It is also particularly relevant in this context to note Pound's observation in the introduction to his Nō translations that "the art of allusion...is at the root of the Noh".⁹ Hence, Snyder's use of Nō drama in Myths & Texts is a pointer to a literary form which exploited the art of allusion as thoroughly as any Modernist text. Arthur Waley says, for example, in discussing the chief features of the Nō:

Another characteristic of the texts is the use of existing literary material. Many of the plays were adapted from Dengaku or were written round dance-ballads already existing; and even new plays made use of such poems as were associated in the minds of the audience with the places or persons named in the play. Often a play is "written round" a poem or series of poemsChinese couplets and Buddhist hymns are also quoted. 10

In all likelihood then, a further layer can be added to Snyder's allusions to the Nō, making the 'original' author of the lines quoted

almost impossible to trace.

As with such ancient examples, and the modern precedent set by poems such as The Waste Land, Snyder blends seemingly disparate materials to provide a rich and dense context for his poem. Such a technique requires, on the part of poet and audience, a shared body of knowledge if the reader is to grasp the full implications of any one allusion without immediate recourse to sources external to the poem. The unlikely possession of a detailed acquaintance with what is often rather esoteric matter implies a more definite engagement of reader with text, a clearly defined struggle to come to terms with the richness of the materials presented. Such a struggle in itself might be taken as a defining characteristic of Modernist texts. If Snyder, or any other writer involved in the use of esoteric or relatively inaccessible sources, is to escape accusations of pedantry or deliberate obscurity, it is because a poem such as Myths & Texts purposefully leads the reader to consider a body of knowledge and a cultural past which has assumed a prime importance for Snyder and encompasses values which he intends to retrieve and then communicate. The didactic element inherent in many Modernist texts has not diminished in Snyder's poem. To provide a sense of balance to such a discussion, and to indicate an interesting - if marginal - comparison between The Waste Land and Myths & Texts, it should be acknowledged that they are both texts which have become more accessible as they, and their readers, have 'matured'. What were once the impenetrable esotericisms of Eliot's poem have been clarified through a battery of guides and glossaries to the point where they offer few serious problems of immediate location to the reader: the poem is now a school text. Similarly, the ecological ideas which lie behind Myths & Texts were not common in the nineteen fifties, and such concepts as the shaman-poet or the use of a mythological figure such as the

Trickster, were not part of the normal poetic or critical apparatus. Such references are no longer the exotica they once may have been.

In his introduction to the long poem Anabasis by St. John Perse, Eliot, apart from coining the phrase, "the logic of the imagination", described a further important structural feature of much Modernist writing:

Any obscurity of the poem, on first readings, is due to the suppression of 'links in the chain', of explanatory and connecting matter, and not to incoherence, or to love of cryptogram. The justification of such abbreviation of method is that the sequence of images coincides and concentrates into one intense impression.... The reader has to allow the images to fall into his memory successively without questioning the reasonableness of each at the moment; so that, at the end, a total effect is produced. Such selection of a sequence of images and ideas has nothing chaotic about it. There is a logic of the imagination as well as a logic of concepts. 11

Eliot is here describing a typical Modernist strategy designed to undermine more traditional narrative development in a text, that is, the juxtaposing of apparently separate images with no "explanatory or connecting matter". As he suggests, it is a device which attempts to instil into the text an immediacy which may be unattainable in a developing chronological line, to allow the sequence to be presented in a near simultaneous fashion as "one intense impression". In such a poem, it is not the author who guides the reader through a carefully presented narrative. If the "links in the chain" are to be replaced, then it is the task of the reader, through "the logic of the imagination", to discern the coherence or pattern of the poem. This is, once more, an extension of the engagement of reader with text and at least one critic, Hugh Kenner, takes the situation to the logical extreme of seeing the act of reading or criticism as an integral part of the text itself. Writing on Eliot, he says:

He is...the first major poet of the first age devoted to serious and systematic, indeed curricular, scrutiny of its own literature.... The various public discussions of Eliot's work are not so much serial opinions as they are part of the work's own way of working; part of a complex process of assimilation from which the work itself can only partly be separated. 12

What is not implied, however, by this method of structuring the text, is the existence of a single coherent intellectual or logical thread which binds together the juxtaposed images. Eliot's demand for "the logic of the imagination" to be applied precludes the notion that the poem is a cryptogram waiting for the skilled code-breaker to unlock its secrets, and I. A. Richards points out the dangers of an intellectual quest for such coherence:

A reader of...The Waste Land, may, if he will, after repeated readings, introduce such a thread. Another reader after much effort may fail to contrive one. But in either case energy will have been misapplied. For the items are united by the accord, contrast, and interaction of their emotional effects, not by an intellectual scheme that analysis must work out. The value lies in the unified response which this interaction creates in the right reader....We can, of course, make a 'rationalization' of the whole experience, as we can of any experience. If we do, we are adding something which does not belong to the poem. Such a logical scheme is, at best, a scaffolding that vanishes when the poem is constructed. 13

This montage technique, "the suppression of 'links in the chain' ", is a primary structural device in The Waste Land and one clearly adopted by Snyder in Myths & Texts, where he tends to employ it in two distinct ways: in a broad sense whereby juxtaposed poems in any one section of Myths & Texts operate together to give a unified impression from several different perspectives; and in a more concentrated fashion within a single poem.

An example of the first would be poems 6, 7, and 8 of 'Logging'.

This section in general forms a polemic on the destruction of the wilderness, concentrating its attention on the North-West Pacific coast of America, but drawing apposite examples of indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources from other cultures, past and present. An alternative, although far from idealized, relationship with nature is offered through a series of images of 'primitive' cultures - chiefly American Indian - and their more reverent attitude to the natural environment. In describing destruction in nature, the section also begins to predict the possibility of regeneration.

'Logging', 6 is a narrative anecdote built on Snyder's recalling of his "father talking about his childhood in Kitsap County".¹⁴ Although initially it appears to be an account of the incredible fertility of nature - the anecdote is concerned with an unusually plentiful crop of wild blackberries in 1914 - the speaker is also led to compare such a display of fecundity with the general landscape of the area which had been spoiled and exhausted by intensive forestry as early as the turn of the century. As a direct parallel to such exploitation, the poem offers an image of a bountiful harvest and a typical human over-reaction to it. The family is invited from all over the region and the berry-harvest is gathered:

we took copper clothes-boilers,
Wash-tubs, buckets, and all went picking.
We were canning for three days.

At the close of the poem, we are left with a neatly ambiguous sense of nature's ability to regenerate itself and man's seeming inability to learn the lessons of previous errors. As the speaker says, somewhat ruefully, "No berries like that now" (MT, p. 8).

Set against this are four examples of social and political exploitation in 'Logging', 7. Remaining in the same geographical region,

A green limb hangs in the crotch
 Of a silver snag,
 Above the Cats,
 the skidders and thudding brush,
 Hundreds of butterflies
 Flit through the pines.

This passes immediately, and with no evident connecting links, into a second passage which is taken directly from the autobiography of a Sioux shaman, Black Elk;¹⁵ in the passage Black Elk recalls the prophetic vision of Drinkswater, a Lakota Sioux shaman:

"You shall live in square
 gray houses in a barren land
 and beside those square gray
 houses you shall starve."

(MT, p. 12)

This vision of a future barren urban and suburban existence had been used earlier by Snyder in a mythic poem pre-dating Myths & Texts,

'A Berry Feast':

The Chainsaw falls for boards of pine,
 Suburban bedrooms, block on block
 Will waver with this grain and knot,
 The maddening shapes will start and fade
 Each morning when commuters wake--
 Joined boards hung on frames,
 a box to catch the biped in.

(BC, p. 4)

Drinkswater's vision, gained at "the high and lonely center of the earth" (MT, p. 12), gives way to an invocation of Crazy Horse. The Sioux leader and shaman is described watching "the Morning Star", an important symbol in Sioux shamanism and, as will be seen later, a vital one for Myths & Texts. This is placed against an extract from a Haida Indian myth:

I ought to have eaten
 Whale tongue with them.
 they keep saying I used to be a human being
 He-at-whose-voice-the-Ravens-sit-on-the-sea."

As the importance of this one myth for Myths & Texts as a whole will be discussed in full at a later stage, it is perhaps sufficient to record that it is an example of a shaman questing myth.

The fifth distinct passage is a simple natural description of a coastal landscape, almost idyllic in its unspoiled natural state, which is blended into a sixth episode invoking the Chinese T'ang poet, Han-shan:

Salmon up creek, bear on the bank,
 Wild ducks over the mountains weaving
 In a long south flight, the land of
 Sea and fir tree with the pine-dry
 Sage-flat country to the east.
 Han Shan could have lived here,
 & no scissorbill stooge of the
 Emperor would have come trying to steal
 his last poor shred of sense.

(MT, p. 13)

Han-shan ('Cold Mountain'), whose poems Snyder has translated,¹⁶ was, as Snyder calls him, "a mountain madman in an old Chinese line of ragged hermits" (RCM, p. 35), who chose to live away from men in the most isolated and inaccessible areas. The "scissorbill stooge" was Lu Ch'iu-Yin, Governor of the T'ai Prefecture in the seventh century, who attempted to seek out Han-shan and bring him back into the Kuo-ch'ing temple.

The final passage of 'Logging', 12 is a laconic personal observation on life in the woods:

"If you're gonna work these woods
 Don't want nothing
 That can't be left out in the rain--"

(MT, p. 13)

Seemingly in response to Thoreau's meticulous plans for practical living, there can be no unnecessary hindrance or clutter if a simplification of the speaker's relationship with the natural environment is to be achieved.

Apart from the several references to shamans and shamanism, the cutting together of these seven passages is likely to appear chaotic to the reader who seeks a logical or narrative thread. A pattern of sorts can be discerned, but it is not one which will supply a wholly satisfactory account of the sudden switches which occur between the poem's diverse materials. Hence, an image of natural destruction is placed with one of spiritual barrenness; these are set against a more positive account of the harmonious relationships which can, and did - according to Sioux mythology - exist between all inhabitants of the world: "the four-legged people, the creeping people, / The standing people and the flying people" (MT, pp. 12 - 13). As in The Waste Land, only a successful quest will restore vitality, and the shaman myth invoked is such a quest; the ultimate goal is foreseen in the restored natural landscape and the figure of Han-shan in harmony with it. The aphoristic guidelines which end the poem are advice, perhaps, to the quester: no physical or spiritual impediments can be allowed to interfere. However, it is the reader who discerns such patterns in a semi-creative relationship with the poem and who must be wary of erecting rigid 'scaffolding' around it which would diminish its imaginative impact.

Parts of 'Logging', l2 display one further technique which, although associated with the use of montage, is sufficiently different to warrant notice. At least two parts of the poem, Drinkswater's vision and a line from the Haida myth, are direct quotations, that is, they have an autonomous existence external to the poem and are not simply of the poet's own creation. The introduction of such material into the

text, a feature of much Modernist writing, is part of the poet's attempt not only to allow these passages to retain their autonomy but also to enrich, by mere presence as well as by what they might suggest, the texture of the new poem. A frequently quoted comment by Eliot suggests that the poetic imagination has a natural propensity to make such collages:

When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes. 17

Some instances of Snyder's use of previously existing materials have already occurred - the lines from Nō drama and Thoreau, for example - but his borrowings are often more extensive than the single phrase or line. One of these would be the transposition of a passage from Fenollosa's study of Oriental art in 'Hunting', 2,¹⁸ but the technique is at its most radical when whole poems of the Myths & Texts series take the form of direct quotation. 'Hunting', 5, for example, "the making of the horn spoon", is taken from Franz Boas' study of the Kwakiutl;¹⁹ 'Hunting', 13 is simply a food-list of the Jicarilla Apache from the work of Hoijer;²⁰ and 'Burning', 8 is quoted directly from the writings of John Muir.²¹

These examples, which will be more fully discussed as they occur in Myths & Texts, are ample illustration of the allusive technique and its characteristic deployment in Modernist writing. The positive advantages are those sought by Snyder in adopting such a typical Modernist strategy: a sense of compression; what Richards calls "the emotional aura"²² brought to the work; the acknowledgement and retrieval of the past; the formal diversity of the poem (that is, historical, descriptive, and creative prose, elements of song and drama, past and present poetics

are all able to co-exist in the final text); the unashamed, yet not blatant, didacticism of such a display of sources; and the simultaneous impact of the diverse parts of the poem. This last point is, for Joseph Frank, a key to the aesthetic form of much modern poetry: "Instead of the instinctive and immediate reference of words and word-groups to the objects or events they symbolize and the construction of meaning from the sequence of these references, modern poetry asks its readers to suspend the process of individual reference temporarily until the entire pattern of internal references can be apprehended as a unity."²³

Frank's essay, 'Spatial Form in Modern Literature', suggests one further feature of Modernist writing, closely associated with those discussed above, which can complete the illustration that Snyder's mythic poems are heavily indebted to Modernist authors such as Eliot. All of these structural points have, either as a purposeful design or an unconscious concomitant, the undermining of the notion of overall structure as a coherent developing narrative. Although it is inescapable that an element of such a form will naturally occur - if only through the physical act of the normal reading experience - many Modernist texts strive towards an alternative structure more suited to the diverse materials and their patterning in the work. As Frank implies, in this poetry no interpretation or understanding can be achieved unless the whole of the work is seen as a unified structure, that is, until any single part of the poem can be read with the totality of the text informing it and not merely those parts which happen to be closest physically. Frank offers the "principle of reflexive reference",²⁴ or reflexive reading, as a method by which the Modernist work can be apprehended in its totality and the patterns which it offers discerned by the reader.

Hence The Waste Land presents its reader with at least three

Pine trees, knobbed twigs
 thick cone and seed
 Cybele's tree this, sacred in groves
 Pine of Seami, cedar of Haida
 Cut down by the prophets of Israel
 the fairies of Athens
 the thugs of Rome
 both ancient and modern

(MT, p. 14)

Snyder takes up the Biblical text used as the epigraph for 'Logging', 2: "But ye shall destroy their altars,/break their images, and cut down their groves" (Exodus 34:13), to develop the poem's attack on the anti-Nature tendency in Christianity: to destroy the groves is to destroy the people. Hence the allusion to Ahab who, in making a grove, "did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the Kings of Israel that were before him" (I Kings 16:33). Other societies which have developed a creative relationship with their natural environment, the poem's example is the Haida, a North-West Pacific tribe from Queen Charlotte Island, British Columbia - a people rich in wood-carving art - are destroyed by cultures whose relationship with Nature is characterized by a domineering exploitation of natural resources. Two other references in this densely packed passage can serve to introduce a second use of the pine in Myths & Texts, its manifestation in mythology: the allusion to Cybele, the Phrygian name of the Great Mother; and a third, its appearance and importance in past literatures: Seami Motokiyo was the greatest of all Nō dramatists.

Most of the allusions to the pine in Classical mythology which Snyder chooses for Myths & Texts are those indicating the symbolic nature of the tree as an emblem of fertility.²⁵ The pine tree is sacred to Cybele because it is evergreen and a symbol of endurance: Cybele was also prayed to by women wanting children and is thus a mother of all life. In one version of the myths surrounding Cybele, an unfaithful lover,

Foot-whack on polished boards
 Slide and stop; drum-thump.
 "Today's wind moves in the pines"

(MT, pp. 6 - 7)

Sketching in details of the rituals of Nō (the Doer, or Shite, is the hero or principal character; stamping is an integral part of the dance element in performance) Snyder invokes Seami Motokiyo, the Zen-trained actor and author of much of the Nō drama still extant, as well as the chief theorist of this art form. Paired with his name on each occasion that it appears in Myths & Texts is the central symbol of the pine. The pine could either be the subject of a complete play, as it is in Takasago - a drama also mentioned by name in 'Logging', 4 - or, more usually, an important standard element of the setting: a single pine is used to represent a complete landscape or appears as part of a painted back-cloth. Pound, quoting from Fenollosa's notes on the Nō, records that "the painting of the pine tree on the back is most important. It is a congratulatory symbol of unchanging green and strength".²⁷ Snyder's intention then, in invoking Nō drama, is to multiply his poem's network of allusions to the pine as it connotes fertility and endurance.

The fourth, and final, manifestation of the pine takes up the theme of endurance and invests it in the use of a single species: the lodgepole pine. Prefacing 'Logging', 3 is a passage taken directly from a natural history:²⁸

"Lodgepole Pine: the wonderful reproductive power of this species on areas over which its stand has been killed by fire is dependent upon the ability of the closed cones to endure a fire which kills the tree without injuring its seed. After fire, the cones open and shed their seeds on the bared ground and a new growth springs up."

(MT, p. 5)

Spliced into the poem from an external source, this passage announces

the potency of Pinus contorta latifolia, the lodgepole, as a symbol for Myths & Texts as a whole. The marvellous qualities of survival and endurance embodied in this pine, and its ability to regenerate itself through, and because of, destruction, make it a focal point for major concerns in the poem: personal regeneration through tortuous quest and the cleansing power of fire articulated in metaphor in 'Burning'. Other references in the poem to the lodgepole vary considerably. They can be brief, simply restating its abilities:

Lodgepole
 cone/seed waits for fire
 And then thin forests of silver-gray

(MT, p. 15)

or even briefer references where it becomes merely a tiny part of the larger sketch of a natural landscape:

Rain sweeps the Eucalyptus
 Strange pines on the coast
 needles two to the bunch
 The whole sky whips in the wind

(MT, pp. 19 - 20)

The "strange pines" are Shore pines, a variety of the lodgepole which although growing twisted and crooked in poor soil in coastal regions, again prove their essential adaptability and powers of survival; like the lodgepole, they also have two needles in a bundle as leaf.²⁹

Towards the end of Myths & Texts, in 'Burning', 15, the lodgepole is reintroduced in a final image of survival:

 lightning strikes, flares,
 Blossoms a fire on the hill.
 Smoke like clouds. Blotting the sun
 Stinging the eyes.
 The hot seeds steam underground
 still alive.

(MT, p. 46)

The pattern of references to the pine in Myths & Texts is a formidable one then, and its richness and complexity is not revealed by any straightforward narrative in the poem. For example, two of the key occurrences of the lodgepole are in the third and forty-sixth poems of a forty-eight poem series and yet not only do they need to be read together but also should be matched with all other allusions to the pine in the poem as a whole. It is only reflexive reading, in response to the spatial form of Myths & Texts, which will enable the reader, in Frank's words, "to suspend the process of individual reference temporarily until the entire pattern of internal references can be apprehended as a unity".

This section began by suggesting that Snyder's mythic poems owed much to the Modernist poetic chiefly as it is expressed in The Waste Land. Other comparisons of Eliot's poem and Myths & Texts have gone beyond such structural features and the surface similarities of the transformation myths on which both poets draw. Steuding, for example, states that

both works are apocalyptic, for they deal with the destruction of the world as man once knew itBoth poems are concerned with the change in values, the loss of faith, and lack of reverence for life. And, finally, both poets draw on many cultures, archaic and contemporary, in an effort to create a mythology through which culture may redirect its energies in more spiritually productive ways. 30

Whilst accepting that such parallels exist, the clearest influence of the earlier poem on the later would still seem to be structural and formal. Steuding's final point, for example, the creation of a contemporary and active mythology is not a feature of The Waste Land which is immediately apparent. It is clear in 'Tradition and the

Individual Talent" that Eliot saw no great value in merely invoking the past, or past myths, for their own sake. For him, the past had meaning only when brought into a single perspective with the present: to read The Waste Land in order to be 'guided' by the myths it invokes is surely to misunderstand Eliot's intention. As one critic has pointed out, Eliot did not "believe or intend to suggest that human beings in earlier times were spiritually in better case than ourselves or that we could now recapture a vital relation to myth or in any way find our salvation through it".³¹ On the other hand, it will be argued later that for Snyder the creation of a surrogate-myth in Myths & Texts is precisely an attempt to make his poem socially functional and that the mythological past upon which he draws is intended to have a didactic dimension.

The key influences then of Eliot and Modernism are structural with Snyder fulfilling Eliot's prediction of the creation of a mythic mode. In reviewing Joyce's Ulysses, and its use of the Odysseus myth, Eliot remarked that "in using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him....Instead of narrative method, we may now use the mythical method".³²

For the important influences on the nature of the content of Snyder's poetry in "the mythical method", it is necessary to turn to the pervasive presence of American Indian oral literature.

(ii) American Indian Oral Literature

As a preface to the discussion of American Indian oral literature and Snyder's mythic poems, a preliminary justification is required of the terms which will be used. Rather than the recently adopted 'Native American', the more traditional term 'American Indian' will be employed, without derogation, to describe certain very general shared features of the culture of the native population of America. This does not imply the recognition of some amorphous 'Indian' culture: such a thing did not, and does not, exist. As Wilcomb Washburn says: "It has been estimated that between 1,000 and 2,000 languages existed in the Americas at the time of European contact, each mutually unintelligible with every other. There was and is no single Indian culture. The languages, customs, personalities, and beliefs of Indians varied (and vary) widely, and have been subject to numerous modifications over time."¹ To reflect this, more precise tribal references will be given where specific cultural traits are discussed.

The term 'oral literature' encompasses poems, songs, narratives, and oral ceremonial rites. In reality, the term 'literature' has no valid application for an Indian people since none of them, north of Mexico, possessed a written language. The existence of a literature simply for entertainment or individual self-expression is also relatively rare; most songs had a supremely functional purpose: religious songs, curing songs, hunting songs, for example. The terms 'song' and 'poem' are also used interchangeably, as is now customary with ethnologists and translators, since there were few 'poems' which did not have a musical or rhythmic accompaniment of some kind.

The general use of the past tense when discussing aspects of American Indian culture follows Washburn's example when he states that

his study cannot be "written in the 'ethnographic present,' assuming the continued existence of long-altered behavioural characteristics".² Although some of the Indian culture discussed in this section may still exist in a relatively unmodified state, it would be unrealistic to ignore the fact that systematic genocide has made many Indian communities, and their culture, a part of history.

As extensive as it is, it might appear misleading to concentrate on the role of American Indian culture in Snyder's mythic poems at the expense of the evidently large number of references to Oriental culture and religions which also figure in a poem such as Myths & Texts. However, reiterating the earlier claim made for Myths & Texts as an initiatory poem, the shaping influences in Snyder's thought are Western, not Eastern. His undergraduate and graduate work in anthropology and American Indian culture at Reed College, Oregon and the University of Indiana between 1948 and 1952 gives his use of such sources in Myths & Texts confidence and authority. Despite his early attraction to Buddhism, and his training in Oriental languages at the University of California from 1953 to 1956, his real interest in Eastern culture was not consolidated until the first visit to Japan in 1956, by which time Myths & Texts, and other poems in the mythic mode, were substantially complete. Moreover, Snyder's real commitment in the mythic poems is not to any structured intellectual, religious, or ideological system, but simply to the natural world and to the possibilities of a set of values which would bring contemporary society into a more harmonious relationship with it. In this sense, the East is equally as culpable in his eyes as the West of the rapacious destruction detailed in 'Logging'; if the relationship is exploitative, and thus sterile, its geographical location is of little consequence and Snyder has no delusions about the stereotyped Oriental worship of nature:

The Far Eastern love of nature has become fear of nature: gardens and pine trees are tormented and controlled. Chinese nature poets were too often retired bureaucrats living on two or three acres of trees trimmed by hired gardeners. The professional nature-aesthetes of modern Japan, tea-teachers and flower-arrangers, are amazed to hear that only a century ago dozens of species of birds passed through Kyoto where today only swallows and sparrows can be seen; and the aesthetes can scarcely distinguish those. 3

Snyder's primary commitment, then, is to what Thomas Lyon has called his "ecological vision". Lyon goes on to assert that Snyder "has not been susceptible to either gross cultural influences or temporary currents, but has always seemed to measure things according to a primal standard of wild ecology. The basic materials of this he learned in the West".⁴ Raymond Benoit also confirms this conclusion: "Perplexed, critics speak of the Oriental ideas in...Snyder. They are really minimal. The question is one of a quite native counteraction."⁵ Although the native materials of Myths & Texts dominate the poem's use of Eastern culture, and are therefore of more importance to an understanding of it, we will see later that aspects of Chinese and Japanese culture do gradually assume more significance in Snyder's writing; in particular, certain formal and structural features of Oriental poetry are paramount in the lyric poems. Yet this does not contradict the widely held feeling that his "basic materials", as Lyon puts it, are Western. How these sources are deployed in his poetry can best be seen in the context of a more general discussion of modern ethnopoetics. A brief summary of this movement provides a valuable indication of Snyder's own, often original, contribution to the use of American Indian culture in modern poetry.

The use of American Indian oral literature as a source of inspiration or as a guide to composition, and the continuing attempts at its translation, have grown rapidly in the last two decades. There

have been efforts at the direct translation of Indian songs and poems for many years, dating at least as far back as Henry Rowe Schoolcraft's versions of Chippewa songs in his early studies of the American Indian.⁶ Yet it is only a comparatively recent development, and one which in part was initiated by Snyder with Myths & Texts, which has seen contemporary poets not only beginning to formulate new approaches to translation, but also discovering the possibility of transposing some elements of American Indian oral culture into their own original poetry. Ethnopoetics has emerged as a term both to signify this work in a general sense and to indicate a reasonably well-defined movement of the nineteen sixties and seventies dedicated to the exploration of the potential of primitive oral literature.

In essence then, there is a broad division in the approaches to this oral literature: first, the translation or re-working of extant versions of Indian songs, poems, and chants; and second, a wider concern to realize the potential of such oral rites - their nature, content, composition, and delivery - for contemporary poetry. The first of these areas has been the major preoccupation of the Ethnopoetics movement and, as Snyder has not been primarily concerned with this work⁷ - perhaps indicating an implicit disapproval of some of the translation practices which it has adopted - it can be passed over relatively quickly in favour of a fuller treatment of the second area where his real interests lie. Some discussion of the modern Ethnopoetics movement is pertinent however, since it throws light on the general ethos of those involved in such work and Snyder's relationship to them.

The use of 'ethnopoetics' to indicate an actual poetic movement began to assume importance in 1968 with the publication of Jerome Rothenberg's anthology of primitive poetry in translation, Technicians of the Sacred,⁸ followed closely by the initial issue of a periodical,

Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics, which claimed to be a "first magazine of the world's tribal poetries" and whose pages were to be open to poets, linguists, ethnologists, and translators alike, in order to provide "a forum to discuss the possibilities & problems of translation from widely divergent cultures".⁹ In the nineteen seventies, Ethnopoetics expanded rapidly with a further Rothenberg anthology devoted solely to American Indian poetry,¹⁰ whilst periodicals such as Io, Stoneybrook, Caterpillar and Coyote's Journal began to offer more space to the developing interest in primitive oral literature. Important individual volumes also began to appear partly under the aegis of Ethnopoetics, for example, the translation and study of Zuni narratives by Dennis Tedlock, co-editor of Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics with Rothenberg.¹¹ It is now, however, practicable to speak of Ethnopoetics as a piece of literary history. In the final issue of Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics in 1980, its remaining editor, Tedlock, described the magazine as "a phenomenon of the 70s",¹² perhaps consigning Ethnopoetics as a movement to the position Snyder had earlier predicted as "a little footnote on academic life in America".¹³ Retrospectively though, Ethnopoetics was able to make one really creative contribution, that is, 'total translation', probably the first positive attempt to confront the special problems of converting an essentially oral event into a written one.

The particular problems of translating Indian song, with its extensive oral elements of repetition, word distortion, meaningless syllables and vocables, had long been familiar to its potential interpreters.¹⁴ Two methods of coping with such difficulties were prominent. The first was simply to ignore such seemingly untranslatable elements, omitting them in favour of what literal sense could be discerned in the song; this often resulted in a drastic compression of the text which the translator proceeded to expand with often extraneous material

of his or her own choosing. Without diminishing the otherwise scrupulous accuracy of pioneer ethnographers, this was a common practice amongst certain of the earliest translators.¹⁵ The second method involved a similar avoidance of the fundamental oral nature of the poem or song, omitting its vocal elements but in this case not replacing them at all. This has given an impression, still current, that much American Indian literature is as elliptically brief and compact as some Oriental verse forms, notably haiku and tanka. The work of Frances Densmore, Mary Austin, and Ruth Underhill frequently followed this pattern and at least one early anthology of Indian poetry, which contained translations by Densmore and Austin, enjoyed a vogue at publication since it coincided with the interest aroused in the type of poetry and poetics initiated by the various Imagist anthologies in the period from 1914 to 1917.¹⁶

In hoping to avoid both of these incomplete practices, total translation attempted to involve all of the specifically oral elements inherent in Indian literature with the fundamental assumption that to exclude them, or to compromise on the grounds of what can or cannot be neatly transposed into a written English text, is not only failing to meet the original at its most basic linguistic level but also denies the strongest oral characteristic of all: the sheer joy of sound and sound improvisation. Jerome Rothenberg's total translations then, especially of Navajo Horse Songs, are attempts to express in an English translation the whole of an oral event and not to deny its sound qualities or refine them in order to smooth out what might otherwise prove to be awkward vocal elements.¹⁷ Word distortion, lengthy repetition, totally meaningless vocables and syllables have all been approximated in his translations which do not pursue the literal sense of the originals at the expense of these elements which were equally, if not more, important. Such a radical technique has not been necessary for the vastly more lucid and conventionally narrative Zuni stories collected and translated by

Dennis Tedlock. Nevertheless, a vital ingredient in his final presentation is a clear guide to their oral performance: volume, pitch, speed, pause, and expressive tone are all indicated for the reader.

A less happy, and certainly more controversial aspect of Ethnopoetics has been its commonly adopted method of 'translation' by the re-working technique. Simply stated, this process involves the recasting of previously collected and translated material to produce what are, in the opinion of the poet involved, more acceptable versions of the original text. The sources for these re-workings are manifold: the literal translations and notes of early field-workers, for example, Franz Boas, J. R. Swanton, or Washington Matthews; the literary versions of earlier translators such as Henry Schoolcraft and Alice Fletcher; and such non-literary sources as ethnographical reports - where prose passages are worked into a 'poetic' form - are among the more common examples. Retranslation from source, with the poet knowledgeable in the original language is rare; in many cases, the language concerned has been closed to any such retranslation through a simple lack of modern linguistic studies. Even without reference to specific examples,¹⁸ the inaccuracies and anomalies of the re-working process are evident. Lacking the option of verifying the accuracy and authenticity of the initial versions being used, Ethnopoetics often compounded errors in the originals of which it was unaware, thus making its own contribution to the omissions and imprecisions which have been a feature of the history of the translation of Indian poetry and song.

As in any discussion of the methodology of translation, however, the translator's knowledge of the language in question, or the procedure he uses, is not always the final criterion by which to judge the result. The quality of Ezra Pound's translations of the Chinese of Li Po does not depend on their literal accuracy; the fact that Pound knew very

little Chinese at the time of the Cathay volume resulted in many 'errors'. While the resulting poems cannot be taken seriously as linguistically accurate versions of the originals, this does not invalidate their status as finely realized poems in English or diminish the general qualities of Chinese verse which he was able to convey through them. Unfortunately, not all of those involved in Ethnopoetics were Ezra Pounds, and a sense of unease accompanies the reader of, for example, Shaking the Pumpkin, where Rothenberg's name is appended to translations and re-workings from twenty-eight different Indian languages - from Aztec to Yuma - and where the simplest examples of American Indian culture are mystified to an extraordinary extent. Hence one poem in the section, 'A Book of Events', reads:

VISION EVENT (III)

Sioux

Go to a mountain-top & cry for a vision.¹⁹

Rothenberg's note to this poem describes it as "a highly condensed version of the Plains Indian 'vision quest' as initiation into manhood, etc.",²⁰ which presumably is rather like offering 'Go into a shop and buy some long trousers' as the white man's equivalent. Rather than the implication of condensing from vast ethnographical data, one wonders also if Rothenberg has not more simply picked up the popular Black Elk book, The Sacred Pipe, the fourth chapter of which, titled 'Hanblecheyapi: CRYING FOR A VISION', reads in part: "Every man can cry for a vision, or 'lament'....There are many reasons for going to a lonely mountaintop to 'lament'."²¹ At such points, criticism of Ethnopoetics mounts. In accusing the movement of ignoring essential features of structure, form, and genre in Indian culture - ironically enough, the same criticisms as Ethnopoetics itself

had levelled at earlier interpreters - William Bevis says of 'Vision Event (III)': "In blind attention to content, and total insensitivity to style and aesthetic form, such 'renderings' as 'Vision Event III' rival the worst anthropology."²²

The re-working process is continually undermined by such criticisms and by the inherent problems of translation. The concerted effort of Ethnopoetics to make available a relatively obscure and inaccessible body of literature is laudable enough and Rothenberg, aware of the pitfalls involved, did introduce his anthology of Indian literature with a cautious caveat:

The awkwardness of presenting translations from American Indian poetry in the year 1971 is that it has become fashionable today to deny the possibilities of crossing the boundaries that separate people of different races & cultures: to insist instead that black is the concern of black, red of red, & white of white. Yet the idea of translation has always been that such boundary crossing is not only possible but desirable. 23

Yet, whilst it is impossible to deny the attractions of "boundary crossing", if it is to the cost of the original then the inevitable accusations of cultural imperialism will always cast doubts on the typical strategies with which Ethnopoetics has chosen to accomplish its task. Indeed, one commentator questions whether the work of the movement is less a new way forward and more a last step in final cultural domination: "What if our capacity to use and reinvent the forms, say, of native American poetry were - quite the opposite of a breakthrough - simply the reflex of the increasing vocation of the system to absorb and to integrate the last of its hitherto irreducible ethnic minorities?"²⁴

An assessment of Ethnopoetics, with both its positive aspects and less productive exercises, places Snyder's own relationship with American Indian culture in perspective. Although his name has been

continually linked with the movement, his attitude towards it is implicitly critical. His caution over direct translation has already been noted, and his views on the re-working technique are equally clear. In commenting on Shaking The Pumpkin, for example, he said:

I'm still dubious about what happens when modern white men start changing the old texts, making versions, editing, cleaning it up - not cleaning it up so much as just changing it around a little bit. There's nothing for me as useful as the direct transcription, as literally close as possible to the original text in whatever language it was, Kwakiutl or Apache. The true flavor seems to be there....I'm all for primary source in historical materials, whether American Indian or otherwise, because I would prefer to do the editing with my imagination rather than let somebody else's imagination do the work for me. At least, then, if there are errors in interpretation they're my own errors and not someone else's. 25

In addition, Snyder, although listed as a contributing editor to Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics, was a very passive one with only seven contributions of any kind in a ten-year period, and most of these extremely marginal.²⁶ In fact, the only really substantial contribution, 'The Politics of Ethnopoetics', is notable for its faint praise of the movement. Snyder quotes, for example, one of the original eight points included in the first issue's 'Statement of Intention' - "to combat cultural genocide in all of its manifestations" - only to conclude that "there is some tiny increment of political value from the publication of oral literatures".²⁷

To return to the broad division in the approaches to Indian culture, Snyder's contribution rests not in translation but in the more general use of Indian materials in his own poetry. Ultimately, his distrust of the re-working technique of Ethnopoetics stems from a belief that it is an act of usurpation. Further, that it diminishes the

vitality of the original and relegates it to a position of inferiority. Ideally, his own use of Indian culture leaves that original as far as possible untouched in the new poem, giving it a semi-autonomous position which allows it to exist on an equal basis with his own material.

Obviously the use of Indian culture as subject matter is by no means original to Gary Snyder, although we can see that poems such as Myths & Texts or 'The Berry Feast' pre-date the Ethnopoetics movement by over ten years. To find a beginning for such a tradition in American poetry, it would be necessary to look back as far as Philip Freneau, George Pope Morris and, of course, Longfellow, who could well be considered as an early ethnopoet since much of the material for The Song of Hiawatha was taken from Algic Researches published in 1839 by Schoolcraft. However, as will become evident, Snyder's adoption of tribal sources is radically different to that of much earlier poets and their 'Indian' poems. In particular, one conspicuous Indian source, the myth figure of the Trickster, can serve to illuminate Snyder's often highly original use of oral literature and culture.

Mythology played a vital role in many Indian communities mirroring as it did their physical environment and reinforcing their relationship with the natural and animal world. In addition, it provided a spiritual milieu and an important psychological outlet in the scatological satire which characterized many of the myths in their original form. The myths were set in the time 'before everything got changed', that is, in the dream time before the world, as the story-teller knew it, was created. In fact, many were creation myths and dominant in them was the archetypal figure of the Trickster, who seems to have fascinated the modern poet as much as he fascinated, shocked, and amused the American Indian. Paul Radin, whose work on the Trickster figure in American Indian mythology is considered definitive, sees this archetype as the

most widespread and enduring of all mythological characters:

Manifestly we are here in the presence of a figure and a theme or themes which have had a special and permanent appeal and an unusual attraction for mankind from the very beginnings of civilization. In what must be regarded as its earliest and most archaic form, as found among the North American Indians, Trickster is at one and the same time creator and destroyer, giver and negator, he who dupes others and who is always duped himself. He wills nothing consciously. At all times he is constrained to behave as he does from impulses over which he has no control. He knows neither good nor evil yet he is responsible for both. He possesses no values, moral or social, is at the mercy of his passions and appetities, yet through his actions all values come into being. 28

The Trickster's ambiguous nature provides the key to the myths in which he figures. He is the embodiment of spite and benevolence, of total vulnerability and total power. His actions, motivated - if they ever are - by greed and selfishness, often recoil on him as he inadvertently benefits the people he attempts to harass. Trickster myths were always dramatic, frequently scatological, and received by their audience with a mixture of fear and amusement. "Laughter tempered by awe" is Radin's apt description.²⁹

For Snyder, and other modern poets who have attempted to place Trickster in a contemporary frame of reference, his most common manifestation is as Coyote. Trickster took on an animal persona with most tribes, although the particular animal varied: Coyote was used by many Californian peoples, but Raven, Hare, and Spider were also Trickster animals. In all cases however, the basic traits of the figure were consistent.³⁰ Although Coyote appears in some of the earliest of Snyder's poetry, his use of this myth figure was pre-dated by the first modern 'coyote' interpreter, Jaime de Angulo, to whom Snyder is clearly indebted.

Jaime de Angulo was, to say the least, an unconventional man. Born in France in 1880 of a Spanish family; a doctor turned rancher turned linguist and translator; a collaborator with Paul Radin and Alfred Kroeber; banished from Taos after a personality clash with D. H. Lawrence; translator for Franz Boas and Carl Jung; and friend of Henry Miller, Robinson Jeffers, and Ezra Pound. His work was championed by William Carlos Williams and, inevitably, Pound, who was indirectly responsible for the first publication of de Angulo's most popular book, Indian Tales, after having given a copy to Allen Ginsberg who carried it to Carl Solomon, then editor at A. A. Wynn.³¹ In his work as a linguist, de Angulo spent many years in the first half of the century living amongst the Pit River Indians in northern California, collecting myths, songs, and narratives which, almost at random, were translated, re-worked, transposed or in some other way incorporated into his own poems and stories. Of the narratives and songs which fashion Indian Tales, for example, he says: "Some I invented out of my own head. Some of them I remembered - at least, parts, which I wove in and out. Some parts I actually translated almost word for word from my texts."³² De Angulo's translations and writings involving Coyote are especially relevant to the contemporary use of the Trickster in that he was one of the first interpreters to have a direct contact with a living body of Coyote lore and legend, who was also able to filter those myths through a non-Indian consciousness and produce English versions which were not simply literal translations from ethnographical texts. Coyote's Bones, for example, is a fascinating blend of disparate materials: the Coyote figure, poems and songs from a variety of Indian tribes, shaman songs, personal reminiscences, and so on - a fusion which in itself must have been enormously suggestive to the Snyder of Myths & Texts.³³ Snyder, in fact, reviewed the first

publication of Indian Tales singling out de Angulo's use of Coyote.³⁴ A further measure of de Angulo's inventiveness, and his possible later influence, is the ending of Indian Tales. In a manner reminiscent of the interaction of author and text in some post-Modernist fiction, two characters, Fox-boy and Oriole, argue over why they seem to have grown up so much during the course of the book; finally they blame the author: "The man who is telling this story, it's his fault...he has let it go too fast."³⁵ Deciding he had invented the author in any case, Fox-boy stops believing in him and the book ends.

De Angulo's revelation of Coyote as Trickster clearly provided a basis on which Snyder could build in his own poetry. In Indians in Overalls, for example, de Angulo stresses the double personality of Coyote as "the Creator, and the Fool....The wise man and the buffoon"³⁶ and Snyder, in turn, takes up that essential ambivalence in speaking of the

world folk image of the trickster, suppressed or altered in some cultures; more clearly developed in others. For me I think the most interesting psychological thing about the trickster, and what drew me to it for my own personal reasons was that there wasn't a clear dualism of good and evil established there, that he clearly manifested benevolence, compassion, help, to human beings, sometimes, and had a certain dignity; and on other occasions he was the silliest utmost fool. 37

A mythic poem such as 'The Berry Feast' evinces that ambivalence:

Fur the color of mud, the smooth loper .
Crapulous old man, a drifter,
Praises! of Coyote the Nasty, the fat
Puppy that abused himself, the ugly gambler,
Bringer of goodies.

(BC, p. 3)

The figure of Coyote stalks through this poem and is associated at once

with the gifts of nature (the berry feast) and with the jarring interrelationship of human and animal which features often in American Indian mythology; after an allusion to the common 'bear-mother' myth, Coyote is also: "Mating with/humankind" (BC, p. 3).³⁸ Later, as the poem moves between the world of myth and the real world, Coyote suffers at the hands of men: "Coyote: shot from the car, two ears,/A tail, bring bounty" (BC, p. 4); but as a myth archetype he is indestructible, although he shows typical Trickster gratitude when brought back to life:

--and when Magpie
Revived him, limp rag of fur in the river
Drowned and drifting, fish-food in the shallows,
"Fuck you!" sang Coyote
and ran.

(BC, p. 5)

The poem ends with a dual image of Coyote: epitome of the wilderness, looking down on the work of man with derision; yet also the suggestion of his ultimate end as myth and history meet to the detriment of the former:

See, from the foothills
Shred of river glinting, trailing,
To flatlands, the city:
glare of haze in the valley horizon
Sun caught on glass gleams and goes.
From cool springs under cedar
On his haunches, white grin,
long tongue panting, he watches:

Dead city in dry summer,
Where berries grow.

(BC, p. 7).

Coyote as a symbol of the wilderness, and his struggle for self-preservation against an encroaching 'civilization', is also prominent in a much later poem from Turtle Island, 'The Call of the Wild', a title borrowed from Jack London's novel in which a Californian rancher's dog

eventually escapes to the wilds of Alaska. That almost twenty years separate the writing of this poem from 'The Berry Feast' indicates that Snyder's interest in the Coyote figure is not an incidental one:

The heavy old man in his bed at night
 Hears the Coyote singing
 in the back meadow.
 All the years he ranched and mined and logged.
 A Catholic.
 A native Californian.
 and the Coyotes howl in his
 Eightieth year.
 He will call the Government
 Trapper
 Who uses iron leg-traps on Coyotes,
 Tomorrow.

The Coyote's call is a reminder that the old man is only a "native Californian" in a limited sense: his eighty-year span is insignificant when set against the durable Coyote who symbolizes a people and a mythology which are more legitimately 'native'. Having imported an alien religion and exploited the area in ways which disfigure it permanently, the man prepares to eliminate the final vestige of the original region. It is not only the well-established rancher who is troubled by the Coyote's song; more recent intruders, "the ex acid-heads from the cities", also despoil the wilderness with their geodesic domes "stuck like warts/ In the woods". All these relative newcomers fear "the call of the wild" through an inborn mistrust of the land which they have commandeered, treating all other inhabitants as rivals to be disposed of. Like the rancher, the "ex acid-heads" have no reverence for Coyote for they are "converted to Guru or Swami" to whom they "do penance with shiny/Dopey eyes" (TI, p. 21). The poem envisages a violent campaign against the realm of Coyote:

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

A Coyote could hide.

Obviously, in this poem, Snyder takes Coyote to represent not only the wilderness in a physical sense, but also the unconscious, the 'back country' of the mind. It is the negation of the ambivalent hero/anti-hero nature of human personality which causes the resistance to "the call of the wild" and commits the interlopers to a sterile and infertile existence; in the poem, the "ex acid-heads" dream of "forever blissful sexless highs" (TI, p. 21) whilst sleeping in the territory of the sexually vital, often rampant, Coyote. In an envoy to the poem, Snyder adds:

I would like to say
Coyote is forever
Inside you

But it's not true.

(TI, p. 23)

For some enemies then, even the spirit of Coyote, the universal pervasiveness of the archetype, has vanished: a pessimistic judgement considering the Trickster's status as the most enduring of all psycho-mythological figures. Carl Jung, for example, in commenting on Radin's studies, says that "in picaresque tales, in carnivals and revels, in sacred and magical rites, in man's religious fears and exaltations, this phantom of the trickster haunts the mythology of all ages, sometimes in quite unmistakable form, sometimes in strangely modulated guise."³⁹ Jung sees the Trickster as representing "the reflection of an earlier, rudimentary stage of consciousness" and goes on to compare the relationship which exists between that and a more developed consciousness as an example of split or double personality. He continues:

The peculiar thing about these dissociations is that the split-off personality is not just a random one, but stands in a complementary or compensatory relationship to the ego personality.

Since Coyote is an object of reverence, as well as a figure of fun, it is an honour to have him so visit the tribe. Coyote is also established as a destroyer:

Coyote: "I guess there never was a world anywhere"
 Earthmaker: "I think if we find a little world,
 "I can fix it up."

(MT, p. 42)

In this borrowing from Radin,⁴⁴ Snyder takes possibly the two most archaic figures from Indian mythology to present the destructive and creative aspects of the psyche, an ambivalence he sees embedded in the Trickster figure who, in himself, frequently adopts the role of creator. At the resolution of Myths & Texts, as will be seen in the following section, Coyote appears as both prophet and transformer, heralding the possibility of change.

On a primary level, Snyder is concerned to present Coyote simply as a feature of American Indian mythology, to allow the Trickster's original nature to show through in his poems. There is never any sense in Snyder, as there legitimately is in Jaime de Angulo, that he can experience the original impact of the figure: "I'm only reading Coyote as I can, namely twentieth century, West Coast white American."⁴⁵ On another level however, Snyder attempts to establish Coyote not merely as a function of American Indian mythology, but as a universal archetype, timeless in one sense but needing to be revived on a personal basis, to be re-created and endowed with a contemporary relevance. Hence his comment that "the first thing that excited me about Coyote tales was the delightful, Dadaistic energy, leaping somehow into a modern frame of reference".⁴⁶ The fact that his use of Coyote has been followed by other contemporary American poets⁴⁷ is proof, for Snyder, of the enduring attraction, not just of Coyote, but of all myth: "When the Coyote

figure comes into modern American poetry it is not just for a sense of place. It is also a play on the world-wide myth, tale and motif storehouse. Poetry has always done this - drawing out, re-creating, subtly altering for each time and place the fundamental images."⁴⁸

Perhaps what Snyder calls the "incredible survival" of Coyote in modern poetry is only further evidence of Radin's recognition of the persistence and endurance of the Trickster myth when he notes that "although repeatedly combined with other myths and frequently drastically reorganised and reinterpreted, its basic plot seems always to have succeeded in reasserting itself".⁴⁹

Snyder's extensive deployment of the Trickster is a valuable example of his incorporation of American Indian oral literature into his poems whilst eschewing direct translation or simply exploiting that culture as direct subject matter. The result is not an authentic 'Indian' text or simply a poem 'about' Indians, but an original, and often highly fruitful compromise. With particular reference to the mythic poems, one further comment by Snyder provides a revealing introduction to the following detailed discussion of Myths & Texts, his most successful poem in the mythic mode:

I found that the sense of Coyote...began to
teach me something about the real flavor of
the land, began to move me back just a trifle
from historical time into myth time, into the
eternal now of geological time for which our
historical time, one hundred and fifty years,
is an inconsequential ripple. 50

(iii) Myths & Texts

Much of the modern interest in mythology stems from the recognition of its social function, as does the even more recent attitude of some scholars and poets that the function mythology serves in primitive culture is desperately needed by contemporary society. 1

I sit without thoughts by the log-road
Hatching a new myth

(MT, p. 18)

A little over a year separated the completion of Snyder's undergraduate thesis and the initial magazine appearance of sections of Myths & Texts. The thesis demonstrates clearly that he had invested heavily in the study of myth from the relatively narrow viewpoint of his detailed discussion of a single Haida tale to the more wide-ranging application of psychology, anthropology, and literary theory as these disciplines influenced the continuing debate over the nature and interpretation of myth. The thesis is interesting enough: an admirably careful and lucid study of a 'Swan-maiden' myth viewed from every conceivable perspective. However, it is the later more general chapters of the thesis, 'The Myth as Literature' and 'The Function of Myth', which give the best insight into the thinking which was to lead to the composition of Myths & Texts.

In a section which considers myth and archetype, Snyder discusses the work of Joseph Campbell and his delineation of the quest as the 'monomyth' (that archetype or single myth which underpins all mythological systems). Snyder offers a brief appraisal of Campbell's synthesis: "Joseph Campbell sees in the quest myth pattern a symbolic significance which corresponds on the one hand to primitive rites of initiation, and on the other to the psychological journey into the unconscious required of the individual who would attain 'wholeness' in the complete sense of

the reconciliation of opposites. In all effective mythology, the quest motif is the key."²

The following discussion of Myths & Texts, particularly where the poem is seen as attempting to supply a contemporary relevance to the ancient function of myth, will propose that it is Campbell's quest monomyth which significantly shapes the poem's theme; that is, in the myth-poem which Snyder 'hatches', there can be discerned the pattern which Campbell analyses so exhaustively: "The passage of the mythological hero may be overground, incidentally; fundamentally it is inwards - into depths where obscure resistances are overcome, and long lost, forgotten powers are revived, to be made available for the transfiguration of the world."³ As Myths & Texts journeys from the forests of the North-West Pacific coast to the messianic call of Coyote: "Earth! those beings living on your surface/none of them disappearing, will all be transformed" (MT, p. 47), Snyder shadows the pattern of Campbell's quest monomyth succinctly contained in "the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation - initiation - return".⁴

That Snyder chose to make Myths & Texts a version of a widespread myth-type, and to incorporate into it the diversity of materials described in previous sections, is entirely consonant with his reading of myth and its composition. It is standard anthropological practice to classify and relate the myths of diverse cultures by isolating the basic narrative pattern and relating it to a reasonably restricted number of standard myth plots. The smaller components, the motifs which have been used to form the new version, can then also be recognized. In a monograph which discusses the evolution, via a number of extant myths, of a Winnebago tale called 'The Two Boys', Paul Radin outlined the two methods by which such a myth can emerge and develop into a new, semi-autonomous version by drawing on previously existing material. Of

'The Two Boys' myth, he writes:

Myth-incident upon myth-incident, theme upon theme, motif upon motif, even when everything seems definitely to point to their being original quotations, can upon closer investigation all be shown to be either borrowed from some other myth or from the large stock-in-trade of incidents, themes and motifs at the disposal of the author-raconteur to use, within specified traditional limits, much as he wills and to elaborate and embellish as he desires. 5

This process of motif integration transforms the elements of older myths so that, although still recognizable, they are compounded into the consistent plot or main narrative pattern of the new version. Radin compares this technique with the composition of a similar cycle of Winnebago myths, 'Red Horn and the Twins', where he notes that "the incidents, themes and motifs, manifestly part of the stereotyped stock-in-trade of the author-raconteur, while often used with considerable literary skill, have been taken as they are and have been subjected to no new reformulations, no reinterpretations, no embellishment".⁶ In this pattern, the chosen motifs are retained largely in their original form and the narrative progression of the basic plot becomes subsidiary to the dramatization, in a new context, of a number of important themes, thus creating a more diffuse and loosely constructed myth.

Myths & Texts, if it is to be considered as a surrogate-myth, conforms more readily to the first of Radin's patterns in that the numerous motifs (and this term can be extended to include all of Snyder's eclectic borrowings and not merely those from extant American Indian myths) are transformed and moulded to the basic design of the new text. That the poem has the more fragmented nature and appearance of the second pattern does not conceal the fact that it is built around an existing myth-type, the hero quest, even if this 'plot' is not, as previously discussed, readily extracted by a conventional linear narrative reading.

The disagreements which accompany the study of myth, even to a basic definition of that term, are notorious and beyond the scope of this study. In microcosm, however, they might be represented by the differing approaches to Myths & Texts even amongst those earlier commentators who assume that Snyder's basic intention was to create a new myth through the poem. Jungels, for example, sees the basic myth-type which is being paralleled as 'the-destruction-of-the-world-by-fire', that is, belonging to a wider set of catastrophe-regeneration myths, and largely rejects Snyder's use of Campbell's hero quest as being inconsistent or incomplete.⁷ Steuding, whilst also acknowledging the influence of Campbell, reaches a similar conclusion: "Snyder's adaption of Campbell's 'monomythic' structure is sketchy, and it does not order the poem. There is little linear movement in Myths & Texts."⁸ Certainly, Snyder's use of the hero quest myth-type is not a rigidly consistent application of Campbell's synthesis. Such inflexibility would not only have been unacceptably mechanical but also would have denied him the basic right of the author-raconteur to improvise within his chosen type. The lack of a "linear movement" is also hardly a disqualifying factor since there is little evidence that this was a strict overriding concern of past raconteurs. There remains in the poem much to suggest that the hero quest myth, as expounded by Campbell, does significantly underpin its basic intentions.

Before offering a detailed commentary on the poem, some discussion of its personal significance to Snyder, and his role in Myths & Texts, is important. If the poem is to be read as a version of the hero quest, then the identity of the hero, and his relationship to the poet, assumes no little significance. It would be tempting to conclude that the protagonist of the poem is an anonymous figure, an Everyman. To an extent, this would be an accurate assumption since the narrative voice

in the poem is never consistently a single or individual one. Like its Modernist predecessors, that voice is an amalgam of the diverse characters who share the narration of the poem. It has the quality of voices in unison as the poet assimilates for support and variety a range of real and fictive speakers who, in sharing a set of values, are absorbed to create an aggregate voice. However, as the poem progresses, and with the large amount of autobiographical material which Snyder incorporates, it also becomes clear that the quest in Myths & Texts is very much a personal one and that Snyder is continually laying his own example before the reader to become, in fact, the hero of his own myth.

There is evidence that the assumption of such a role, which might lead to the overbearing presence of the poet in the text, was problematic in the writing of the poem. At several points in the manuscript, overtly personal references have been cancelled or altered in an attempt to 'depersonalize' it. One example which might serve to illustrate this is a deleted passage which at one stage was to have concluded 'Hunting', 10:

& here am I
 26 years a human being:
 that fourth of July
 We tossed firecrackers at a butterfly
 & bits of golden wing
 came glinting down. 9

Despite the cutting of such explicit references to the author, and thus his superficial removal from the poem, Snyder's role as the initiate, and the status of Myths & Texts as personal quest, is still manifest. Almost as a signal, and reminiscent of the Whitman of 'Song of Myself', Snyder leaves his name in the body of the poem in 'Hunting', 6.

The comparison of Myths & Texts to this further long poem model is not a superficial one in this context. In one sense, 'Song of Myself' is also an exemplar of a personal quest with its detailed plotting of the entry into a mystical state, the path to a higher awareness by purification

and darker rites of passage, the insights and perceptions awarded to the poet, and the final emergence from the quest with the reader being urged to follow the personal example which has been offered:

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you. 10

Snyder's vision of his America is as intense as Whitman's celebration. Both poems are suffused with the poet's personality; both poets act as the central consciousness of their respective texts, observing, commenting, filtering the poem before it reaches the reader; and both offer the poem as an example of a personally experienced quest.

It is also important for Snyder that the role he plays within the poem is unambiguous. As will be seen, he makes no attempt to conceal his own actions in the first section, 'Logging'; in describing and lamenting the disappearance of the physical wilderness, his role is as one of the destroyers, a logger or forestry worker. As an agent of destruction, he disarms accusations of pious, disinterested complaint by implicating himself and sharing the guilt, thus reinforcing the authenticity of his allegations through personal experience and involvement. In 'Hunting' he also implicates himself fully; in this section, which dramatizes past affinities between man and nature, he works towards the genesis of an alternative to the exploitative relationships he encounters. It is vital that Snyder reveals himself as being uncomfortable within such a revived code of values; not only must he lay the examples before the reader, but also strive himself for a fuller understanding of them. The cancelled passage quoted above is one example (others remain in the final version of the poem) of how, at this stage, Snyder's

relationship to the animal world is far removed from the reverence shown in the primitive hunting practices which are detailed in 'Hunting'.

One final point concerning the personal importance of Myths & Texts to Snyder involves the reiteration of an earlier proposal: the crucial position it holds as a 'first' poem, a poem of self-location. As much as for any modern American poet, a sense of place has been a dominating factor in Snyder's work. In an early statement on Myths & Texts, he said that the poem

grew between 1952 and 1956. Its several rhythms are based on long days of quiet in lookout cabins; setting chokers for the Warm Springs Lumber Co... and the songs and dances of Great Basin Indian Tribes....I tried to make my life as a hobo and worker, the questions of history & philosophy in my head, and the glimpses of the roots of religion I'd seen through meditation, peyote, and "secret frantic rituals" into one whole thing. 11

Myths & Texts, growing out of a physical region and the consciousness which was formed and shaped there, is an effort to fix that sense of place. With the several references to Walden in the poem, it is Snyder's answer to Thoreau's challenge that "we are acquainted with a mere pellicle of the globe on which we live....We know not where we are".¹² In an introduction to a later edition of Myths & Texts, Snyder states that "we are most of us a still rootless population of non-natives.... [I have] set out like everyone else, to make sense, and to find somehow a way to actually 'belong to the land' ".¹³ Such attempts at self-location are an integral part of Myths & Texts as the poem explores its physical and spiritual regions, and as Snyder delves into the mythologies of his immediate predecessors, following the quest path of "a separation from the world, a penetration to some source of power, and a life-enhancing return".¹⁴

(a) "a separation from the world"

As previously noted, the first section of Myths & Texts, 'Logging', is a portrayal of rapacious natural devastation, localized in one sense through Snyder's personal experience in a particular time and place, but also spreading geographically and temporally with references to previous ages and cultures. Much of the power of this polemic is achieved by highlighting the human cost which such destruction incurs. Increasing mechanization has reduced the existence of one worker to triviality:

Ed McCullough, a logger for thirty-five years
 Reduced by the advent of chainsaws
 To chopping off knots at the landing:
 "I don't have to take this kind of shit,
 Another twenty years
 and I'll tell 'em to shove it"
 (he was sixty-five then)

(MT, p. 9)

The logger's wry comment on his fate does not conceal the pathos which lies beneath the cumulative effects of natural exploitation. This is reinforced in a neatly balancing portrait, in 'Logging', 11, of a contemporary Indian caught up in much the same process. Ray Wells, "a big Nisqually", now working for those who ruin the natural environment in which his own people had once flourished, introduces an anecdote which is the epitome of 'Logging' as a whole:

"Yesterday we gelded some ponies
 "My father-in-law cut the skin on the balls
 "He's a Wasco and don't speak English
 "He grabs a handful of tubes and somehow
 cuts the right ones.
 "The ball jumps out, the horse screams
 "But he's all tied up.

As so often in Myths & Texts, Snyder immediately introduces a mechanical agent of mutilation to set against this and bring the poem to a pitch:

The Caterpillar clanked back down.
 In the shadow of that racket
 diesel and iron tread
 I thought of Ray Wells' tipi out on the sage flat
 The gelded ponies
 Healing and grazing in the dead white heat.

(MT, p. 12)

Ray Wells and the castrated horses are merged into one image: the Indian with a white name is also "tied up", reduced to assisting in the obliteration of his region, yet still, almost pitifully, clinging to his "tipi"; he and the gelded ponies are symbols of total impotence in the "dead white heat" of a sterile landscape.

Images of heat and burning are pervasive in Myths & Texts. In 'Logging', they operate almost entirely to compose a picture of complete barrenness; it is a ruined territory, the vision of a wasteland with "all America hung on a hook/& burned by men" (MT, p. 4). Snyder, whose position as one of the wreckers is implicit throughout, shares in the guilt to the extent of realizing the inadequacy of simply laying the blame elsewhere: he must repay his own debt and, in doing so, offer his example to others. In effect, he has received the 'call' and must "retreat from the world scene of secondary effects to the causal zones of the psyche where the difficulties really reside, and there to clarify the difficulties, eradicate them in his own case...and break through to the undistorted, direct experience".¹⁵ Snyder's physical journey away from the materialistic present of America back to a semi-wilderness which places him in contact with pre-existing 'primitive' values is a retreat from "the ancient, meaningless/Abstractions of the educated mind" (MT, p. 7) to the sharp discrimination made available by what he will later call "the back country". It enables him also, as 'Logging' shows,

to widen his apprehension of the destructive processes which he witnesses, so that "the ancient forests of China logged/and the hills slipped into the Yellow Sea" are as much a part of the poem as "the woods around Seattle" (MT, p. 4). Such a journey, and the comprehension which it brings, are integral to the preparation of his role as quest hero:

The hero...is the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normal human forms. Such a one's visions, ideas, and inspirations come pristine from the primary springs of human life and thought. Hence they are eloquent, not of the present, disintegrating society and psyche, but of the unquenched source through which society is reborn. 16

Such 'eloquence' will feature later in 'Hunting', but before this stage in the quest is reached, the call must be accepted. In Campbell's description of the hero quest there may be an initial, or in some cases, a complete refusal of the summons which "converts the adventure into its negative. Walled in boredom, hard work, or 'culture', the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved....the refusal is essentially a refusal to give up what one takes to be one's own interest".¹⁷

One of Snyder's immediate reactions to the wasteland which surrounds him in 'Logging' could be construed as a selfish attempt to ensure personal survival in the face of an overwhelming sense of infertility. 'Logging', 9 describes a journey back, "leaving mountains behind", seeking sexual fulfilment:

by night to my girl and a late bath.
she came in naked to the tub
her breasts hung glistening...
we made love night-long.

(MT, p. 10)

Although gratifying at a personal level, the inadequacy of this response is shown by its placement between two powerful images of desolation which have no solution in such a gesture. Preceding this isolated passage is the portrait of natural devastation given in 'Logging', 8, quoted above; a human reminder of the task follows it:

A ghost logger wanders a shadow
 In the early evening, boots squeak
 With the cicada, the fleas
 Nest warm in his blanket-roll
 Berrybrambles catch at the staggd pants
 He stumbles up the rotted puncheon road

(MT, p. 11)

The spectral presence of the "ghost logger" haunts this section of Myths & Texts, acting as a constant reminder to the poet that attempts at personal salvation can only be the exercising of self-interest and are wholly insufficient for the task in hand. This pattern of the initial refusal of the call is further expanded in 'Logging', 13 where the key motif of fire and burning is once again present. The poem draws upon Snyder's experience as a fire-watcher:

T 36N R 16E S 25
 Is burning. Far to the west.
 A north creek side,
 flame to the crowns
 Sweeping a hillside bare--
 in another district,
 On a different drainage...

 The crews have departed,
 And I am not concerned.

(MT, pp. 13 - 14)

As a balance to this initial reluctance, 'Logging' offers two emphatic signs that acceptance of the call is vital and potentially a route to renewal. First, and again re-stating the poem's concentration on images of fire and burning, are the scattered references to the

lodgepole pine enumerated earlier. This pine becomes a central symbol for Myths & Texts as a whole, uniting its themes of destruction and subsequent rebirth. For Snyder, the tree is remarkably apt since it can only reproduce itself through destruction by fire and this capability relates Myths & Texts to a number of other creation myths which follow this pattern. In one African myth of the Fang of Gabon, for example, after the destruction of the world by fire, life is re-created by the seeds of a tree which, in falling, create new growth from which leaves, falling in their turn, are transformed into living creatures.¹⁸

The second sign or guide is that of a previously successful quest which is invoked by the inclusion of motifs from a Haida myth called 'Big-tail'.¹⁹ The first occurs in 'Logging', 12:

I ought to have eaten
Whale tongue with them.
they keep saying I used to be a human being
"He-at-whose-voice-the-Ravens-sit-on-the-sea."

(MT; p. 13)

The second appears later in 'Hunting', 11 which is sub-titled 'songs for a four-crowned dancing hat':

The little women, the fern women,
They have stopped crying now.
"What will you do with human beings?
Are you going to save the human beings?"

(MT, p. 28)

These allusions to the Big-tail myth are composed of separate lines taken from various points in the narrative and make little or no literal sense as Snyder uses them in the poem. Even the original myth itself, in Swanton's translation, is very obscure and difficult to decipher, although he appends numerous footnotes to explain local references and allusions to other myths. However, as with similar motifs in Myths & Texts, literal

sense is always secondary to their function as indicators to the complete myth and its role and importance as it informs the new poem. A brief synopsis of the Big-tail myth, then, is more revealing.

The blight on the people of Skidegate village is famine. Supernatural-being-at-whose-voice-the-ravens-sit-on-the-sea speaks through Big-tail, one of the people, indicating that Big-tail has begun the process of becoming a shaman. At one point, Big-tail secretly attends a feast for all the supernatural beings during which "a small being stood up....He wore a four-crowned dancing hat. And he began to ask them: 'What will you do with the human beings? Are you going to save the human beings?' " ²⁰ Attendance at this feast, and other trials endured by Big-tail, initiate the salvation of his people ensuring them food and successful hunting. As his power increases, Big-tail visits the house of Supernatural-being-looking-landward and, although offered food, does not accept: "Before he had eaten of that he went up, and, when he awoke, he said: 'Why did I come away so soon? I ought to have eaten whale tongue with them.' " ²¹ Visiting this same being again at another feast, he dances for the guests and, again indicating his progression towards becoming a powerful shaman and supernatural being himself, begins to question his changing status: "After he had stood around a while, he said: 'Human beings keep saying this about me. They keep saying that I used to be a human being.' " ²² Big-tail's metamorphosis is not yet complete however, and when his people begin to starve again he must once more journey for them and undertake tasks on their behalf: "One time he performed all night. Then Supernatural-being-looking-landward said to him: 'Big-tail, have them stop making the little supernatural women living along the shore cry. Say that I will give the human beings something.' " ²³ In time Big-tail takes on all the attributes of the powers who speak through him, becoming a powerful shaman in his own

right, and thus ensuring the well-being of his people.

The allusions to the Big-tail myth in Myths & Texts present that story as an incentive and example to the unsure hero. The primary function of the borrowings is to offer a case whereby a human being, through transformation, can separate himself from the physical world and gain access to "some source of power". As a shaman questing myth, the journey is undertaken in a selfless manner for the benefit of the community and such shaman narratives become increasingly important to the poem as a whole as it enters its second section, 'Hunting'.

(b) "a penetration to some source of power"

Snyder's quest for enlightenment in Myths & Texts, and his implicit wish that it should serve as an example, is closely associated with the traditional role of the shaman. It also provides another point of contact with Campbell's hero quest since, in describing the journeys of the initiation phase, he states that "among the most perilous are those of the shamans...when they go to seek out and recover the lost or abducted souls of the sick".²⁴

The figure of the shaman was central to the religious and ceremonial life of many Indian peoples.²⁵ In a strict sense, shamanism is a religious phenomenon of the primitive peoples of Siberia and Central Asia, although the name of shaman has come to be applied to any individual who employs ecstatic or trance techniques for curing the sick. Curing, in this narrow sense, was the original prime function of the shaman although, unlike other primitive religious and medicine men, his powers often extended to a wider 'curing', for example - and as in the Big-tail myth - ensuring the collective well-being of the whole tribe. The central feature of shamanism is, however, the "technique of ecstasy.... every medicine man is a healer, but the shaman employs a method that is

his and his alone".²⁶ The shaman's unique method is the trance journey in which his spirit leaves his earthly body and travels in search of a cure or guidance towards a cure. The whole magico-religious life of a community would be centred on the shaman who was usually initiated by a spontaneous call rather than by inheritance or other means. In many North American Indian tribes the shaman did co-exist with a wide range of other priests and healers but belonged to no special class or priesthood, being set apart by his particular and unique skills:

Among many North American tribes shamanism dominates religious life, or at least is its most important aspect. But nowhere does the shaman monopolize all religious experience. Besides him, there are other technicians of the sacred - the priest, the sorcerer (black magician); in addition...every individual seeks to obtain, for his own personal advantage, a number of magico-religious "powers," usually identified with certain tutelary or helping "spirits." The shaman, however, is distinguished from both classes - his colleagues and the lay population - by the intensity of his own magico-religious experiences....only the shaman, by virtue of his relations with the spirits, is able to enter deeply into the supernatural world; in other words, he alone succeeds in acquiring a technique that enables him to undertake ecstatic journeys at will. 27

Among the distinguishing features of the shaman's performance was his song, a crucial element in his trance journey. This song was composed and performed in any other state than that of waking consciousness, that is, in circumstances which would produce a trance and visions: dream, privation of food or sleep, self-induced illness, and the taking of drugs were amongst the methods used. In the Big-tail myth, it is fasting, drinking sea-water, and chewing tobacco which help him to induce the trance state. The shaman songs which resulted were fragmented and often largely incomprehensible. The belief was that a power spoke through the shaman, using him as a mouthpiece. Ruth Underhill describes an Eskimo

shaman's performance:

His method was to go into a trance. Sometimes he sang and pounded on his tambourine-drum until he fell unconscious; sometimes he sat motionless while the audience sang....Groans and shivers announced the fact that a spirit had entered the shaman's body. Then others might come, rustling and howling in the dark. The shaman babbled in his secret language with perhaps only a few words that could be understood. The spirits might even quarrel inside him until at last, with a shriek, he felt them go. 28

The incomprehensible and disjointed nature of the shaman's song or message was tolerated because of its origins in a world to which only he had access, and then perhaps only partial access; in this sense, it was much like an imperfectly overhead conversation. Emerging from his trance, the shaman would attempt to interpret the seemingly meaningless words for his audience.

The shaman's song features importantly in Myths & Texts, although perhaps more vital for Snyder is the duty, and ability, of the shaman to travel to those places forbidden to others, where he alone has access; he must undertake his journey, and all the trials and ordeals which it might involve, as a deputy for his people. In Myths & Texts, the quest motif is clearly presented as a parallel to the shaman's sacred journeying and many of the myths to which Snyder alludes - like the Big-tail narrative - depict the shaman's spiritual quest on his people's behalf. The concept of the shaman-poet is almost a commonplace now, but Snyder's articulation of it in his mythic poems was an early and detailed one. In addition, he sees the shaman-poet as "the man whose mind reaches easily out into all manners of shapes and other lives, and gives song to dreams. Poets have carried this function forward all through civilized times".²⁹ His close paralleling of the modern poet and the ancient shaman has been constant:

I'd emphasize again the importance of a sense of community, a need for the poet to identify with real people, not a faceless audience. There should be less concern with publishing, more with reading. A reading is a kind of communion. I think the poet articulates the semi-known for the tribe. This is close to the ancient function of the shaman. It's not a dead function. 30

The first poem of the 'Hunting' sequence, sub-titled 'first shaman song', invokes many of the ancient shamanic rituals:

In the village of the dead,
 Kicked loose bones
 ate pitch of a drift log
 (whale fat)
 Nettles and cottonwood. Grass smokes
 in the sun
 Logs turn in the river
 sand scorches the feet.

Two days without food, trucks roll past
 in dust and light, rivers
 are rising.
 Thaw in the high meadows. Move west in July.

Soft oysters rot now, between tides
 the flats stink.

I sit without thoughts by the log-road
 Hatching a new myth
 Watching the waterdogs
 the last truck gone.

(MT, p. 18)

Such a poem has a tangible ritualistic quality. In it the speaker has placed himself in states conducive to shamanic vision, for example, isolation and hunger. The disparate phrases making up the poem are lucid enough individually, yet together have only a fragmentary sense and press for interpretation. The deliberateness of the poem's construction lends it an almost chant-like monotony: although its enjambed lines give it a superficial fluency it is, in fact, a series of cautiously patterned and quite isolated phrases separated by punctuation, caesurae, and terminal juncture. A deliberate rhythm is

induced by close grammatical parallelism of a kind which will be seen as a frequent structural feature of the lyrics, for example, noun - verb - prepositional phrase or object, as in "Grass smokes/in the sun", "Logs turn in the river", and the similar "sand scorches the feet"; or the direct and concise phrasing of "Kicked loose bones", "Move west in July", "trucks roll past", "rivers are rising" and "Soft oysters rot now". The rather cryptic opening lines, which are a motif from a myth of the Coast Salishan, are an indication of the stage which Snyder's quest has reached.³¹

In the myth, Bluejay visits the village of the dead in search of his sister who has married a dead man. Whilst there he commits a number of bungling errors such as kicking the loose bones, the dead people, and refusing to partake in a feast of whale meat since, for him, it resembles the pitch on a drift log. Through his bad behaviour he is forced to endure a series of trials one of which, again so apt for the type of regeneration myth favoured in Myths & Texts, involves his own death by fire and subsequent transformation and rebirth.

Such an allusion maps Snyder's position at this point; Bluejay is not a shaman and, given the opportunity to make a quasi-shamanic journey, he wastes his chance because he cannot comprehend what he experiences. Making numerous errors, he must eventually be directed by further ordeals and rites. Although Snyder has put aside his initial reluctance, he has only just begun his quest and 'first shaman song' is a poem of initiation, an announcing that a series of physical and spiritual trials awaits him. The mental and physical setting of 'first shaman song' recalls perfectly the parallel phase in Campbell's archetype: "Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials."³² The dream landscape of 'first shaman song' is apparent even

without prior knowledge of the Bluejay myth. The nightmarish "loose bones" of "the village of the dead" combine with the physical medium created by "nettles and cottonwood", the rotting oysters, and the stinking mudflats; eating "pitch of a drift log" recalls one of the methods used to achieve shamanic vision - self-induced sickness - and links with another, "Two days without food", that is, purposeful deprivation. Set against this ruined landscape, 'first shaman song' announces the beginning of the quest and its intentions: to 'hatch' a new myth. The poem is also indicative of a process characteristic of Myths & Texts as a whole: the tension between a desire to transcend the physical realm and a counterbalancing need not to break all contact with it and drift into meaningless fantasy. The poem, although drawing heavily on mythic elements, is constantly anchored by the actuality of object and landscape described and by Snyder's typical striving towards weight and density in the language of the poem.

Snyder's choice of hunting as title and central physical and symbolic action of the second section of Myths & Texts begins to draw together several of the poem's disparate threads. The impetus for the quest has been given by the stark portrait of the exploitative and destructive treatment of the wilderness; the search for an alternative relationship leads Snyder back to previous cultures and what he perceives as their more harmonious existence within a natural environment. Such a search is essentially one of 'healing', of repairing the rift between man and animal and has been closely linked with the primitive shaman's healing function. He has also alluded to the more basic role of the shaman, particularly amongst American Indian tribes - and exemplified by the Big-tail motif - as a vital figure in the community hunt for food. Underlying 'Hunting' then are not only what amount to simple songs in

praise of the animal world, but also an exploration of primitive hunting techniques and the ritualistic practices they often involved, practices which confirm the closest possible association of man and animal. Forming such a context to the section, they also provide the stage upon which the trials and tests to be endured by the quester will be played out.

For Snyder, primitive 'hunting magic' is the most complete expression of the mutual interdependence of man and nature. To sever such a connection is to forgo a knowledge and mode of being, which inevitably leads to self-destructive conduct. Many of his prose essays reinforce the point:

A culture that alienates itself from the very ground of its own being - from the wilderness outside...and from that other wilderness, the wilderness within - is doomed to a very destructive, ultimately perhaps self-destructive behavior....I think there is a wisdom in the worldview of primitive peoples that we have to refer ourselves to, and learn from...our next step must take account of the primitive worldview which has traditionally and intelligently tried to open and keep open lines of communication with the forces of nature.

(TI, pp. 106 - 107)

As an example of such "lines of communication", primitive hunting is seen as a religious rite, a symbol not of exploitation, slaughter, and waste but of reverence, understanding, and mutual dependence; it is a metaphor for a desirable psychic wholeness:

To hunt means to use your body and senses to the fullest: to strain your consciousness to feel what the deer are thinking today, this moment; to sit still and let your self go into the birds and wind while waiting by a game trail. Hunting magic is designed to bring the game to you - the creature who has heard your song, witnessed your sincerity, and out of compassion comes within your range. 33

The ritual processes of the primitive still-hunt are described elsewhere;

here for example, those of a Pueblo community:

They go out hunting in an attitude of humility. They make sure that they need to hunt, that they are not hunting without necessity. Then they improvise a song....It is a song to the deer, asking the deer to be willing to die for them. They usually still-hunt, taking a place alongside a trail. The feeling is that you are not hunting the deer, the deer is coming to you; you make yourself available for the deer that will present itself to you, that has given itself to you. Then you shoot it....and you pray to the deer, asking it to forgive you for having killed it.

(TI, pp. 109 - 10)

'Hunting', then, sets out to reproduce a variety of the practices of primitive hunting to endorse the philosophy which underpins the whole section. 'Hunting', 2 begins with two Eskimo verbs which encapsulate this technique:

Atok: creeping
Maupok: waiting
to hunt seals.
The sea hunter
watching the whirling seabirds on the rocks

(MT, p. 18)

'Hunting', 10 quotes a typical attraction song of the Skokomish:

"If I were a baby seal
every time I came up
I'd head towards shore----"

(MT, p. 27)

The context of hunting magic also begins to elucidate other poems in the section. A crucial concern was to obtain the favour of the animal killed in order not to jeopardize future success. Reverence for the animal extended to rituals after its death with many focusing on the anxiety to prove the necessity for the killing, that it was not thoughtlessly or wastefully done. Hence 'Hunting', 5 - 'the making of the horn spoon' - a

borrowing from Boaz's Kwakiutl studies as previously noted, details the elaborate procedure for the fashioning of a spoon from the head of a mountain-goat: to show necessary respect, absolutely no part of the animal could be wasted or remain unused.

The close bond of man and animal idealized in such practices is reinforced in 'Hunting' not only by lyrical passages concentrating simply on the beauty of animals, 'Hunting', 3 - 'this poem is for birds' - is a good instance, but also in a fascination for that class of myth which arises from the more tangible joining of the human and animal world. 'Hunting', 6, for example, is a retelling of the widespread 'bear-marriage' myth. The geographical extent and diversity of this myth is apparent from the studies of Irving Hallowell from whom Snyder took many of the motifs which feature in his poem. As with many of the ancient narratives, Snyder presents the bear as a powerful and awesome figure, emphasizing above all its human qualities. The poem respects the basic narrative pattern of the myth which remains constant despite its myriad tribal variations. A young girl, most often alone collecting berries, is abducted by a bear, being confused by its resemblance to a human figure:

The others had all gone down
 From the blackberry brambles, but one girl
 Spilled her basket, and was picking up her
 Berries in the dark.
 A tall man stood in the shadow, took her arm,
 Led her to his home.

(MT, p. 22)

In her 'marriage' to the bear, the girl gives birth to his children who share human characteristics with those of their father in a combination which depends on the particular version of the myth:

In a house under the mountain
 She gave birth to slick dark children
 With sharp teeth...

Bear-cubs gnawing the soft tits
 Teeth gritted, eyes screwed tight

(MT, pp. 22 - 23)

In most versions, the girl is finally rescued by her brothers, or other men of her village, who kill the bear:

her brothers found the place
Chased her husband up the gorge
Cornered him in the rocks.

(MT, p. 23)

Snyder intersperses his telling of the narrative with small motifs taken from a variety of Northern circum-polar tribes; most stress the semi-human characteristics of the animal which are at the root of the 'bear-marriage' myth:

honey-eater
forest apple
light-foot
Old man in the fur coat, Bear!...
Grandfather black-food!

(MT, p. 22)

The primitive ability to "keep open lines of communication with the forces of nature" is, for Snyder, powerfully illustrated in such animal marriage myths which recognize not the subservience of the animal world to the human, but the interpenetration of the two:

People of primitive cultures appreciate animals as other people....Snakes move without limbs.... Birds fly, sing, and dance; they gather food for their babies....Fish can breathe water and are brilliant colors. Mammals are like us, they fuck and give birth to babies while panting and purring; their young suck their mothers' breasts; they know terror and delight, they play. 34

As a section, 'Hunting' aims to present an alternative relationship with "the other people - what the Sioux Indians called the creeping people, and the standing people, and the flying people, and the swimming people" (TI, p. 108). It is a juxtaposition for comparison of such primitive attitudes with the essential villain of 'Logging': the

Judaeo-Christian tradition in which "animals don't have souls and can't be saved; nature is merely a ground for us to exploit while working out our drama of free will and salvation under the watch of Jehovah".³⁵

Having created the ethos of hunting magic, and its concomitant animal reverence, it is in such a context that the hero's trials are dramatized. 'Hunting', 8 - 'this poem is for deer' - is a complete negation of hunting magic:

Missed a last shot
 At the Buck, in twilight
 So we came back sliding
 On dry needles through cold pines.
 Scared out a cottontail
 Whipped up the winchester
 Shot off its head.
 The white body rolls and twitches
 In the dark ravine
 As we run down the hill to the car.

(MT, p. 24)

This act of needless slaughter (the body of the rabbit is not even collected apparently) is followed by an even more damning one:

Home by night
 drunken eye
 Still picks out Taurus
 Low, and growing high:
 four-point buck
 Dancing in the headlights
 on the lonely road
 A mile past the mill-pond,
 With the car stopped, shot
 That wild silly blinded creature down.

These two executions could not be further from the reverent practices detailed in 'Hunting' since they are done neither out of necessity nor with any love or respect for the animals slaughtered: one is a function of blind instinct, the other of drunkenness. The deer in the second incident is not one of "the other people" but a "wild silly blinded creature". In sharp contrast, other passages between these images of

death emphasize the deer's sentience - it is "like a wise man" - or
marvel at its sheer physical presence and beauty:

On the autumn mountain
Standing in the late sun, ear-flick
Tail-flick, gold mist of flies
Whirling from nostril to eyes.

(MT, p. 25)

As with the poet's guilty involvement in 'Logging', his own personal guilt is used in 'Hunting' to exemplify the painful stages of the quest; like Bluejay in 'Hunting', 1, he must atone for his errors and seek to expiate them through a series of trials and acts of contrition:

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

(MT, p. 26)

Drawing on what are standard rites of passage or acts of purification for boys in North-West Pacific coast tribes, the poet begins his bid to make amends. The opening and closing lines are crucial since it has been stressed that the key to primitive hunting magic is the co-operation of hunter and hunted. It is not an act of ego or will on the part of one but a concurrence of the two: an expression of need and a consequent recognition and selfless giving. A later passage in 'Hunting', 14, when read reflexively with this, endorses the point and also shows the relative lack of progress in the quester's achievement of such a concord:

Buddha fed himself to tigers
& donated mountains of eyes
(through the years)
To the blind,
a mountain-lion
Once trailed me four miles
At night and no gun
It was awful, I didn't want to be ate
maybe we'll change.

(MT, p. 29)

Here Snyder employs a legend concerning the Buddha in a previous incarnation as Mahasattva contained in the Suvarnaprabhasa, a Mayahana sutra. Finding a tigress with young cubs who is exhausted by hunger and thirst, Mahasattva offers his own body in self-sacrifice in order to win enlightenment.³⁶ Such an allusion, yoked to the personal anecdote, reveals again that Snyder's quest journey is still far from complete. Amongst the numerous examples of creative relationships with nature that 'Hunting' presents, the quest hero's trials continue to be endured:

On the rainy boulders
 On the bloody sandbar
 I ate the spawned-out salmon
 I went crazy
 Covered with ashes
 Gnawing the girls breasts
 Marrying women to whales
 Or dogs, I'm a priest too
 I raped your wife
 I'll eat your corpse

(MT, p. 26)

A plethora of horrific shamanic myths and practices represent the frenetic 'crying for a vision' which, at this point in the quest, goes unrewarded. An informative image here, rather than the hopeful lodgepole pine seed, is one of utter barrenness: "I am a frozen addled egg on the tundra" (MT, p. 26). A resolution of the quest will only come in the poem's final section, 'Burning'.

(c) "a life-enhancing return"

'Burning' begins with a 'second shaman song' to parallel that song which opened the previous section:

Squat in swamp shadows.
 mosquitoes sting;
 high light in cedar above.
 Crouched in a dry vain frame
 --thirst for cold snow
 --green slime of bone marrow
 Seawater fills each eye

Quivering in nerve and muscle
 Hung in the pelvic cradle
 Bones propped against roots
 A blind flicker of nerve

(MT, p. 34)

There are crucial differences between the first and second of these shaman songs. Whilst still evoking the physical and mental states which probe for visionary experiences, this 'second shaman song' is extended into the sensations which vision-seeking can bring. Rather than simply striving for shamanic vision then, the speaker begins to experience it and, typically, travels inward into his own body, a trial for the apprentice shaman documented by Eliade as "a great initiatory ordeal.... [which] requires his making a long effort of physical privation and mental contemplation directed to gaining the ability to see himself as a skeleton".³⁷ The purpose of such an ordeal is a specific one, as Eliade reports via Rasmussen's studies of the Iglulik Eskimo: "By thus seeing himself naked, altogether freed from the perishable and transient flesh and blood, he consecrates himself...to his great task."³⁸

Once freed from the physical world, what is now required is a spiritual 'leap' to enlightenment and, at the core of 'Burning', is a succession of images which form a pattern illustrating the process which the quest hero must follow. 'Burning', 5 is built around the Mohave's use of the jimson weed as a dream-inducing drug: songs and visions come in those dreams (MT, p. 37). 'Burning', 6 presents a motif from a Winnebago myth:

When Red Hand came to the river he saw
 a man sitting on the other side of the river
 pointing with his arm. So Red Hand
 sat and pointed with his arm until nightfall
 when he suddenly realized that it was
 only a dead tree with a stretched out limb
 and he got up and crossed the river.

(MT, p. 38)

Unless he has a more specific myth in mind, Snyder has adapted an episode from the Trickster stories recorded by Radin in Winnebago Hero Cycles in which Trickster's foolishness is demonstrated as he mimics what he believes to be a man pointing; becoming increasingly tired of the joke "he walked away and when he looked round, to his astonishment, he saw a tree-stump from which a branch was protruding".³⁹ What is more significant is that Snyder has added the word "suddenly" to his version at a late stage in the manuscript of Myths & Texts in a clear attempt to increase the sense of the abrupt epiphanous nature of the realization: the ubiquitous satori of Zen Buddhism.⁴⁰

There is a similar quality in the experience of John Muir in a passage from The Mountains of California which forms the whole of 'Burning', 8. Muir, climbing a rock face, is brought to an abrupt halt and, unable to move, is certain to fall:

My mind seemed to fill with a
 Stifling smoke. This terrible eclipse
 Lasted only a moment, when life blazed
 Forth again with preternatural clearness.
 I seemed suddenly to become possessed
 Of a new sense. My trembling muscles
 Became firm again, every rift and flaw in
 The rock was seen as through a microscope,
 My limbs moved with a positiveness and precision
 With which I seemed to have
 Nothing at all to do.

(MT, p. 39)

Adapting Muir to a poetic line, yet quoting him practically verbatim,⁴¹ the vocabulary is perfectly fitting for Snyder's poem. The experience is of the moment, the release into a new clarity is sudden; above all, Muir has chosen to describe his experience predominantly in images of burning, thus providing yet another motif in the accretion which points to one of the primary themes of Myths & Texts: renewal by fire.

These examples of sudden enlightenment are reinforced in

'Burning', 9 by a series of allusions to both journeys of liberation and journeys in search of, or bringing, knowledge: "Lenin in a sealed train through Germany"; Chief Joseph and Crazy Horse as charismatic leaders seeking freedom for their people; Bodhidharma, who brought Buddhist teaching to China, and Hsüan Tsang, who journeyed to India in search of ancient Buddhist texts (MT, p. 40). 'Burning', 10 invokes the name of Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Light, who took forty-eight vows as a Bodhisattva, each involving a refusal to accept enlightenment if certain spiritual benefits did not accrue to all beings calling upon his name.

For example:

If, O Blessed One, when I have attained enlightenment, whatever beings in other worlds, having conceived a desire for right, perfect enlightenment, and having heard my name, with favorable intent think upon me, if when the time and moment of death are upon them, I, surrounded by and at the head of my community of medicants, do not stand before them to keep them from frustration, may I not, on that account, attain to unexcelled, right, perfect enlightenment. 42

In 'Burning', 10, Snyder gives Amitabha three more vows, each placed in a contemporary hobo setting, yet retaining the Bodhisattva's essential promise to help others towards enlightenment.

The orientation of much of the material in 'Burning' is towards two of the most telling images for Myths & Texts as a whole, both of which return to Nature for their inspiration. The first is an allusion to the anecdote related by Thoreau in the closing lines of Walden:

Every one has heard the story which has gone the rounds of New England, of a strong and beautiful bug which came out of the dry leaf of an old table of apple-tree wood, which had stood in a farmer's kitchen for sixty years.... Who does not feel his faith in a resurrection and immortality strengthened by hearing this? 43

In 'Burning', 11, Snyder's brief allusion reads: "In the dry, hard

chrysalis, a pure bug waits hatching" (MT, p. 41). This, perhaps the most radical metamorphosis in Nature, is given its political parallel in Snyder's earlier use of the particularly apposite I.W.W. motto: "Forming the New Society/Within the shell of the Old" (MT, p. 40). Both suggest that the new relationships and modes of being must be developed before the shell of the old is jettisoned, hence the poem's rather abrupt dismissal of Marxism in 'Logging', 5. The image of the chrysalis, the embodiment of an eventual new blossoming of life, is strengthened by the second of the important natural images - the final application of the lodgepole pine seed as the central symbol of regeneration through partial destruction:

lightning strikes, flares,
 Blossoms a fire on a hill.
 Smoke like clouds. Blotting the sun
 Stinging the eyes.
 The hot seeds steam underground
 still alive.

(MT, p. 46)

The image of fire as a destructive force is typically offset by the use of the verb "blossoms": within the destruction lies the possibility of renewal. This concept of fire as a cleansing force is an enduring one for Snyder; it is still present, for example, in 'Burning the Small Dead' (BC, p. 13) and even in poems written up to twenty years later. 'Control Burn', for example, a poem typical of Turtle Island in its desire for a restoration of the past, recalls the Indian custom of burning out the lower brushwood and undergrowth annually in order to keep the main forests healthy (TI, p. 19).

The two potent images of renewal introduced into 'Burning' prepare for the resolution of the quest and the return of the hero. This climax is heralded by Coyote and it is significant, and in keeping with the earlier proposal that the important shaping influences of Myths &

Texts are Western not Eastern, that despite the increasing number of Buddhist references in the poem, it is still towards American Indian myth that Snyder looks for his most crucial motifs. 'Burning', 11 presents Earthmaker and Coyote, a vital complementary pair of myth figures, to advance another promise of creation:

Coyote: "I guess there never was a world anywhere"
 Earthmaker: "I think if we find a little world
 "I can fix it up."

(MT, p. 42)

With this borrowing from a Maidu creation myth,⁴⁴ Snyder gives an example of the fusion which occurs in many American Indian religious systems between a supreme creator, a monotheistic deity almost, and the Trickster figure, here in his role of Transformer, that is "his role to transform the world into its present shape and to bestow upon mankind all the various elements of culture".⁴⁵ The dual nature of Earthmaker and Transformer - frequently fused into a single figure - is essential, although the two temperaments which they represent are often completely opposed. As Radin says:

We thus have two concepts: the supreme deity, creator of all things, beneficent and ethical, unapproachable directly and taking but little interest in the world after he has created it; and the Transformer, the establisher of the present order of things, utterly nonethical, only incidentally and inconsistently beneficent, approachable, and directly intervening in a very human way in the affairs of the world. 46

Earthmaker as creator then, without whom there could be no physical world; Coyote the Trickster, the less positive, more ambivalent, figure; yet without him in his role as Transformer, that world would remain infertile and without proper shape and culture. It is Coyote as Transformer, then, who heralds the resolution of the quest:

Earth! those beings living on your surface
 none of them disappearing, will all be transformed.
 When I have spoken to them
 when they have spoken to me, from that moment on,
 their words and their bodies which they
 usually use to move about with, will all change.
 I will not have heard them. Signed,

()

Coyote

(MT, p. 47)

The notion of the world transformed is entirely consonant with Campbell's hero quest although, as he points out, the transformation is of a particular kind where "the objective world remains what it was, but, because of a shift of emphasis within the subject, is beheld as though transformed".⁴⁷

The resolution of the quest is reached in the final poem of 'Burning' which is divided into two parts - 'the text' and 'the myth' - each of which represents a dominant theme in the poem. The text, in anthropological terms always associated with literalness, is the practical message, the poem of the real world, in which Snyder has described a move away from 'civilization' towards a renewed appreciation of the wilderness and a consequent harmonious interrelationship with it. It is a conscious surface text whose final expression is of a physical landscape, a mountain ablaze; the fire is actual but

Toward morning it rained.
 We slept in mud and ashes,
 Woke at dawn, the fire was out,
 The sky was clear, we saw
 The last glimmer of the morning star.

(MT, p. 47)

The myth, an internalizing of the text, has been a parallel inward journey towards enlightenment: an examination of the loss of the beliefs and values inherent in the mythic material upon which the poem draws, and a struggle towards their recovery and renewal. In 'the myth' the

mountains ablaze are of a very different nature:

The mountains are your mind...

Rain falls for centuries
Soaking the loose rocks in space
Sweet rain, the fire's out
The black snag glistens in the rain
& the last wisp of smoke floats up

(MT, p. 48)

The poem ends with the final sentence of Walden: "The sun is but a morning star." As well as being a borrowing from this comparatively modern source, Snyder uses the image of the new dawn fully aware that it is one of the most powerful visionary symbols in American Indian religions. In the Hako ceremony of the Pawnee, for example, several songs are dedicated to it with the Ku'rahus (ceremony leader) who was the informant of the early collector, Alice Fletcher, saying: "Life and strength and fruitfulness are with the Morning Star."⁴⁸ Also figuring in many Sioux ceremonies is "the sacred Morning Star who stands between the darkness and the light, and who represents knowledge";⁴⁹ and John Neihardt, on first meeting the Sioux, Black Elk, recalls that the shaman produced a sacred ceremonial object which took the shape of

a leather star tinged with blue, and from the center of the star hangs a strip of hide from the breast of a buffalo, together with the feather from the wing of an eagle....Holding the star before us, Black Elk said: 'Here you see the Morning Star. Who sees the Morning Star shall see more, for he shall be wise.' 50

With the promised renewal at hand, Snyder has brought together the two worlds of text and myth, of conscious and unconscious, "the two worlds", as Campbell calls them, of "the divine and the human" which

can be pictured only as distinct from each other - different as life and death, as day and night. The hero adventures out of the land we know into darkness; there he accomplishes his adventure... and his return is described as a coming back out of that yonder zone. Nevertheless...the two kingdoms are actually one. The realm of the gods is a forgotten dimension of the world we know. 51

Both 'the text' and 'the myth' have ended by sounding a note of successful completion; first a glimpsing, and then an affirmation of the hope inherent in the Morning Star, a new dawn and a restoration. The quest hero is the boon-bringer; on one level, his quest has been a personal one: "Intrinsically it is an expansion of consciousness and therewith of being"; but it has also, like the shaman's sacred task, been performed for the community and so "the boon that he brings restores the world".⁵²

The successful resolution of the quest, the 'happy ending' as it were, might be seen as essentially arrogance or self-indulgence on Snyder's part. More accurately, it is another reflection of the two sources which have supplied so much of the impetus for his retelling of the quest monomyth, that is, his adherence both to Campbell who states that "the happy ending of...the myth...is to be read, not as a contradiction, but as a transcendence of the universal tragedy of man",⁵³ and also to American Indian mythology. As Radin points out in his study of Winnebago myth:

Like the majority of American Indians, the Winnebago distinguish sharply between what might be called myths and realistic tales. Under "myth" is included everything regarded as having taken place in a distant past; under "tale" everything that has occurred within comparatively recent times....Stylistically a very interesting difference exists between the two, the former always having a happy, the latter, prevailingly if not always, an unhappy ending. 54

One initial proposition in this study of Myths & Texts was that, through its composition and constant use of myth motifs, the poem itself is transformed into a myth. Of the factors which mitigate this, the principal one is that a myth cannot simply be 'created'. Snyder never sets out to 'create' a myth since he is aware that this defies its essential nature - and that of all orally-transmitted literature - which can have no single creator but is anonymously and collectively authored.⁵⁵ The cumulative mode of construction over time which is characteristic of myth indicates its essentially open-ended nature, and also determines the scope and freedom of any individual author-raconteur. He can contribute in some fashion to an already extant myth, either by a retelling of it in an individual style, or by extending and embellishing the basic version by the introduction of new motifs. However, whichever method is chosen, the myth extends beyond the individual and continues to change and be changed; it is indifferent to the efforts of any single voice to fix it permanently or to claim unique authorship. Conversely, a literary artefact such as Myths & Texts, although using mythic elements in profusion, is fundamentally a closed and finished product; it is a fixed statement and will not continue to transform itself in the hands of others. Yet, given this, Snyder is clearly concerned to have his mythic poems function as myths in themselves and to supply a contemporary relevance to the ancient province of myth. For him it is a basic assumption

that mythology has a function in culture. This may seem too obvious a fact to require statement, but many past theories of mythology have operated as if myths were irrational diseases from which savage minds suffered....Much of the modern interest in mythology stems from the recognition of its social function, as does the even more recent attitude of some scholars and poets that the function mythology serves in primitive culture is desperately needed by contemporary society. 56

The term which could perhaps be used to describe a poem such as Myths & Texts is 'surrogate-myth', which might be defined as a contemporary literary artefact which, whilst admitting that the traditional creation, transmission, and role of myth is no longer strictly possible, draws on myth in order to recall those ancient functions for its own age and culture, its construction and choice of motifs being partly conditioned by the particular requirements of its own time. As a surrogate-myth for its own age, Myths & Texts does satisfy many of the thematic and formal criteria of myth delineated by Snyder in his own study where he defines it as a "social document, as the product of historical diffusion and compounded from motifs distributed all over the world, as metaphysical and psychological truth in symbolic form, and as a vital functioning aspect of a culture".⁵⁷

Snyder's terminology within the poem is not 'creating' a myth but 'hatching' a myth; a phrase which mirrors precisely his use of images of chrysalis, pod, and shell. The myth emerges gradually through his gathering of materials, as he says, to "let another flower of clarity rise from the compost of information",⁵⁸ and reasserts the past functional power of myth to control moral, social, and even day-to-day behaviour. In hatching his surrogate-myth, he proposes that the retrieval of myth in a contemporary cultural artefact can make that text one small part of an operational set of values and beliefs which retains its capacity to be spiritually and socially formative, and in which the poet enacts the traditional role of the shaman. The surrogate-myth, moreover, can encourage what Snyder has called "the healing intention of myth, and the use of myth as the harmonizer of man, society and nature",⁵⁹ thus deputizing for traditional myth in a sophisticated and highly literate contemporary society where its ancient function is no longer feasible. Although in some later poems the accusation that Snyder

is a Romantic primitivist looking back nostalgically to a simple, rural idyll is justifiable, in Myths & Texts such allegations ignore the essential nature of the poem. Despite its textual message, its allusions to Walden, and its often literal usefulness, Myths & Texts is not simply a practical handbook for an alternative, less exploitative, existence. Even though it is a document addressed to its own age and culture, it is like all myth essentially a-historical and timeless: its sources lie outside history in fundamental myth images and figures that are still held to be relevant.

In summary then, the term 'mythic' - when applied to Snyder's poetry - implies certain constant criteria. Structurally, mythic poems employ a form which is concurrent with many technical features familiar in the Modernist long poem, but which also recalls the structure of myth itself. In wider terms, it is a form through which Snyder can show how the myths he invokes functioned in their original setting and, with the concept of the surrogate-myth, can argue their contemporary relevance on a social, spiritual, and cultural level. Finally, and recalling the personal importance to Snyder of a poem such as Myths & Texts, the form associates him with the values expressed in the mythology which he retrieves, and helps him to establish a firm connection with what he senses as his own cultural and spiritual inheritance. In this process of retrieval he offers a response to Thoreau's challenge of "we know not where we are" and endorses the vital position of Myths & Texts as a poem of self-location and self-discovery. For Snyder, briefly quoting Malinowski, myth is ultimately "a 'reality lived' because for every individual it contains, at the moment of telling, the projected content of both his unarticulated and conscious values: simultaneously ordering, organizing, and making comprehensible the world within which the values exist".⁶⁰

III. THE LYRIC POEMS

(i) The Lyric Mode and the Modern Lyric

As with the mythic mode, any discussion of the lyric impulse in Snyder's poetry must necessarily account for a number of influential previous models, even though these are perhaps not as readily broken down into specific paradigms for structure and content as was the case for the mythic poems.

An initial examination of the term 'lyric' itself is warranted, since the use of such a designation raises important questions of definition in a period where the lyric poem, as a form, has diversified dramatically leaving in its wake a certain confusion over what might now constitute its essential features. Such a discussion can be developed in the context of the modern lyric, and more specifically its twentieth-century American form which, from the earliest experiments of Pound and the Imagists and their attempts to clarify the language of their poetic expression, has sought continually to reassess the fundamental components of the lyric poem. This serves the dual purpose of locating those immediate predecessors who have plainly influenced Snyder's poetry and, also, of demonstrating how far his work is a contribution to that modern experimental lyric tradition.

A second distinct, although not unconnected, influence is that of Oriental, and particularly Chinese, poetry and poetics which exercised a specific impact on Snyder as he began to formulate his own lyric model. The effects of such an influence can also be measured by Snyder's translations from the Chinese and Japanese.

Both of the above areas are vital preliminaries to the assessment of Snyder's early lyric poetry, which will be treated en bloc from 1952 to 1968 in this chapter rather than by attempting to distinguish between the two major volumes of this period in which

it is contained: Riprap (1959) and The Back Country (1968).¹ The reason for this compression, much as in the case of Myths & Texts, is to avoid the possibility of introducing any false notion of development in the lyric poetry, based on the enforced artificialities of volume publication, when in fact no such process could be said to occur. In this sixteen-year period, Snyder's gathering of poems originally placed in a variety of diverse magazines and periodicals has been haphazard to say the least. Thus the later of the two volumes, The Back Country, contains poems such as 'Robin', dated 16 June 1954 (BC, p. 75), and 'Home from the Sierra' (BC, p. 15) and 'Six-Month Song in the Foothills' (BC, p. 9), which Snyder dated 1955 and 1953 respectively in an earlier printing,² the latter having been written when Snyder was embarking on his formal studies of Oriental poetry at the University of California. Conversely, the earlier volume, Riprap, contains at least seven poems - those written in the light of his initial visit to Japan - which can be dated 1957 or later. To take this a step further, Regarding Wave (1970) has a poem, 'For Will Petersen the time we climbed Mt. Hiei cross-country in the snow' (RW, p. 72), an earlier version of which exists on a postcard sent by Snyder to Will Petersen dated 9 March 1958.³ Even Snyder's most recent major volume, Turtle Island (1974) has one poem, 'Walking Home from "The Duchess of Malfi" ' which is dated "Berkeley: 55" (TI, p. 68).

Neither could it be argued that Snyder's arrangement of his poems into volumes is done with much specific selectivity or thematic consideration in mind. Although many of the poems of Riprap reflect the 'riprap' technique of composition discussed later in this chapter, much the same claim could be made for numerous poems in The Back Country. In fact, poems from the two volumes could certainly be interchanged without creating any apparent hiatus. In discussing the lyric poetry

to 1968 as a single corpus then, one major intention is to show that, having found an appropriate structure for his lyric poems, Snyder consistently adheres to it over this period. Moreover, some version of that lyric structure is made to do duty throughout his career to date when he chooses to write in a recognizably lyric mode. It is important, then, to trace the origins of his specific adaption of this poetic form.

In many discussions of what might be indicated by the use of the term 'lyric', perhaps the only real point of agreement is the colossal difficulty of reaching any agreement at all. Literary theory concerning the lyric mode seems to be invariably contradictory, or so overburdened with qualification that attempts at definition almost always reflect the rather resigned comment of Ernest Rhys that "of all the categories, the lyrical is the most lawless and has least hesitation about breaking bounds".⁴ Such a comment reflects the difficulties encountered when any rationalized definition of the essential characteristics of the lyric mode is hazarded.

Two points on the diverse nature of the lyric poem should be made immediately; firstly, that the continual expansion of the scope of the lyric and its "lawless" nature are central to a form which has its origins in performed oral literature. Much like the discussion of the oral nature of myth in the previous chapter, to deny this would be "a negation of a basic characteristic of the traditional lyric, which is its inherent capacity for alteration".⁵ Secondly, and as a reflection of this first point, the problematical nature of the lyric and its definition is relatively recent, dating from a time when the precise divisions suggested in the classic categories of poetic literature - lyric, narrative, and dramatic - could no longer be applied

with any confidence; that is, from a period when the lyric could not simply be defined as any poem which was composed to be sung or otherwise accompanied by a musical performance. It is at this point, then, that a revaluation of the term is needed to avoid "the confusion in the modern (i.e., 1550 to the present) critical use of the term 'l[yr]ic'... due to an overextension of the phrase to cover a body of poetic writing that has drastically altered its nature in the centuries of its development".⁶

As Johnson's dating suggests, many literary historians trace the schism in the lyric form to the Renaissance with, in Britain, the gradual emergence of a poetry written primarily for the eye and not for the ear, so that the songs of, say, Campion and Shakespeare, and the predominantly print-poems of Donne and Marvell share, somewhat uneasily, the same term of lyric. In particular, it is the Jacobean lyric which is held chiefly responsible:

We have seen that Elizabethan verse was lyrical in the oldest sense of that term, for an astonishingly large number of poems were written for music and many that were never sung are perfectly adapted for instrumental accompaniment. Few of Donne's poems are actually songs; they are lyrics because they are short, subjective pieces, showing in every line the poet's dominating personality...we do not find the lilt of song in most of his work. 7

Leaving aside at present the brief definition of lyric which is offered here, Reed views the work of John Donne as marking the rise of a poetry which, however liberated from the fundamental requirement of musical performance, still demands inclusion in the category of the lyrical. H. J. C. Grierson, whilst noting that Donne had written some songs as such, also agrees that it would be difficult to imagine the fusion of music and text in many of his more highly wrought and intricate poems.⁸

No less important is to consider the simple effect of the rapid growth of printing in converting the performed lyric into the written poem. "The effect of the printed page" comments Rhys "made of the song in literature almost a silent piece of music".⁹ The printed page, and its more efficient method of distribution when compared to oral performance, could not help but encourage silent reading and direct attention away from any possible or potential musicality.

The "lawless" nature of the lyric - its essential adaptability as a poetic form - has perhaps been the paramount factor in its increasing elusiveness. Whilst other traditionally defined literary categories have remained relatively undiluted says Reed, "something of the epic and of the drama may enter into the lyric; we have 'narrative' lyrics and what Browning has called 'dramatic' lyrics".¹⁰ In many ways, the rise of the novel form can be seen to have usurped the functions of the narrative and dramatic modes in poetry. Certainly, in the twentieth century, it has had a marked effect on the production of traditional narrative poetry and verse drama and many of the features of such verse forms have been subsumed into the ever-expanding lyric.

With its primary characteristic, that is, its actual melodic base or musical performance, no longer an absolute given, theorists of the lyric have been forced into accounting for the form by turning to a variety of secondary characteristics which are felt to be constant enough to offer some measure of definition. In this process, definitions may become either dramatically comprehensive or severely limited according to taste or opinion. In either case, struggling to encompass the massive diversification in the lyric, such critics become open to the charge of concealing "their basic failure to define exactly the nature of the l[ytic] genre which distinguishes it from narrative and dramatic poetry and which includes all the disparate types of poetry

commonly called 'lyrical' ".¹¹ Some of these secondary characteristics are invoked frequently enough to merit further discussion. The conjectured definition of Reed above, for example, points to such factors as brevity, subjectivity, and the overwhelming presence of the poet's personality in the poem.

What another critic calls the "habitual brevity of the lyric"¹² is only truly problematical as a criterion if interpreted purely in terms of actual physical length. Otherwise, the strictly logical question - how brief is brief? - is always liable to reveal its inadequacy with, for example, Milton's 'L'Allegro' or 'Il Penseroso', or Wordsworth's 'Ode on Intimations of Immortality' - all three included in Palgrave, a touchstone for many lyric theorists - raising self-evident objections. One writer however, Elder Olson, has usefully redefined the attribute of brevity: "The peculiar nature of lyric poetry is related, not to its verbal brevity, but to the brevity of the human behavior which it depicts. Its verbal brevity, in general, is a consequence of the brevity of its action....the lyric tends towards concise invention, economy of depiction, concision of language."¹³ This concept of brevity of action, or concentration of emotion, is similar to Herbert Read's earlier definition: "We often call the short poem a lyric, which meant originally a poem short enough to be set to music and sung for a moment's pleasure. From the poet's point of view, we might define the lyric as a poem which embodies a single or simple emotional attitude, a poem which expresses directly an uninterrupted mood or inspiration."¹⁴ With the question of length, one might also follow the lead of Edgar Allan Poe and theorize that "a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones - that is to say, of brief poetical effects".¹⁵ Yet, with the undeniable element of narrative which has been incorporated into the lyric form - including some of

Poe's own poems such as 'The City in the Sea' or 'Annabel Lee' - brevity is always likely to remain a less than reliable yardstick for the lyric.

"Subjectivity is a determining characteristic...of the modern lyric"; lyrics as "words governed by overmastering emotion"; lyrics as "short, subjective pieces, showing in every line the poet's dominating personality"¹⁶ - those definitions which offer intense emotion or the lyric as the revelation of a poet's innermost feelings, might also be suspect, especially since such qualities could hardly be said to be exclusive to the lyric form. It is again Elder Olson, in the spirit of the intentional fallacy, who questions such criteria:

The lyric voices the poet's innermost feelings?
Precisely how do we know that? This is a historical proposition which...we cannot possibly verify; what is more, it is frequently controverted in cases where we do know the feelings of the poet. We can and do enjoy lyrics, moreover, without knowing anything about the poet; which is enough to show that reflections on his actual feelings has nothing to do with the recognition of the form or with the pleasure we derive from it as a particular form. 17

To support such basic reservations on subjectivity as a governing factor, it is difficult to see how much of the modern lyric can be read as an expression of impassioned personal feelings: Imagist poetry, the lyric poems of Pound and Williams, the appositely named Objectivists and, certainly, the lyrics of Snyder, could hardly be comfortably included under such a definition.

With the confusion which may accompany the pursuit of the lyric's secondary characteristics - and looking to Snyder's own assertion that "my poetry is...an oral poetry...very close to song"¹⁸ - it is inevitable that, with Johnson, the search for definition should return to the lyric's one indisputable primary quality: "The musical

element is intrinsic to the work intellectually and aesthetically: it becomes the focal point for the poet's perceptions as they are given a verbalized form to convey emotional and rational values.... The irreducible denominator of all l[ytic] poetry must, therefore, be those elements which it shares with the musical forms that produced it."¹⁹ Although the gradual disappearance of actual musical performance has encouraged literary historians to seek elsewhere for the uniform components of the 'silent' lyric, the form's enduring connections with music have never been totally ignored. However, an initial clear distinction needs to be made between the simple concept of poetry merely imitating music, and the more abstract relationships between the two that are open to exploration in the modern lyric.

A new definition of the lyric as a poem which provides an elementary duplication of the sound values of music, that is, a poem which can be made actually to resemble a song through the exaggerated use of the sound devices at its disposal - metrical rhythm and rhyme for example - is not one which will bear much weight, although it has had its supporters. Reed, for example, says that the "musical element of the modern lyric is to be found in the melody of rhyme" and although "the unrhymed lyric...may possess a rare and subtle music... rhyme renders emphatic the music of verse".²⁰ It is, rather, that "rare and subtle music" which has been the goal of the modern lyric, even though past instances of a more elementary, and perhaps less subtle, music do suggest themselves: the poetry of Poe, of Swinburne, and perhaps even of Hopkins. The case of Hopkins is especially pertinent since, although the posthumous publication of his poems, letters, and journals limits the direct influence he exercised over early twentieth-century experiments in the lyric form, his consistent

articulation of poetry as a performed art is an important restatement of the lyric's musical origins.

"My verse is less to be read than heard"²¹ Hopkins wrote in a letter to his frequent correspondent and future editor, Robert Bridges; and later, in his numerous attempts to guide Bridges through the supposed eccentricities of his verse, offered instructions on the most profitable way of approaching 'The Loss of the Eurydice': "To do the Eurydice any kind of justice you must not slovenly read it with the eyes but with your ears, as if the paper were declaiming it at you."²² In a letter to his brother, Hopkins practically rehearses a summary of the development of the lyric, stressing again his belief that poetry must always return to its oral roots:

Poetry was originally meant for either singing or reciting; a record was kept of it; the record could be, was, read, and that in time by one reader, alone, to himself, with the eyes only. This reacted on the art: what was to be performed under these conditions, for these conditions ought to be and was composed and calculated. Sound-effects were intended, wonderful combinations even; but they bear the marks of having been meant for the whispered, not even whispered, merely mental performance of the closet, the study....This is not the true nature of poetry, the darling child of speech, of lips and spoken utterance: it must be spoken; till it is spoken it is not performed, it does not perform, it is not itself. 23

Hopkins is a poet to whom Snyder claims to have paid close attention, particularly for the inherent sound values of his poetry and for "the good sense he had of English and of the accentual line."²⁴ However, many of Hopkins' thoughts on poetry and performance would seem to be governed by the notion of the literal transformation of words into a verbal music. Certainly, in many of his poems, it is evident that sound values often dominate, if not occasionally obliterate, meaning.

Hopkins was always prepared to coin a word for its evocative sound if he could find nothing more conventional which suited his purpose. Such a technique has not been the primary direction taken by the modern lyric and is not apparent in Snyder's poetry; when asked, for example, if he had ever employed words for their musical or sound values independent of meaning, his response was unequivocal: "No. I like to think there is a merger of the sound and the meaning in some of the poems I have written. I try to steer a middle path in that."²⁵

To gauge the relationship between word and music in the modern lyric, it is more profitable to turn to Ezra Pound and his concept of an "imagined music": "Poetry is a composition of words set to music. Most other definitions of it are indefensible or metaphysical. The proportion or quality of the music may, and does, vary; but poetry withers and 'dries out' when it leaves music, or at least an imagined music, too far behind it."²⁶ Pound's essays frequently evidence his consistent association of poetry and music. Much of ABC of Reading uses examples to show how music "is a medium nearer to poetry than painting is";²⁷ the articles on Arnold Dolmetsch, as Eliot points out,²⁸ focus on the importance of the study of music to the poet and contain typically assertive Poundian statements: "Poets who are not interested in music are, or become, bad poets. I would almost say that poets should never be too long out of touch with musicians."²⁹ In 'How to Read', we also find melopoeia as one of Pound's categories of poetry "wherein the words are charged, over and above their plain meaning, with some musical property, which directs the bearing or trend of that meaning".³⁰ Since many of Pound's ideas were formulated under the aegis of Imagism, his concept of "imagined music" can best be clarified in the context of the development of the lyric poem in the modern period. What is immediately evident, however, is that it has little to do with

the simple synthetic music of words, but is much more concerned with a fascination in the power of music to suggest and create complex states of feeling and emotion in an audience through what are often basically simple structures. In this, Pound is close to Eliot's notion of the auditory imagination, that is, the unconscious faculties of the receiver which an "imagined music" can hope to animate: "What I call the 'auditory imagination' is the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word."³¹ This is the ability of the lyric then "even if set to no music and read in silence" that it "still sings and dances in the reader's brain".³²

Despite their well-documented mutual antagonism, Eliot's "auditory imagination" is akin to the belief of William Carlos Williams that poetry has the ability to create a pleasure simply through its sounding, and that the listener may well arrive at an understanding of the poem long before having comprehended the literal meaning of each word:

All art is sensual...don't try to work it out,
listen to it, let it come to you; get the
feeling of it, get the tactile sense of
something going on. It may well be that you
will then perceive, have a sensation, that
you may later find will clarify itself as you
go along. So that I say: don't attempt to
understand the modern poem, listen to it...it
should be heard. It's very difficult sometimes
to get it off the page, but once you hear it,
then you should be able to appraise it. 33

Much the same idea is expressed by the contemporary poet, Robert Creeley, who confirms both the lyric's association, in its measure, with music and the importance of an "imagined music" to the modern lyric: "I think for myself the primary term is that words can move in the measure of song, although I do not wish to confuse poetry with

music. But in a poem I tend to hear whatever can be called its melody long before I have reached an understanding of all that it might mean."³⁴

A number of features in the modern lyric can be seen as responses to its definition in terms of an "imagined music", and all act, in some ways, as replacements for outworn conventions in the lyric mode. Three such features will be discussed here with reference to some of the major practitioners of the lyric in the early twentieth century, among them the Imagists, Pound, and Williams in particular. The first is the attempt to rejuvenate the importance of expressive rhythm; the second is the new approach to lineation in the modern lyric; and the third is the adoption of a series of alternative sound devices as a replacement for such conventions as end rhyme.

In 'Imagisme', the earliest of what was to be a succession of Imagist manifestos, the third of three fundamental guidelines was the instruction that "as regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome".³⁵ Pound, in expanding this initial rule, added:

Don't chop your stuff into separate iambs.
 Don't make each line stop dead at the end,
 and then begin every next line with a heave.
 Let the beginning of the next line catch
 the rise of the rhythm wave....In short,
 behave as a musician, a good musician, when
 dealing with that phase of your art which
 has exact parallels in music. 36

If one of the traditional conventions of the lyric to be jettisoned by Imagism was regular metre and metrical rhythm - the "metronome" - its replacement was not to be an ungoverned and structurally chaotic free verse, but one whose rhythms were based closely on music. That the major poets involved in such a process did

not interpret 'free verse' as simply rhythmless and formless poetry hardly needs to be stressed. "I do not believe in vers libre, this contradiction in terms" wrote Williams "either the motion continues or it does not continue, either there is rhythm or no rhythm".³⁷ In 'Reflections on Vers Libre', Eliot practically dismisses the notion of free verse altogether, saying that "so-called vers libre which is good is anything but 'free' " and concluding with the admirably pithy observation that free verse is a misleading term since "there is only good verse, bad verse, and chaos".³⁸ The Preface to the 1916 edition of Some Imagist Poets also chides the misapprehension that, in the substitution of metre, all formal rhythm has been rejected:

Many reviewers...have been betrayed into saying that the Imagists discard rhythm, when rhythm is the most important quality in their technique. The definition of vers libre is - a verse-form based upon cadence....But one thing must be borne in mind: a cadenced poem is written to be read aloud, in this way only will its rhythm be felt. Poetry is a spoken and not a written art. 39

A rhythm related closely to cadence, both in its musical sense and as it is related to the spoken voice, is at the heart of irregular verse. It provides "the sense of perfect balance of flow and rhythm"⁴⁰ and also the means of achieving an individual rhythm to correspond with the individuality of expression in any given poem. For the Imagists, and Pound, cadenced rhythm had such an expressive purpose: it was a method by which the particular emotion of the poem could be accurately expressed. In his expansion of original Imagist doctrine, Pound had affirmed a belief in

an 'absolute rhythm', a rhythm, that is, in poetry which corresponds exactly to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed. A man's rhythm must be interpretive, it will be, therefore, in the end, his own, uncounterfeiting, uncounterfeitableI believe in technique as the test of a man's

sincerity...in the trampling down of every convention that impedes or obscures...the precise rendering of the impulse. 41

Pound's crusading tone here is a function of the excessive zeal to which he resorted in a period when his enthusiasm for a new poetry could brook no opposition; where, in order to clear a space for new forms, all that had gone immediately before must be swept aside. It would be misleading therefore to interpret his call for an "absolute rhythm" as a negation of all metrical form since he, of all poets, must have been aware that its flexibility in the hands of a skilled practitioner could create an infinite number of expressive effects; a capacity, in fact, which he was later to capitalize upon in 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley'. Pound, therefore, could not have shared the often extreme views of metre which occasionally surfaced in Imagism, for example, Hulme's assertion that "regular metre to this...poetry is cramping, jangling, meaningless and out of place",⁴² or Edward Storer's dismissal of metrical rhythm and rhyme as being "often destructive of thought, lulling the mind into a drowsy kind of stupor, with their everlasting regular cadence and stiff, mechanical lilts".⁴³ Yet Pound was decisive on one central issue, that "rhythm MUST have meaning"⁴⁴ and that a fixed metrical pattern was less likely to encompass and express an individual or unique emotion. Confirming this, the Preface to the 1915 edition of Some Imagist Poets called for the poet to "create new rhythms - as the expression of new moods - and not to copy old rhythms, which merely echo old moods....We believe that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in free-verse than in conventional forms. In poetry, a new cadence means a new idea".⁴⁵

As with much of Imagist poetics, this is less a novel theory and more the restatement of an idea which at least some earlier theorists

of the lyric had recognized. Parallelling Pound's view, for example, the French critic Ferdinand Brunetière had written that "la poésie lyrique est l'expression des sentiments personnels du poète traduite en des rythmes analogues à la nature de son émotion".⁴⁶ The fusion of a cadenced rhythm with the expressive content of the poem is necessarily an abstract one unless illustrated with specific examples, a process best incorporated into a discussion of the second of the three areas outlined above, that is, the importance of lineation.

The Imagist poet, John Gould Fletcher, gives an early indication of the function of lineation as a key factor in a cadenced rhythm:

I maintain that poetry is capable of as many gradations in cadence as music is in time. We can have a rapid group of syllables - what is called a line - succeeded by a slow, heavy one; like the swift scurrying-up of the wave and the sullen dragging of itself away. Or we can gradually increase our tempo, creating accelerando and rallentando effects. Or we can follow a group of rapid lines with a group of slow ones, or a single slow, or vice versa.... The good poem is that in which all these effects are properly used to convey the underlying emotion of its author. 47

A poem which is written using one of the traditional metres available to the poet in English achieves its rhythm, that is, its total movement, by playing off against the "metronome" of metre a number of effects which will supply a variety and individuality to the expression, for example, the use of caesura, enjambement, the insertion of a reversed or 'odd' metrical foot (often at the beginning of a line which follows a heavily end-stopped one), or by trailing and extra syllables. Given these modulations, the rhythmic touchstone of the poem remains its chosen metre, that is, its total rhythmic effect is pinned to the

regularity of the metric line and, in the sounding of the poem, line length is apparent by regular syllable count and, often, is accentuated by a pattern of end rhyme. Despite the more exaggerated claims of some Imagist poets as to the deadening monotony of regular metrical verse, it would be a gross simplification to interpret the experiments in prosody of the early twentieth century as being merely a blanket rejection of metrical rhythm for a 'freer' cadenced one. Eliot, for example, wrote that

the most interesting verse which has yet been written in our language has been done either by taking a very simple form, like the iambic pentameter, and constantly withdrawing from it, or taking no form at all, and constantly approximating to a very simple one. It is this contrast between fixity and flux, this unperceived evasion of monotony, which is the very life of verse. 48

In fact, Eliot argues in the same essay that practically any line, whether deliberately cast into metre or not, can be made to scan. In the case of his own poetry this is possibly true, since he is one of the most skilful practitioners of the techniques he sets out above. Eliot, however, made little use of one clear feature which distinguishes irregular verse from that which is written in, or approximates, a regular metrical rhythm: a lineation which employs broken syntax. As Jones says, in relation to Imagist poetry, "it was line length or word isolation rather than syntax that pointed...the cadence - often there is broken syntax in imagistic writing".⁴⁹ Simply stated, broken syntax involves the use of enjambement where the lines enjambed do not in themselves form complete syntactical units; a dilemma is created in the reader, then, as to the nature of the pause which follows such a line as compared to a line which is either grammatically end-stopped or where, lacking this, the sense will not be broken by a pause.

Although Jones claims that broken syntax is a feature of Imagist poetry, it is difficult to find pronounced examples of this. There is no extreme of broken syntax in, say, the early Pound, and an archetypal Imagist poem such as H. D.'s 'Oread' displays heavy grammatical end-stopping or, failing this, a lineation which causes little or no hiatus in sense if a natural pause is left:

Whirl up, sea--
 Whirl your pointed pines,
 Splash your great pines
 On our rocks,
 Hurl your green over us,
 Cover us with your pools of fir.⁵⁰

On the contrary, it might be thought that a poem which manages six grammatical stops in an equal number of lines is far from displaying broken syntax of any kind. Similarly, her poems 'The Garden' or 'The Pool' and other representative Imagist verses such as T. E. Hulme's 'Autumn' or Richard Aldington's 'Evening' conform to this pattern. Eliot also, as noted above, yields few examples although, importantly enough, he once wrote in a letter to John Quinn that "I always pause at the end of a line in reading verse"⁵¹ looking forward to what is usually known as the terminal juncture. It is rather to poets such as William Carlos Williams and E. E. Cummings that we must look for the earliest use of extremes in broken syntax. Williams' celebrated lyric, 'The Red Wheelbarrow' is a good example:

so much depends
 upon

a red wheel
 barrow

glazed with rain
 water

beside the white
 chickens. 52

No single line of this poem could properly be called a complete syntactical or meaningful unit; in each pair of lines, the second absolutely requires the first to provide its full sense, with the three important visual images deliberately broken over the lines: "wheel/barrow", "rain/water", and "white/chickens". However, the cadence of the poem is only revealed if it is sounded according to its lineation, that is, if a distinct pause, notwithstanding the exigencies of grammar, is made at each line-break. If not, then either the poem risks becoming a small dribble of prose (there is little inherent rhythm if it is written out or read as a single sentence), or it must rely entirely on the visual appeal of its images to invest it with some meaning over and above its literal statement. In other words, the poem requires the enforcement of the terminal juncture to point up its line endings to the listener if it is not to be accused of gratuitous eccentricity in its structure.

In writing of his own poem, 'The Name', Robert Creeley mentions the "syncopations of the rhythms - most evident if you will make a distinct pause (called a terminal juncture!) at the end of each line, and will read the words relaxedly yet clearly, one by one",⁵³ and elsewhere stresses the rhythmical base which is created by such a technique: "I tend to pause after each line, a slight pause. Those terminal endings give me a way of both syncopating and indicating a rhythmic measure. I think of those lines as something akin to the bar in music - they state the rhythmic modality. They indicate what the base rhythm of the poem is, hopefully, to be."⁵⁴ The terminal juncture, and the additional audible punctuation which it affords to supplement normal grammatical pause, is central in achieving a measurable cadence for irregular verse. Such precise attention to the poem's lineation as a guide to its rhythm and sounding has developed

into a more fully realized conception of the written text's capacity to act as a score for the voice, a factor of increasing importance to the contemporary lyric poet whose concern is with a text for an oral performance rather than for a silent reading. Creeley, again, is convinced that "the typographical context of poetry is still simply the issue of how to score - in the musical sense - to indicate how I want the poem to be read".⁵⁵ Snyder also emphasizes the fact that for him "the written poem in the book is like the score for the poem - it is actually in its full life when presented in a poetry reading, read by me or by someone else".⁵⁶ In fact, his approach to lineation is even more extreme in his belief that "any irregular line arrangement creates a manner of reading and a rhythm, which is poetical".⁵⁷ Like Creeley, Snyder also affirms the music created by exact attention to the poem's typography and, in doing so, offers another dismissal of the notion of 'free verse':

So-called or apparently "free" verse, or open-form poetry, if properly done, is not spontaneous or formless...there is an effort to hear the sound, to catch the internal rhythmic infrastructure of English spoken language...and make a music out of that. My ear is very attentive to the music of the English language; that attention may not be visible on the page but can be heard when I read the poems. A person who has heard me read can learn how I'm scoring my poems and reproduce that music. 58

Although an actual example of the relationship between written text and actual performance is impossible, a poem such as 'Hop, Skip, and Jump' - here quoted in its entirety - can give some indication of Snyder's use of the text as a score for the voice;⁵⁹ the visually chaotic appearance of the poem is justified by considering its lineation and typography as a guide to its oral performance:

participles used as adjectives, "curvd" and "cornerd" in the opening line, or the use of a sound-equivalent ending for a past participle per se rather than the correct 'ed', for example, "trippt" in line 20. This latter technique, wholly adopted for an intended oral performance, indicates that the more normal conversational elision is to be replaced by the precise sounding of such endings, a constant and notable feature of all Snyder's readings.

A poem such as 'Hop, Skip, and Jump' is, consciously or otherwise, heavily indebted to the many typographical experiments which are a commonplace in the poetry of E. E. Cummings and which constitute his most important contribution to the modern lyric. 'in Just-', for example, which also speaks of children's games - "hop-scotch and jump-rope" - displays a similar scoring to indicate what is the poem's essential rhythmic movement:

in Just-
spring when the world is mud-
luscious the little
lame balloonman

whistles far and wee

and eddieandbill come
running from marbles and
piracies and it's
spring 60

Together with Cummings' characteristic neologisms, and his complete eschewal of punctuation, are many of the features which Snyder has adopted: the use of spacing in the line to indicate pause, a literal running together of words to increase pace, and a broken syntax which, as with Williams, stretches to the fragmenting of compound words over two lines. Obviously, not all of Snyder's poems - or those of Cummings and Williams - make such an extreme use of these guides to performance as 'Hop, Skip, and Jump' in which, like Cummings in 'in Just-', he is

patently attempting to create a mimetic rhythm which will mirror the hopscotch game. Yet, as will become clear in the later, more detailed discussion of Snyder's lyrics, typography and lineation are always subject to the most careful scrutiny as means to achieve, and then to indicate to the reader, the poem's rhythmic base.

Although broken syntax and the terminal juncture have their roots in early Modernism, the proper recognition of their potential lies not, for example, with Williams - who in readings rarely followed the line patterns he created⁶¹ - but, as Snyder suggests, in a more recent poet:

Most poets I know...who follow that open form structuring of the line on the page, do it with full intention as a scoring - as Charles Olson pointed out some years ago in his essay on projective verse....The placement of the line on the page, the horizontal white spaces and the vertical white spaces are all for scoring how it is to be read and how it is to be timed. Space means time. 62

Charles Olson's 1950 essay, 'Projective Verse', the intention of which was to consolidate "the fruits of the experiments of Cummings, Pound, Williams",⁶³ is a complete statement of precisely those features which govern what Snyder calls the "open form structuring of the line". The terminal juncture, although not named as such, is proposed as the exact equivalent of lineation by metre, in that "the line comes...from the breath, from the breathing of the man who writes, at the moment that he writes...for only he, the man who writes, can declare, at every moment, the line its metric and its ending - where its breathing, shall come to, termination".⁶⁴ The natural progression in the development of such a line is that "the conventions which logic has forced on syntax must be broken open".⁶⁵ As Snyder acknowledges - and Creeley confirms - Olson's is also the seminal statement on the poem's typography as a score

for the voice; and, as those later poets did in his wake, Olson makes the analogy with music:

From the machine has come one gain not yet sufficiently observed or used, but which leads directly on toward projective verse and its consequences. It is the advantage of the typewriter that, due to its rigidity and its space precisions, it can, for a poet, indicate exactly the breath, the pauses, the suspensions even of syllables, the juxtapositions even of parts of phrases, which he intends. For the first time the poet has the stave and bar a musician has had. For the first time he can, without the conventions of rime and meter, record the listening he has done to his own speech and by that one act indicate how he would want any reader, silently or otherwise, to voice his work. 66

Olson's brief mention of the removal of rhyme, and by this we assume specifically end rhyme, leads to the third of the striking features of the modern lyric which is designed to replace such a conventional sound device with an alternative method of creating an "imagined music".

When a poet adopts an open-structured line, and stresses the analogy between the print-poem and a musical score, what may often follow is a quest for a much greater and varied use of the sound qualities in the language employed. Pound's instruction to the apprentice poet is to "know assonance and alliteration, rhyme immediate and delayed, simple and polyphonic, as a musician would expect to know harmony and counterpoint and all the minutiae of his craft";⁶⁷ and later, isolating the example of rhyme, he counsels that "a rhyme must have in it some slight element of surprise if it is to give pleasure".⁶⁸ Eliot, too, suggested that the habitual use of end rhyme had "thickened the ear" and predicted the potential which could be released by a removal of the

tyranny of a regular and predictable pattern: "Rhyme removed, the poet is at once held up to the standard of prose. Rhyme removed, much ethereal music leaps up from the word, music which has hitherto chirped unnoticed....this liberation from rhyme might be as well a liberation of rhyme. Freed from its exacting task of supporting lame verse, it could be applied with greater effect where it is most needed."⁶⁹

Snyder, then, has ample precedent for his own belief that the modern lyric can realize the roots of that form of music and song: "Even the way I read...poems has the element of song in it, because the intensification of language and the compression of the already existing sound-system musicality of the spoken language itself are manifested by the reading of the poem. Part of the work of the poet is to intensify and clarify the existing musical sound-possibilities in the spoken language."⁷⁰ Such an exploration of "sound-possibilities" is not, of course, the sole province of the modern lyric; but this form is distinguished by the conscious avoidance of their stock use - where they are well-worn enough to thicken the ear - and by the meticulous attention given to the smallest detail. With reference to his own poem, 'The Name', for example, Creeley expresses a satisfaction with "the way this poem moves, in its lines, in the way certain words pick up echoes of rhyme in others, sometimes very clearly, sometimes as a shading".⁷¹ Elder Olson comments that the real task of the modern lyric poet was "as far as diction was concerned...to learn that everything did not need to be made explicit...to learn the use of suggestion, implication and innuendo....to learn the uses of incomplete rhyme, false rhyme, 'analysed' rhyme, misplaced rhyme".⁷²

Such practices are a consistent feature of the modern lyric. Even so brief a poem as Pound's 'Papyrus', which has the unique record of containing more dots than words, quite distinctly exploits the sound

values of the four words it does have:

Spring
 Too long
 Gongula 73

The lines have a palpable impetus created by the shaded rhyme of "Spring" and "long", and carried through with the echo of "long" in the first syllable of "Gongula". Similarly, 'In a Station of the Metro' is given a subtle cohesiveness by the shaded end rhyme of its couplet in "crowd" and "bough" as well as its more conventional use of alliteration.⁷⁴ Perhaps of all modern lyricists, William Carlos Williams displays the most determined effort to create rhythm through sound devices and word-play as, for instance, in 'Poem':

As the cat
 climbed over
 the top of

 the jamcloset
 first the right
 forefoot

 carefully
 then the hind
 stepped down

 into the pit of
 the empty
 flowerpot 75

In its attempt to catch the precise movement of its subject, 'Poem' is given a complex of sound-matching which almost defies enumeration: one notices the basic alliteration of the hard 'c' in "cat", "climbed", "closet", and "carefully"; the constant repetition of the hard 't' in "cat", "top", "closet", "first", "right", "forefoot", "stepped", "into", "pit", "empty", and "flowerpot"; a play on the 'f' in "first", "forefoot", "carefully", and "flowerpot"; and a spine of shaded rhyme and half-rhyme which pushes the poem to its conclusion, "cat", "top", "foot", "pit",

and "pot". Practically the only word which is not enmeshed in such a web of sound is the definite article, and then its seven-fold repetition can be noted for the emphatic specificity which it offers the poem. Although a striking example, 'Poem' is not untypical in these respects of Williams' shorter lyric poems, and his precise attention to the sound potentials in his diction is an unmistakable influence on Snyder. A similar scrupulosity is at work, for example, in 'Six-Month Song in the Foothills', a highly patterned presentation of natural observation:

In the cold shed sharpening saws.
 a swallow's nest hangs by the door
 setting rakers in sunlight
 falling from meadow through doorframe
 swallows flit under the eaves.

Grinding the falling axe
 sharp for the summer
 a swallow shooting out over.
 over the river, snow on low hills
 sharpening wedges for splitting.

Beyond the low hills, white mountains
 and now snow is melting. sharpening tools;
 pack horses grazing new grass
 bright axes -- and swallows
 fly in to my shed.

(BC, p. 9)

Like Williams, Snyder often provides a basic framework for the poem by casting it into a series of unrhymed stanzaic units of equal length. However, the real discipline and pattern is realized by the abundant oral possibilities inherent in its language, which serve to bond the poem into a cohesive whole. Their profusion begins with the almost perfect iambic rhythm of the opening two lines (accentuated by the only occurrence of anything approaching an end rhyme in "saws" and "door"), as the poet, in the style of Eliot, approximates and withdraws from that metre. A more unorthodox movement is given to the poem by its use

of repetition. In a relatively brief space, Snyder deliberately repeats key words almost in an ascending order of importance for the poem's expression of the convergence of the swallow's seasonal life and the man's seasonal work; hence "shed", "door"/"doorframe", "axe"/"axes", "snow", and "low hills" are repeated twice, and "sharp"/"sharpening", and "swallow"/"swallows", four times. Such a spine of repetition is emphasized by the frequent use of present participles which give the poem its feeling of constant action: "sharpening" (three times), "setting", "falling" (twice), "grinding", "shooting", "splitting", "melting", "grazing" - eleven such participles in a poem of fifteen lines is not fortuitous, the poem's movement is gathered up and carried forward by each. This feature of the poem is reinforced by the steady insertion of those prepositions which will convey the sense of a continual process: "in", "by", "from", "through", "under", "out", "over", "on", and "beyond". As the diction of the poem is thus analysed, its extensive use of basic alliteration is brought to light - the "sh" sound is a good example - although only by sounding the poem is attention focused on the fact that almost half its words play on the hard or sibilant 's' in its many combinations as initial consonant, noun plural, or sound component of a word such as "grazing". Similarly, although to a lesser extent, the straightforward alliteration of "falling", "from", and "frame" in line 4 is part of a larger pattern in the poem with "falling" (again), "fit", "for", and "fly". Any full rhyme in the poem, following the dicta of Eliot and Pound, comes with an element of surprise and, usually, internally in the line, as in "fly" and "my" in the last line, or "snow on low hills" in line 9, a combination repeated with the addition of a half-rhyme in lines 11 and 12: "Beyond the low hills, white mountains/and now snow is melting". Such analysis of the network of sounds created in the

poem's diction might continue, since it offers an almost inexhaustible variety. Their use is not incidental; each contributes to Pound's sense of expressive rhythm, where the poem's content and movement converge, not in some elementary mimesis, but in order to create an "imagined music" which invigorates the poem's statement.

This section began by discussing those bids to account for the diversity of the lyric poem since it lost its fundamental defining characteristic of musical performance and the pitfalls attendant on any definition which looks to its secondary characteristics. It would not be unfounded to claim that, in the twentieth century, an experimental lyric tradition has been established (although recognizing that an earlier poet such as Emily Dickinson shares some of its features), which has sought to remove and replace many of what it considered to be the outmoded or over-used conventions of the lyric. The Imagists, Pound, Williams, Marianne Moore, Cummings, the Objectivists (Carl Rakosi, Louis Zukofsky, Charles Reznikoff, George Oppen) have, through the mediation of Olson, been followed by contemporary lyric poets such as Creeley and Snyder in rejecting the automatic use of regular metrical rhythm, the habitual adoption of end rhyme, and a typography and lineation which made no concessions to individual expression. Many of the alternative strategies which they have favoured have, in one sense, been forced through the necessity of the lyric poet to reflect accurately the idiom of his age; that is, the lyric falls into desuetude if it insists on carrying the idioms of a previous age into its own, a point made by Rhys who remarks that "unless there is a concurrence between the contemporary idioms and the rhythms of a period, with the individual idiom of the lyricist, half the expressional force of his ideas will be lost".⁷⁶ Often this may require the drive and

energy of an individual, for example, Pound in the first two decades of this century.

Yet if a definition of the modern lyric were hazarded, it would not consist merely of a bald rejection of those conventions with which, until the twentieth century, the lyric was associated, since the lyric poet must have at his disposal every possibility in rhythm, structure, and language. A turning away from outworn poetic conventions does not mean their total repudiation, as both Eliot and Pound were careful to suggest, but only the refusal to allow them to become routine and unimaginative: a liberation from such conventions, to paraphrase Eliot, might well be a liberation of them. Fundamentally then, the lyric is a poem which "retains structural or substantive evidence of its melodic origins, and it is this factor which serves as the categorical principle of poetic lyricism".⁷⁷ In the modern lyric, that structural evidence is instanced by a number of features which involve a sense of precision and constant alertness on the part of the poet but which, whilst avoiding cliché, do not exclude any viable prosodic element whatever its age or provenance.

Hence we might say that the modern lyric is one in which the poet achieves an exact convergence and mutual support of content and rhythm; in which precise attention is paid to the text's structure and typography as an indication of its rhythmic movement and as a score for the speaking voice; and in which meticulous care is taken in the exploitation of the inherent and potential sound values of the language employed. This, in Pound's phrase, can create the modern lyric's "imagined music". In Snyder's case, as one example among many, such a poem would be 'Burning the Small Dead':

Burning the small dead
 branches
 broke from beneath
 thick spreading
 whitebark pine.

a hundred summers
 snowmelt rock and air

hiss in a twisted bough.

sierra granite;
 mt. Ritter--
 black rock twice as old.

Deneb, Altair

windy fire

(BC, p. 13)

The lyric has a relentless upward and outward movement from the small branches of the whitebark pine, to the longevity of that tree, "a hundred summers" (with an implicit, almost casual, suggestion of the poet's relative insignificance), which is briefer still against the volcanic origins of the surrounding rocks, in themselves paling into insignificance before the stars, "Deneb, Altair"; the poem is then brought full circle with the sensory image of the wind roaring the flames of the small fire, pulling the statement back, as so often in Snyder, to a palpable physical base. This movement is admirably supported by the three strands of sound which pattern the poem's language, each of which picks up and then fades as the next takes over. Hence the heavy alliteration of the plosive 'b' is prominent in the opening five lines and fades with the last example, "black", in line 11, ceding to the assonance created in the middle section of the poem, "hiss in a twisted bough./sierra granite" which, although echoed briefly later in "twice", gives way in turn to the shadow rhymes which take the poem to its last word: "air", "Ritter", "Altair", "fire". The pace and tone of the poem are unmistakably indicated: isolated words,

compressed and elliptical expression, spacing in the lines, indenting in the lineation, the careful distinction of syntactically complete lines and broken syntax; all fulfil the need of the text to act as a score for the voice. This is the modern lyricist's art.

(ii) Snyder and Chinese Poetry

From 1953 to 1956, when he made his first visit to Japan, Snyder was enrolled in the graduate school of Oriental languages at the University of California at Berkeley, where he consolidated and then greatly expanded an early interest in Oriental poetry which had been aroused initially by his reading of such texts as Ezra Pound's Cathay, Arthur Waley's 170 Chinese Poems, and translations of the earliest Chinese poems collected as the Shih Ching (Book of Songs). The most tangible result of this study, and the accompanying linguistic work in Chinese and Japanese, was to be his translations of the T'ang dynasty (618 - 907) poet Han-shan (Cold Mountain). These versions arose specifically from a seminar in Chinese literary history given by Ch'en shih-tsiang where Snyder also encountered the work of other T'ang poets, notably Wang Wei, Tu Fu, and Li Po (Pound's Rihaku).¹ The Han-shan translations quickly established Snyder's reputation as a skilful and sympathetic translator being reprinted since in standard anthologies of Chinese poetry in translation.²

Of greater interest in terms of Snyder's own poetic development, however, is the possibility that certain aspects of the Chinese poetry he read and studied were filtered into his own lyric poems, although it should be noted that he rarely attempts simply to reduplicate exact features of this poetry in his own work. In such cases where this does occur, the results seem inevitably deliberate and often highly artificial with the reader's attention being diverted from the poem as a whole: examples of this will arise in later discussion. Some of the immediately striking features of T'ang poetry which caught Snyder's attention can be found in the Cold Mountain seminar notes where, for example, there are numerous references to such recurrent characteristics as "perfect

parallelism", the poem as song, colloquialism (especially in Han-shan), the adoption of a 'plain' style in "an era of fanciness", and the experiments with the aural qualities of tone and assonance.³ Among these, we may concentrate on three which can be seen to have exercised a measurable influence on Snyder's own poetry: the poem as song; parallelism; and the plain style.⁴

In the wake of the discussion in the previous section, where the equation of poetry with song or music became almost a commonplace, it is hardly surprising to discover that Snyder's attraction to T'ang verse was created, in part, by a culture in which the same word, 'shih', served for both poem and song. It was a culture, therefore, in which Snyder could find yet another confirmation of his belief that "there's a useful definition of poetry...it's song".⁵ The T'ang period, the "golden age of shih", is recognized for its poets' endeavours to explore to the full the musicality of their language:

In a sense it is impossible to say that Chinese poetry has ever been completely disassociated from music, at least in our understanding of the word "music." Although poems were no longer written for a pre-existing tune, the prominence of the tonal pattern seems to have led to a technique by which lyric poems were chanted, the emphasizing of the tone of each word producing a definite, though limited melodic line. 6

Although it is impossible to reproduce the tonal music of Chinese poetry in English, which has no equivalent to the four tones of classical spoken Chinese, certain other aural elements can be approximated. James J. Y. Liu enumerates several of the more frequent of these beginning with standard alliteration - although only over two immediately adjacent syllables - which we have already seen is a standard feature of Snyder's poetry. More specific is the technique of what Liu terms "riming compounds"

which involves "the use of compounds each consisting of two syllables that rime with one another" and which further "requires identical final consonants (if any) as well as similar vowels". Liu offers, in example, compounds from a poem by Tu Fu: "wu-shu" (misty trees) and "lian-shan" (connected mountains).⁷

As noted above, Snyder transmutes his borrowings rather than attempting an elementary duplication which, in this case for example, might lead to a series of over-deliberate and unsubtle sound compounds. Yet the general concept does offer an account of his fondness for compound adjectives and nouns which lie outside the range of normal collocation, that is, setting aside those which have virtually become verbal clichés, 'snow-white' for example, or those which, with normal grammatical accuracy, require compounding, for example, numerals used as adjectives. Newly coined compounds are a regular occurrence in Snyder's lyric poems, something which is partially reflected in the title of one of his collections, Riprap. Representative poems from that volume reveal many examples of compounding which, whilst avoiding a belaboured full rhyme, often capitalize on echoic or shaded rhyme. Hence, in 'The Late Snow & Lumber Strike of the Summer of Fifty-four', we have "split-shake houses", "green-chain", and "sun-glare" (RCM, pp. 2 - 3); in 'Praise for Sick Women', "skull-roof", "bone-white", and "gut-cramp" as well as the more usual "long-legged" (RCM, pp. 4 - 5); in 'Milton by Firelight', "mule-hooves", "ice-scratched", "bell-mare", and "fill-in", as well as "saddle-blankets" and "night-sky" (RCM, pp. 7 - 8); in 'Water', "hop-and-step", "this-year" (as an adjective) and "boulder-color" (RCM, p. 10). In 'Noonsack Valley', as well as "berry-pickers", "second-growth", and "farm-house", are the lines

All America south and east
 Twenty-five years in it brought to a trip-stop
 Mind-point

(RCM, p. 15)

in which Snyder also exploits the device for the compactness of expression it can offer. A slightly later poem such as 'Vapor Trails' has six compounds in its brief length with "criss-cross", "ant-hill", and "two-leaf", that is, relatively usual compounds, interacting with a line composed entirely of coined compounds: "Cloud-flaked light-shot shadow-arcng" (BC, p. 37) in an accumulation which perhaps betrays a further influence from Hopkins in whose poetry such strings of compounded adjectives are frequent. However, that the root influence of such a device is in Chinese poetry seems to be confirmed by 'Eight Sandbars on the Takano River' which Wai-lim Yip has called "the most conscious approximation of the Chinese syntax" in modern American poetry.⁸ The closing sections are particularly relevant:

dragonfly
 why wet moss
 your black
 stretch-stretch-
 wing perch

strawberrytme

walking the tight-rope
 high over the streets
 with a hoe and two buckets
 of manure.

straight-
 swaying stride
 backt
 twelve-foot
 pine pole
 lightly,
 on her head.

(BC, p. 45)

Although there is the usual quota of both normal and coined compounds here, the lineation strongly suggests the presence of other phrases which are their equivalent: "wet moss", "swaying stride", and "pine pole", for example. The rather odd adjectival compound describing the dragonfly: "your black/stretch-stretch-/wing" is a possible example of an extreme form of "riming compound" which Liu terms reduplication, being the simple repetition of a syllable either for emphasis, or as a reflection of colloquial usage, or to form a new word (his example is "nien-nien" [year-year], that is, 'every year').⁹ Snyder's compound here is an imaginative and sensuously physical adjectival repetition to capture the dragonfly's movement. Although frequent in Chinese poetry, such a device has its obvious limitations in English. Liu suggests that a parallel might be phrases such as 'long, long ago' or 'far, far away', an adaption of the latter appearing in Snyder's 'August on Sourdough, A Visit from Dick Brewer' with the phrase "far, far, west", although this is a poem which is more generally indebted to Pound's Cathay versions since it closely mirrors the Four Poems of Departure, in particular 'Taking Leave of a Friend';¹⁰ it also has specific verbal echoes of 'The River-Merchant's Wife : A Letter':

If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang,
Please let me know beforehand,
And I will come out to meet you
As far as Cho-fu-Sa.¹¹

Compare:

Meadows and snowfields, hundreds of peaks...

Next morning I went with you
as far as the cliffs

(BC, p. 19)

Parallelism, the second of the characteristics which has made its mark on Snyder's poetry, is not only a frequent occurrence in Chinese verse, but often a prosodic requirement. This is particularly so in the T'ang period:

The features of the regulated poem were a precisely balanced parallelism of phrasing between the lines of the poem and a selection of words to produce an ordered pattern of tonal sound. Parallelism is a feature which may be regarded as endemic in the nature of the classical Chinese language, but the conscious approach to literature of this period developed parallelism in...verse as a deliberate effect. 12

The two most common verse forms in T'ang poetry are 'ku-shih' (ancient verse) and 'lü-shih' (regulated verse). The former originated in the Han period (206 B.C. to A.D. 219) and involved the use of five- or seven-syllable lines, with a marked asymmetrical caesura, that is, a pattern of 2 - 3 or 4 - 3 respectively, which has the effect of furnishing the kind of additional audible grammar which was discussed as a consequence of the terminal juncture in the previous section; 'ku-shih' were also of indefinite length. Almost all of the poems of Han-shan, and many by Li Po, were written in this form. 'Lü-shih', or regulated verse, established itself at the beginning of the T'ang period and had a much stricter prosody - hence its name. This included a fixed length, usually eight lines; a regular syllabic count through the poem, be it five or seven; an even more pronounced use of the asymmetrical caesura; a regular pattern of end rhyme; and a formidably complex system of parallelism:

The four middle lines of an eight-line poem in Regulated Verse should form two antithetical couplets, contrasting with each other in sense as well as in sound. In an antithetical couplet, each syllable in the first line should contrast

in tone with the corresponding syllable in the next line....At the same time, the contrasted words should be of the same grammatical category: noun against noun, verb against verb, etc.... Furthermore, the words which contrast with each other should refer to the same category of thingsOne should contrast colour with colour, flower with flower, etc. 13

This undoubtedly is the "perfect parallelism" which Snyder had noted. However, in view of his translations of Han-shan, it is more likely that it was the less rigid form of 'ku-shih' which appeared to have possibilities for his own poetry. Although this also involved fairly precise matching being "a combination of sameness, likeness, difference, antithesis, embracing phonological, grammatical, and semantic features",¹⁴ it did not require the strict antonymic nature of 'lü-shih' in which no like word could be used in matching positions. Liu gives an example of parallelism in 'ku-shih' from Li Po:

The Yellow River flows to the eastern main,
The white sun sets over the western sea.

In this translation, the parallel grammatical arrangement of the two lines is clear: definite article/adjective of colour/noun/verb/preposition/definite article/adjective of place/noun. Its partly antithetical nature is also evident: "river"/"sun"; "flows"/"sets", that is, a verb of motion and one indicating an arrest of motion; and "eastern"/"western". Liu points out that the couplet is not perfectly antithetical since the adjective of colour in the first line is part of a proper name, and also that "main" and "sea" are synonyms not antonyms.¹⁵

Snyder was to encounter, and have to account for in translation, many similar examples of parallelism in the poems of Han-shan, a process which doubtless sharpened his ability to use this technique in his own poems. One typical instance occurs in the ninth poem of the sequence

he presents:

Rough and dark--the Cold Mountain trail,
 Sharp cobbles--the icy creek bank.
 Yammering, chirping--always birds
 Bleak, alone, not even a lone hiker.
 Whip, whip--the wind slaps my face
 Whirled and tumbled--snow piles on my back.
 Morning after morning I don't see the sun
 Year after year, not a sign of spring.

(RCM, p. 45)

The notes and transliterations which accompany Snyder's workings for this poem present quite prominently the deliberate parallelism intended by its author. In the original, each line begins with a reduplicated syllable which forms the first part of the line. After the required caesura (the poem is composed of five-syllable lines), three further syllables extend or expand the descriptive pattern created by the initial reduplication, with a variable amount of parallelism between each couplet. It is interesting to note that, in his drafts, Snyder attempts one version which removes the poem's parallelism altogether but, as his final text shows, he restores it as an acknowledgement of its integral function in the poem. However, in his final version, he does introduce a certain amount of variation in the opening reduplicated syllable, often using a synonym rather than a simple repetition of the same word.¹⁶ The parallelism inherent in the second part of each line, and brought through in translation by Snyder, can perhaps best be shown diagrammatically:

1. the / cold / Mountain / trail
2. the / icy / creek / bank
3. always / birds
4. not even / a lone hiker
5. the wind / slaps / my face
6. snow / piles / on my back
7. I don't see / the sun
8. not a sign / of spring

Hence the poem has paired lines in which the parallelism is antithetical, for example, lines 3 and 4; and couplets which are an amalgam of synonym and antonym - the first and last. Snyder also indicates the pronounced use of the caesura in the poem, signalling it in five lines by a dash, in two others with a comma, and leaving it implicit in the remaining, seventh, line.

In his own original poetry, Snyder's adoption of such techniques meets with variable success. Their exact reproduction does not, in general, result in poems which are conspicuously effective. In the first of Four Poems for Robin, 'Siwashing it out once in Siuslaw Forest', for example, he provides a typographical signal to approximate the caesura present in 'ku-shih' and 'lü-shih'; the poem opens:

I slept under rhododendron
 All night blossoms fell
 Shivering on a sheet of cardboard
 Feet stuck in my pack
 Hands deep in my pockets
 Barely able to sleep.

(BC, p. 47)

Having previously conditioned an expectation in his readers that some significant addition to his poetry's rhythm and overall impact will result from precise attention to the text as a score for reading, here Snyder uses spacing in the line for its visual impact as a version of the caesura. Certainly, if the poem is read with the heavy pause which appears to be indicated, it gains little in its delivery as the typography lacks the flexibility which characterizes his other lyrics. Even the tentative parallelism in some of the lines

Feet / stuck / in my pack
 Hands / deep / in my pockets

is made to seem very deliberate by the spacing and lacks the fluidity

of the Han-shan translations. The poem, in any case hardly one of Snyder's better lyrics, serves as an example of how the simple grafting on to his own work of techniques experienced in the poetry of a different culture can result in a hybrid poem which flatters neither. Very much like the transformation of the motifs used in the mythic poems, such strategems need careful 'acculturation' if they are to be of any real value.

The more successful adaption of parallelism can be found elsewhere in Snyder's lyrics and ranges from its use in a single line in any one poem to a more thoroughgoing deployment where it becomes a major prosodic element. In the simple lyric which opens Riprap, 'Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout', parallelism in a single line helps to create the calm and reflective atmosphere of the poem:

Down valley a smoke haze
 Three days heat, after five days rain
 Pitch glows on the fir-cones

(RCM, p. 1)

The comma at mid-line emphasizes an already present natural caesura, enhancing the parallelism of the line and the rhythm inherent in it. Much the same effect is created in the opening lines of 'Eight Sandbars on the Takano River':

Well water
 cool in
 summer

warm in
 winter

(BC, p. 44)

Both the rhythm induced by terminal juncture and the unobtrusive alliteration are elements which underpin the basic parallelism here:

all contribute to the poised and tranquil opening to the poem. Even when parallelism is used more extensively, it is rarely blatant or over-deliberate. There are relatively few examples, say, of a poem in which a series of parallel lines might amount to a catalogue in the fashion of Whitman or, later, Allen Ginsberg, where the use of a basic parallelism is often the poem's only prosodic element. The only comparable examples in Snyder, the poem 'Night' (BC, p. 77) is an instance, reveal him as uncomfortable in a poetics which is never naturally his own. In Snyder's lyrics, more extensive parallelism is likely to be moderated by other prosodic features, yet will still make a tangible contribution; in 'Work to do Toward Town', for example:

Venus glows in the east,
 mars hangs in the twins.
 Frost on the logs and bare ground
 free of house or tree.
 Kites come down from the mountains
 And glide quavering over the rooftops;
 frost melts in the sun.
 A low haze hangs on the houses

(BC, p. 52)

Although the opening two lines suggest a promise of obvious parallelism it is other, initially less conspicuous, parallels which give the poem its form. The steady repetition of preposition and definite article binds the lines together: "in the" in lines 1, 2, and 7; "on the" in lines 3 and 8; "from the" and "over the" in lines 5 and 6 respectively. There is also the consistent matching of subject with verb of action or quality of action, thus the pattern "Venus glows", "mars hangs", "Kites come down", "frost melts", and "haze hangs". Removing these two features isolates the poem's series of precise nouns of physical place at the end of the line: "ground", "tree", "mountains", "rooftops", and "houses".

Such examples of parallelism could be multiplied throughout

Snyder's lyric poems. That he adopted the technique at an early point in the establishing of his lyric mode is nowhere better illustrated than in the uncollected poem, 'Late October Camping in the Sawtooths', which although not published until 1957 was probably written during his initial study of T'ang verse:

Sunlight climbs the snowpeak
 glowing pale red
 Cold sinks into the gorge
 shadows merge.
 Building a fire of pine twigs
 at the foot of a cliff,
 Drinking hot tea from a tin cup
 in the chill air. 17

In this early poem the parallelism is more stylized and deliberate with Snyder seeking perfect antithesis, for example, in lines 1 and 3:

Sunlight / climbs / the snowpeak
 Cold / sinks / into the gorge

and equally prominent, although not precisely antithetical, parallelism between lines 2 and 4, 5 and 7, and 6 and 8. However, it does represent the inception of a technique which he would eventually develop to a stage where it demonstrates a skilful transposition of an Eastern style into a profitable American equivalent.

The final of the three direct influences from Chinese poetry is the 'plain' style or use of a limited vocabulary and ellipsis. Snyder has spoken of his poetry as having

a sense of compression, a sense of ellipsis, of leaving out the unnecessary, of sharpening the utterance down to a point where a very precise, very swift message is generated, an energy is transmitted. In doing that, I have paid particular attention to the Anglo-Saxon or Germanic derived aspects of the English language, and have made much use of monosyllabic words, of compactness and directness of the Anglo-Saxon heritage in the English

language, which I have cross-bred with my understanding and ear for Chinese poetry. 18

Snyder's attention to the Anglo-Saxon roots of the language, and the "compactness and directness" which they can provide, is the conscious realization that the concrete particularity which is a hall-mark of his lyric poetry is best achieved through a deliberate avoidance of what might be seen as the more abstract nature of Latin-derived etymologies. Apart from the infrequent occasions where he wishes to approximate a regular metrical rhythm, Snyder's poetry can rarely be scanned accentually. His preference for monosyllabic rather than polysyllabic diction gives each line the sense of being a series of equally weighted elements crafted into the 'riprap' pattern. As Sherman Paul has noted, for Snyder "the unit of composition is the single word, like rock, a solid particular thing of weight and texture ...and the act of composition is architectural, a building by words, a deliberate handwork".¹⁹ Such a concentration on the monosyllabic might also suggest the monotonous: an unrelieved, sluggish movement and rhythm. Several of Snyder's methods to forestall this have already been discussed - the use of compound words and a flexible typography, for example. One other frequently adopted ploy, however, is to play off a series of weighted and deliberate monosyllables against the careful introduction of a more ornate intruder into the line, that is, a polysyllabic word which suddenly lifts the poem's diction and thus moderates that which surrounds it. The basic technique can be seen at work in the lyrics of William Carlos Williams where an appropriate example would be the centrally positioned "probably" in 'This Is Just to Say' which alleviates the otherwise terse diction of the poem.²⁰ With Snyder, it is often a more exotic polysyllable which is used for the same purpose, an American Indian or Oriental place name, or an

unusual plant or animal. Hence in 'All through the rains', where forty-six of the fifty-three words are monosyllables, the arrival of "eucalyptus" in the final line gives a calculated rhythmic interest and variation to the basic vocabulary (RCM, p. 16). A similar function is performed by "Mrs. Kawabata" in the equally plain lyric, 'Yase: September', and the strategy is at its most effective in 'How to Make Stew in the Pinacate Desert : Recipe for Locke & Drum' where a recipe, made over into a poem, revels in the variety of sound and rhythm offered by clusters of more exotic vocabulary: "rutabaga", "tarragon", "oregano", "Sonora", "Pinacate", "Ocotillo", and "budweiser" are some of the examples (BC, pp. 28 - 29).

It is also likely, of course, that Snyder's continual debt to Pound - whom he once called his "teacher in poetic technology"²¹ - is reflected in this careful attention to diction with the Imagist tenet "to use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation" in mind.²² There are, however, significant differences between Snyder's lyrics and the practices of Imagism. Early Imagist poems, for example, are invariably built around simile (Pound's 'In a Station of the Metro' is a later breaking of this mould), whereas this is a device which Snyder uses relatively infrequently, and never as the focal point of a poem, reflecting the Chinese models he studied. His concentrated involvement with Chinese poetry occurred during the formative period of his own lyric poems and Snyder has frequently affirmed its influence on him. In some of the Riprap poems, for example, he states that "the line was influenced by the five- and seven-character line Chinese poems I'd been reading, which work like sharp blows on the mind".²³

Written Chinese is a monosyllabic language, that is, although certain words may be polysyllabic, the character itself is not. In the poetic line, the ideogram invariably signals a single syllable, a

primary characteristic with a pronounced influence on Snyder's own verbal economy. In Western terms, it is also essentially a non-grammatical language eschewing concepts such as the differentiation of singular and plural, any declension of a part of speech, and the notion of personal pronouns, voices, and tenses. For the poem, the result is the removal of all non-essentials and a consequent utterance which is extremely dense and compact, retreating, as far as this is ever possible, from the abstract nature of language. T'ang poetry, in particular, emphasized these qualities:

The vocabulary of these poems tends to be more limited, probably, than that of any other great poetry in the world, because it prefers almost always the common word, which is also the general word, to the particular....adjectives are sparingly used and then almost always as definitions rather than descriptions....simile is relatively little used and never extended, as it may be in our poetry, in such a way as to substitute a different image in the reader's mind from the main one of the poem. 24

This is not to suggest a distorted conception of all Chinese poetry as solely a series of monosyllabic, bare, and fundamental words. It was also, in many cases, a highly allusive poetry which, through an apparently simple vocabulary, was able to provoke in its readers a myriad of associations through reference to past literature and culture in a "diction which by long literary and historical use is replete with associations. An entire complex of ideas...can be tersely and forcefully expressed in such 'loaded' phraseology".²⁵

In Snyder's lyric poems, compression, ellipsis, "leaving out the unnecessary" becomes so habitual that its absence is more noteworthy than its presence. Conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, and simple linking words are frequently erased from the poem altogether leaving a compressed and sharply focused residue. Here, for example, is the

first section of 'The Late Snow & Lumber Strike of the Summer of Fifty-four' (whilst being elliptical in the poem itself, Snyder is inordinately fond of verbose titles) with an approximation of the omitted parts of speech which its full sense might suggest:

Whole towns [are] shut down
 [I am] hitching the Coast road, [and] only gypos
 Running their beat trucks, [with] no logs on
 Gave me rides. [The] Loggers [have] all gone fishing
 [their] Chainsaws in a pool of cold oil
 On [the] back porches of ten thousand
 Split-shake houses, [which are] quiet in [the] summer rain.
 [I] Hitched north [through] all of Washington
 Crossing and re-crossing the passes
 Blown like dust, [with] no place to work.

(RCM, p. 2)

The simple insertion of the omitted parts of speech is sufficient to register how deep-seated the ellipsis is in such a poem. Since the technique does not upset the word order or cause any surface difficulties of comprehension, its use is virtually an 'invisible' one for the reader who, after becoming familiarized with a body of Snyder's lyrics, unconsciously replaces the 'missing' elements. On occasion, however, Snyder's ellipsis does extend to a compression where the syntax is noticeably altered, and where some problems of immediate understanding are thus posed. This is particularly true of those poems in which Snyder makes the most conscious attempt to parallel exactly his Chinese models and is most probably a result of his work as a translator. The working notes and drafts for the Cold Mountain translations are revealing in this context. Snyder's method was to prepare a direct transliteration of the ideograms in Han-shan's line, providing an English equivalent after selecting from the range of synonyms that each character suggested, an operation which in itself required a sensitivity to Han-shan's idiomatic language.²⁶ The opening of the

first poem of the series, which uses a five-syllable line, is presented thus in Snyder's first attempt:

1. can laugh Han Shan path
2. and without cart horse traces
3. connect gorge bird mark crooked
4. fold cliff don't know layers 27

The final version is then reconstructed from this skeleton, fleshing in the grammatical elements which are required in English, but which would have been implicit for a reader of the original. Snyder's final translation reads:

The path to Han-shan's place is laughable,
 A path, but no sign of cart or horse.
 Converging gorges--hard to trace their twists
 Jumbled cliffs--unbelievably rugged.

(RCM, p. 37)

Turning to Snyder's own poetry, there are one or two instances in which he appears to have attempted a version of Chinese syntax, that is, they seem to reflect the raw state of the original before it is reconstructed. In two sections of 'Eight Sandbars on the Takano River', for example:

white radish root
 a foot long
 by its dark
 dirt hole
 green top
 her son...

gone wild
 straw berry vine
 each year more small
 sour
 mulcht by pine.

(BC, p. 44)

Although by no means an elementary 'word-for-character' duplication, the curious syntax of such extracts does require the reader to perform some

basic paraphrasing in order to rebuild them into more normal English. Thus, respectively: 'Her son pulls up the radish, with its foot-long white root, by its green top from its dark and dirty hole'; and: 'Having gone wild, and mulched by fallen pine needles, each year the wild strawberry vine produces smaller and more sour fruit'. The very awkwardness of such paraphrases is the first indication of why Snyder has chosen this extreme form of ellipsis; by doing so, a "precise, very swift message is generated, an energy is transmitted". Other advantages also become apparent. The dislocation of syntax, and the need for the reader to reconstruct the poem, begins to focus attention on some of the text's qualities which otherwise may have passed unnoticed. In the first passage, for example, the brevity of the utterance highlights the contrasting colours which are an integral part of the poem: the implicit red of the radish, its white root, its green top, and the "dark/dirt" hole from which it is drawn; certain shaded rhymes also become more effective: "root" and "foot", "dark" and "dirt"; one notices the play on the 't' sound in "white", "root", "its", "dirt", and "top"; and the general pattern of elongated and sonorous vowels is also accentuated: "root", "foot", "long", "dark", "dirt", "hole", and "son".

Although such extreme ellipsis is uncommon in Snyder's poetry as a whole, its exaggerated use here can serve as an example of the benefits which such a device can bring to the lyric where the touchstone for success is often the creation of complexity through brevity and apparent simplicity.

In many senses, the influence of Chinese poetry, and particularly that of the T'ang dynasty, is analogous to Snyder's receptiveness to American Indian oral culture in the mythic poems.

In the mythic mode, Snyder can be seen as an inheritor of a recognizably modern long poem tradition. Having absorbed the craft of earlier poets such as Eliot, he is able to add a further dimension to that tradition in his use of American Indian literature and the creation of the surrogate-myth. Similarly, he belongs to a modern lyric tradition, taking up the experiments of Pound and Williams, but again, in his own lyrics, adding a personal dimension: the transformation and use of certain specific aspects of the form and nature of Chinese poetry. Although this section has been primarily concerned with the purely stylistic or formal features which have found their way into Snyder's short poems, there are more abstract qualities of Oriental poetry - functions of subject and content - which have also impressed him. He once commented, for example, that "when I read Chinese poetry, I was struck in some of the translations by qualities hard to describe... clarity, limpidity, space, and at the same time, a fine, specialized and precise attention and observation of natural detail".²⁸ The effect of such qualities on his own writing will form a part of the following discussion of the bulk of his lyric poems.

(iii) 'Riprap' and 'The Back Country'

In the course of explaining the unusual title, Snyder once described the Riprap lyrics as

a class of poems I wrote under the influence of the geology of the Sierra Nevada and the daily trail-crew work of picking up and placing granite stones in tight cobble patterns on hard slab. "What are you doing?" I asked old Roy Marchbanks -- "Riprapping" he said. His selection of natural rocks was perfect - the result looked like dressed stone fitting to hair-edge cracks. Walking, climbing, placing with the hands. I tried writing poems of tough, simple, short words with the complexity far beneath the surface texture. 1

As well as confirming the importance of a sense of place to his poetry, Snyder also proffers here another example of his conviction that "the rhythms of my poems follow the rhythm of the physical work I'm doing and life I'm leading at any given time - which makes the music in my head which creates the line".² On this occasion, one aspect of his experience is translated directly into a metaphor for a poetic technique, which is also inextricably involved with the plain style he had encountered in Chinese poetry. One neat convergence amply demonstrates this. At the foot of a page of notes taken during a class with Ch'en shih-tsiang on 'yüeh-fu' (a colloquial ballad-style poem favoured by Li Po), Snyder has jotted: "Riprap style: lay a cobble of hard words on steep places, on which to walk."³ The concept has its poetic expression in the title poem of Riprap:

Lay down these words
 Before your mind like rocks.
 placed solid, by hands
 In choice of place, set
 Before the body of the mind
 in space and time:
 Solidity of bark, leaf, or wall
 riprap of things...

 each rock a word
 a creek-washed stone

Granite

In its pursuit of "solidity" and a "riprap of things", Snyder's lyric poetry in the 'riprap' style attempts as pure as possible a rendering of the physical world, a registering of the poem's landscape with the minimum of interference either from the personality of the narrative voice in the poem, or from the abstractions of language. His goal has always been the poem as a precise record of experience and not a substitute for it; his problem has been how to achieve such an unalloyed presentation of things without compromising their integrity through the distortion of the individual voice or the abstract nature of language. Though eminently desirable for Snyder, the eradication, or at least the temporary dismantling of such barriers is problematical.

As with the mythic poems, the narrating voice of the lyrics requires some clarification. Whatever measure of apparent impersonality might be claimed for these poems, it is inescapable that a majority of them - almost two thirds in the case of Riprap and The Back Country - do involve some use of the first person pronoun. In addition, many also reflect in their subject matter, the direct experience of Snyder's various occupations. The quotation which opened this section is indicative of the close correlation which he frequently makes between his working life and the poems which emerge from it, and is also an indication of why he does not simply eschew the personal pronoun altogether in his search for objectivity. It is tempting, then, to draw the convenient conclusion that the narrating voice of the lyric poems is simply and consistently Snyder's own. There would be no suggestion, therefore, of the Modernist concept of mask or persona at work in them, no confirmation of the impersonality which Eliot has stressed in his belief that poetry "is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality".⁴ Yet, if this is so, Snyder's lyrics must also be differentiated from a poetry in which the poet's personality is the focus

and, ultimately, the dominating element of the poem. However unsatisfactory the term 'confessional' might be in its application to poets contemporary with Snyder, Robert Lowell and Sylvia Plath for example, it may well indicate a poetry in which autobiographical material intrudes to an extent where it assumes an overriding importance and becomes the true raison d'être of the work.

This is palpably not the case in Snyder's lyrics where the quiet and casual tone consistently denies one traditional assumption that the lyric is necessarily a highly charged and dramatic utterance of personal import to the author. These, in fact, are qualities which Snyder has actively sought to avoid since, as he has said, "the thing that keeps someone else's poem from working for me most often is too much ego interference, too much abstract intellect, too much striving for effect".⁵ Here he approaches a perception of the role of the poet in the poem which has its most succinct expression in Charles Olson's definition of "objectism":

Objectism is the getting rid of the lyrical interference of the individual as ego, of the "subject" and his soul, that peculiar presumption by which western man has interposed himself between what he is as a creature of nature...and those other creations of nature which we may, with no derogation, call objects. For a man is himself an object, whatever he may take to be his advantages, the more likely to recognize himself as such the greater his advantages, particularly at that moment that he achieves an humilitas sufficient to make him of use. 6

In Snyder's lyrics, the crucial point is not the absolute removal of the poet from the poem to achieve some spurious impersonality, but rather the suppression of the poet as the centre-piece of the poem, his reduction to a role whereby he is merely another of its objects. The 'I' of such a poem is less a signal for simple autobiography or of a

a strong mediating presence between the reader and the poem, but more the announcement of the existence of one other object. Thus the voice is never intrusive to the extent where it demands the privileged attention of the reader. The effect is much like that delineated by Liu as a quality of Chinese poetry which, by grammatical necessity, can never include a subject: "Such omissions of the subject allows the poet not to intrude his own personality upon the scene, for the missing subject can be readily identified with anyone, whether the reader or some imaginary person. Consequently Chinese poetry often has an impersonal and universal quality, compared with which much Western poetry appears egocentric and earth-bound."⁷ Snyder's application of this to his lyrics is most pronounced in those poems which invoke a vivid natural landscape with a single human figure as a part of it. 'Marin-an', here quoted in its entirety, is a good example:

sun breaks over the eucalyptus
grove below the wet pasture,
water's about hot,
I sit in the open window
& roll a smoke.

distant dogs bark, a pair of
cawing crows; the twang
of a pygmy nuthatch high in a pine--
from behind the cypress windrow
the mare moves up, grazing.

a soft continuous roar
comes out of the far valley
of the six-lane highway--thousands
and thousands of cars
driving men to work.

(BC, p. 8)

The atmosphere which this poem attempts to create is representative of that in many of Snyder's lyrics of solitude. It reflects qualities which he had admired in translating the poems of Han-shan where he noted "the imagery of cold, height, harshness, isolation, mountains", declaring

them "available to any one today".⁸ What is immediately striking in the poem is the contrast created by the evocation of the natural landscape in the first two sections and of the man-made world in the last. This is hardly an unusual theme in much conventional nature poetry, but what is untypical in Snyder's poem is not only his method of expressing that contrast but also the role of the individual in the poem. Much of the poem operates through the registering of one of the senses: hearing. The sharply distinct animal sounds, which might all carry some connotations of unpleasantness - "bark", "cawing", and "twang" - are projected against the indistinct "soft continuous roar" which rises from the road below. Snyder appears anxious not simply to re-state a positive/negative dualism between the natural and the human world, a point reinforced by an inversion of normal phrasing in the poem's vision of "thousands of cars/driving men to work", which at least suggests an unwillingness, perhaps impotence, in the men dominated by coercive machinery. The poem deliberately stops short of censuring the men for disturbing, and not sharing, the alternative natural tranquillity made available in it, and thus avoids any overtly superior moralizing on the part of the speaker. This reluctance to assume a disdainful attitude is reinforced by the personal presence in the poem. Entering only once, simply enough to register or establish his presence, the narrator is no more than one other object in the poem's landscape. Again, perhaps unlike a more traditional nature poet, he is neither superior to his surroundings, nor in awe of them; he merely wishes to merge and blend with the scene in a way which, as Kern says, "eliminates the problem of relationship between man and nature, subject and object, by assuming their unity a priori".⁹ The poem, 'All through the rains', provides another example:

That mare stood in the field--
 A big pine tree and a shed,
 But she stayed in the open
 Ass to the wind, splash wet.
 I tried to catch her April
 For a bareback ride,
 She kicked and bolted
 Later grazing fresh shoots
 In the shade of the down
 Eucalyptus on the hill.

(RCM, p. 16)

The specificity with which this poem renders its natural objects cannot help but undermine the poet's presence, which again is registered by a single intrusion. The use of "that" rather than a perhaps more usual definite or indefinite article to begin the poem is reminiscent of the sense of specificity which William Carlos Williams - a poet whose influence will be increasingly apparent - exploited with a similar technique. In his case, it often expresses an urgency also; for example, in opening 'Willow Poem' with "It is a willow when summer is over", or 'Complaint' with "They call me and I go/It is a frozen road", or 'Young Sycamore' with "I must tell you/This young tree"¹⁰ [my emphases]. 'All through the rains' plays out, in fact, a tiny symbolic drama in which the poet is literally rejected from any domination of the poem's other main object. His intrusion, in this sense, is to no avail; the poem begins and ends with a natural scene which he has been unable to disturb.

This is not to deny, of course, the ultimate artifice of these poems. The poet does remain a mediating presence: he is the final instrument of selection and rejection, of the choice and ordering of the objects and images which make the poem. The craft of such poems, laden with Snyder's familiar structural and rhythmic devices, makes them calculated utterances. In the face of this however, are his attempts not to assume the position of the self-imposed dominant subject of the

poem, but rather a simple and single part of it: an inconspicuous guide. It is a role, in fact, which Williams assigns to the poet in his allegorical poem 'Tract', in which he sets out his poetics by using as a parallel the arrangements for a funeral. Hence his instructions to the "townspeople" on the role of the driver of the hearse (the poet):

For heaven's sake though see to the driver!...
 Bring him down--bring him down!
 Low and inconspicuous! I'd not have him ride
 on the wagon at all--damn him--...
 Let him hold the reins
 and walk at the side
 and inconspicuously too!¹¹

An extremely fine dividing line exists in the lyric which simultaneously looks to minimize the intervention of the poet's personality whilst also relying heavily on the use of the first person pronoun. To guide him along this tightrope, Snyder has always had the example of Williams whose poems frequently confront - and usually overcome - the same problem. In Snyder's poetry, the lyrics which most successfully achieve a correct balance are those which, like the two discussed above, involve a single, and then essentially unassuming, registering of the speaker's presence: 'Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout', 'Piute Creek', 'Six-Month Song in the Foothills', 'Oil', 'Yase: September', 'Vapor Trails', 'Work to do Toward Town', and 'Nanao Knows' are among the best examples. Conversely, less satisfactory are those which draw too heavily on autobiography and thus become vulnerable to an oppressive presence. 'Confessional' in the least positive sense of the term, they result in sentimentality which often develops a maudlin tone: the Four Poems for Robin sequence displays these tendencies only too clearly. When Snyder does achieve a suppression of personality in the poem, his success can be measured by the illusion which he creates that, for the span of time which the poem occupies, the reader can experience a direct contact with the objects

presented; that, in fact, the poem speaks for itself without the reader being aware of the presence of a mediator.

This attempt to remove one barrier in the reading experience by erasure of the self has its counterpart in the approach to language in the lyrics. Snyder's use of tradition is never a slavish one and, if he appears to reject one distinctive aspect of Modernism - an impersonality accomplished via the use of persona - then, as Robert Kern suggests, in his lyric poems he also distrusts another - the poem as autonomous artefact:

Modernist poetics typically emphasizes the way in which a poem is a separate autonomous object, a primary, independent reality unto itself - MacLeish's "The poem must not mean/But be," for example, or Stevens's "Not Ideas About the Thing but the Thing Itself."....there is a constant stress, implicit and explicit, on the poem's organic unity, its separateness from history and its otherwise privileged nature as a species of language exempt from the inroads of the ordinary temporal world. In its flight toward its own reality, the poem must avoid the discursive and merely representational.

Kern goes on to argue that Snyder's lyric poetry does not share this Modernist preoccupation but, on the contrary, is fundamentally mimetic or representational since Snyder has "a hope or faith or conviction that there is an authentic relationship between the words of a poem and what they refer to - along with the necessary corollary of any mimetic theory that the thing represented, the external world, is the primary locus of value, as opposed to the poem itself".¹² It is this context which reveals one manifest difference between the lyric and mythic modes in Snyder's poetry. A mythic poem such as Myths & Texts, with the Modernist models which underpin its writing, consistently draws attention to its own autonomous existence. Its frequent use of allusions, its collage materials, the appearances of languages other than English,

its spatial form and discontinuous composition, are all devices by which the poem asserts its own independence, demanding to be read in its own right and not merely as a passive vehicle or representational model of the real world. The lyric poems exist on an entirely different level, especially as regards the reader's involvement with the surface texture of the poem; in fact, that surface virtually disappears in Snyder's wish to write, in the lyric mode, a poem "which you didn't even see... it was so simple on the surface".¹³

Some of this 'transparency' is achieved through the characteristic language of the lyrics, although Snyder's view of it fluctuates - often dramatically - between a realization that there are areas of purely non-communicable feeling which may prove impossible to convey, and an equally firm assurance that the handling of language as 'riprap' - a concrete, solid, and weighty construction of particulars - will enable the almost physical reconstruction of a given scene. This attempted act of reconciliation between the abstract or non-verbal and the utterly physical is exhibited, for example, in his comments on the Han-shan translations where he writes that "in working with these few poems of Han Shan [sic], I have several times had a powerful sense of apprehending auras of non-verbal meaning" and yet, as he continues, "part of the effort of translation has been an almost physical recall of the Ponderosa and whitebark pine, granite cliffs, frozen summer lakes".¹⁴ The act of "physical recall" - "Lay down these words/Before your mind like rocks" - is the one chosen by Snyder as he steers "a course between crystal clouds of utterly incommunicable non-verbal states - and the gleaming daggers and glittering nets of language".¹⁵ Many of the lyric poems emerge, then, from a curious struggle between a patent distrust of the abstractions inherent in language and a faith that words can almost stand in a one-for-one relationship with aspects of the real world.

This debate is often carried over into the lyrics themselves. 'Foxtail Pine' is a good example of a poem which is above all concerned with definition, description, and the slipperiness of language. It opens with a self-confident display of definition involving physical characteristics:

bark smells like pineapple: Jeffries
cones prick your hands: Ponderosa

nobody knows what they are, saying
"needles three to a bunch..."

"the true fir cone stands straight,
the doug fir cone hangs down."

When the poem turns its attention to a similar definition of the foxtail pine, it is abruptly brought to a halt with a query:

foxtail pine with a
clipped curve-back cluster of tight
 five-needle bunches
 the rough red bark scale
and jigsaw pieces sloughed off
 scattered on the ground.
--what am I doing saying "foxtail pine"?

(BC, p. 16)

Not only does the poem begin to question what possible logical connection there could be between signifier and signified in the case of the foxtail pine but also, in a pattern of thought which is entirely typical of Snyder's poetry, it goes on to invoke a geological past in which such trees existed long before the ability of man to pin them with language. Their antiquity is sharply contrasted with what by now seem the trivial descriptions which opened the poem:

these conifers whose home was ice
age tundra, taiga, they of the
 naked sperm
do whitebark pine and white pine seem the same?

The question is a rhetorical one since the two pines resemble each other neither in shape, bark, leaves, nor cone formation, but the application of purely arbitrary, yet similar, written symbols, has created a suggestion of homogeneity perhaps satisfying a necessity to reduce and control by naming. It is an apt example of the power of language to diminish specificity rather than, as Snyder would wish, to enhance it. As the poem returns to the foxtail pine, it is noticeably less confident about either naming or description as the first line of this last section demonstrates:

a sort of tree
 its leaves are needles
 like a fox's brush
 (I call him fox because he looks that way)
 and call this other thing, a
 foxtail pine.

(BC, p. 17)

The 'logical' explanation for the naming of the pine - its leaves are bunched needles which resemble a fox's brush, hence 'foxtail' - is undermined by the speaker's realization that the basis for this train of connections has no real solidity in itself, since he can produce no better reason for using 'fox' as the signifier for that animal than habitually accepted usage, almost defiantly saying "I call him fox because he looks that way". By the end of the poem, then, the foxtail pine has become "this other thing" and the speaker's self-assured display of natural lore which began the poem has been relegated to a more humble context.

The poem 'June' from the series, Six Years, supplies another implicit discussion of the way in which language, which Snyder desperately wishes to see as a thing of solidity and stability, can suddenly reveal the fragility of its relationship with the actual world. The poem has

as its background Snyder's experiences of teaching English as a foreign language to Japanese students, a context in which he is persistently brought to face the inherent instability of language and its ability to veer off into nonsense with little or no provocation. As the exercises in the class-room progressively increase the sense of unreality of language, Snyder juxtaposes them with a series of sharp visual and aural images whose clarity helps him to defend his lines:

students listen to the tapes---...

"A nap is 'provisional sleep' "

Blue jumper on a white blouse (Miss Yokota)
car honks outside...

"people call her 'Janie' "

"people collar Janie"

Van Gogh print on the wall: vase of flowers all yellow
& tawny.

Sun setting on Atago Mountain

A mock battle is joined between the comforting reality of the physical sounds and precise visual images and the chanting of phrases in a pronunciation exercise - a process which rapidly renders them nonsensical. The conflict eventually produces a fascinating sound poem in itself:

pingpong game in the hall
Motorcycle rumbles in the streets--
horns--dark nights rain up sudden on the tin bar
roof next door

"try tea buy ties weigh Tim buy type
flat tea bright ties greet Tim met Tess
stout trap wet trip right track light tread
high tree Joy tries gay trim fry tripe"

(BC, p. 60)

Snyder's language dilemma is epitomized in these two juxtaposed sections. First, a brief passage in a characteristically terse and elliptical style which uses a monosyllabic and onomatopoeic diction to build a sound

picture for the reader. The distinct and well-defined noises of the "pingpong game", the motorcycle, car horns, and the rain on a tin roof look to provide a tangible reconstruction of the world outside the class-room: language, then, as a solid "riprap of things". Secondly, a passage which, although equally involved in word-play - and producing delightful sound patterns - reaches a point where its language is rinsed of any meaning and of all reference to the external world; here then, not language as "a cobble of hard words on steep places, on which to walk", but

Language torn up like a sewer or highway
& layed out on text
Page and tape.

(BC, p. 61)

Snyder is continually aware of the delicate balance involved in the concept of language as 'riprap'; his is never a simple faith that language can always be manipulated to provide some primary access for the reader, but a certain knowledge of the perpetual engagement in a struggle to prevent the poem, through its language, from being converted into a metaphor for an abstract idea which would deny the concrete nature of its fundamental expression. Much as with his efforts to remove the "interference of the individual as ego" from the lyric poems, his success in such a struggle is never to be measured by some impossible outright victory, but rather by the illusion which he is often able to create and sustain that the abstractions of language, and the inevitable gap between the signifier and the signified, have been temporarily overcome. As Kern concludes in writing of the lyric poems:

At their own expense, then, these poems promote the value of the external world and of immediate experience. They do so, that is, by subordinating themselves to the world and by insisting on their

own inadequacies, as well as those of language, to do anything more than represent. Paradoxically, however, their failure is also their success.... The art of these poems, in fact, often lies in the way they convince us that certain kinds or uses of language are more "concrete," and therefore less abstract or conceptual, than others. 16

One notably consistent feature of Snyder's drive towards a more concrete expression is his frequent insistence on naming as a method of accentuating the supremely representational function of his language. His poems thus become littered with dates, times, proper names - people, places, animals, natural features - to increase the sense that they are firmly located in the real world. Even before Riprap begins, then, we are offered a list of dedicatees whose names in themselves are practically an evocative poem, one redolent of life "in the woods & at sea". The titles which Snyder chooses for his poems also reflect this commitment to naming. They often invoke people: 'Sather', 'Nansen', 'Alysoun', 'Robin', 'Nanao Knows', 'For John Chappell'; or a particular geographical place, for example, 'Piute Creek', 'Above Pate Valley', 'Noonsack Valley', 'Marin-an', 'Pine River', 'Mt. Hiei', 'A Volcano in Kyushu', 'This Tokyo', 'Across Lamarck Col'; or specify a precise time or date, as in 'The Late Snow & Lumber Strike of the Summer of Fifty-four', '7:VII', '7.IV.64', the Six Years series, with twelve separate poems each corresponding to a month in the year; or, a particularly frequent combination, a fusion of place and time: 'Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout', 'Six-Month Song in the Foothills', 'Yase: September', 'Twelve Hours out of New York after Twenty-Five Days at Sea', or three of the Four Poems for Robin - 'A spring night in Shokoku-ji', 'An autumn morning in Shokoku-ji', and 'December at Yase'. On occasions, this relentless naming spills over into exaggeratedly long titles which almost become short poems in themselves, for example, 'Trail Crew Camp at Bear Valley, 9000 Feet. Northern Sierra--White Bone and Threads of

Snowmelt Water'.

Individual poems are also often given a spinal column of naming to pin them to the actual. Not untypical is 'Migration of Birds' which is carefully sub-titled with a precise date, "April 1956", and takes the reader through a veritable flock of bird names, "a hummingbird", "white-crowned sparrows", "the rooster", "the Golden Plover and the Arctic Tern", "juncos and the robins", as well as more indications of time and place: "this hazy day/Of April summer heat" and the seabirds which

Chase Spring north along the coast:
Nesting in Alaska
In six weeks.

For good measure, Snyder adds two book titles, "the Diamond Sutra" and "Migration of Birds", and a named participant, "Jack Kerouac" (RCM, p. 17). The poem becomes a construct of names and naming in an effort to equip it with so many designated objects from the ordinary world that the reader is left in no doubt as to its physicality. The same process informs 'Sather', a poem which describes a chance encounter whilst travelling:

old Norwegian by me on the bus,
"travel makes you big"
 night ride through Redding,
Red Bluff, north;
"those forests on Snoqualmie Pass
 just like the streams and woods
 where I grew up--"
an island in the North Atlantic,

Everett at age nineteen
a sailor on a schooner, 1912...

"I used to like this country--
now I think I'll live in France"...

a dried out Scandinavian
fisherman's son gone off to
 the Northwest.

name is Sather.

"means 'mountain summer pasture'
like they have in Norway--it's a
common name--"

where we take our cow.

& up Queets Basin country,
that year, 1964,
was still in August,
ten feet under
snow.

(BC, p. 30)

In noting the surfeit of place names and dates which construct the poem, we also realize that they pattern the man's life. Looking forward to plans which will probably never materialize, and back nostalgically to a childhood he has lost, he can only cling to what he feels is immutable - the solidity of place, name, and date which his memory furnishes. The last section shows that the poet, in his turn, has begun to convert his own experience into a diary form.

In employing such techniques, Snyder's search for the purely concrete, palpable qualities in language lead him into poems which want, in themselves, to become part of the "riprap of things"; they are an exact parallel to Basil Bunting's exclamation in Briggflats:

Words!
Pens are too light.
Take a chisel to write. 17

Some of the habitual strategies of Snyder's lyric poems are beginning to clarify themselves: the extension of the plain style into one which deliberately emphasizes the absolutely concrete and literal nature of the poem; the ensuing absence of any real surface difficulties of comprehension for the reader; the stress on the clear perception and uninvolved presentation of the external world with little interference on the part of the poet; and the studied resistance to any manipulation

which would allow the creation of abstractions, divorcing the poem's objects from their primary reality. In a period, however, where dominant trends in literary criticism have equipped the reader to deal comfortably with complexity or ambiguity in poetry, the presence of such simplicity can be strangely puzzling; what are listed above, then, as the virtues of Snyder's lyrics are, for some, their abiding faults:

The major problem in Snyder's poetry is that he can rarely achieve the unity of thought and language required of a good poem. Usually, he is caught up in that poetic quicksand that swallows so much of the work of Whitman and Carlos Williams and the "Beats": the cataloguing of natural objects, mundane events, and sensory impressions until they are meaningless and boring. In short, there is a failure of poetic discrimination and organization which is in itself a failure of sensibility. This sort of cataloguing is rooted in the notion that all Snyder's experiences, thoughts, and perceptions ...are interesting to others....Consequently, a great deal of the poetry is the enshrining of casual observations and recollections, unyoked to broader human concerns and rendered in a language devoid of originality or beauty. If either the experiences or the language are meaningful to Snyder, he fails to communicate their importance to his readers. 18

Without commenting on what this writer's ideals of beautiful language might be, such criticisms will always be partially valid when directed at a poetry where a commitment to the precise rendering of detail may extend into catalogue or list poems, which require delicate handling if they are to accomplish their aims. However, as a blanket condemnation, it may prove less pertinent. This particular grievance, for example, is illustrated by citing the Apache food-list forming 'Hunting', 13 of Myths & Texts, which not only succeeds as an exotic and rhythmical sound-poem but also takes its proper place in the fine complex of the poem as a whole. If it is ripped from that context then much of its effectiveness will necessarily be lost. (The case is reminiscent of the puzzled, and slightly hostile, questioning of Williams over the

shopping list in 'Two Pendants: for the Ears' which had similarly been quoted out of context and which finally elicited from Williams the eminently quotable remark that "anything is good material for poetry").¹⁹ These criticisms might be more accurately levelled at poems such as 'More Better' where a series of totally obscure allusions, snippets of personal experience, and other random images leave the reader, if not completely baffled, then without any real incentive to search for Snyder's possible intent:

Uncle, Oh uncle
 seventy dogs

O centipede
 bit me in bed
wind in the red leaf berry tree

whynes

Bull you are
too brown.

The Persimmon
was too fat the tree its

branches too bent down.

(BC, p. 87)

Such a poem might find even the devotee looking, and hoping, for signs of deliberate self-parody, which unfortunately may not be there. The general charge, however, remains to be answered, that "there is a fallacy in [Snyder's] idea of poetry...going back to W. C. Williams - that the poet is a holy man who only has to point at an object; the initiate will perceive its significance".²⁰

As previously discussed, much of Snyder's faith in the unadorned 'object' as a building block for the poem comes from his admiration of Chinese poetry, where each monosyllabic ideogram stands alone to strike its own note in the reader's imagination without the conscious addition of connectives to dilute that blow; to quote the eleventh-century Wei T'ai:

"Poetry presents the thing in order to convey the feeling. It should be precise about the thing and reticent about the feeling, for as soon as the mind responds and connects with the thing the feeling shows in the words."²¹ As a parallel to this, and another confirmation of Snyder's role in the modern American lyric tradition, there is the example of William Carlos Williams who stands accused by both the preceding critics of Snyder's objectism.

Williams' philosophy of composition was consistent in its rejection of any thinking which ordered itself in generalities or abstractions and not in the particular, the detailed, the lucid and precise. Such a belief is reflected throughout his poetry and essays from the ubiquitous "no ideas but in things" to his conviction that the artist "does not translate the sensuality of his materials into symbols but deals with them directly....That - all my life I have striven to emphasize it - is what is meant by the universality of the local".²² Much of Williams' lyric poetry is evidence of a wish to rinse language of all ornamentation or false suggestion and to allow only the act of perception, and the transfer of that act onto the page, to give rise to the power and feeling of the poem. For Williams, nothing was more important than the duty of the poet to permit the clearly perceived objects of the poem to have a distinct and autonomous existence. They should not be transformed and the poem as a whole should not be allowed to become merely a vehicle for abstract ideas. (This surely is the major import of the plea which opens 'The Red Wheelbarrow': "so much depends/upon"). Correctly presented, 'things' have the ability to suggest their own meanings through the new pattern of relationships they create in the poem. Some of these relationships, or rather the ideas which they produce, may well be abstract in nature; but if this occurs, it will be through no overt act of tampering by the poet. It is not a poetry without ideas then,

but a poetry without the conscious or deliberate infusion of ideas: a poetry which rejects the notion of the poem as an instrument of direct didacticism or moralizing. Hence, a typical Williams lyric such as 'The Banner Bearer' may be speaking of the human qualities of endurance, resolution, and indefatigability; or it might, in its mimetic rhythm, plot the gradual process of developing from one train of thought into another in an effort to enter a "new territory" of the mind. Ultimately though, it is its primary description which continues to speak most powerfully; simply, then, what is actually perceived: "the lonesome/dog", steadfast and stubborn with "some obscure/insistence", almost joyfully resisting its transformation into an abstraction.²³ The poem is able to create a complex of meaning and possible interpretation without the poet ever having compromised the nature of his original perception.

This is also, admittedly, a poetry which can often skirt the edges of banality. If the presentation, for all its honesty, does ultimately fail for the reader, then there can be little left for salvage. However, it is important that such a failure is not simply a function of the poem being probed for what the poet had never intended should be there. The two critics of Williams and Snyder cited earlier are perhaps guilty of this. Rothberg asks for a self-evident display of "broader human concerns", and Simpson's remarks implicitly demand not only that the poet should charge his poem's objects with significance but also that they should be 'significant' in the first place: there is little room for Williams' "universality of the local" here or his belief that the tiniest and seemingly least meaningful experiences can be made over into poetry.

In their espousal of the ordinary, and their assertion that the poem can operate without a mediating commentary, Snyder's lyrics frequently resemble those of Williams. One comparison might be the two poems of

physical work, Williams' 'Fine Work with Pitch and Copper' and Snyder's 'Hay for the Horses', with the latter occasionally producing a verbal echo of the former. 'Fine Work with Pitch and Copper' catches a quiet moment of rest in a day's labour:

Now they are resting
in the fleckless light
separately in unison

like the sacks
of sifted stone stacked
regularly by twos

Typically, Williams is fascinated by the precision and exactitude of the men's work, producing his acknowledgement of it in the meticulous shaded rhyme and sound-matching which pervade the lines of his poem, accentuating their slow and meditative movement. There is an admiration also for the solid and palpable nature of their craft:

The copper in eight
foot strips has been
beaten lengthwise

down the center at right
angles and lies ready
to edge the coping

For Williams, who was fond of describing a poem as a "machine made of words",²⁴ this is an image of raw materials shaped and controlled to a specific purpose; it is work in which the craftsman can feel a justifiable pride:

One still chewing
picks up a copper strip
and runs his eye along it

With a fine and confident nonchalance, one is unable to resist the temptation, even at rest, to survey his skill again with a measure of satisfaction.²⁵

Characteristically, in his poem, Snyder becomes one of the workmen; thus having received a load of hay:

We stacked the bales up clean
 To splintery redwood rafters
 High in the dark, flecks of alfalfa
 Whirling through shingle-cracks of light,
 Itch of haydust in the
 sweaty shirt and shoes.

In a poem which makes greater use of a narrative and anecdotal framework, Snyder then turns to that same moment of rest and atmosphere of quiet:

At lunchtime under Black oak
 Out in the hot corral,
 --The old mare nosing lunchpails,
 Grasshoppers crackling in the weeds--

As in the Williams lyric, he can now focus on a single workman, using an anecdote to elicit his attitude to the physical labour:

"I'm sixty-eight" he said,
 "I first bucked hay when I was seventeen.
 I thought, that day I started,
 I sure would hate to do this all my life.
 And dammit, that's just what
 I've gone and done."

(RCM, p. 13)

With a certain amount of wryness - reminiscent of the logger, Ed McCullough, in 'Logging', 7 of Myths & Texts - the man has a rueful pride in his work, which is matched by the poet's admiration for his dedication and expertise.

Both of these poems might be dismissed as the meaningless rendering of trivial incident of importance only to the poet. Certainly, neither makes a conscious effort to yoke its observations to "broader human issues". Yet through their exact perception, both are capable of providing - in an essentially unprepossessing manner - a deep insight into lives governed

by simplicity and dignity. Both may also, and particularly in the case of the Williams poem, be implicit comments on what might be learned by the poet for his own craft. This deeply sympathetic observation of individuals is a feature of Williams' poetry, producing a series of similar 'portrait' poems including, amongst many others, 'Death', 'A Portrait of the Times', 'To a Poor Old Woman', 'Proletarian Portrait', 'Pastoral', 'The Poor', 'A Widow's Lament in Springtime', 'The Farmer', and 'Autumn'.²⁶ It is an order of poem which has its parallel in Snyder with, for example, 'Sather', 'Out West', 'The Public Bath', 'Asleep on the Train', 'The Old Dutch Woman', and, as representative as any of these lyrics which take their inspiration from the portrayal of the individual, 'Yase: September':

Old Mrs. Kawabata
cuts down the tall spike weeds--
 more in two hours
than I can get done in a day.

out of a mountain
of grass and thistle
she saved five dusty stalks
 of ragged wild blue flower
and put them in my kitchen
 in a jar.

(BC, p. 35)

There is something of admiration and something of envy in the speaker's voice as he admits the dextrous superiority of his companion in a work which she has mastered through habit and long practice. In the space between the two sections, one imagines a silent debate as to whether he will continue to ennoble the simple labour, or perhaps save face by suggesting that, after all, such work may have a brutalizing effect. The old woman cuts through any such debate with an unaffected gesture of friendship having found some vestiges of beauty among the waste and debris. Like Williams' poor old woman "munching a plum" or the "big bareheaded woman" pulling out the nail from her shoe,²⁷ Mrs. Kawabata steadfastly

resists being transformed into an abstraction: the poem's impact rests finally in its two sentences, its two sections, its two acts of labour and friendship, and the poet's deliberate cultivation of a space within which the poem can operate.

This sense of space, and the ensuing lack of tension caused by the adoption of a tone of understatement, is purposefully created in order to allow the free play of the reader's imagination in its contact with the poem. The refusal to permit the intrusion of large abstract issues, initiated and discussed by the poet, is governed by an implicit sense that they will fill such a space before the poem has even reached its audience, thus controlling and channelling its reaction. Rather, such issues must arise naturally from the directness of expression in the poem - "no ideas but in things" - in a fashion taught by Williams and absorbed by Snyder. Hence in a poem such as 'What Do They Say', Snyder is doubtless concerned with human transience and mortality, yet such enigmas are handled not by overt discussion but through a series of precise juxtaposed images:

The glimpse of a once-loved face
 gone into a train.
 Lost in a new town, no one knows the name.
 lone man sitting in the park
 Chanced on by a friend
 of thirty years before,
 what do they say.
 Play chess with bottle caps.
 "for sale" sign standing in the field:
 dearest, dearest,
 Soot on the sill,
 a garden full of weeds

(BC, p. 89)

The poem is a concretion of well-defined statements each making a slightly different contribution to the central core: an image of the grief of parting and loss; one of disorientation and the strangeness of an

unfamiliar place; a portrait of human loneliness which even the chance meeting of a past friend cannot ameliorate since that brings its own problems of communication - "what do they say"; finally the neglected house for sale, an objective correlative for the effects of time passing. Inserted in this final statement is the repeated endearment, "dearest, dearest", on the one hand an almost defiant gesture against the pain of loss; on the other, a pointless verbal repetition. As well as contributing to the composite picture of waste and separation, each individual image has its own resonance, its own space in which to work, with the poet careful not to impose predetermined links for the reader. The technique is that of Pound, exemplified in 'In a Station of the Metro', where two superimposed images invite the reader to discern the layers of meaning in the poem but do not offer explicit connections (the poem is neither simile nor metaphor).

With Pound's claim that 'In a Station of the Metro' was influenced in part by his understanding of the Japanese haiku, it is tempting to seek a similar inspiration in Snyder's lyrics, especially considering his extended contact with Japanese culture. Indeed, the structural principles of haiku and its philosophy of composition would seem to offer ideal support to the type of lyric poem under discussion. R. H. Blyth writes, for example, that the form "emphasizes the material, as against the so-called spiritual. There is no abstract arguing, no general principles. Everything is concrete".²⁸ The haiku poet's treatment of the objects in the poem is also pertinent since "the aim of haiku is to bestow on things the poetic life which already they possess in their own right....This poetry of things is not something superimposed on them, but brought out of them".²⁹

Western understanding and appreciation of the haiku has consistently stressed its simplicity, often viewing it merely as an

epigrammatic form or, worse still, mistaking its apparent unsophistication for triteness. Certainly, some of the earlier Imagists scarcely treated it seriously; witness F. S. Flint's remarks that the Poet's Club, in its dissatisfaction with English verse "proposed at various times to replace it by pure vers libre; by the Japanese tanka and haikai; we all wrote dozens of the latter as an amusement".³⁰ This was hardly the approach of the premier exponent of haiku, the seventeenth-century Bashō, who felt that "he who creates three to five haiku poems in a lifetime is a haiku poet. He who attains to ten is a master",³¹ which is curiously reminiscent of Pound's much latter comment that "it is better to present one Image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous works".³²

What had initially attracted the early Imagists to haiku was, of course, what could be presented of it in translation. Without claiming any special status for the form in this respect, its apparent artlessness, paired with an inherent complexity, makes its translation a particularly difficult task. Even so, neither the simplicity of haiku, nor its sophistication, could ultimately be of much use to the poet in English. Pound's 'In a Station of the Metro', for example, is unlike haiku in that, for all its plainness, it remains too complicated: a haiku would make absolutely clear the relationship between the two images involved, whereas Pound deliberately wished to leave this open to speculation. Neither is the sophistication of haiku open to translation. Looking at perhaps the epitome of the form, the model poem of Bashō - 'Furu-ike ya' - in its Blyth translation, can only leave a Western reader at a loss to understand the high status it is accorded:

The old pond;
A frog jumps in,--
The sound of the water.³³

What is left behind in the translation are those features which deny the

surface limpidity of haiku: its strict rules of versification (which go beyond the counting of seventeen syllables); its specialized diction; its propensity towards allusion and the use of standard phrases or objects which may set off independent trains of reference in the reader; and finally, perhaps the most neglected element of all in the popularized translated haiku, its extensive use of word-play both to delight the mind - pun, for example - and to appeal to the ear, as in its uniquely comprehensive use of onomatopoeia. Indeed, sound devices of all kinds play a role in the poem. "Haiku...are songs" writes Blyth, "they are meant to be read aloud, and repeated aloud....the full and perfect meaning of a haiku is not realized until it is heard by the physical ear".³⁴ One prominent aspect of haiku which is diminished by translation is the season word, even if this device is nominally accounted for in the new version. The haiku, in its comparatively short development, has always been quintessentially a poem of nature and, more specifically, will evoke a particular season for its audience by the inclusion of a key phrase or word. The season word, which has been such an integral part of the haiku as to be a defining factor of it, may be a natural object, a reference to the elements, some human artefact, and so on; however, such is the strictness of their use, that they may be indexed and compilations can be consulted by the intending poet. One of the functions of the season word is to act as a focal point in the haiku unifying its other elements, although its major concern is to broaden the impact of the poem; thus it "may give the atmospheric background, it may be a kind of seed, a trigger which releases a whole world of emotion, of sounds and scents and colours....it is a kind of poetic algebra or shorthand".³⁵ Such elements of the haiku can only be effective when the form is imbedded in its own culture; their translation may prove impossible, yet the acknowledgement of their existence moves haiku away from its misconception

as a seventeen-syllable epigram and reveals its highly wrought and sophisticated nature.

As an Orientalist with a detailed knowledge of Japanese culture, Snyder is as wary of misjudging haiku as he has been of misconstruing the literature of any other culture he has encountered. His studies of T'ang poetry, for example, had revealed much which he sensed to be non-verbal, and thus untranslatable, in its impact. Even those elements which he has felt able to borrow for his own poetry are much transformed and mutated in the process; it is an equivalence, not a direct duplication, which is sought. Similarly, the idea of 'Western' haiku has not appealed to him, since the simple three-line poem - the form which the translated haiku has normally taken - is never an accurate reflection of the nature of the original, but leaves practically all of its real interest behind. Snyder's only direct efforts to approximate haiku are often as opaque as, say, Blyth's translations of the originals but lack the benefit of his ensuing comprehensive commentaries (there are over six pages glossing 'Furu-ike ya' in Blyth's Haiku). In the journal section of Earth House Hold, for example, there are occasional tiny images which, although pleasant enough in themselves, carry no great weight:

two butterflies
a chilly clump of mountain
flowers 36

In the series Hitch Haiku in The Back Country, Snyder is occasionally able to use the minimal haiku-like framework to better effect:

They didn't hire him
so he ate his lunch alone:
the noon whistle

(BC, p. 24)

The man rejected from a job eats a solitary lunch, prepared in the

anticipation of new work; as he eats, the noon whistle blows - the official lunch signal for those who are working - thus increasing the poignancy of the moment. Ironically enough, in its limited success, this brief poem is not haiku at all but senryu, a form which while sharing the basic structural features of haiku, is not a poetry of nature but of the human world. Blyth defines senryu as "the expression of a moment of psychological insight into the life of human beings; nature is either absent or a mere background".³⁷ With their "preoccupation with man and indifference to nature" and their "obliviousness to so-called religion and poetry", senryu are valued for their satiric function, as often as not parodying the solemnity of haiku: "the literature of the unliterary" as Blyth calls it.³⁸ There is a tacit admission by Snyder that Hitch Haiku is a series of senryu, not haiku, in that he follows the typographical distinction which Blyth uses between the two in his translations (Snyder would certainly have been familiar with Blyth's work as a major interpreter of Japanese poetry and culture). For haiku, Blyth indents the first and third of the three lines, as for example in Bashō's 'Furu-ike ya' cited earlier - and in Snyder's 'haiku' quoted from 'Lookout's Journal'; for senryu, the middle of the three lines is indented, as in Snyder's senryu-equivalent immediately above. Most of the poems in Hitch Haiku adopt this typographical pattern, and many also exploit the form's satiric and self-mocking tone. Here, the poet becomes simultaneously the butt and the mock-hero of his poem, parodying the quasi-religious 'satori' or insight of haiku by projecting it into the secular world:

After weeks of watching the roof leak
 I fixed it tonight
 by moving a single board

(BC, p. 25)

Occasionally, Snyder takes the spirit of senryu into a longer poem, especially where that form touches upon areas which are taboo for the haiku: the physical body, its functions, and sex. "To haiku", writes Blyth, "sex hardly exists; to senryu, it is all-pervading....Senryu is concerned above all things with the vital relation of man to man and man to woman".³⁹ Thus 'The Public Bath' presents its series of self-contained and witty portraits with the vigour of senryu:

the bath-girl

getting dressed, in the mirror,
 the bath-girl with a pretty mole and a
 red skirt is watching me:
 am I
 different?

the baby boy

on his back, dashed with scalding water
 silent, moving eyes
 inscrutably
 pees...

the old woman

too fat and too old to care
 she just stands there
 idly knocking dewy water off her
 bush.

the young woman

gazing vacant, drying her neck
 faint fuzz of hair
 little points of breasts
 --next year she'll be dressing
 out of sight.

(BC, pp. 41 - 42)

As in senryu, there is no malice in these portraits as Snyder takes us with great economy and insight through a range of very human responses: the shy curiosity of adolescence, the self-consciousness of the outsider

(the poem is set in Japan), the unabashed naturalness of childhood, and the resignation of old age.

With more single-mindedness than Snyder, and certainly less expertise in the language and literature, the early Imagist interest in forms such as haiku was derived from a belief that their concentrated brevity was the closest poetry might come to achieving that pure epiphanous moment felt to be at the heart of lyric poetry. This is inherent in Pound's definition of the Image as "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time....It is the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sudden sense of growth".⁴⁰ Epiphany in the lyric, concisely defined by Robert Langbaum as "a manifestation in and through the visible world of an invisible life",⁴¹ is expressed in haiku by what one writer calls the "haiku moment", the goal towards which every haiku poet strives: "A haiku moment is a kind of aesthetic moment - a moment in which the words which created the experience and the experience itself can become one. The nature of a haiku moment is anti-temporal and its quality is eternal, for in this state man and his environment are one unified whole, in which there is no sense of time".⁴² The interpenetration of poet, poem, and experience described in such a union is one which Snyder seeks in his lyrics. For him, however, its achievement rarely relies on the attempt to capture or re-create the pure epiphanous moment. Inherent in the concept of epiphany is a sense of tension where the poem's component parts first stand apart, or even pull one against the other, before their sudden coherence into a combination which provides the trigger for swift, incisive meaning. As must already be apparent in the poems discussed to this point, such dialectical tension has no real place in Snyder's lyrics which, on the contrary, cultivate a deliberately studied tranquillity, a

relaxed and nonchalant tone which depends much more on the perfect equilibrium between the poem's individual constituents. As Altieri says in discussing the lyric poems:

The characteristic poem in this style is thoroughly concrete and dramatic, but its drama does not involve the usual process of creating and intensifying conflicts that are eventually resolved. Rather the poem develops casually and depends not on tension between elements but on the mutual support they give one another, on the way they draw out one another's full significance for the processes of living. 43

Such epiphany also implies an essentially static structure for the lyric, the stasis of the moment caught in time. Not only is such a concept almost totally absent from Snyder's work, it is, in fact, one which the modern lyric since Pound has struggled to overcome; that is, how to invest a sense of the dynamic or kinetic into what might otherwise become the static nature of the lyric. Pound's own response was the "moving image": "The defect of earlier imagist propaganda was not in misstatement but in incomplete statement. The diluters took the handiest and easiest meaning, and thought only of the STATIONARY image. If you can't think of imagism or phanopoeia as including the moving image, you will have to make a really needless division of fixed image and praxis or action."⁴⁴

The dynamic forces in Pound's poems of the "moving image" are created almost entirely by juxtaposition. Poems such as 'The Garden', 'Salutation', 'The Bath Tub', 'Liu Ch'e', 'Fan-Piece, For Her Imperial Lord', 'In a Station of the Metro', and 'Alba' are essentially composed of a series of static images which are given a sense of the kinetic by the relationships which are created when the individual objects of the poem are placed side by side.⁴⁵ As Hugh Kenner says of the Imagist poem in the hands of Pound: "Misrepresented as a poetic of stasis, it had been

Characteristically for Snyder's poetry, an abstract event - the speaker's study - is disturbed by a physical and concrete one. In this case it is a particularly apposite interruption since, as the poet recalls:

Yesterday I read Migration of Birds;
 The Golden Plover and the Arctic Tern.
 Today that big abstraction's at our door...
 And in this hazy day
 Of April summer heat
 Across the hill the seabirds
 Chase Spring north along the coast:
 Nesting in Alaska
 In six weeks.

(RCM, p. 17)

One small natural event has become the catalyst for a process in which the speaker's study, and the physical reality of the objects of study, come together without apparent tension or strain. The poet is able to feel a part of a natural phenomenon which before he could only experience at second-hand. The poem plots a process of thought and physical action, bringing together recent memory, present action, and future behaviour, suggesting a complete harmony between perceiver and perceived. Although Williams is obviously an influence here, one further figure - closer to Snyder personally - is also important: Kenneth Rexroth.

The position of Rexroth as a literary patriarch in the San Francisco of the nineteen fifties has already been briefly discussed. For Snyder, Rexroth's working life, and the poems which arose directly from it, were a precise model and guide. Rexroth had been involved in forestry and mountain work since the nineteen twenties converting much of this experience into a poetry which prefigures the relationship between the physical wilderness and the 'back country' of the mind which Snyder was anxious to articulate in his own poems. As well as dedicating The Back Country to Rexroth, Snyder has acknowledged the many areas into which Rexroth has either guided him or provided confirmation of his own sense

of their importance. He has spoken, for example, of Rexroth's "sense of biology and nature, his belief in poetry as song...his interest in American Indian song, his interest in Chinese and Japanese poetry".⁴⁸ In return, Rexroth's consistent championing of Snyder's poetry contains more than a little hint of the older poet's recognition of a disciple.⁴⁹

With such a convergence of interests, parallels between the poetry of Rexroth and Snyder are not difficult to locate. Rexroth's volume, In Defense of the Earth is particularly notable in this respect since it contains poems written in the early nineteen fifties when Snyder was a regular visitor at Rexroth's literary gatherings.⁵⁰ With these poems, similarities often spill over into direct verbal echoes with an appropriate example being the opening lines of 'The Great Nebula of Andromeda':

We get into camp after
Dark, high on an open ridge
Looking out over five thousand
Feet of mountains and mile
Beyond mile of valley and sea.⁵¹

Such a passage immediately brings to mind phrases from a number of the Riprap lyrics, for example, the closing lines of 'Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout': "Looking down for miles/Through high still air" (RCM, p. 1); or part of the opening of 'Above Pate Valley': "High on the ridge-side/Two thousand feet above the creek" (RCM, p. 9). Over and above such verbal parallels, more general shared themes become apparent. Rexroth is fond of evoking a sense of isolation and loneliness in his 'wilderness' poems:

A deer comes down to the water.
The high passes are closed with snow.
I am the first person in this season.
No one comes by. I am alone
In the midst of a hundred mountains...

Here on this high plateau where
 No one ever comes, beside
 This lake filled with mirrored mountains,
 The hours and days and weeks
 Go by without variation. 52

This espousal of solitude in nature is largely derived from what is practically a stock theme in much Oriental poetry, and one with which Rexroth would certainly have been familiar in his own translations from the Chinese and Japanese. Snyder had also encountered it on many occasions in Han-shan where there is a constant analogy between solitude as a state of mind and the physical isolation of Cold Mountain where there are "no trails for men" (RCM, p. 38) and "days and months slip by like water" (RCM, p. 53). In such poetry, solitude is valued at a primary level in its divorcing of the poet from the world of human affairs:

Now I've lived here--how many years--
 Again and again, spring and winter pass.
 Go tell families with silverware and cars
 "What's the use of all that noise and money?"

(RCM, p. 38)

Through solitude and separation will hopefully come the acquisition of what Snyder calls in 'Piute Creek', "a clear, attentive mind": an expansion of consciousness and sharpening of perception in a mind which has been freed of all ties. In Snyder's lyrics, considering his long Zen training, there may also be an element of one of the 'furyu' (moods) associated with such Zen-related art forms as haiku and haiga, for example, that of 'sabi' which Blyth has defined as "a kind of beauty associated with loneliness" and which involves the creation of quietness and solitude to act as a pervasive atmosphere for the poem.⁵³ 'Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout' furnishes an example of what might be called the lyric of solitude in Snyder's poetry:

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

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

(RCM, p. 1)

From his position of separation, the precise rendering - and subsequent physical impact - of the natural phenomena in the poem, breaks the speaker's links with both the abstractions of reading (seen implicitly as synthetic experience) and any ties to the human world. The poem contains the promise of a real clarity of perception, a lucidity which is captured in all the palpability of "cold snow-water from a tin cup". Although difficult to articulate, and even more difficult to locate with any precision in the text, much of the poem's effectiveness lies in the creation of a certain atmosphere: a stillness and limpidity which at once welcome solitude yet occasionally suggest a hint of melancholy.

Other shared themes in Rexroth and Snyder might equally have been noticed. Rexroth's poetry, for example, has an undeniably elegiac strain particularly as it touches upon love and the transience of human relationships, a less dominant - yet still detectable - ingredient of Snyder's lyrics. This again probably has its origins in the traditional themes of much Chinese poetry. Neither poet could be said to manage this topic with any subtlety or conspicuous success, especially if the inspiration for the poem is drawn from personal circumstances. Rexroth's laments are often heavily laden with an exaggerated fatalism which, for example, will not even allow him to observe the face of his sleeping wife without musing that "who knows?/This night might be the last one of all".⁵⁴

Whilst lacking such pessimism, those elegiac poems of Snyder which involve personal experience are prone to sentimentality, even self-pity, and have an awkwardness of expression alien to the normal technical virtuosity of his lyrics. Four Poems for Robin evoke memories of his first wife, Alison Gass, and often suggest his essential discomfort in making a poem purely from the direct experience of his personal relationships. Thus in 'December at Yase', the last of the series:

Now ten years and more have
Gone by: I've always known
 where you were--
I might have gone to you
Hoping to win your love back.
You are still single.

I didn't.
I thought I must make it alone. I
Have done that.

(BC, p. 49)

As might be expected in a poet who has consciously attempted to diminish the overt expression of personality in the poem, six uses of the first person pronoun in nine lines (fourteen in the poem as a whole) does not bode well. Snyder is measurably more comfortable in handling a theme such as impermanence or transience when his personal experience can be absorbed into a more general statement. 'Nanao Knows', for example, as well as being a much more finely achieved poem technically, can involve the personal pronoun without the stuttering self-consciousness of 'December at Yase'. It begins with an expression of the essential ephemerality or evanescence of all phenomena:

Mountains, cities, all so
 light, so loose. blankets
Buckets--throw away--
Work left to do.
 it doesn't last.

Attempting to locate something of real permanence in order to redress the balance, the poem turns to human, and specifically sexual, relationships; these, in their turn, are seen as fundamentally transient:

Each girl is real
 her nipples harden, each has damp,
 her smell, her hair--
 --What am I to be saying.
 There they all go
 Over the edge, dissolving.

The poem concludes with a self-enclosed, balanced image which echoes back through the poem: first, literally a most substantial and concrete example of the artefacts of the human world; then a rejoinder to it:

Riveters bind up
 Steel rod bundles
 For wet concrete.
 In and out of forests, cities, families
 like a fish.

(BC, p. 98)

Like the darting, elusive movements of the fish, what might seem tangible and lasting, only appears and disappears, insubstantial and dissolving, difficult to capture or make permanent.

Despite Rexroth's initial influence, Snyder's lyrics are ultimately the more accomplished and consistently interesting poems. Rexroth's shorter poems are characterized by a technical monotony: a form which is built on a simple visual regularity of line length governed by an approximated syllable count, so that a feature such as enjambement becomes less a creative device and more an automatic function of rigid lineation. Paired with this is the almost total rejection of stylistic diversity with, for example, only a few of the poems in In Defense of the Earth having even the basic variety offered by the use of a regular or irregular stanzaic pattern. With a similar disregard of the various sound

devices adopted by other modern lyric poets, the poems' rhythms rely entirely on the discursive narrative drive of the speaking voice; where this fails, they are prone to fall into inescapable *prosimess*. Rexroth's writing, then, compares unfavourably with Snyder's more flexible and experimental approach where his extreme care over matters of lineation, typography, and the creation of rhythm is an acknowledgement of the importance of form as an integral part of the poem's impact. Also quite alien to Snyder's lyrics is Rexroth's frequent adoption of a formula in his nature poems whereby the natural scene is exploited only to provide a route into the discussion and revelation of human emotion. The poems, that is, often turn back into the human world after an initial contact with nature in a fashion more akin to the traditional poetic uses of nature as an agent for human inspiration or instruction. In 'Blood on a Dead World', for example, the poet, his wife, and their child watch an eclipse of the moon which, initially at least, is valued in its own right:

A blowing night in late fall,
 The moon rises with a nick
 In it...
 And we stand on the corner
 In the first wisps of chilling
 Fog and watch the light go out.

It is not long, however, before this natural phenomenon is being used to provide a little moral lesson initiated by a comment from his child:

"The earth's shadow is like blood,"
 She says. I tell her the Indians
 Called an eclipse blood on the moon.
 "Is it all the blood on the earth
 Makes the shadows that color?"
 She asks. I do not answer. 55

Having served its purpose as a vehicle for the 'message' of the poem, the natural phenomenon is itself eclipsed, and the mock solemnity - even melodrama - with which that message finally arrives further diminishes

any impact the poem might have. In comparison, Snyder's willingness to allow things to speak for themselves, makes his poetry a significantly more direct and less prolix affair.

As might be said of the best lyric poetry, Snyder's short poems are deceptive in their simplicity. Yet, as the preceding discussion indicates, they arise from a complexity of sources and influences. For the most part, they can be placed as a contribution to the twentieth-century American lyric tradition - one is never far from the causative work of Pound and Williams in reading them. However, as with the mythic poems' relationship to the modern long poem, Snyder has been able to make his original, and often innovative, addition. In some cases, his absorption of an influence or previous model can appear somewhat ruthless, perhaps reflecting Eliot's astute comment that "immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different".⁵⁶ The example of Rexroth is appropriate here, with Snyder taking what he needed and quickly discarding that which was not useful.

His work as a translator also has some of this quality. There is often an ambivalence in his approach which, in one sense is clearly governed by the desire to produce a faithful rendering of the original, yet also is not slow to recognize those elements which, suitably modified, could enhance his own poetry. Snyder seems alternately attracted and repelled by the possibilities inherent in translation and, perhaps for these reasons - and despite the success of his versions of Han-shan - further work of this kind has not been extensive. The only other significant set of translations are those from the writings of the early twentieth-century Japanese poet, Miyazawa Kenji, included in The Back Country (pp. 130 - 50). Once again, these involve a process of give and

take with Snyder producing highly acclaimed English versions, but also learning much from the colloquial and irregular form of poems whose subject matter reflects Miyazawa's Buddhism, his interest in the natural sciences, and his ecological concerns. Although translation has often been a provider, then, it has increasingly become "too tempting" since "it takes you away from...your own work".⁵⁷

In the final analysis, what is most impressive in Snyder's lyrics of this period is their astonishing variety. Thomas Parkinson once attempted a definition of the stock Snyder poem:

The Gary Snyder poem...has a certain mechanical quality - a reference to Coyote or Bear, a natural (preferably wilderness) setting, erotic overtones, plain colloquial language, firm insistence on an objective imagery, an anecdotal frame, short lines modelled on the Chinese Cantos of Ezra Pound with much internal rhyme and alliteration, very little dead weight (the prepositional phrase held in abomination). 58

While some of Parkinson's criteria have a general applicability to Snyder's poems, rather than their "mechanical quality" it is their diversity of form, tone, and subject which is striking, with Snyder able to employ the seemingly restrictive lyric form to encompass themes which hardly conform to its traditional domain. Hence, in this body of poetry, we find the familiar themes of the lyric - nature and the praise of nature, love and its transience, time and the passing of time - jostling with overtly political poems: 'Vapor Trails', 'This Tokyo', 'To the Chinese Comrades', and 'For the West'; or comic poems: 'Thin Ice', 'The Six Hells of the Engine Room', and '7.IV.64'; with what might be called the 'work' lyric: fire-watching in 'Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout' and 'August on Sourdough, A Visit from Dick Brewer'; forestry work in 'Milton by Firelight', 'Above Pate Valley', and 'Trail Crew Camp at Bear Valley'; life as a seaman in 'The Sappa Creek', 'T-2 Tanker Blues',

'Oil', and 'The Wipers Secret'; agricultural work in 'Hay for the Horses', 'Yase: September', 'Out West', and the majority of the poems in the Six Years sequence. There is even a poem which can be cooked and eaten: 'How to Make Stew in the Pinacate Desert: Recipe for Locke & Drum'.

It is precisely the indication of such qualities which may prepare for the discussion of Snyder's later poetry in the following chapter, where it will be proposed that a marked decline occurs in his writing in general. Rather than variety, there is a monotony of theme or, at the least, a severely restricted range; rather than technical virtuosity, there is a noticeable dissipation of poetic technique; and, perhaps most crucially for Snyder's poetry, rather than the unassuming self of the earlier poems, the reader must confront what often seems to be self-aggrandizement.

IV. THE POETRY SINCE 1968

(i) 1968: A Turning Point

As many of the critics of his work have noted, 1968 marks a watershed in the life and poetry of Gary Snyder.¹ With a number of brief interruptions, most notably a visit to India in 1962, Snyder had lived in Japan since 1956, engaged chiefly in the formal study of Zen Buddhism under Oda Sessō Rōshi at the Daitoku-ji monastery in Kyoto. Towards 1968, a number of factors conspired in prompting his permanent return to America. In 1966 his teacher, Oda Sessō, died, thus releasing him from his Zen training which, even so, Snyder had extended as far as a layman was able. In 1967 he participated in the creation of the Banyan Ashram, a commune situated on Suwa-no-Se Island off the southern tip of Japan. This first true experience of communal living - and marriage (his third) to Masa Uehara in the same year - are related in Earth House Hold with an intensity and lyricism which leave little doubt as to his commitment to such a shared existence.² In December of 1968 Snyder returned with his wife and first child to settle permanently in California, partially re-creating that communal life by building on a remote plot of land in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada range. Having re-rooted himself firmly in the American West, Snyder's adoption of a familial life seemed to signal the close of a period of physical journeying and restlessness which is a characteristic of the earlier poems.

To confirm Snyder's insistent claims that his life at any given period is always reflected in his writing, this new sense of domesticity is given free rein in the post-1968 poetry where there is a continual celebration of the sense of community in family, with poems, for example, such as 'Everybody Lying on their Stomachs, Head toward the Candle, Reading, Sleeping, Drawing' (RW, p. 28), 'The Bed in the Sky' (RW, p. 32), 'Not Leaving the House' (RW, p. 34), and 'The Bath' (TI, pp. 12 - 14); or the

poems written about his children, 'Kai, Today' (RW, p. 33), and 'Gen' (TI, p. 74). Snyder's arrival in America also coincided with the rapid growth of the ecological movement. In some quarters, the early Myths & Texts had achieved the status of an ecological handbook or a practical guide in combating what was felt to be an unprecedented industrial and commercial despoliation of the environment. Such a standing for the poem could not help but renew and strengthen his position as a spokesman and, inevitably, a leader figure. Illustrated aptly by the title of an interview given at the time to a local newspaper - 'The Return of Japhy Ryder,'³ - which harked back twelve years to Kerouac's fictional portrayal in The Dharma Bums, the feeling appeared to be that Snyder's was almost a messianic home-coming to disseminate the knowledge of a decade's residence in the East; that, in fact, he had arrived to fulfil the prophecy of "Alvah Goldbook" (Allen Ginsberg) in Kerouac's novel that "Japhy Ryder is a great new hero of American culture".⁴

Some of the changes which occur in Snyder's poetry during this period can be ascribed to factors such as those mentioned above. Certainly, the new element of overt didacticism - more pronounced than anything in his writing to this date - and the use of the poem as an instrument of instruction, can be seen as arising partially from his enlistment as a counter-culture spokesman. However, it will be argued in this chapter on Snyder's more recent work, that the real predicament of his poetry in this later period is not due solely to the social and cultural pressures which operate externally upon it. Rather, as has been emphasized throughout, the changes are a reflection of more general trends in the specific American literary traditions to which he has always belonged.

Briefly then, having been involved in the post-war rediscovery of classic Modernism, Snyder had proved himself to be at ease in taking Modernist texts as exemplars. Such a process had enabled him to write a

wholly successful long, mythic poem, Myths & Texts, in the pattern of Eliot's The Waste Land; and to make a significant contribution to the tradition of the experimental lyric initiated by Pound and Williams. It is when he wishes to participate in what can be seen as the subsequent interrogation of Modernism, that is, when he becomes part of a movement which struggles to achieve more than a simple repetition of past models, that his poetry is open to real failure.

Thus, since 1968, Snyder's poetry has entered a period of crisis and the following sections examine the effect of this on both the long and short poem in turn, in order to demonstrate that Snyder is at his best in the revival of Modernist poetics, and is least comfortable when attempting to question that Modernist inheritance.

(ii) The Mythic Poem in Crisis: 'Mountains and Rivers
without End'

In 1956, immediately following the completion of Myths & Texts and on the eve of his departure for Japan, "Japhy Ryder" announces, according to Kerouac, that he is embarking on "a new long poem called 'Rivers and Mountains without End' ", a poem which will resemble

one of them real long Chinese silk paintings that show two little men hiking in an endless landscape of gnarled old trees and mountains so high they merge with the fog in the upper silk void. I'll spend three thousand years writing it, it'll be packed full of information on soil conservation, the Tennessee Valley Authority, astronomy, geology, Hsuan Tsung's travels, Chinese painting theory, reforestation, Oceanic ecology and food chains.¹

Somewhat more soberly, and free of his fictional garb, Snyder wrote in 1959: "Since 1956 I've been working on a long poem I'm calling 'Mountains and Rivers without End' after a Chinese sidewise scroll painting. It threatens to be like its title....The dramatic structure follows a certain type of No play."² Also in 1959, in a letter to Philip Whalen, Snyder felt confident enough to claim that "all of the 'Mountains & Rivers Without End' material awaits a few inspired weeks of work & it will be complete".³ At the time of writing, twenty-four years later, the poem still remains unfinished, a collection of scattered sections, and some often contradictory statements by Snyder, testimony to the difficulty which the poem's completion and its final form have caused him.⁴

Initially, it may appear curious that with the example of a successful long poem in Myths & Texts behind him, Snyder has encountered so many problems in completing Mountains and Rivers without End. Closer examination shows, however, that it is precisely the differences between

the two poems which account for those problems. As discussed in chapter II, Myths & Texts is very similar to its most important structural model, The Waste Land, in that, although it has a surface appearance of fragmentation and apparent disorder, reading the poem closely, and reflexively, will reveal a remarkably tight and organized pattern. Snyder has spoken of two types of structuring which involve the use of fragmentation:

One is, say, a fragmented text which appears fragmented and which is fragmented and which leads nowhere. Another is ideogrammic method, a fragmented text which appears fragmented but actually leads you somewhere because the relationships that are established between the fragments express a deeper level of connectedness, which becomes clear to the reader's mind if he is able to follow it....The ideogrammic method is intended as a method of communication in the sense of juxtaposing apparently unrelated things that show the connections automatically. That, of course, is what I'd have in mind in my work. Not that I want to make fragmented form but that I want to make a whole form. 5

Myths & Texts is clearly an example of what Snyder terms here "ideogrammic method" (Pound's phrase originally, another substantiation that Snyder's thinking is congruous with that of the Modernists); Mountains and Rivers without End, however, might be seen as a poem which strays perilously close to the first type of fragmented text which Snyder mentions.

In the case of Myths & Texts, the "ideogrammic method", linked with the application of Campbell's quest monomyth and the plethora of destruction/regeneration motifs, serves to pull the poem's diverse materials into order; the poem, that is, turns in on itself and assumes an essentially closed form. This combination of surface chaos and underlying order might be said to be distinctive of early Modernist texts. Joyce's Ulysses, for example, can be made to reveal a carefully planned

process which belies its initially perceived confusion,⁶ and The Waste Land - subjected to reflexive reading - also exhibits Eliot's precise patterning. As briefly mentioned in chapter II, such texts are susceptible to a process of maturation in which their 'difficulties' dissolve as successive readers unravel the structural and thematic threads. As Howard Nemerov has commented: "By heroic efforts of criticism and exegesis Eliot's poems, which seemed to have impressed many of their first readers as being written in Linear B, were made part of the common language." He goes on to suggest however that "the same has not happened to the Cantos of Ezra Pound, and I incline to doubt it will happen". Nemerov is implicitly proposing that Modernism, in one of its initial developments, began to produce texts which, in his phrase, display "a collapse in...meaning".⁷ Robert Duncan specifies the direction of such a development as being towards an "open form" which "began to appear in the 1940's" with "the Pisan Cantos of Ezra Pound and Paterson of William Carlos Williams".⁸

After the willing or unwilling abandonment of their original design, the degree of structure in these texts is problematical. Such a poem will inevitably have some sense of form in that, as the product of a single author, it will reflect whatever unity that one presiding consciousness can offer as it responds to experience. In fact, as will be seen later, many of these works have the unity or form of a diary. Hence Duncan's location of The Pisan Cantos as an important watershed, since it was with this volume that Pound gave up whatever pre-planned structures he had envisaged for The Cantos (particularly those modelled on Dante's The Divine Comedy), and turned instead to a more personal, diaristic approach. Although "open form" suggests a lack of pre-planned structure to the text, it does not indicate a reaffirmation of the accepted notion of organic form, that is, a form which is found as the poem grows and develops with its subject matter, shaping itself from

within. This would imply that there might still be an organizing principle to the work, despite the avoidance of an imposed structure, even if it is not foreseen by the author. Such a concept of organicism is at the root of Denise Levertov's definition:

For me, back of the idea of organic form is the concept that there is a form in all things (and in our experience) which the poet can discover and reveal....A partial definition, then, of organic poetry might be that it is a method of apperception, i.e., of recognizing what we perceive, and is based on an intuition of an order, a form beyond forms, in which forms partake, and of which man's creative works are analogies, resemblances, natural allegories. Such poetry is exploratory. 9

As Peter Brooker points out, such a concept reveals a "fundamental complacency" since "exploration, on these terms, can only proceed within a given circumference whose line is already drawn, if not by mortal hand".¹⁰ It is again Robert Duncan, quoted by Levertov as she expands her definition of organic form, who makes the critical point:

Thinking about how organic poetry differs from free verse, I wrote that "most free verse is failed organic poetry, that is, organic poetry from which the attention of the writer has been switched off too soon, before the intrinsic form of the experience had been revealed." But Robert Duncan pointed out to me that there is a "free verse" of which this is not true, because it is written not with any desire to seek a form, indeed perhaps with the longing to avoid form (if that were possible) and to express inchoate emotion as purely as possible. 11

The concept of open form which Duncan is expressing here is a confirmation of his belief that there has been a dispersal of the structured texts of early Modernism and that, at a particular stage in its writing, Pound's The Cantos marks its beginnings.

Pound's often anguished search for unifying principles in his

which the various aspects of a city may embody". He was confident enough in his predicated plan to announce its progress in the first publication of 'Book One' in 1946: "Part One introduces the elemental character of the place. The Second Part comprises the modern replicas. Three will seek a language to make them vocal, and Four, the river below the falls, will be reminiscent of episodes - all that any one man may achieve in a lifetime." From 1946 to 1951 the four books of Paterson duly appeared with the author's intention apparently being fulfilled. Seven years later, however, Williams realized that his original plan was no longer sufficient to accomplish his purpose in the poem, and produced a further 'Book Five', somewhat ruefully commenting:

I had to take the world of Paterson into a new dimension if I wanted to give it imaginative validity. Yet I wanted to keep it whole, as it is to me. As I mulled the thing over in my mind the composition began to assume a form which you see in the present poem, keeping, I fondly hope, a unity directly continuous with the Paterson of Pat. 1 to 4. Let's hope I have succeeded in doing so. 16

Despite his fond hopes, the poem stubbornly refused to remain within any bounds set by the author since, towards the end of 1960, he informed his publishers that a sixth section was beginning to emerge. At his death, several pages of notes and fragments were discovered for this projected 'Book Six' which, appended to the poem as they now normally are, lend Paterson its air - and physical appearance - of incompleteness.

For Duncan, however, what Pound openly admitted and Williams implicitly accepted as the major flaw in their respective long poems, became not a fault but rather the basis for an achievement. The struggle for unity, and its ultimate failure, was not to be considered as a defect in the poem but, on the contrary, was to be seen as a way forward. Irving Howe, discussing Modernism as a whole, had located this struggle as

providing the real sense of purpose in many Modernist texts:

The expectation of formal unity implies an intellectual and emotional, indeed a philosophical composure; it assumes that the artist stands above his material, controlling it and aware of an impending resolution; it assumes that the artist has answers to his questions or that answers can be had. But for the modern writer none of these assumptions holds, or at least none of them can simply be taken for granted. He presents dilemmas; he cannot and soon does not wish to resolve them; he offers his struggle with them as the substance of his testimony; and whatever unity his work possesses, often not very much, comes from the emotional rhythm, the thrust toward completion of that struggle. 17

This proposition is significantly more true of those Modernist texts which have taken, however unwillingly, first steps towards an open form since, as noted previously, earlier Modernist works tend to possess a high degree of formal and thematic unity beneath their apparent surface fragmentation. Duncan is quite specific in his concentration on Pound when, in quoting him, he again emphasizes that precisely what Pound saw as failure might in fact be a crucial positive influence for the contemporary poet:

"It has the defects or disadvantages of my Cantos," he writes of Bartok's Fifth Quartet: "It has the defects and disadvantages of Beethoven's music... the defects inherent in a record of struggle." Just this incorporation of struggle as form, this Hericlitean or Lucretian or Darwinian universe as a creation creating itself, that drew us to Pound's Cantos and continues to draw me, alienated its author, for in this process of self-creation out of self his own conflict and distress in the complexity and heterogeneity of his world was everywhere active there. "Struggle" was exactly, of course, what Darwin saw central to the nature of creation and to the viability of form: Form had its principle of survival not in its derivation from an eternal paradigm but from its variability and plasticity in functioning in the changing totality. 18

Here then for Duncan are the origins of a poetry which "is written not

with any desire to seek a form, indeed perhaps with the longing to avoid form", that is, the need for an infinitely variable open form to respond to his sense of an "open universe". Pound's initial inspiration for The Cantos, expressed as early as 1912 in a draft, that "the modern world/Needs such a rag-bag to stuff all its thoughts in",¹⁹ is thus the catalyst for a poetics which challenges the essentially closed forms of early Modernism. For Duncan - however it might have alienated Pound - The Cantos as a poem "does not homogenize; for its operations are not archetypal or simple. Its organization is not totalitarian but co-operative".²⁰

Such poems as The Cantos and Paterson are representative of a dilemma in the response to Modernism in the post-war period. Other texts could be added to these examples: Olson's The Maximus Poems, Zukofsky's A, even Duncan's own The Structure of Rime and Passages are, to a greater or lesser extent, poems begun with no pre-determined plan but which sought whatever unity could be found in the writing and, more often than not, have no real sense of completion. In fact, Duncan's two long sequence poems, although begun separately, seemed to have collapsed into a single work, judging by the manner of their interspersion in Bending the Bow.²¹ In this context, Mountains and Rivers without End is in no sense a freak work but belongs centrally to a group of poems which question the formal nature of early Modernist texts. Even Snyder's move from a 'first generation' Modernist poem such as Myths & Texts to the open form of Mountains and Rivers without End has its parallels. His close contemporary, Allen Ginsberg, has trodden a similar path from Howl to The Fall of America. On first publication Howl was greeted as a chaotic assemblage of Whitmanesque long lines, a modern equivalent of a classic oral poem in which any idea of order or formal unity was sacrificed to the cumulative rhythmic power which could be created by verbal delivery. Further evidence of its essential formlessness is often proffered by reference to

the notion of spontaneity as a desirable artistic creed, particularly those ideas of Kerouac which were prevalent at the time. It has been common to explain, if not at times to excuse, the poem as a fulfilment of many of Kerouac's 'Essentials of Spontaneous Prose':

Not "selectivity" of expression but following free deviation (association) of mind...with no discipline other than rhythms of rhetorical exhalation and expostulated statement, like a fist coming down on a table with each complete utterance....No pause to think of proper word but the infantile pileup of scatological [sic] buildup words till satisfaction is gained.... Begin not from preconceived idea of what to say about image but from jewel center of interest in subject of image at moment of writing, and write outwards swimming in sea of language to peripheral release and exhaustion. 22

Yet Howl does display more discipline than its immediate surface appearance might suggest. To compare it with a true oral poem reveals not its laxity but its often scrupulous patterning: its variety of verbal, grammatical, and syntactical parallelism; its precise grammatical and verbal formulae, meticulously chosen to fit each of the poem's sections, and so on. Thematically also, the poem possesses more of a structure than may be immediately apparent. Part One is the initial howl of accusation, a list of atrocities committed against Ginsberg's "angelheaded hipsters", a denunciation of a society seemingly bent on denying them any existence as individuals. Part Two continues those allegations using the Canaanite idol Moloch, who received children in sacrifice, as the epitome of an evil in society which consumes the 'innocents' of the poem. In Part Three, Ginsberg focuses on one individual, Carl Solomon - to whom the poem as a whole is dedicated - as a symbol of "the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness"; literally so, in this case, as Solomon had been incarcerated in a mental hospital. The last section, 'Footnote to Howl' is a final affirmation to counter Moloch with its insistent, ritual repetition of "Holy!". Thus "Holy! the

supernatural extra brilliant intelligent kindness of the soul!" is presented as an antidote to the dark, mechanical, all-devouring Moloch.²³

In contrast to the relatively diligent planning of Howl, Ginsberg's more recent The Fall of America, is a contemporary example of a poem which refuses to co-operate with its author and assumes no readily apparent structure. Like some of its open form predecessors, the poem continues to grow and its confused publishing history makes it difficult to discern what is and is not a part of it. In 1972 Ginsberg published The Fall of America, a series of poems covering the years 1965 to 1971 and composed orally via a tape recorder with a later transcription into a written text. At a primary level, the book is a diary of Ginsberg's travels in America over those seven years and explicitly asks to be considered as a single long poem, although initial doubts might be raised by 'Elegies for Neal Cassady 1968' where some sections are a chronological continuation of the basic travelogue and others appear to stand independently. In a bibliographical note to the volume, Ginsberg further extends the poem by announcing that 'Wichita Vortex Sutra', a poem dated 1966 and published in the 1968 volume, Planet News, has a place in The Fall of America sequence. Further to this, another poem, Iron Horse, published separately in 1973 - that is, after The Fall of America volume - yet dated 1966, is also noted as properly belonging to that long poem. This confused matrix of dates is not elucidated by a suspicion that other parts of Planet News and indeed of Ginsberg's more recent volumes, Mind Breaths and Plutonian Ode, might also quite readily be made to fit into The Fall of America saga.²⁴ Ginsberg himself would appear to have little notion of the poem's final form or, indeed, whether it will eventually have one at all. When asked if the poem was now completed, he responded: "No...I have a lot of fragments and long poems since then, that connect with that. I don't think that it will ever have

a completed form unless it arrives by accident."²⁵

It is in this context that Snyder began, and continues, the writing of Mountains and Rivers without End. "I am a striver, not a finisher" he has said,²⁶ practically writing a motto for the open form poetics of later Modernism. Essentially, his is a poem which belongs to the post-war reaction to 'first generation' Modernism; a poem which, if it wants it at all, goes in search of form and unity rather than imposing a pre-determined structure; and a poem which, like its contemporaries, is open to failure. When Williams wrote of Paterson that "there can be no end to such a story",²⁷ he might well have been supplying the proper epigraph for Mountains and Rivers without End (aptly, but probably coincidentally, Williams' statement must have been made at the time Snyder was embarking on his poem). Yet Snyder, like Pound, has been distinctly uneasy with the open form structuring suggested by 'without end', implicitly believing that the poem will be inherently deficient unless its form is finally clarified. To this end, he has claimed consistently that the poem will eventually cohere, that it "is not an endless poem, it has an intention of being ended".²⁸ The evidence, at present, might suggest otherwise.

The rather chequered publishing history of Mountains and Rivers without End has already been indicated. A final length is envisaged by Snyder but, with echoes of The Cantos and Paterson, it is not always the same one. Steuding reports from a conversation with Snyder in 1972 that "within the next two or three years, Snyder hopes to complete the work which will contain approximately forty sections".²⁹ Those "two or three years" and more having passed, a further interview, published in 1978, sees Snyder agreeing that the completed poem will have twenty-five sections.³⁰ Whilst the poem may expand and contract over the years,

Snyder has at all times vigorously defended his sense of it as a potentially complete, and presumably unified, work. In 1977, in an interview with James McKenzie, he asserted that "it does have an end - absolutely. Like those scrolls all do come to an end....It has an end, and it serves a function - and it will have a use and a place".³¹ A later exchange in the same interview has Snyder again vehemently defending the apparent paradox of a poem 'without end' as a finished product with a reiteration of Pound's belief that formlessness has no part to play in works of art:

JM: Does what you said about Mountains and Rivers without End mean that you don't see it as endless cantos?

GS: Oh, no. Not at all. No, I don't like that idea about endless things.

JM: But you say, "without end."

GS: That's the name; the name comes from the Chinese scrolls. That's what they title themselves, but only endless insofar as they become cyclical finally....Let the universe be endless, works of art don't have to [be]. In fact...craft-wise, I have perhaps an excessive sense of structure. 32

This highly developed sense of craft and structure has been manifest in the early poetry; in fact, his 'excesses' there are central to the success of those poems. What formal elements of patterning he supplies for Mountains and Rivers without End will be discussed presently, although at times his efforts to regain and maintain control of the poem can seem almost comic in their intensity. One interviewer, having posed the fateful question of structure in Snyder's poetry, provides parenthetically within the reply, a cameo of the poet's struggle to harness this long poem: "On long poems, like 'Mountains and Rivers without End', which I'm working on now, I have to be more organized....(He opens the various file cabinets and explains the use of the many folders, cards and catalogues to

on-going work of composing poetry.)....I use a system of organization to keep on top of it."³³

It is clear that for Snyder, as for Pound, an endless or totally open form is not a route to "make...a work of art". Yet, looking at what is currently available of the poem, Mountains and Rivers without End appears to be precisely that. It cannot be overlooked that the poem is based on a series of paradoxes: a poem whose title professes it to be 'without end', yet whose author claims that it will have a definite completion; a poem whose form will be cyclical, yet whose author feels restrained by that cycle: "I would like to have the poem close in on itself but on some other level keep going";³⁴ and a poem in which the author suggests two main influences for its structure: one, the Chinese landscape scroll painting, an essentially open and infinitely variable form; the other, Nō drama, which is notable for its strictly controlled and historically conditioned closed form.

Whether or not these two latter elements do provide a coherent pattern can only be judged by a more detailed discussion of Snyder's application of them to his poem. It should be noted, before attempting this, that there are self-evident pitfalls in the evaluation of a work which is still incomplete, since future sections could presumably make radical alterations to the poem's direction. However, there exists enough of the poem to suggest that whatever its further development, there will be no sudden resolution of some of its inherent problems; that is, on the evidence of the sections already in print, much of the poem's intractable material will continue to resist Snyder's attempts to marshal it into what he would consider to be a coherent structure.

In the first instance, the Chinese landscape scroll painting, particularly of the Yüan dynasty (1279 - 1368), offered Snyder a title

for his poem with examples such as Hsü Pen's 'Streams and Rivers' or Sheng Mou's 'Mountains and Rivers' in mind.³⁵ Beyond this, the landscape scroll can be seen to furnish only the loosest possible structure to the poem. What had attracted Snyder to this art form was its particular exploitation of a sense of space and the distinctive linking device used in such physically lengthy works: "What happens there in terms of space and time has always fascinated me...the sense of the landscape and the traveller through, and the trail that is somehow always there, faintly sometimes, disappearing, finding its way to a bridge, going out of sight behind a mountain and then turning up again on the edge of a little creek."³⁶ One of the advantages of this use of space was to draw the spectator fully into the painting. In discussing landscape art in China as early as the T'ang, Rowley comments that artists in this mode "suggested a space through which one might wander and a space which implied more space beyond the picture frame" and that "they practised the principle of the moving focus, by which the eye could wander while the spectator also wandered in imagination through the landscape".³⁷ The actual process of viewing such a horizontal scroll can also help to engross the spectator in the world that the painting depicts:

Directly in front of the observer as the scroll is unrolled, is the place he stands, to the right he may look back to those scenes traversed, to the left he may look towards the new vistas being unrolled as they would reveal themselves to the traveller. It is impossible sympathetically to view a landscape scroll without becoming part of it and entering the artist's world of peaks and streams. 38

Snyder gives notice of his intention to make his poem a parallel to such paintings by incorporating a brief allusion to the landscape scroll into one of the early sections of Mountains and Rivers without End, 'Night Highway Ninety-nine', with an emphasis on the travel motif:

--Chinese scene of winter hills & trees
us "little travellers" in the bitter cold

The road that's followed goes forever;
In half a minute crossed and left behind.

(MR, p. 21)

Nevertheless, it is difficult to discern how this motif is extended into a useful structural device for the poem. One key 'narrative' thread in the landscape scroll, as Snyder has indicated, is a road or trail which binds together the immense variety of separate scenes and individual images involved in its depiction of the landscape:

Again and again in these landscape scrolls a road or a path appears at the beginning, and we are almost bound to follow it. These roads direct the attention of the spectator and instruct his vision. Now and again he must walk in the foreground, viewing the plains and distant hills; he is led on to the hills themselves, crossing bridges, climbs mountains, rests at high-placed temples; occasionally he may choose between the path and a boat, and often he is led completely out of sight behind a cliff or hill only to emerge again farther along. 39

The problems involved in converting this structural principle into an equivalent for Snyder's poem are to detect any similarly continuous linking threads, however erratically they may appear and disappear. At a fundamental level, the only such connective link might simply be Snyder's own life and journeys, since Mountains and Rivers without End is more overtly autobiographical than much of his other poetry where the question of the speaking voice is never easily resolved. Snyder often makes his own presence apparent in the poem by the oblique method of including the names of his friends and acquaintances in connection with the speaker in the poem: Allen Ginsberg in 'Bubbs Creek Haircut' and 'Night Highway Ninety-nine'; Ginsberg and Philip Whalen in 'The Circumnambulation of Mount Tamalpais'; Lew Welch in 'Journeys' are among the obvious examples,

although this feature noticeably decreases in the more recent sections of the poem. However, if the only common factor which serves to link the disparate sections of the poem is Snyder's presence as poet, then the scroll motif is being used simply as an invitation to all-inclusiveness, that is, the structure of the poem has only the indeterminate boundaries of his own experience. In other words, it drifts towards the open form, and particularly the diaristic structure, which he has taken pains to deny.

By indicating Nō drama as another possible model for the poem, Snyder uncovers a more profitable line of enquiry, particularly where he syncretizes the seemingly disparate art forms of the Nō and the Chinese landscape scroll. With its habitual use of a path or trail as a structural device, the latter invariably exploits the theme of journeying, a characteristic reflected in such titles as Fan K'uan's 'Travelling amid Mountains and Streams', Sheng Mou's 'Travellers in Autumn Mountains', or 'Travellers in Early Winter' attributed to Chang Yüan. With this in mind, it is not surprising to read in one of the diary sections of Earth House Hold of Snyder's interest in the "Nō play Yamauba - forever walking over mountains".⁴⁰ In Arthur Waley's synopsis of this play by Seami Motokiyo, the character Yamauba

is the fairy of the mountains, which have been under her care since the world began. She decks them with snow in winter, with blossoms in spring; her task carrying her eternally from hill to valley and valley to hill....In the second part of the play the aged fairy...tells the story of her eternal wanderings - "round and round, on and on, from hill to hill, from valley to valley." 41

Snyder has already shown his willingness to incorporate elements of Nō drama into his own poetry with his use of a number of motifs in Myths & Texts drawn from the Pound/Fenollosa translations. In Mountains and Rivers without End, he concentrates on the central theme of journeying which provides, at

least for a number of the early sections, a common thread for the poem.

As Pound points out, the idea of the journey, and the journey itself, are standard structural features of the Nō: "A play very often represents some one going [on] a journey. The character walks along the bridge or about the stage, announces where he is and where he is going, and often explains the meaning of his symbolic gestures, or tells what the dance means, or why one is dancing."⁴² The announcement of the intention to travel - usually by a priest - and the journey itself, are conventionally situated at the very beginning of the play. A simple declaration is followed by a "song of travel", as Waley terms it,⁴³ as in this representative play, Kumasaka by Zenchiku Ujinobu:

I am a priest from the Capital. I have never seen the
East country, and now I am minded to go there on
pilgrimage.

(He describes the journey, walking slowly round the
stage.)

Over the mountains, down the Ōmi road by a foam-
flecked stream;
And through the woods of Awazu.
Over the long bridge of Seta...
In evening sunshine to the village of Akasaka I am
come! 44

When the destination has been reached, important events associated with it, both historical and mythical, are recalled. In the continuation of Kumasaka, for example, the priest encounters the ghost of the thief Kumasaka, killed by the legendary hero Ushiwaka, who entreats him to pray for his soul which cannot escape until salvation has been granted.

The theme of travel, then, is taken up by Snyder for at least part of his long poem. The opening section of the seven already collected, 'Bubbs Creek Haircut', is one which announces a journey, initially a literal one into the mountains:

High ceilingd and the double mirrors, the
 calendar a splendid alpine scene--scab barber--
 in stained white barber gown, alone, sat down, old man
 A summer fog gray San Francisco day
 I walked right in...

Just clip it close as it will go.
 "now why you want your hair cut back like that."
 --well I'm going to the Sierras for a while
 Bubbs Creek and on across to upper Kern.

(MR, p. 1)

Like the $N\bar{O}$, the intention to journey eventually elicits a series of memories of past trips, of preparations for travel, and of important incidents on those travels. As Antony Hunt has pointed out,⁴⁵ the poem is based on the Avatamsaka Buddhist philosophy of interdependence, a doctrine which, as Snyder explains it, "sees the world as a vast interrelated network in which all objects and creatures are necessary and illuminated".⁴⁶ In this respect, a focal image for the poem is "the double mirrors" or the later "double mirror waver" (MR, p. 6) of the barber's shop. Hence the poem reveals a series of interrelated and mutually reflecting images as the poet contemplates his journey: the "splendid alpine scene" of the calendar is a promise of his destination; the barber himself has visited the region to which the poet will travel; a "sag-asst rocker" (MR, p. 2) abandoned in a Goodwill store, where the speaker is buying clothing for the trip, recurs in "rocking lotus throne:/a universe of junk, all left alone" (MR, p. 4); the "drag-legged" keeper of the store is connected with the poem's later questioning: "is the Mountain God a gimp?/'le Roi Boeuf' and the ritual limp?" (MR, p. 4) - references invoking widespread Bull king myths - and, later, "the girl who was the skid-row/Cripple's daughter" (MR, p. 6). Even a mundane object such as the poet's favourite green hat worn on mountain trips can connect two separate episodes in time:

A big truck stopped a hundred yards above
 "Siskiyou Stoneware" on the side
 The driver said
 He recognized my old green hat.
 I'd had a ride
 with him two years before
 A whole state north
 when hitching down to Portland
 from Warm Springs.

(MR, p. 5)

The poem itself, begun in the barber's chair, also ends there, neatly enclosing an almost 'stream of consciousness' train of interconnected thought and memory:

 out of the memory of smoking pine
 The lotion and the spittoon glitter rises
 Chair turns and in the double mirror waver
 The old man cranks me down and cracks a chuckle

"your Bubbs Creek haircut, boy."

(MR, p. 6)

Hunt has also pointed out, quoting Heinrich Zimmer's analysis of the symbolism of the shaved head in Buddhist philosophy, that the journey is not merely a physical one.⁴⁷ Zimmer comments that "the lesson of the significance of the shaving of the head may be followed in the story of the 'great departure'...of the Buddha" and, in a specific reference to Shiva, the Hindu deity who appears in 'Bubbs Creek Haircut', expands his point:

Supra-normal life-energy, amounting to the power of magic, resides in such a wilderness of hair untouched by the scissors....anyone renouncing the generative forces of the vegetable-animal realm, revolting against the procreative principle of life, sex, earth, and nature, to enter upon the spiritual path of absolute asceticism, has first to be shaved. He must simulate the sterility of an old man whose hairs have fallen and who no longer constitutes a link in the chain of generation. He must coldly sacrifice the foliage of the head. 48

As Parkinson comments, ultimately the poem is little more than "one thing after another".⁴⁹ More engaging are the literal journeys which form the basis of 'Three Worlds, Three Realms, Six Roads'. This section is composed of six 'Things To Do Around...' list-poems, each centered on a particular place within Snyder's experience: Seattle, Portland, 'a Lookout', San Francisco, 'a Ship at Sea', and Kyoto, the entire section taking the reader on a journey from West to East. Each separate poem establishes its sense of place by enumerating the possibilities offered to the poet there, that is, what 'things there are to do'. The emphasis throughout is on movement: the potential of a place to galvanize further action. Four of the six poems end with specific instructions, preparations for future travels:

Get ready for the snow, get ready
To go down.

Keep moving--move out to the Sunset--
Get lost or
Get found

Dream of girls, about yr. girl friend, writing letters, wanting
children,
Making plans.

Throwing away the things you'll never need
stripping down--
Going home. 50

The poems are propelled by restless action, often created by the insistent use of the present participle. In 'Things To Do Around Seattle', for example, half the lines of the poem begin with the forward impulse given by "biking", "peeling", "cleaning", "reading", "swimming", "eating", "walking", "picking", "feeding", and "feeling".⁵¹ The seven present participles in the short extracts quoted above are part of this same process.

The counterpoint to the sections of Mountains and Rivers without

End which describe literal travel are those which involve dreams or internal explorations of the unconscious, that is, journeys within. 'The Elwha River', in fact, combines both literal and dream elements in a poem which juxtaposes three separate parts, each connected to the other by some reference to the Elwha. The opening part describes a dream in which the poet blurs the distinction between the unconscious or fantasy world and the real world. The dream itself has the speaker as a schoolgirl writing an essay which involves the Elwha river, although she intervenes to explain that

The Elwha River...is a real river, but not the river I described. Where I had just walked was real but for the dream river

At the close, the poet interrupts to augment this mélange of the dream, the poem, and the real world:

As I write this I must remind myself that there is another Elwha, the actual Olympic peninsula river, which is not the river I took pains to recollect as real in the dream.

(MR, p. 7)

The second part of the poem is a quietly impressive elegy for "lost things" one of which, to maintain a link with the chosen focal point, is a

pigleather tobacco pouch
left on the ground at Whiskey Bend along
the Elwha, 1950--

(MR, p. 8)

In recalling the loss of such small personal possessions, the poem takes the reader on a global journey from the Elwha river to the South China Seas, from "some/Kawaramachi bar" to a beach outside Bombay. The third and final part of the poem celebrates the 'real' Elwha river with the unmistakably physical and elliptical vividness of many of Snyder's lyrics:

Elwha, from its source. Threadwhite falls
 out of snow-tunnel mouths with
 cold mist-breath
 saddles of deep snow on the ridges--

(MR, pp. 8 - 9)

Although this final part occasionally threatens to become a mock hymn of praise: "o wise stream--o living flow/o milky confluence" (MR, p. 9), 'The Elwha River' takes its place in the sequence as a section which, like the $N\bar{o}$, has chosen a particular location as a nodal point and created around it an immensely varied series of actual and mythical, or dream, images.

'Journeys', although punctuated by some actual incident and examples of physical travel, is the section which most openly employs an inner journey. In an often surreal landscape, the poet is led "through an enormous maze, all underground" and, although he tries to keep "a chart of our route in/mind" (MR, p. 34), the frequent and bewildering transformations lose him. The final part of the section is as clear a statement as any of Snyder's continual equation of the physical wilderness with the unconscious; the journey here, again with a dream-like quality, is through a geography of the mind and re-states briefly some of the trials to be endured before that 'back country' can be attained and explored:

Ko-san and I stood on a point by a cliff, over a rock-walled canyon. Ko said, "Now we have come to where we die. "I asked him, what's that up there, then--meaning the further mountains.
 "That's the world after death"...
 Ko grabbed me and pulled me over the cliff-- both of us falling. I hit and I was dead. I saw my body for a while, then it was gone. Ko was there too. We were at the bottom of the gorge. We started drifting up the canyon, "This is the way to the back country."

(MR, p. 37)

All of the sections of Mountains and Rivers without End discussed above, with the addition of 'The Circumambulation of Mount Tamalpais', could be interpreted as contributing to the journey motif taken by Snyder from Nō drama. However, this 'trail' through the poem is difficult to trace beyond these, perhaps disappearing momentarily to reappear again at some later stage; although that it has not done so in the other ten sections already available, suggests that it will be difficult to recover in any future additions to the poem. The fact that the seven sections which involve the journey element were all first published between 1961 and 1966 would indicate, rather, that Snyder's initial flirtation with this structural idea has been discarded. If any linking thread has been introduced as a replacement, it is Snyder's sense of "poetry as a healing act"⁵² which dominates a chronologically succeeding group of sections published between 1968 and 1971 including 'The Rabbit', 'The Blue Sky', 'The Hump-Backed Flute Player' and 'The California Water Plan'. That Mountains and Rivers without End begins to display this partitioning of its sections, further strengthens the feeling that, as a poem-in-progress, it reflects quite directly Snyder's particular interests at the time of writing with rather less attention being paid to the overall structure of the work.

Snyder's 'healing poem' is an extension of his concept of the shaman-poet, that is, "the present incarnation of the poet as shaman and healer".⁵³ In primitive cultures, he believes, "the special genre is healing song. The Shaman was the specialist in that....The power of this type of song...enables him to hear and to see a certain classic song which has the capacity to heal".⁵⁴ Snyder's hypothesis that the role of the modern poet reflects the function of the tribal shaman has already been discussed in chapter II and need not be elaborated again, except to re-emphasize that 'healing' in this modern context indicates not the

planting. The section also extends the implications of 'healing' by introducing the historical figure of Hsuan Tsang who

went to India 629AD
 returned to China 645
 with 657 sutras, images, pictures,
 and 50 relics

Like Kokopilau, Hsuan Tsang is seen as a broadcaster or disseminator: in this case, his 'seeds' are knowledge - the introduction of Buddhist doctrine into China.⁵⁸ A third shamanic figure in the section is "Jack Wilson/Wovoka, the prophet".⁵⁹ Wovoka, a Pauite (Jack Wilson was the name given by his white employers), was the prophet of the late nineteenth-century Ghost Dance religion, one of the final, despairing efforts of the indigenous population to resist the rapidly encroaching white political and cultural domination. The focus of this religion's rituals was a dance which Wovoka had received in a shamanic vision. At the height of the movement's popularity, he was able to bring together often mutually hostile tribes in a common cause; that is, for a brief period, he assumed the role of the integrating 'healer'.

'The Blue Sky' syncretizes aspects of Buddhism and American Indian mythology in its creation of "Medicine Old Man Buddha". In this context, the Buddha is "Master of Healing,/AZURE RADIANCE TATHAGATA" (MR, p. 38), and "medicine old man" a composite of 'medicine man' (shaman or healer) and 'old man', a term often used for the Trickster figure as, for example, in Jaime de Angulo's use of "Coyote Old Man" as a character in Indian Tales. Although the general theme of 'The Blue Sky' is clear enough: "Whole, Whole, Make Whole!" (MR, p. 39), the poem is symptomatic of the increasing abstruseness of Mountains and Rivers without End, resembling as it does some of the more opaque and fragmented sections of The Cantos. In six pages, the reader must manoeuvre amongst passages of

Sanskrit, etymological exercises, dream sequences, personal reminiscences, the forbidding cast of characters including Tathagata, Maya, Kāma, Yakushi, Shakyamuni and Amitabha, in a combination which renders the complexities of Myths & Texts lucid in comparison.

As the specific use of the journey motif faded in earlier sections, so the focal point of healing also recedes. On this occasion, however, the remaining available sections - published after 1971 - leave few clues to aid the reader. This is a period in which the open form of Mountains and Rivers without End is proven by its willingness to expand and include an extremely diverse body of material. As it does so, any structural threads which it may have had become increasingly faint and the sections begin to vary considerably. 'The Flowing', for example, has much in common with earlier sections such as 'The Rabbit' and 'The California Water Plan'. Each of its four parts is devoted to a separate stage in the development of a river from 'Watershed' through 'Riverbed' and 'Floods' to 'Mouth'. It is also studded with the eclectic range of references familiar in the later sections and contains some of the direct political comment which will be prominent in the recent lyrics:

the mud and jungle,
 little scrubby muddy jungle
 sailing in a big French ship
 up the winding river to Saigon--

The USA will never take the delta
 The USA will never take the delta
 The USA will roll and slither till its elbow bones
 stick out and scratch the bloody desk 60

This reference is further evidence of the absence of a rigid pre-planned structure for Mountains and Rivers without End, since Snyder could not possibly have predicted the American involvement in Vietnam when he began the poem in 1956. By his willingness to allow contemporary material to enter the poem, he acknowledges that it has no set boundaries and is open

to the constant change and development which will reflect the period in which any one section is written.

As a contrast, the section 'Ma' is the transcript of a letter written by the mother of an Indian boy and found by Snyder in an abandoned shack near his home.⁶¹ Transposed into a poetic line - although the obvious narrative drift of the letter taxes even Snyder's ability to lineate it for rhythm - it resembles a back country version of the advice of Polonius to Laertes. More generally, the turn to material drawn specifically from the American Indian might indicate Snyder's future plans for Mountains and Rivers without End and explains his intention that the epigraph for the final version will be a saying of the early mountain man, Jim Bridger: "Where there aint no Indians that's where you find them thickest."⁶²

Conscious of the accusations of esotericism which might be levelled at Mountains and Rivers without End, Snyder has suggested that the last section of the poem might be one which would consist only of footnotes and a glossary for the work as a whole.⁶³ More seriously, he has also proffered various hints as to those elements which will eventually give the poem its form, although these often serve to add to the confusion surrounding the text rather than elucidating it. One such example might be his claim that each section contains a 'ku' or small key phrase which acts as a focal image.⁶⁴ While the existence of such a phrase is not disputed, the assistance which it offers the reader is variable. In 'Bubbs Creek Haircut', as we have seen, Snyder states that the 'ku' is "double mirror waver" which undoubtedly does aid considerably in the recognition of the mirrored and matched images around which this section is built. However, to be informed that the equivalent phrase in 'The Blue Sky' is

"Where'd you get that buttermilk?"
I'd been looking all over for buttermilk. He said,
"At the OK Dairy, right where you leave town."

tends to undermine the reader's confidence in this idea: in an already puzzling poem, this looks suspiciously like a red herring. Ultimately, the device of the focal image is not one which increases any sense of pre-planning in the poem, since Snyder admits that a particular section is never built around a pre-conceived phrase but that it is 'discovered' in the process of writing.⁶⁵

If Mountains and Rivers without End demonstrates anything of Snyder's poetics, it is that his "excessive sense of structure" operates wholly to his advantage, as with Myths & Texts, when he writes firmly within the classic Modernist tradition. When he attempts to confront that tradition - in a gesture entirely typical of the later reaction to it - his unease with a more open form becomes apparent. Time and again in this later long poem, the familiar themes of Myths & Texts recur: the concept of the shaman-poet, the harmonizing of man and nature, the quest motif. Yet where the tightly patterned form of Myths & Texts has endowed these with a real power to convince the reader, in Mountains and Rivers without End their further expansion is often elusive and fragmentary. There are, nevertheless, passages of high quality in this latter poem: 'Bubbs Creek Haircut'; sections I and II of 'The Elwha River'; the cutting together of the dream-like fantasy and the hard-edged reality of 'Journeys'; and, particularly, 'The Market' which could be seen as a marginal contribution to the journey motif as it progresses from the Crystal Palace market in San Francisco to the markets of Saigon, Katmandu, and Benares, but is more remarkable for Snyder's sustained dialectic between East and West. In a finely worked 'naming' passage, the poet - as a representative of privilege in this context - puzzles over the idea of equivalences in radically different cultural and social structures:

seventy-five feet hoed rows equals
 one hour explaining power steering
 equals two big crayfish =
 all the buttermilk you can drink
 = twelve pounds cauliflower...

mangoes, apples, custard apples, raspberries
 = picking three flats strawberries
 = a christmas tree = a taxi ride
 carrots, daikon, eggplant, greenpeppers,
 oregano white goat cheese
 = a fresh-eyed bonito, live clams.
 a swordfish
 a salmon
 a handful of silvery smelt in the pocket...

I gave a man seventy paise
 in return for a clay pot
 of curds
 was it worth it?
 how can I tell

(MR, pp. 30 - 32)

The last part of the section turns its attention to the human cost of such places of transaction, with the poet as helpless observer - the tourist who is finally and brutally awakened to the reality which lies behind the 'picturesque' market scene by seeing a mutilated man. In the midst of the thriving market, and performing a small commission himself, he sees the cripple

who has young face.
 open pit eyes
 between the bullock carts and people
 head pivot with the footsteps
 passing by
 dark scrotum spilled on the street
 penis laid by his thigh
 torso
 turns with the sun

I came to buy
 a few bananas by the ganges
 while waiting for my wife.

(MR, p. 33)

It is perhaps no coincidence that all the passages enumerated above are from sections written before 1968, another confirmation that the subsequent problems of Mountains and Rivers without End are a reflection of the wider difficulties Snyder has experienced in his poetry since this important watershed date.

The poem, of course, awaits completion; but considering Snyder's approach to its composition, it is tempting to return to his original inspiration for its form, the Chinese landscape scroll, and see a counterpart for Mountains and Rivers without End in what is considered to be one of the major works of the genre: Huang Kung-wang's 'Dwelling in the Fu-ch'un Mountains'. Cahill writes that the painter of this mammoth scroll (it is well over twenty feet in length)

laid out the entire design in one burst of creation
He added to it occasionally, when his mood
 was right. More than three years had passed by
 the time he decided it was finished. The somewhat
 arbitrary nature of that decision is suggested by
 the nature of the picture; it has nothing of the
 air of inevitability, of an absolute consummation
It seems rather to be the product of a series
 of decisions, some of them a bit capricious, made
 by the painter at successive stages in the painting
 process, reflecting his state of mind at the moments
 when he made them. 66

(iii) The Lyric Poem in Crisis: 'Regarding Wave' and
'Turtle Island'

If Mountains and Rivers without End is evidence of one struggle Snyder has had with his Modernist inheritance, then the lyric poems since 1968 demonstrate another: the attempt to reject the elitism which is inherent in Modernism's relationship with its audience, nowhere better articulated than in Pound's short poem 'Causa':

I join these words for four people,
Some others may overhear them,
O world, I am sorry for you,
You do not know these four people.¹

Regarding Wave, and to an even greater extent, Turtle Island, signal the beginning of Snyder's deliberate efforts to reach out to a wider audience and his concern to adopt a public voice. However, if Snyder does endeavour to achieve a greater accessibility for his poetry, at least one distinguishing characteristic of Modernism - its inescapable didacticism - does remain; in fact, this element tends to increase in a direct relationship with his assumption of a more communal role. At some points, then, these later poems begin to read as very thinly disguised instruments of instruction. Such a development can be compared with an earlier period when Snyder was dubious as to whether poetry had any political role. In 1965, expressing a belief that society had reached "the last and most fevered extension of the anxiety generated by class structure and accumulation of property", he doubted the ability of poetry to ease that anxiety:

Without saying that a poet or poetry has any political role, all I can say is that poetry doesn't fit into any of these things; that the poet is still doing the same dance with the same antlers and the same deer hide thrown over his back as he was doing forty thousand

years ago at Lascaux; and perhaps seeing this dance just vaguely out of the corner of their eyes will distract people a moment...from the destructive and horrified fascination with the political 'civilized' ego. 2

With the direction that the lyric poems have taken since 1968, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that Snyder now feels that more than mere distraction can be, or rather must be, attempted; that the poet can aspire to a social and political role that will achieve more than moving "the world a millionth of an inch".³

Soon after his return to America in 1968, Snyder commented that he "began to feel the need to put [his] shoulder to the wheel on this continent",⁴ a deliberate echo perhaps of Allen Ginsberg's poem 'America'. Having catalogued both his own personal alienation and the national paranoia he experienced in the nineteen fifties, Ginsberg nevertheless declares, with the Whitmanesque realization that "I am America":

I'd better get right down to the job...
America I'm putting my queer shoulder to the wheel.⁵

Similar phrases are characteristic of Snyder's writing in this period; he talks of "the real work", for example, and "what is to be done" (TI, pp. 9, 32). In broad terms, the composition of this work had been formulated as early as Myths & Texts: a thorough appreciation of physical place through rediscovery of 'the old ways' - hence the title of Turtle Island, "the old/new name for the continent, based on many creation myths of the people who have been here for millenia" (TI, Introductory Note); the battle against the wanton despoliation of the environment; a fuller realization of the interrelationship of man and nature; and a celebration of the 'tribe' or community consciousness. These later lyrics, then, are the blueprint of Myths & Texts made over into a practical plan.

Such a conversion from the more abstract, 'mythologized' proposals

of Myths & Texts to the practical, if not wholly pragmatic, programme of the later poems necessarily involves Snyder in a reassessment of his role as poet. Charles Altieri has usefully categorized such a change as being from that of seer to prophet. In the earlier poems, argues Altieri, Snyder as seer "has found a mental strategy giving access to important truths about experience not available to the ordinary procedures of thinking and discovering in his society, and he has found a way of expressing them".⁶ However, if those discovered truths fail to make an appreciable impact, or can only properly be deciphered by an elite, he may be lured into a development of the role of seer - the poet as prophet, whereby

he is tempted to supplement his vision in order to insist that it not be taken as merely another aesthetic object, and, more important, he is tempted to take on another role in order to show how his vision is to be used or to make it accessible to a wider and less elite audience than his pure vision might reach....He is tempted to resort to some version of ordinary discourse or to cast himself in a more socially acceptable role. 7

The tensions which might arise out of the adoption of such a role are manifold. Snyder must be prepared to adapt a stance, which had previously supplied an implicit ideology for the already convinced, to one which will have a measure of practicality and appeal for the wider community. In doing so, he must prepare himself to persuade an audience which, in part, is likely to be sceptical of his vision. Aesthetic considerations will also be subjected to no little pressure, since even the simple use of poetry as the mode of communication may be potentially alienating to that wider audience. In this regard, one can almost sense the exasperation in Snyder as parts of Turtle Island spill over into a prose section aptly titled 'Plain Talk'. Such tensions as these will be at the centre of the ensuing discussion of the lyric poems since 1968.

The major themes, and title, of Regarding Wave are explained by Snyder in his essay 'Poetry and the Primitive', and emerge partially from the increasing interest in Indo-European word roots which is also apparent in some of the later sections of Mountains and Rivers without End. As Snyder records in this essay, for him "the muse [is] a woman"; he continues:

Poetry is voice, and according to Indian tradition, voice, vāk (vox) - is a Goddess. Vāk is also called Sarasvati, she is the lover of Brahma and his actual creative energy....As Vāk is wife to Brahma ("wife" means "wave" means "vibrator" in Indo-European etymology) so the voice, in everyone, is a mirror of his own deepest self. The voice rises to answer an inner need. 8

With Snyder's propensity for syncretism, such things as the shared origins of 'wife', 'wave', and 'voice' are happy coincidences. In the poem 'Wave', he synthesizes the female principle of 'voice' (the creative impulse) and the occurrences of the wave pattern in nature:

Grooving clam shell,
 streakt through marble,
 sweeping down ponderosa pine bark-scale
 rip-cut tree grain
 sand-dunes, lava
 flow

Wave wife.
 woman--wyfman--
 "veiled; vibrating; vague"
 sawtooth ranges pulsing;
 veins on the back of the hand.

(RW, p. 3)

Many of the poems in Regarding Wave explore this concept of the poet's 'voice' as 'lover' - that which stirs his creative energy. More specifically, since the volume's dedication is "For Masa", they are often

related directly to Snyder's own wife. This is particularly so in the book's second section where physical love is celebrated as a generative force, a form of 'sustenance' to be appreciated in the context of a more tangible food-chain. Hence in 'Song of the Taste':

Eating the living germs of grasses
 Eating the ova of large birds

 the fleshy sweetness packed
 around the sperm of swaying trees...

Eating each other's seed
 eating
 ah, each other.

Kissing the lover in the mouth of bread:
 lip to lip.

(RW, p. 17)

Such overt sensuality has often perplexed those readers who cannot reconcile Snyder's energetic celebration of the physical realm with his Buddhism which, in its mainstream beliefs, shares with other major religions a distrust of any undue attention to the sensual world. Hence Julian Gitzen reminds us of Snyder's "affiliation with Zen, since his enthusiasm for physical experience is not consistent with conventional Buddhism".⁹ Yet Zen itself could scarcely be described as a Buddhist sect which gives licence for any great indulgence in bodily pleasure. On the contrary, its rigid and disciplined training frequently involves severe denial and asceticism, as Snyder's own experiences of Zen sesshin (extended periods of intense zazen meditation) amply demonstrate.¹⁰ Despite his long Zen apprenticeship, then, Snyder has been attracted to those Buddhist systems of belief and practice which do not automatically reject the value of the physical senses and emotions. To this end, as he has acknowledged in the curious context of an interview with a Benedictine monk, his adopted sect is Vajrayana Buddhism.¹¹ Vajrayana is a Tantric

sect with its roots in Northern India and Tibet and, as with all Tantrism, is prepared to accept that which more conventional Buddhism would reject: "It asserts that, instead of suppressing pleasure, vision and ecstasy, they should be cultivated and used....Because sensation and emotion are the most powerful human motive forces, they should not be crushed out, but harnessed to the ultimate goal. Properly channelled they can provide an unparalleled source of energy, bringing benefits to society as well as continually increasing ecstasy for the individual."¹²

Those poems in Regarding Wave which are permeated with Vajrayana Buddhism are fierce celebrations of the life-force which Snyder perceives in both the natural and human worlds. To parallel those poems which rejoice in his own marriage and the birth of a child are abundant images of a corresponding fecundity in nature. An example would be 'Kyoto Born in Spring Song':

Beautiful little children
 found in melons,
 in bamboo,
 in a "strangely glowing warbler egg"
 a perfect baby girl--

baby, baby,
 tiny precious
 mice and worms...

wild babies
 in the ferns and plums and weeds.

(RW, pp. 18 - 19)

It is with such poems, however, that Snyder's writing since 1968 begins to compare unfavourably with his earlier work. Myths & Texts, for example, contains an eloquent exposition of what is fundamentally the same concept - the potent fertility of nature. In that poem, however, as in the earlier lyrics, nature is presented very much on its own terms; in 'Kyoto Born in Spring Song', Snyder begins to indulge in what is often an excessive

anthropomorphism. The poetry verges dangerously on the sentimental, a criticism which could rarely be levelled at his earlier work. To read of the "infant pea" of 'Sours of the Hills' (RW, p. 45), the "nut-babies" of 'Seed Pods' (RW, p. 4) or the clouds as "brothers" in 'Song of the Cloud' (RW, p. 13), may only confirm the impression that Snyder is striving too hard to assert the equality of all phenomena. What points up the uneasy transitional sense of this rather oblique method of natural description is the presence in Regarding Wave of several lyrics, or lyric fragments, which still display the directness and solidity of the 'riprap' technique. Thus in 'Aged Tamba Temple Plum Tree Song', the physical presence of the tree is recreated with a precise attention to language which does not rely on drawing any parallels with the human world:

Scaly silver lichen
 on the plum
 bark
 Ragged, rough, twisted,
 parts half-rotted...

Fat buds, green twigs,
 flaky gray bark

(RW, p. 41)

As Snyder has always claimed, lineation, and typography in general, have an important role to play in such a poem; the indented lines and isolated words are the elements which help to provide the weighted and deliberate rhythm, supporting and supplementing the predominantly monosyllabic diction. On more occasions in Regarding Wave than in the earlier lyrics, attention to typography wavers and the poems risk the accusation that their abnormal layout is gratuitous and serves no precise function. Occasionally they begin to resemble the more extreme typographical experiments of Cummings, with the result that the poems become more visual than verbal in their impact. A section of 'Beatings Wings', for example:

Comb the sand down from my hair.

"off"
 and away. apart. separating. peeling back.
 a-way. a "ways off"
 he's "off --out of,
 the "offing"

--hot breath
 breathing down my neck.

(RW, p. 55)

Such a chaotic assemblage can be contrasted with the middle section of the title poem, 'Regarding Wave', where Snyder is able to express his sense of the life and liveliness inherent in the natural world by using the lyric techniques familiar from his earlier volumes - a more delicate movement indicated by typography, an insistent but not deliberate verbal parallelism, and an exact ear for sound:

Every hill, still.
 Every tree alive. Every leaf.
 All the slopes flow.
 old woods, new seedlings,
 tall grasses plumes.

Dark hollows; peaks of light.
 wind stirs the cool side
 Each leaf living.
 All the hills.

(RW, p. 35)

Co-existing in Regarding Wave with celebrations of family, community, and natural energy is a set of more polemical poems which have as their target that which would destroy such ideals. The apparent paradox of placing such radically different poems in close proximity can be partially explained by further reference to Snyder's Vajrayana beliefs, which also help to account for the outright anger they often contain. Almon points out that in Vajrayana "anger and desire...can be made instruments of enlightenment. They are changed from poisons into wisdom....Anger can be

realizes that the purging of the 'white' within him - however desirable - is an impossibility. 'White Devils', whilst not retracting these aspirations, re-enacts the same struggle but makes it over into a nightmarish physical reality:

Strangling a white girl
disembowelled, the insides hid in a shed
the body crushed...

and then
a disembowelled, half-skinned
horse-sized white wolf bitch
lying on its side in a pool of
half-melted snow

Even the extreme violence of these images of physical annihilation fails to eradicate the deeply rooted antipathy in the poet; ultimately he cannot deny, and is not allowed to forget, his stock:

a snowbank around her,
icy melt water staining red,
the red of blood spreading into the white snow.
she moved, stirred,

And I thought, my God.
still alive.

(RW, p. 10)

These are poems which reflect Snyder's desire in this period to be significantly more direct in his handling of such material; a belief, perhaps, that unvarnished and straightforward assault will have a greater impact on the reader. There is more obvious anger in these poems, for example, than in 'Vapor Trails' from The Back Country, a poem written immediately prior to the massive American intervention in Vietnam, and which makes its point through discreet and astute irony. Walking in the grounds of a monastery in Japan, the poet looks for the distinctive shape of the two-leaf pine; above him, that same design is being created on a gigantic scale by the "precise plane icetracks" of "young expert U.S. pilots".

In a presentiment of the human and natural devastation which is to follow, he sees "the air world torn and staggered" as his present world of "the cobble rockpath" and "temples" is literally overshadowed (BC, p. 37). In comparison, the images of 'In the House of the Rising Sun' are less ambiguous; now the menace is frighteningly actual:

Skinny kids in shorts get cups
 full of rice-gruel--steaming
 breakfast--sling
 their rifles, walk
 hot thickets.
 eyes peeled for U S planes...

Viet Nam uplands burned-off jungles
 wipe out a few rare birds
 Fish in the rice paddy ditches
 stream a dry foul taste thru their gills

However, what he gains in directness in these later poems, Snyder often seems to dissipate. Wanting to add an image of human 'pollution' to those of nature, he cannot resist the temptation to animate the point with a visual pun: "New Asian strains of clap/whip penic ill in"; and, presumably with the intention of supplying a personal correlative to the poem, he succeeds only in diverting attention away from its emphatic statement with a misplaced whimsicality:

Making toast, heating coffee,
 blue as Shiva--
 did I drink some filthy poison
 will I ever learn to love?

Did I really have to kill my sick, sick cat.

(RW, p. 9)

Prefiguring what will be a major concern in Turtle Island, when Snyder adopts the role of social prophet in Regarding Wave, the poems assume a curiously dated tone. This is particularly true of the section, 'Long Hair', where there are rather too many examples of stock offerings

to a receptive sub-culture. 'Brown', for example, displays Snyder's apparent willingness at this time to act as celebrant for a late nineteen-sixties bohemia:

black bread, brown sugar

"all year round"

bare feet, long hair
 sit on the floor,
 no meat, no under
 wear.
 smoky brun bear

BROWN RICE HEADS

(RW, p. 59)

As a further indication of the transitional nature of Regarding Wave, such poems give way to the sense of utter seriousness which Snyder adopts in Turtle Island. Retaining the same blend of celebration and anger, Snyder moves his poetry into an often purely personal arena as he prepares to commend "the real work" to his readers.

Turtle Island is at once Snyder's best received and most controversial volume. Recipient of the 1975 Pulitzer Prize (although even his most ardent admirer would concede that the award was a recognition of his growing reputation rather than of the individual volume itself), Turtle Island elicited a set of sharply polarized responses. Depending on the amount of sympathy for the book's polemics, it could be either "a source of hope, peace, and benediction",¹⁵ or "the ego-trip of an aging hippy who has somehow become a cult figure and now believes that if his belches were chemically analyzed, they would be found to consist of Wisdom".¹⁶ Even those maintaining a more neutral position between these two extremes could hardly fail to notice the marked decline in Snyder's interest in the formal

aspects of his poetry. Decline in interest rather than in ability is stressed since, as with Regarding Wave, there remain in Turtle Island some finely constructed examples of lyric poetry. Yet, more often than not, they are oases in a volume in which Snyder practically parodies many of the distinctive formal characteristics which had so enhanced the earlier lyrics. How else, for example, could a poet who had previously schooled himself so thoroughly in the delicate sound patterns of Williams, revert to 'The Uses of Light':

It warms my bones
say the stones

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

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

(TI, p. 39)

For a poet who had studiously avoided the regular use of end rhyme, its blatancy here is particularly striking. Even those techniques which Snyder had made a personal feature of his lyrics become exaggerated. Hence the use of word compounds, suggested earlier as an influence from his reading of Chinese poetry, is taken to extremes in 'The Bath':

Sweating and panting in the stove-steam hot-stone
cedar-planking wooden bucket water-splashing
kerosene lantern-flicker wind-in-the-pines-out
sierra forest ridges night

(TI, p. 12)

Six compounds, and a variety of other interposing adjectives, delay the ultimately lame arrival of the noun "night", which they exhaustively qualify. As Mark Twain would have commented: "It reminds a person of

those dentists who secure your instant and breathless interest in a tooth by taking a grip on it with forceps, and then stand there and drawl through a tedious anecdote before they give the dreaded jerk."¹⁷

When directly compared with earlier work, the poems in Turtle Island seem less able to emulate the poet's former skill to capture, in descriptive passages, the essence of natural phenomena and place them vividly before the reader's mind. For example, a part of 'Hunting', 3 - 'this poem is for birds' - from Myths & Texts:

Birds in a whirl, drift to the rooftops
Kite dip, swing to the seabank fogroll
Form: dots in air changing line from line,
the future defined...

Vaux Swifts
Flying before the storm
Arcing close hear sharp wing-whistle
Sickle-bird
pale gray
sheets of rain slowly shifting
down from the clouds,
Black Swifts.

(MT, pp. 19 - 20)

Compare with a passage from 'Straight-Creek--Great Burn':

A whoosh of birds
swoops up and round
tilts back
almost always flying all apart
and yet hangs on!
together;

never a leader,
all of one swift

(TI, p. 53)

The section from Myths & Texts is not faultless, but it does employ to good effect the proven standard features of the early poetry: compound words, the inclusion of proper names, careful lineation and the precise use of the caesura to create rhythm, and a variety of sound devices, among them

the shaded rhyme of "birds"/"whirl" and "whistle"/"sickle", the more direct matching of "line"/"defined" and "drift"/"swifts"/"shifting", and the unobtrusive alliteration of "sharp"/"sheets"/"shifting". In other words, the poem displays that attention to detail which converts into convincing and vivid description. The extract from the Turtle Island poem seems almost fallow in comparison: a rather hackneyed onomatopoeic "whoosh" in the first line, and the later jolting "almost"/"always"/"all"/"apart" within a single line, do little to enhance the unconvincing and somewhat flat description. It does not flatter this later poem that almost twenty years separate it from the earlier one.

Such examples could be multiplied. Occasionally, as in 'The Wild Mushroom', it is simply a lack of information which can mislead the reader. As it is presented on the page, this poem appears to be a travesty of any skill as a lyric poet Snyder might have once possessed with its rough approximation of ballad metre, awkward inversions, and forced rhymes:

Well the sunset rays are shining
 Me and Kai have got our tools
 A basket and a trowel
 And a book with all the rules...

We set out in the forest
 To seek the wild mushroom
 In shapes diverse and colorful
 Shining through the woodland gloom...

So here's to the mushroom family
 A far-flung friendly clan
 For good, for fun, for poison
 They are a help to man.

(TI, p. 46)

There is no hint in the text that Snyder does not intend 'The Wild Mushroom' to be a print-poem, but rather a set of lyrics for a song. Only when performed as an actual folk-song, with an appropriate traditional tune, does the poem begin to justify some of its apparent oddities of diction and rhythm.¹⁸

Despite these examples, it is still possible to find examples of the accomplished lyric poem in Turtle Island. 'Pine Tree Tops' is a reminder of his ability to record and transmit a natural scene with the concise and concrete expression of the earlier lyrics:

in the blue night
 frost haze, the sky glows
 with the moon
 pine tree tops
 bend snow-blue, fade
 into sky, frost, starlight.
 the creak of boots.
 rabbit tracks, deer tracks,
 what do we know.

(TI, p. 33)

Visual images, sounds, and colours are blended to produce an unadorned representation with the poet hesitant to impose himself upon it - a cautiousness perfectly captured in the understated question of the last line. It is a poem which can serve as a focal point for Turtle Island as a whole, since, when read in comparison with much of the volume, it makes apparent two of the major differences which exist between the earlier and later lyrics. These changes, which will be discussed in turn, are firstly the modified role of the poet in the poem, that is, the presence and importance of the speaking voice; and secondly, the greatly increased didacticism of the writing.

In the discussion of the lyrics prior to 1968, the role which Snyder assigned to the presence of the poet's personality in the poem was seen as an unobtrusive and suppressed one. With his insistence on the new sense of community in the later poems, it might be expected that the poet's individual personality would be even further erased. Indeed, as early as 1967, Snyder claimed that "in the new way of things, the community is essential to the creative act; the solitary poet figure and the 'name'

author will become less and less relevant";¹⁹ and in a later interview that "part of my personal world is erasing some parts of my ego increasingly into the cooperation of the group".²⁰

Snyder chooses a simple, if not over-simplified, method of achieving these aims. Rather than using the first person singular pronoun at all in a number of the Turtle Island poems, he substitutes the more general and inclusive 'we', thus giving at least a superficial sense that the individual speaking voice has been subsumed into a group consciousness. Poems such as 'Front Lines', 'By Frazier Creek Falls', 'Hemp', 'Rain in Alleghany', 'Bedrock', and 'What Happened Here Before', all employ the plural pronoun as a device both to erase the individual poet completely and to provide, in consequence, some easier sense of identification of reader with poem. What frequently occurs, however, is the very opposite of that which Snyder presumably intended. Although Turtle Island is engaged in an effort to break through to a wider audience, there remains at its centre, as Altieri notes, a sense in which "Snyder feels his primary role is to encourage an elite and give a firm intellectual and affective structure for its ideology".²¹ When related to the poems, this casts a different light on the use of 'we': too often it can be felt as referring to a limited group - to Zac, Kai, Gen, Masa, Dan, Drum, Diana, Philip, Keith, Allen, Dick, and the other friends, colleagues and acquaintances who populate the poems. Far from including the reader, the formation of a self-limiting group - a new elite - serves to exclude. Whereas in the earlier lyrics, the self-effacing 'I' drew the reader into the poem, the new communal 'we' is frequently alienating.

Moreover, there are occasions when the use of the plural pronoun actually increases Snyder's presence rather than being a device which helps to remove it. 'By Frazier Creek Falls', for example, is one of the volume's many entreaties that we should recognize our true position in the natural scheme of things:

This living flowing land
is all there is, forever

We are it
it sings through us--

We could live on this Earth
without clothes or tools!

(TI, p. 41)

There is the ready assumption in the final two lines that the poet speaks for all. Yet it is not difficult to appreciate that, in this case, when Snyder says "we", he means more accurately, 'I', since the poem's tone is more than suggestive of the poet lecturing his readers from a position which involves little or no self-doubt (in which case, the penultimate line could be further modified: the conditional "could" ought properly to read 'should' to complete the poet's intention). It is in this sense that the collective voice can alienate rather than assimilate his readers, especially those who might entertain doubts about the validity of the poem's instructions; even if the proposal of these concluding lines is more metaphorical than literal, that portion of the world's population which has no choice about living "without clothes or tools" might find it hard to agree. The exclamation which ends the poem is a device not uncommon in Turtle Island - as if vociferousness might make it more acceptable or persuasive - and is a good example of what Altieri defines as a "theatrical morality in which the assumption of an attitude is made to do the work of real action".²² Like so many in Turtle Island, the idea in itself may have an initial attractiveness; but it becomes more dubious if we are asked to treat it as constituting part of a practical programme for the achieving of an ideal society.

Snyder's lack of self-doubt in much of Turtle Island leads to the second major difference in these later poems: their didactic tone which, at points, borders on the dogmatic. To draw another comparison with the earlier

poetry, one of the chief contributing factors to the success of Myths & Texts, in its construction of a socially functional surrogate-myth, was seen to reside in the role of the archetypal quest hero. Guilty of many of the faults against which the poem sets itself, he too must grapple with his own inadequacies in order to gain greater insight; he is, then, essentially involved in a process of self-incrimination and must expiate his own guilt. The difference between this position and the stance adopted in Turtle Island is crucial. In Myths & Texts the ideological attitude is embedded in a network of the poet's own fears and doubts; in Turtle Island, with all such doubts put aside, the ideology is imposed upon the reader who no longer has an example to follow, but an ideal to which to aspire. In many poems, and in prose sections titled 'Facts' and 'Plain Talk', Snyder is explicitly asking that his thinking should be considered as a practical working alternative to a society which is destroying itself. At the same time, and in response to this request, the reader is led to undertake a closer examination of the poems in order to ascertain whether that alternative is adequate or convincing: we must judge the prophet for the quality of his vision. In doing so, and conscious of the certainty and occasional moral self-righteousness with which it is proposed, any flaws in the programme are likely to become accentuated.

Small yet nonetheless important inconsistencies are common in Turtle Island. One representative example is in two poems which invite the reader to consider them as complementary. 'Steak' and 'The Hudsonian Curlew' both concern themselves with a fundamentally simple theme: the eating of meat. As a pair, Snyder asks us to consider that there might be a 'right' and a 'wrong' way of doing this. 'Steak' is an indignant poem in which the speaker is outraged by

the steak houses
 called "The Embers" --called
 "Fireside"
 with a smiling disney cow on the sign
 or a stockman's pride--huge
 full-color photo of standing Hereford stud
 above the very booth
 his bloody sliced muscle is
 served in;
 "rare"

The sanitary presentation of the animal, the exploitation involved in rearing for the table, the escapism of the "disney cow", the slaughter for mass consumption, are all subject to the poet's contempt, as is the rather stereotyped list of villains who frequent, and thus perpetuate, such places:

The Chamber of Commerce eats there,
 the visiting lecturer,
 stockmen in Denver suits,
 Japanese-American animal nutrition experts
 from Kansas,
 with Buddhist beads

(TI, p. 10)

The poet invites us to share his disapproval of what he perceives as the epitome of ruthless 'civilized' consumption. 'The Hudsonian Curlew' also involves killing and eating. In this case, though, our approval is being sought, not our censure. The poem narrates an episode in which two birds are shot and eaten on a trip to the beach, the incident being conducted in a tone of veneration which is the precise antithesis of the callousness registered in 'Steak'. With more than a reminder of the primitive hunting techniques familiar from Myths & Texts, due homage is paid to the physical beauty of the birds:

the bill curved in, and the long neck limp--
 a grandmother plumage of cinnamon and brown.
 the beak not so long--bars on the head;
 by the eye.
 Hudsonian Curlew

There is also a suitable air of reverence in the initial preparation of the bird:

The down
 i pluck from the
 neck of the curlew
 eddies and whirls at my knees
 in the twilight wind
 from sea.
 kneeling in sand

 warm in the hand.

(TI, p. 56)

What follows, in a detailed and graphic account of the gutting and cleaning of the bird, is a display of knowledge which again has its roots in 'hunting magic'. The speaker's ability is offered as a partial atonement for having taken the life, and thus his actions are to be seen as morally preferable to the callous slaughter of 'Steak'. There is a readiness to be involved in all stages of what has become by now a ceremony rather than a meal; the participant is not sheltered from the intervening steps of converting a living animal into dead flesh. A none too subtle contrast is made in the two poems between what now lies ready for eating. In 'Steak', it is "bloody sliced muscle"; in 'The Hudsonian Curlew', it is

dense firm flesh
 dark and rich,
 gathered news of skies and seas.

(TI, pp. 56 - 57)

Up to this point, the poems have been drawing neat moral divisions. However, their respective conclusions begin to break down those easy contrasts without it being the poet's apparent intention that they should do so. 'Steak' ends by transferring its attention to the living animals which exist behind the false facade of the "disney cow":

And down by the tracks
 in frozen mud, in the feed lots,
 fed surplus grain
 (the ripped-off land)
 the beeves are standing round--
 bred heavy.
 Steaming, stamping,
 long-lashed, slowly thinking
 with the rhythm of their
 breathing,
 frosty--breezy--
 early morning prairie sky.

(TI, p. 10)

This predictably sympathetic portrait of the cattle captures their sentience, suggests a melancholy born of apprehensiveness, and indicates a sure knowledge of their eventual fate. As the two poems are made to contrast at almost every other point, it is surprising to find a similar ending to 'The Hudsonian Curlew':

at dawn
 looking out from the dunes
 no birds at all but
 three curlew

ker-lew!

ker-lew!

 pacing and glancing around.

(TI, p. 57)

Even to the same time of day, this is a comparable image of the creatures confronting a possible death. Their apprehensiveness comes from a lack of control over their fate should the poet wish to repeat his meal of the previous evening. Whether deliberately or not (and one suspects the latter), a telling point has been made in these two poems which undermines the simplistic contrast they initially propose. What is important to the eater - how and by whom the animal is killed, how it is prepared, how and where it is

consumed - is of little consequence to the eaten. In both poems, the animals are at the mercy of the next being in the food chain and fine moral distinctions are luxuries in which only the diner can indulge. If this point is taken, the reader concludes not only by recognizing that the ritual of consumption in 'The Hudsonian Curlew' is hardly feasible on a large scale, but also that the 'morality' it preaches might well be suspect. In the impact of its final image, the poem calls attention to its own imperfections.

Inconsistencies such as these are common in Turtle Island. At times we have no alternative but to accept that Snyder's proposals for change apply only to others. In 'The Dead by the Side of the Road', we are presented with a series of images of animals killed by modern transport with the reproving remark that "log trucks run on fossil fuel" (TI, p. 7), that is, they destroy nature in their every operation. In 'Front Lines', perhaps Snyder's most forthright condemnation of the effects of modern technology on the environment, we are invited to disapprove of another vehicle:

Sunday the 4-wheel jeep of the
 Realty Company brings in
 Landseekers, lookers, they say
 To the land,
 Spread your legs.

(TI, p. 18)

In the prose essay, 'Four Changes', Snyder insists that we should "phase out the internal combustion engine" and that "cars pollute the air" (TI, pp. 94, 95); 'Tomorrow's Song' asserts that "we need no fossil fuel" (TI, p. 77). In view of what seems to be a most clearly stated position, it is difficult to reconcile the appearance of, for example, the motorcycle which speeds Snyder home to his family in 'The Bed in the Sky' (RW, p. 32), or the truck which takes him to the coast in 'The Hudsonian Curlew'. Still less does it account for the veritable hymn of praise to a vehicle in the as yet uncollected poem, 'Working on the '58 Willys Pickup', which finds Snyder

Admiring its solidness, square lines,
Thinking a truck like this
Would please Chairman Mao...

The rear end rebuilt and put back
With new spider gears,
Brake cylinders cleaned, the brake drums
New-turned and new brake-shoes 23

Not so much an act of phasing out the internal combustion engine, this is a loving and delicate restoration.

To highlight such inconsistencies as these may appear to be quibbling, that is, to be overlooking the major issues at stake in favour of relatively unimportant details. However, Snyder's vision, and the often angry or satirical expression it assumes, has the sense of purity which tolerates no opposition. Minor contradictions indicate his potential unreliability as a prophet: if they exist, can his proposals regarding much more significant issues such as population control be taken as authoritative? These later poems often lack the recognition of the complexities which face the poet in the role of social and cultural reformer. Snyder allows himself to fall too easily into a critique of his own society which is founded on a simple contrast with a previous culture. 'Control Burn' (TI, p. 19), for example, puts forward one aspect of American Indian culture as an ideal with no obvious admission that its implied contrast with contemporary America is one which involves two radically different social structures. How far this might be considered as a regression in Snyder's appreciation of social and cultural change can be appreciated by comparing 'Control Burn' with the more complex portrait of Ray Wells, the Nisqually Indian, written some twenty years earlier in Myths & Texts. Wells is shown as caught up in the process of attempting to preserve some part of his ancient tribal existence whilst having to succumb to the inevitable pressures of the modern world: there are no simple solutions for his dilemma (MT, p. 12). Snyder's sympathies in both poems are with a more

harmonious, less destructive, way of life; but in 'Control Burn' he ignores those aspects of twentieth-century existence which effectively prevent an uncomplicated return to 'the old ways', and thus recoils from discussing any very practical solutions to the problems he reveals.

In ignoring such complexities, Snyder also begins to turn away from those things which had previously been a source of inspiration for him. As L. Edwin Folsom has commented, citing also the work of Hart Crane, Olson, Williams, and Theodore Roethke, Turtle Island is part of a widespread concern in modern American literature with a "descent to the land: an attempt to get in touch with the continent at some point before the white man began to write his history upon it".²⁴ For Folsom then, Snyder's later poetry is illustrative of a common desire to slough off a series of historical and cultural superimpositions:

We are part of an immense palimpsest; the U.S.A. is but a superficial layer, the most recent (and damaging) inscription over a series of earlier texts. Whitman may have found "The United States themselves" to be "essentially the greatest poem," but post-Whitman poets have found them to be a poem that was violently scratched over earlier poems, imposed on and obliterating native texts, native ways, natives themselves. To descend in the palimpsest, then, to learn what meanings lie preserved in the lower layers, to rediscover ways of existing on the land without destroying it: this is the basis of the American poet's desire for descent. 25

As Snyder peels back the layers to reach 'the old ways', he also dispenses with one stratum of white America to which he had previously paid homage. Riprap was dedicated, says Snyder, to "men I knew as seamen...or men I'd worked with as loggers. I felt that I owed them as individuals, as persons, as much as I owed any books".²⁶ In the same vein, Myths & Texts acknowledged the influence of the 'Wobblies', with elegiac poems for their martyrs, as well as affectionate portraits of the individualistic, defiant,

and socially unassimilated characters of his youth such as Ed McCullough. In Turtle Island, his sympathy for that generation of working men has disappeared or is, at best, more ambivalent. In 'Dusty Braces', Snyder offers the faintly ironic salutation of "nine bows" to

you ancestors
lumber schooners
 big moustache
long-handled underwear
sticks out under the cuffs...

you bastards
my fathers
and grandfathers, stiff-necked
punchers, miners, dirt farmers

Although he admits that "your itch/is in my boots too", such men also stand accused as those who "killd off the cougar and grizzly" (TI, p. 75). There is now only the merest suggestion of a belief which was diffused through the pre-1968 poetry: that such workers were often as exploited as that which they were led to exploit. In 'I Went into the Maverick Bar', Snyder is even less equivocal; here he admits his alienation from them, although he is half-ashamed of the things which set him apart:

I went into the Maverick Bar
In Farmington, New Mexico.
And drank double shots of bourbon
 backed with beer.
My long hair was tucked up under a cap
I'd left the earring in the car.

Initially he is attracted - with a heavy dose of nostalgia - by the old America that the bar represents: the cowboys, the country-and-western band, a couple dancing who "held each other like in High School dances/in the fifties". He is brought face to face with what he recognizes as a former self:

I recalled when I worked in the woods
 and the bars of Madras, Oregon.
 That short-haired joy and roughness--
 America--your stupidity.
 I could almost love you again.

In any comparison with the earlier poems - one thinks of 'Hay for the Horses' from Riprap, for example - the tone of superiority, if not almost condescension, is striking here. It is, no doubt, the reason why any such temptation can be firmly set aside:

We left--onto the freeway shoulders--
 under the tough old stars--
 In the shadow of bluffs
 I came back to myself,
 To the real work, to
 "What is to be done."

(TI, p. 9)

With the allusion to Lenin's seminal pamphlet here, Snyder sets the final seal on his fellow-feeling for the anarchic and individualist politics he had once so admired: there is a dogmatic and rather menacing tone in these closing lines.

Eventually, the lack of sympathy with the America of a past generation, and the anger he feels towards the America of the present, result in poems such as 'The Call of the Wild'. Previously discussed as an example of his abiding use of the myth figure of Coyote, it is also a poem in which his anger proliferates into something approaching a blanket condemnation. The farmer ("a native Californian"), the "ex-acid heads from the cities", loggers, the Government, "women.../in bouffant hairdos", "all these Americans" are impeached for their part in the silencing of the coyote's symbolic call (TI, pp. 21 - 23). As in Regarding Wave, the rancour of this poem - and others such as 'Steak', 'Spel Against Demons', and 'Front Lines' - could be justified by the use of anger as a teaching method in Vajrayana Buddhism; that is, passionate and violent condemnation - even if not entirely

rational - can be an instrument to break through the shell of complacency by the very nature of the emotions it arouses. There must come a point, though, where resort to an esoteric set of Buddhist rituals can be an excuse, rather than a justification, for wrath. However compassionate its ends, anger, even for the initiated reader, can be alienating rather than instructive.

Since 1968, then, the lyric poems have entered a period of crisis through Snyder's attempt to employ his established lyric form to bear the weight of a demonstrably altered perception of his role as a poet. In the earlier poems, Snyder discovered those structures which enabled him to make an eloquent revelation of his vision as seer. Now, striving to assume the more pragmatic status of social prophet, much of the earlier persuasiveness is overshadowed by a constant exaggeration of what had previously been left implicit. One area alone furnishes a precise single example of this. Much of the poetry prior to 1968 argues convincingly for the basic equality of all living things with Snyder's usual practice being to present such phenomena directly, allowing them to speak for themselves. In Turtle Island, seemingly impatient with this indirect approach, Snyder announces his intention to be a direct pleader for the wilderness, to interpose himself and "be a spokesman for a realm that is not usually represented either in intellectual chambers or in the chambers of government" (TI, p. 106). Thus deliberately politicizing his role, and adopting the natural world as his 'constituency', he produces poems such as 'Mother Earth: Her Whales' which, in its assumption of the rhetoric and language of politics, has the impact - as one critic suggests - of a "good prose essay mysteriously incarnated as a bad poem":²⁷

May ants, may abalone, otters, wolves and elk
 Rise! and pull away their giving
 from the robot nations.

Solidarity. The People.
 Standing Tree People!
 Flying Bird People!
 Swimming Sea People!
 Four-legged, two-legged, people!

How can the head-heavy power-hungry politic scientist
 Government two-world Capitalist-Imperialist
 Third-world Communist paper-shuffling male
 non-farmer jet-set bureaucrats
 Speak for the green of the leaf? Speak for the soil?

(TI, p. 48)

"Why", comments one reviewer, "can't he let Nature, through his poems, speak for herself?",²⁸ a remark which would have been redundant for the early Snyder, and a judgement in miniature on the attempt to bring together his poetry and his polemics in a volume which ultimately does justice to neither.

Since 1968, the poetry as a whole has done little to allay the major criticisms frequently levelled at Snyder's work; in particular, it has exacerbated that line of attack which holds him to be a Romantic primitivist, a nostalgic seeker after lost ideals whose poetry can have little relevance for a modern industrialized society. In fact, this accusation might well be the direct cause of Snyder's decision to inject a more strident socio-political content into his recent writing. If so, such a deliberate response is as clumsy as the original allegation since, once again, this is clearly a debate which must involve a discrimination between his earlier and later poems.

There can be little doubt as to Snyder's position in a well-established tradition of American writers whose work, in part or whole, is

a radical critique of the status quo through a retrospective comparison with a past social model which is presented as an ideal. The work of Thoreau to some extent, of Mark Twain certainly, of Eliot and Pound in part and, to give an example of an author contemporaneous with Snyder, the fiction of Ken Kesey, could all be read in this context. One feature which many such authors share is to subject their own society to the most searching and remorseless criticism, but, in introducing their past model for comparison, then fail to submit that ideal to the same rigorous examination. The reader is often left with an unsatisfactory and, in some cases, a rather shallow and abstract utopianism to set against the harshly perceived faults of the present. As previously suggested in the comparison of sections of Myths & Texts with poems from Turtle Island, this is only a flaw in Snyder's recent work where an idealized or impractical vision becomes too pronounced to overlook. The loss of discipline and stability in the later poems - caused by the rejection of his Modernist models - not only has implications for the aesthetic impact of his writing, but also results in foregrounding some of the crudeness of its ideology. It is because Snyder is now attempting to change our ways as well as our minds that we are less likely to accept his vision wholesale or to ignore some of the discrepancies in his proposed new social model.

The one past culture which Snyder consistently offers as an antidote to contemporary society is that of the American Indian. In the poetry, and also in many of his essays, Snyder presses upon his audience the example offered by a primitive tribal existence. 'Re-Inhabitation' is a call to seek a proper identity and sense of place through learning from "the old ways";²⁹ 'Passage to More Than India' has its sections on "The Tribe" and "White Indians";³⁰ and the essay, 'Why Tribe', which proposes the existence of a "Great Subculture which runs underground all through history" and includes "peasant witchcraft in Europe, Tantrism in Bengal, Quakers in England, Tachikawa-ryū in Japan, [and] Ch'an in China", has as its

contemporary outcropping a new sense of tribe, a society which "proposes a totally different style: based on community houses, villages and ashrams; tribe-run farms or workshops or companies; large open families; pilgrimages and wanderings from center to center".³¹

In purely objective terms, Snyder's vision of the Indian and the tribal life is an idealized one. However, in Myths & Texts, the reader is willing to accept a certain amount of generalization since, in this poem, Snyder is content to hint at such an alternative culture and presents, not enforces, more desirable modes of existence: they are subsumed into the totality of the text, rather than standing isolated as the poem's only raison d'être. In Myths & Texts, Snyder is hardly suggesting that we should become "white Indians" (indeed, in the portrait of Ray Wells, he demonstrates clearly how problematical that might be); instead, he is offering the possibility of what he perceives as a simpler and more harmonious mode of being. As Almon says, the point of interest is "Snyder's poetry, not his credentials as an anthropologist".³²

However, when his claims for "the old ways" become more peremptory, and are isolated from their mythic context, they are liable to more detailed scrutiny. As became apparent in the discussion of Turtle Island, this not only reveals certain inexactitudes but also magnifies their importance. With the rapturous praise lavished on the tribal life in some of the later poems and essays, the nature of the problem is of the same order, as one specific example demonstrates. We read a great deal in both Snyder's poetry and prose of primitive hunting techniques, and especially of that epitome of the harmonious relationship between hunter and prey, the still-hunt, which Snyder states "is designed to bring the game to you - the creature who has heard your song, witnessed your sincerity, and out of compassion comes within your range".³³ Doubtless such practices did, and still do, exist; but even the most basic anthropological or ethnographical text verifies that they are

far from universal. Alvin Josephy, for example, discussing the hunting practices of early Plains and Great Basin tribes respectively, shows that much of their food-gathering was a good deal less noble or reverent than Snyder's 'hunting magic':

Various methods were utilized to secure game, including donning skin disguises and creeping up on quarry, or surrounding animals and driving them into a pound, or stampeding them over cliffs....

Diets also included roasted grasshoppers, which people caught by driving them into trenches with the aid of fire...and birds and rabbits, which were trapped with large nets.... And where there was antelope, Indians often came together...and, led by shamans, surrounded the animals and drove them into brush corrals where they were slain. 34

Even the shaman's sacred journeying, then, had to be supplemented on occasions with rather more practical methods. Snyder's use of 'hunting magic' as an appropriate symbol for an enlightened relationship with the natural world has its imprecisions; but in Myths & Texts, they might be condoned by all but the most severe critic, since that poem marshals so much supporting evidence for his vision. It is only in the later work, when the issue at stake is not simply the recommendation of preferable cultural alternatives, that Snyder's "credentials" are really put to the test. As he begins the direct advocacy of radical changes in social thinking and behaviour, then the pressures which are brought to bear on his theories reveal more significant flaws.

The reader is never sure, for example, as to the exact means of such a social revolution. In Myths & Texts, Snyder rejects radical Marxist action for the more gradual change suggested in the I.W.W. motto: "Forming the New Society/within the shell of the Old" (MT, p. 40); by 1967, however, he is insistent on his "revolutionary, apocalyptic, and somewhat violent view of what has to be done",³⁵ a stance corroborated in

1968 with an angry poem such as 'A Curse on the Men in Washington, Pentagon'. A little later, in 1969, he returned to essentially non-violent methods: "Since it doesn't seem practical or even desirable to think that direct bloody force will achieve much, it would be best to consider this a continuing 'revolution of consciousness' which will be won not by guns but by seizing the key images, myths, archetypes, eschatologies, and ecstasies so that life won't seem worth living unless one's on the transforming energy's side" (TI, p. 101).³⁶ By 1971 though, Snyder can still be incensed enough to write the as yet uncollected poem 'Little Dead Kids Butts', which prepares for its violent ending by introducing four separate themes: the killing of Vietnamese by American soldiers, his own killing and dressing of a deer, the birth of his second son, Gen, and an image of his first son, Kai, playing naked in the garden. The catalyst for the conclusion is Snyder's realization that his half-Japanese sons remind him of the "fat little butts of/dead children in photos", hence his extreme reaction:

The dead doe,
The dead Vietnamese baby
Gen being born
Kai's bare butt in the garden...

if you come near my children
With "orders"
Your "orders" your
Limp-cock shitting-tongue
Trigger-finger "orders"

I'll kill you
Soldier

And dress out your meat.³⁷

The inconsistency of this sequence is still apparent in Turtle Island. On adjoining pages in that volume can be found poems such as 'Spel Against Demons' and 'Front Lines'. In the former, Snyder clearly states his case against the rhetoric of violence:

The stifling self-indulgence in anger in the name of
 Freedom
 must cease

this is death to clarity
 death to compassion

Down with demonic killers who mouth revolutionary
 slogans and muddy the flow of change

(TI, pp. 16 - 17)

Turning the page one finds 'Front Lines', a poem which deals almost exclusively in the imagery of violence and battle; against those forces which pose a destructive threat to the wilderness, writes Snyder, continuing to operate in such images, "we must draw/Our line" (TI, p. 18).

In essence, the precise social or political relevance of Snyder's poetry is only an issue when Snyder himself draws our attention to it. In the later poems, as he attempts to speak to a wider audience and teach "the real work", his thinking assumes a more virulent and less flexible position. At that point, he invites the reader who is not wholly convinced that such poems can act as models for social change, to engage in debate with their author. Before 1968, Snyder's poems, both lyric and mythic, have equally ambitious motives, but the message they embody is less dictatorial. Escaping from the pressures which a more utilitarian role might impose upon them, they are controlled - often moving - testimonies to an attractive and assured response to the world they confront. Hence, we do not read Myths & Texts as a pragmatic guide to life in the woods any more than we read 'Migration of Birds' as an ornithological treatise. In this context, a final comparison between an early poem such as Myths & Texts and a work to which it pays due homage through allusion, Thoreau's Walden, is especially pertinent.

We miss the point of Walden if it is read solely as a practical handbook for self-sufficiency, that is, if we are only interested in its literal statement. Essentially, Thoreau was neither preaching a direct

social gospel, nor advocating an actual withdrawal from society, but proposing a more general change in consciousness: not an actual economy, then, but an economy of mind and spirit, how to 'spend' one's life in the most profitable fashion. This is equally true of Myths & Texts, where the reader is prepared to overlook some of its more idealized notions, to disregard some of the more obvious impracticalities, because the poem as a whole is a powerful and persuasive statement which does not so much demand some impossible revision of practical habit and behaviour, but pleads rather for the change of mind and attitude which its surrogate-myth embodies. An ideology is certainly present in the poem, but it is embedded in the mythic framework and is never allowed to become dogmatic or absolute. In the earlier discussion of this poem, it was suggested that much of its success is dependent on the reader being offered a personal example to follow and, further, that the flawed nature of that example encourages rather than alienates. In both Myths & Texts and Walden, the sense of a personal quest helps the reader to suspend disbelief, to transfer attention from the literal statement of the text to its more general, underlying arguments. "My purpose in going to Walden Pond" says Thoreau "was not to live cheaply or to live dearly there, but to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles".³⁸ We are encouraged, then, as in Myths & Texts, to become immersed in the protagonist's struggle to establish his new mode of thinking. In the poems since 1968, however, it is not so much a case of immersion as one of drowning in the rhetoric which Snyder's early poems so adroitly avoided.

V. CONCLUSION

No reading of the poetry of Gary Snyder can advance to any great extent without an awareness of the crucial role which tradition has played in shaping it. Those critics who would claim an utter originality for his work are rebuffed at every point by the poetry itself and by Snyder's own willingness to acknowledge his debts to past hands. For the otherwise perceptive James Wright to propose that Snyder "has written a poetry which is quite unusual and very different from most poetry written in the last years" is simply to ignore those traditions which underpin it.¹ Equally unacceptable is Robert Kern's assertion that the Riprap lyrics deny "all example and all precedent",² when it is strikingly obvious that they are an integral part of a modern American lyric tradition which, as it includes the likes of Pound, Williams, and Cummings, is hardly obscure enough to be overlooked.

Still more implausible are those attempts to transform Snyder into a 'backwoods' American original: to pretend that he is a literary Randle P. McMurphy sweeping through the stuffy hall of academe. His path, writes Steuding - in the course of making a somewhat facile equation between 'academic' and 'the academy' - is in "the rough-and-tumble world of the Far West".³ This judgement is of the same order as the easy acceptance of Snyder's tenuous links with the Beats. Deceived by superficial appearance, it disregards his rigorous period of self-disciplined study in the formative years from 1948 to 1956. In 1951, at the age of twenty-one, Snyder submitted an undergraduate dissertation, 'The Dimensions of a Myth'; reprinted without alteration in 1979, it is all the reminder we need of his early commitment to the academic. Primarily, it is a comprehensive study of a single Haida myth drawn from the work of J. R. Swanton; but it also discusses the eminent American ethnologists, Franz Boas, A. L. Kroeber,

Edward Sapir, Stith Thompson, Paul Radin, and Robert Lowie; it demonstrates Snyder's knowledge of a range of other mythographers and anthropologists: James Frazer, Jessie Weston, Heinrich Zimmer, Jane Harrison, Joseph Campbell, Bronislaw Malinowski, Robert Graves, and the work of Jung and Kerenyi on myth; it evidences his own researches into other mythological systems: Medieval Romance, Eddic Folklore, and Japanese myth; and it reveals his awareness of major literary critics, particularly as their work relates to tradition, archetype, and myth: T. S. Eliot, Maud Bodkin, I. A. Richards, and Northrop Frye amongst others. This is not the work of a backwoods man. The image of Snyder as the unaffected 'natural man', scornful of the academic life, also offers no account of how, in just over two years at the University of California, he assimilated the Chinese language to a standard which resulted in the highly acclaimed Han-shan translations. Neither could it be said that Snyder himself has encouraged such an image. Riprap may be dedicated to the working men whom Snyder felt had taught him so much; but the dedication pages of many of his other books record his gratitude to the teachers - in the stricter sense of the word - who have guided him: Earth House Hold for Oda Sessō Roshi, his Zen master; the new edition of Myths & Texts for Lloyd Reynolds and David French, lecturers at Reed College; The Old Ways for Alan Watts, the influential American Orientalist and philosopher. Similarly, much of his poetry, especially in the lyric mode, may celebrate physical work - and thus suggest an implicit antipathy to the studious life - but Snyder has consistently and readily declared the complex matrix of sources from which such poems arise, as one interviewer discovered when probing for his early influences. In the space of three transcribed pages, Snyder had regaled him with Carl Sandburg, Edgar Lee Masters, D. H. Lawrence, Robinson Jeffers, Walt Whitman, T. S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, Charles Olson, W. B. Yeats, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Ezra Pound, and James Joyce;

this was in addition to mentioning the work of Jane Harrison and Jessie Weston, and appending, for good measure, Chinese poetry and American Indian mythology and song.⁴ Although he may not be of the academy, Snyder's allegiance to the academic is evidently greater than many of his critics are prepared to admit. For the remaining unconvinced, a glance at any page of Myths & Texts should prove sufficient.

From his earliest poems it is also obvious that Snyder, as much as any contemporary poet, has absorbed the theories of both Eliot and Pound as to the essential apprenticeship which the neophyte must undertake to achieve a mature voice. He has clearly benefited from Pound's view that "the experimental demonstrations of one man may save the time of many".⁵ In adopting the models meticulously cultivated by his twentieth-century forbears, he has become a product of the modern American tradition.

That Snyder's work lies in an American, and not a more general English-language poetic heritage cannot be over-emphasized. To neglect this basic point can lead to the confusion and misapprehension which, for example, greeted the initial printings of his poetry in Britain. In 1965, the periodical Critical Quarterly published one of the first representative samples of Snyder's poetry to appear in this country. It consisted of four poems which were later collected in The Back Country, and included 'How to Make Stew in the Pinacate Desert: Recipe for Locke & Drum'.⁶ As previously discussed in chapter III, this lyric is in the classic American tradition: a 'naming' poem with precedents as least as far back as Emerson's 'Hamatreya' with its sonorous opening invocation of "Bulkeley, Hunt, Willard, Hosmer, Meriam, Flint",⁷ and written in the discursive, colloquial tone common to much modern and contemporary American poetry. As traditional as it may have been in its American context, the poem was evidently an alien experience for many British readers. In a later issue of Critical Quarterly, its editor, C. B. Cox, was prompted to defend the poem, firstly denying one suggestion

that it was a 'spoof', and then reminding his readership that "Snyder's poems seem particularly unusual in Britain, perhaps because we have not readily assimilated American poetry in the tradition of Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams".⁸

The precise tradition in which Snyder's poetry stands has been deliberately narrowed in this study: it is American, Modernist, formal, and experimental. To return to our original claim, it is only by establishing his position in this lineage that a comprehensive account of his work can be given. We have seen attempts to align him with the Beats, or with that peculiarly American phenomenon, the 'backwoods' tradition (the term is not applied in a derogatory fashion since it encompasses such authors as Cooper and Twain, a dimension of the poetry of Robert Frost, parts of Hemingway's fiction - particularly the early short stories - and the novels of Ken Kesey). In view of his recent assumption of a more public and rhetorical voice, some case could be made for reading Snyder as the inheritor of an American populist poetic tradition, which might include the work of Whitman, Sandburg, Masters, Vachel Lindsay, Kenneth Fearing and, latterly, Allen Ginsberg. Even more tempting would be to assign his poetry to an established Romanticism, to judge it as an outcropping of the line of Blake, Jeffers, and Lawrence, that is, writers seeking a psychic wholeness in the midst of what they perceive as a diseased civilization. Such traditions offer only partial interpretations of his achievement. In the case of the latter, we would be in the position of considering his most recent poetry as of the greatest interest, since it is the work which constitutes Snyder's most stringent analysis of society; but it would leave open the question as to why he has gone from being greeted in the nineteen sixties as one of the finest lyric poets in English in the post-1945 period, to one who has attracted the controversy which the manifest weaknesses of this later poetry have caused.

It is only by firmly establishing his Modernist credentials that such a hiatus can be explained. Only via those Modernist traditions of lyric and long poem which have been scrutinized here, can we recognize from where his poetry emerges, what its typical strategies are, and how the stability offered by such a heritage allowed Snyder to exercise a measure of beneficial innovation. Only by realizing that he turns away from these models in the post-1968 period, can we explain the loss of formal discipline and the frankly slipshod technique which makes further experiment in the later poems much less profitable.

Such a concentration on tradition, however, should not overshadow the truly innovative aspects of his poetry. Indeed, any poet who chooses to align himself with Modernism - at whatever stage in its history and development - is likely to discover that Pound's maxim, "make it new", practically compels him towards experimentation. One such area has been implied throughout this study: Snyder's ability to syncretize disparate aspects of his knowledge and experience to provide an often novel and individual integration. The blend of Nō drama and Chinese scroll landscapes as instigator of the original structure of Mountains and Rivers without End, the whole concept of the shaman-poet, or the successful fusion of the mythical and the actual in Myths & Texts, are among the examples. Two other spheres of experiment have been accorded special attention: his extensive use of American Indian oral culture in the mythic poems, and the dexterous transformation of certain features of Chinese poetry in the lyrics. It is worth reminding ourselves, however, that neither of these is totally original nor wholly exclusive to Snyder. For the use of Indian materials, he had the example of Jaime de Angulo whose similar deployment of myth, song, and poem pre-dates and pre-figures his own; and, of course, the Imagists - and Pound especially - had much earlier begun to explore the possibilities of allowing Oriental poetry to influence their own work.

What is innovative in Snyder's practice was the ability to bring these earlier experiments to full fruition. A much more accomplished poet than de Angulo, he found an eminently functional model in the Modernist long poem through which he developed a mythic mode capable of exploiting such Indian sources to their fullest extent. Much more knowledgeable than earlier poets in his studies of Chinese verse, and certainly far superior as a linguist, he was in a position to realize that neither strict translation, nor rough approximation, would ultimately offer much to the development of his own poetry. Using his expertise, he proceeded to the transformation of elements of both form and content which enhanced his own lyrics without, in any sense, compromising or devaluing his appreciation of the original.

In addition, the value of Snyder's innovation can be measured by what his poetry has initiated or freed for later writers. One prime example would be the frequency with which the Coyote figure surfaces in modern American writing. Although Snyder was guided by Jaime de Angulo's initial use of this myth archetype, the latter's direct influence on contemporary writers in general is limited, since the bulk of his work lay neglected until it was resurrected in the nineteen seventies (a restoration itself partially due to Snyder's promptings). Such collections as Barry Gifford's Coyote Tantras, then, or Will Staple's Coyote Run, and the existence of a periodical like Coyote's Journal, can be directly attributed to Snyder's early poems, 'A Berry Feast' and Myths & Texts, and to his consistent belief that such archaic myth figures as the Trickster have a function in contemporary writing. More pleasing still is that Snyder's efforts have cleared a space for modern American Indian writers to revive their own tribal Coyote songs and tales, as in the work of the Mohawk, Peter Blue Cloud, or Simon J. Ortiz of the Acoma Pueblo. One literal indication of how widespread the fascination with Coyote has become is given

by the listing under that title in the June 1983 Books in Print: the two dozen entries include tribal songs, myths, and lore, as well as original poems and stories inspired by the Trickster in this guise, amongst them the alarming, yet nevertheless intriguing, Coyote Meets Kafka.⁹

Snyder's early articulation of the shaman-poet has had a similar effect, virtually introducing that term into the modern critical vocabulary. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Keith Sagar describing the work of Ted Hughes in terms which often directly echo Snyder's words: "He performs a function essential to the race, a function analogous to that performed in more 'primitive' cultures by a shaman, whose function is to make the dangerous journey, on behalf of his society, into the spirit world, which is to say, into his own unconscious."¹⁰ Without implying any direct influence from Snyder, Hughes himself frequently describes the task and the strategies of the poet in distinctly shamanic terms:

There is the inner life, which is the world of final reality, the world of memory, emotion, imagination, intelligence, and natural common sense, and which goes on all the time, consciously or unconsciously, like the heart beat. There is also the thinking process by which we break into that inner life and capture answers and evidence to support the answers out of it. That process of raid, or persuasion, or ambush, or dogged hunting, or surrender, is the kind of thinking we have to learn and if we do not somehow learn it, then our minds lie in us like the fish in a pond of a man who cannot fish. 11

In this context, an investigation of the genealogy of Hughes' trickster-like 'Crow' might discover that he is not too distant a relative of Coyote.¹²

Inevitably, a poet such as Snyder will also provoke work of less vigour and intensity, although its very existence is witness to his influence. There are plenty of examples of Parkinson's mechanical "Gary Snyder poem" to be found, and to peruse a copy of the magazine Kuksu (itself 'A Journal of Backcountry Writing'), leaves no doubt as to the

motive force behind it. Together with Snyder's own contribution are pieces with titles such as 'Four for Coyote', 'Grace for a Porcupine Never Eaten', 'Earthmaker Believe Me', 'Master of the Wilds', and an excerpt from a de Angulo Coyote creation myth, 'How the World was Made'. To cap the point, this issue is also sub-titled 'The Old Ways'.¹³

It is probable that in the future the development suggested by Altieri in Snyder's perception of his role as a poet - from seer to prophet - will become even more of a central issue in his work. Indeed, that change may already be manifesting itself as a still more radical one. At its most extreme, it is the difference between Snyder's very early conviction that poetry had an important personal function, and a later decision that the genre might no longer be sufficient for his purposes. In this light, perhaps the most prophetic of all the early responses to Snyder's poetry was Parkinson's comment that "Snyder doesn't care about the art, that poetry for him is only one of a set of instruments in a spiritual quest".¹⁴ Hence Snyder's confession in an interview of the late nineteen seventies: "I'm not that interested in poetry; I've always been busy with other things that were just as, or more, interesting to me; I don't even read poetry very much...I gave up poetry when I was twenty-five."¹⁵ There is more than a hint of bravado in such a claim; in fact, Snyder's profound ambivalence over his relationship with poetry in this period is evidenced by reading a little further in the same interview to find him claiming that "all my life is poetry".¹⁶

If the former of these two comments has a serious intent, however, it is not fortuitous that the key date is 1955 (his twenty-fifth year), since it was then that Myths & Texts was being brought to completion. Myths & Texts has been stressed in this study as essentially an initiatory poem, a poem of self-discovery and self-location. Snyder's comments increase

the sense that its vital ingredient is a personal spiritual quest, one which by the end of the poem has been accomplished or, at the least, has set him on the correct path. Hence, as "one of a set of instruments in a spiritual quest", poetry - in the form of Myths & Texts - had served its purpose for Snyder even at that very early stage. In 1959, writing on the poem and its importance to him as an individual, he commented: "I tried to make my life as a hobo and worker, the questions of history & philosophy in my head, and the glimpses of the roots of religions I'd seen through meditation, peyote, and 'secret frantic rituals' into one whole thing. As far as I'm concerned, I succeeded."¹⁷ Although Snyder later retracted this final sentence as "prideful and wrong", and maintained that the mission begun in Myths & Texts was "far from finished",¹⁸ the poem remains as an astonishingly mature work for the young poet. Despite the excellence of many of the poems which follow it, it has been a formidable task for Snyder to recapture the delicate balance he achieved in the poem's personal conviction, its aesthetic appeal, and its wider social and cultural significance.

For Snyder's poetry as a whole, the example of Myths & Texts is a telling one. It stands as the centre-piece in a phenomenally fertile period of his writing career. A relatively brief span of time from the early nineteen fifties to the mid-nineteen sixties saw the production of not only this major long poem, but also the highly successful lyrics of Riprap, the Han-shan translations, and the bulk of the poems of The Back Country. Whatever reservations may be voiced concerning Snyder's more recent work, this is, by any standards, an impressive achievement. In fact, it is precisely the disappointing nature of the later poetry which highlights his real value. In 1969, close to that point which we have identified as a watershed for Snyder's poetry, Stephen Berg and Robert Mezey included a large selection of his work in their anthology, Naked Poetry. Even at a

distance of almost fifteen years, their choice of poems seems a judicious one. It includes an example of the crispest of the Riprap lyrics - 'Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout'; indications of the best of Snyder's 'narrative' lyrics - 'Hay for the Horses', 'Noonsack Valley', and 'The Late Snow & Lumber Strike of the Summer of Fifty-four'; a generous portion of Myths & Texts; evidence of the quality of The Back Country - 'Foxtail Pine' and 'For the West'; and some of the most impressive early fragments of Mountains and Rivers without End - 'The Market' and two of the 'Things To Do...' series.¹⁹ To say that no single example from the later poetry springs to mind as a replacement in such a selection, is not so much a judgement on the post-1968 poetry, as another endorsement of the excellence of the earlier work.

In a wider context, Snyder's quality is also gauged by his location in those American Modernist traditions to which he has contributed. To place Myths & Texts in a line of American long poems which includes Eliot's The Waste Land, Pound's The Cantos, Williams' Paterson, H. D.'s Trilogy, Zukofsky's A, Olson's The Maximus Poems, Duncan's Passages and The Structure of Rime, and Ginsberg's Howl and The Fall of America, is to subject it to the highest and most competitive standards. Yet the poem is not overshadowed in such company and takes its place as an equal and wholly fitting part of their tradition; to compare Myths & Texts with The Waste Land is not to diminish it, but to recognize it as a poem of a similar order and quality. Equally, to estimate the value of Snyder's lyrics by offering them in comparison to a line which includes the work of the Imagists, Pound, H. D., Williams, Cummings, the Objectivists, Moore, Rexroth, and Creeley, is not to assign them to any subordinate position. On the contrary, at their best, they are not only a major contribution to that modern lyric tradition, but also stand as among the peaks of its achievement.

Ultimately, it is in the nature of any tradition that, without

continual reassessment and renovation, it risks becoming moribund.²⁰
The truest measure of Snyder's writing, then, is that with its degree of
beneficial innovation - and putting its surface exoticism into a proper
perspective - his best poetry remains not only profoundly within the
American tradition, but also represents one of its most significant
contemporary developments.

VI. FOOTNOTES

I. INTRODUCTION(i) The Mythic and Lyric Modes

1. The manuscript of Myths & Texts, held at the library of the Kent State University, Ohio, is dated by Snyder: "Sourdough Mt. 1953 - McCorkle's Shack 1956" (p. 1; the MS is unpaginated: further references are located by numbering from the title page and using the abbreviation, Myths & Texts MS). This is amended in all published versions to "Crater Mt. L.O. 1952 - Marin-an 1956". The earliest dating of a poem from Riprap is that for 'Praise for Sick Women', dated 1954 by Snyder when reprinted in The New American Poetry, edited by Donald M. Allen (New York, 1960), p. 308.
2. Doug Flaherty, 'An Interview with Gary Snyder', Road Apple Review, 1, no. 4 - 2, no. 1 (Winter 1969 - Spring 1970), 59 - 68 (p. 65). A version of this interview appears in Gary Snyder, The Real Work: Interviews & Talks 1964 - 1979, edited by Wm. Scott McLean (New York, 1980), pp. 15 - 30. However, since this and many of the other interviews included in the volume have been subjected to extensive editing and, often radical revision, the original periodical publication has been preferred. As with many contemporary writers, the interview can be a valuable source of information: a listing of those with Snyder is included in the bibliography.
3. Flaherty, 'An Interview with Gary Snyder', p. 65.
4. Gary Snyder, 'Poetry and the Primitive: Notes on Poetry as an Ecological Survival Technique', Earth House Hold: Technical Notes & Queries to Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries (New York, 1969), pp. 117 - 30 (p. 118).
5. Gary Snyder, 'Statement on Poetics', in Allen, The New American Poetry, pp. 420 - 21 (p. 420).
6. Quoted in David Kherdian, A Biographical Sketch and Descriptive Checklist of Gary Snyder (Berkeley, California, 1965), p. 12.

(ii) Snyder and the Beat

1. Jack Kerouac, The Dharma Bums (1958; London, 1965).
2. Snyder met Kerouac for the first time on the day of the Six Gallery reading (see note 13 below), 13 October 1955, and left for Japan on 15 May 1956.
3. James Dickey's term used in 'Five First Books' (review of Myths & Texts included), Poetry, 97 (1961), 316 - 20 (p. 317).

4. Ann Charters, Kerouac: A Biography (London, 1974), p. 55.
5. Jacqueline Starer, Les Ecrivains Beats et le Voyage (Paris, 1977), p. 67. The interview referred to took place on 29 September 1973. (Snyder, in private, does not describe the scene in the same way; he says that it happened in a more friendly and less romantic fashion, that Kerouac did not tell the whole truth in his novels but transformed it as he pleased and that, in fact he, Snyder, accompanied the young girl very calmly back down the gangway and on to the quay.)
6. Charters, Kerouac, p. 373.
7. Peter Barry Chowka, 'The Original Mind of Gary Snyder' (interview in three parts), East West Journal, 7, no. 8 (August 1977), III, 18 - 30 (p. 25).
8. Kenneth Rexroth, 'The New Poetry', Assays (New York, 1961), pp. 184 - 95 (pp. 184 - 85).
9. Jack Kerouac, Desolation Angels (1965; London, 1968), pp. 324 - 25.
10. Jack Kerouac, On the Road (1957; Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1972).
11. Kenneth Rexroth, 'Poetry in the Sixties', With Eye and Ear (New York, 1970), pp. 69 - 77 (pp. 73 - 74).
12. Rexroth, 'Poetry in the Sixties', p. 73.
13. Allen Ginsberg, 'Howl', Howl and Other Poems (San Francisco, 1956), pp. 9 - 22. The Six Gallery, a small art gallery in San Francisco, was a frequent venue for poetry readings. The reading referred to in the text took place on 13 October 1955 and is best known as the first public performance by Ginsberg of Howl. Descriptions of the event, in which Snyder also participated, can be found in Kerouac, The Dharma Bums, pp. 14 - 16; in Kherdian, A Biographical Sketch, p. 11; and in Jane Kramer, Paterfamilias: Allen Ginsberg in America (New York, 1968), p. 48.
14. Rexroth, 'Poetry in the Sixties', p. 74.
15. Thomas Parkinson, 'Phenomenon or Generation', in A Casebook on the Beat, edited by Thomas Parkinson (New York, 1961), pp. 276 - 90 (pp. 280 - 81).
16. John Clellon Holmes, Nothing More to Declare (London, 1968), p. 110.
17. Holmes, p. 117.
18. Thomas F. Merrill, Allen Ginsberg (New York, 1969), p. 17.
19. Allen Ginsberg, 'Notes for Howl and Other Poems', in The Poetics of the New American Poetry, edited by Donald Allen and Warren Tallman (New York, 1973), pp. 318 - 21 (p. 318).
20. Kerouac, On The Road, p. 183; Ginsberg, Howl, p. 9.
21. William Carlos Williams, 'Howl for Carl Solomon', in Ginsberg, Howl, pp. 7 - 8 (p. 8).

22. Gregory Corso, 'Variations on a Generation', Gemini, 2, no. 6 (Spring 1959), 47 - 51 (p. 48).
23. Some examples of the better-known of these accounts would be: Dan Jacobsen, 'America's "Angry Young Men": How Rebellious Are the San Francisco Rebels?', Commentary, 24 (1957), 475 - 79; Norman Podhoretz, 'A Howl of Protest in San Francisco', New Republic, 16 September 1957, p. 20, and 'The Know-Nothing Bohemians', Partisan Review, 25 (1958), 305 - 18; Ralph Gleason, 'Kerouac's "Beat Generation"', Saturday Review, 11 January 1958, p. 75; V. S. Pritchett, 'The Beat Generation', New Statesman, 6 September 1958, pp. 292, 294, 296.
24. The Beat Scene, edited by Elias Wilentz (New York, 1960). Examples of other retrospective anthologies would be Parkinson, A Casebook on the Beat and The Beats, edited by Seymour Krim (Greenwich, Connecticut, 1960). Earlier, in the nineteen fifties, Snyder's work had been printed with that of many of the writers included in these anthologies, for example, in issues of Evergreen Review from 1956 and in the final issue of Black Mountain Review, no. 7 (1957). The major difference, however, is that these periodicals were making no deliberate attempt to create a Beat category for the authors whom they published.
25. James McKenzie, 'Moving the World a Millionth of an Inch: An Interview with Gary Snyder', in 'The Beat Diary', edited by Arthur and Kit Knight, the unspeakable visions of the individual, no. 5 (1977), 140 - 57 (p. 141).
26. Kerouac, The Dharma Bums, p. 27.

(iii) Critical Responses to the Poetry

1. "Crunk" [pseud.], 'The Work of Gary Snyder', The Sixties, no. 6. (Spring 1962), 25 - 42. Although "Crunk" was normally the pseudonym of Bly himself, this issue states that "Crunk this time is a guest Crunk" (p. 80). The bibliography of Bert Almon, Gary Snyder (Boise, Idaho, 1979), p. 47, lists "Crunk" as the poet, James Wright.
2. Thomas Parkinson, 'The Poetry of Gary Snyder', Southern Review, 4 (1968), 616 - 32 (p. 624).
3. Parkinson, 'The Poetry of Gary Snyder', pp. 617 - 18.
4. Thomas Lyon, 'Gary Snyder, A Western Poet', Western American Literature, 3 (1968), 207 - 16.
5. Nathaniel Tarn, 'From Anthropologist to Informant: A Field Record of Gary Snyder', Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics, old series, no. 4 (1972), 104 - 13 (p. 112).
6. Sherman Paul, 'From Lookout to Ashram: The Way of Gary Snyder', in two parts, Iowa Review, 1, no. 3 (Summer 1970), I, 76 - 89 (p. 78).
7. Charles Altieri, 'Gary Snyder's Lyric Poetry: Dialectic as Ecology', Far Point, no. 4 (Summer 1970), 55 - 65 (pp. 57 - 58).

8. Quoted in Bert Almon, 'The Imagination of Gary Snyder' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of New Mexico, 1971), p. 65. Almon is citing Snyder's introductory comments to a reading at the University of New Mexico, 3 December 1966.
9. Donald Davie, 'Sincerity and Poetry', Michigan Quarterly Review, 4, no. 4 (Winter 1966), 3 - 8 (p. 7).
10. Bob Steuding, Gary Snyder (Boston, Massachusetts, 1976), p. 31.
11. Robert Kern, 'Clearing the Ground: Gary Snyder and the Modernist Imperative', Criticism, 19 (1977), 158 - 77 (p. 164).
12. Kern, 'Clearing the Ground', p. 177.
13. Snyder, Myths & Texts MS, p. 57, includes a list drawn up by the author of the sections placed for magazine publication before the first edition of 1960. The first of these was as early as 1952 with 'Songs for a Four-Crowned Dancing Hat' (later 'Hunting', 11, although retaining this sub-title) in Folio, 17, no. 2 (March 1952), 22. Kherdian, A Biographical Sketch, p. 18, lists the first appearance of a section ('Hunting', 12) under the title of Myths & Texts in Poems and Pictures, no vol. (1954), n.p. Although Snyder considered alternative titles for the poem's three main sections ('Groves', 'Beasts', and 'Changes' respectively), it is clear that the main title and general structure was fixed prior to the 1959 publication of Riprap. The manuscript collection at the Kent State University Library, Ohio, for example, has a letter from Snyder to Will Peterson dated 21 July 1958, stating "am reading all of Myths & Texts to an interested group of local poets this week".
14. See Snyder's comments on this poem in McKenzie, 'Moving the World', p. 143.
15. Kern, 'Clearing the Ground', p. 177.

II. THE MYTHIC POEMS

(i) The Modernist Poetic

1. Poems, for example, such as 'A Berry Feast' (BC, pp. 3 - 7), 'Through the Smoke Hole' (BC, pp. 125 - 27), and the uncollected 'On Vulture Peak', Yugen, no. 6 (1960), 34 - 37.
2. See interviews such as Chowka, 'The Original Mind of Gary Snyder', III, 21; and Paul Geneson, 'An Interview with Gary Snyder', Ohio Review, 18, no. 3 (Fall 1977), 63 - 105 (pp. 71 - 72).
3. The following discussion is indebted to the delineation of a six-point structural profile of a Modernist artefact included in John A. Osborne, 'Charles Olson and the Modernist Inheritance: A Study of The Maximus Poems' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1980). Osborne's identification of six key structural

features which characterize the Modernist artefact is copiously illustrated with examples from a range of Modernist works.

4. T. S. Eliot, 'The Waste Land', Collected Poems 1909 - 1962 (London, 1963), pp. 61 - 86 (pp. 80 - 86). Further references to this poem are given in the text using the line numbering of this edition. It is interesting to note that in Myths & Texts MS, pp. 58 - 60, Snyder had begun to compile a similar table of notes, but was not tempted to publish them with the poem. Such a gap has been filled, albeit modestly, by Howard McCord, Some Notes to Gary Snyder's 'Myths & Texts' (Berkeley, California, 1971). This volume is unpaginated; further references are located by numbering from the title page. The location of some of the numerous allusions in Myths & Texts is more indebted to William J. Jungels, 'The Use of Native-American Mythologies in the Poetry of Gary Snyder' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1973).
5. T. S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', Selected Essays, third edition (London, 1951), pp. 13 - 22 (p. 14).
6. Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (1949; London, 1975).
7. Henry David Thoreau, Walden and Civil Disobedience, edited by Sherman Paul (1854; 1849; Boston, Massachusetts, 1960), p. 227.
8. Ezra Pound, 'Noh Plays', The Translations of Ezra Pound, enlarged edition (London, 1970), pp. 211 - 360. The translation of Nishikigi appears on pp. 286 - 98. The lines used by Snyder are from p. 298 and p. 289 respectively.
9. Pound, 'Noh Plays', p. 214.
10. Arthur Waley, The Nō Plays of Japan (London, 1921), p. 35.
11. 'Preface to Anabasis', Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot, edited by Frank Kermode (London, 1975), pp. 77 - 78 (p. 77).
12. Hugh Kenner, 'Introduction', in T. S. Eliot: A Collection of Critical Essays, edited by Hugh Kenner (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1962), pp. 1 - 14 (p. 2).
13. I. A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism, second edition (1926; London, 1960), p. 231.
14. McCord, Some Notes, p. 5.
15. Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux, as told through John G. Neihardt (1932; Lincoln, Nebraska, 1979), p. 10.
16. These translations are in the standard text, Riprap, & Cold Mountain Poems (pp. 31 - 61), but have also been published separately as Cold Mountain Poems (Portland, Oregon, 1970).
17. Eliot, 'The Metaphysical Poets', Selected Essays, pp. 281 - 91 (p. 287).

18. Ernest Fenollosa, Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art: An Outline History of East Asiatic Design, 2 vols (London, 1912), I, 23. Snyder's use of this extract is verbatim although somewhat misleading, since in the text of the poem it is followed by the lines: "thus Fenellosa [sic] /On the pottery of Shang." (MT, p. 18). The description Snyder quotes however is not of Shang pottery but of jars from the Han dynasty.
19. Franz Boas, 'Ethnology of the Kwaikiutl', in Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology 1913 - 1914, in two parts (Washington, 1921), I, 43 - 794 (pp. 102 - 104).
20. This information from Snyder, Myths & Texts MS, p. 59.
21. John Muir, The Mountains of California (1884; New York, 1961), p. 51 - 52.
22. Richards, p. 232.
23. Joseph Frank, 'Spatial Form in Modern Literature', The Widening Gyre (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1963), pp. 3 - 62 (p. 13).
24. Frank, p. 14.
25. This discussion of the pine in Classical mythology is indebted to Sabine G. Oswalt, Concise Encyclopedia of Greek and Roman Mythology (Glasgow and Chicago, 1969).
26. These two lines are presumably a direct quotation, although their source has remained elusive. In Snyder, Myths & Texts MS, p. 58, the author's only note to the lines is an eloquent question mark.
27. Pound, 'Noh Plays', p. 246.
28. George B. Sudworth, Forest Trees of the Pacific Slope (1908; New York, 1967), pp. 50 - 51.
29. Details from C. P. Lyons, Trees, Shrubs and Flowers in British Columbia, second edition (Vancouver, 1954), p. 19.
30. Steuding, p. 74.
31. David Perkins, A History of Modern Poetry From the 1890s to the High Modernist Mode, 2 vols (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1976), I, 508.
32. T. S. Eliot, 'Ulysses, Order, and Myth', The Dial, 75 (1923), 480 - 83 (p. 483).

(ii) American Indian Oral Literature

1. Wilcomb E. Washburn, The Indian in America (New York, 1975) p. xv.
2. Washburn, p. xv.
3. Snyder, 'Poetry and the Primitive', Earth House Hold, pp. 119 - 20.

4. Thomas Lyon, 'The Ecological Vision of Gary Snyder', Kansas Quarterly, 2, no. 2 (Summer 1968), 117 - 24 (p. 123).
5. Raymond Benoit, 'The New American Poetry', Thought, 4 (1969), 201 - 18 (p. 204).
6. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States, 6 vols (Philadelphia, 1851 - 57), V, 559 - 564.
7. The only direct translation is 'Prayer for the Great Family' (Mohawk) included in Turtle Island, p. 24. Otherwise, Snyder uses the transliterated version of the first collector of the text in question.
8. Technicians of the Sacred: A Range of Poetries from Africa, America, Asia & Oceania, edited by Jerome Rothenberg (New York, 1968).
9. Quotations from 'Statement of Intention', Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics, old series, no. 1 (Autumn 1970), 1.
10. Shaking The Pumpkin: Traditional Poetry of the Indian North Americas, edited by Jerome Rothenberg (New York, 1972).
11. Dennis Tedlock, Finding The Center: Narrative Poetry of the Zuni Indians (1972; Lincoln, Nebraska, 1978).
12. Dennis Tedlock, 'Notes and Comments', Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics, new series, 4, no. 2 (1980), 194 - 95 (p. 194).
13. Gary Snyder, 'The Politics of Ethnopoetics', Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics, new series, 2, no. 2 (1976), 13 - 22 (p. 17). This essay is collected in Gary Snyder, The Old Ways: Six Essays (San Francisco, 1977), pp. 15 - 43. The former has been preferred since it is a more authentic representation of the essay's origins as a conference paper.
14. For discussion of the difficulties inherent in translating from American Indian oral literature see, for example: Washington Matthews, 'The Mountain Chant: A Navajo Ceremony', in Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology 1883 - 1884 (Washington, 1887), pp. 379 - 467 (p. 456); Ruth Murray Underhill, Singing For Power: The Song Magic of the Papago Indians of Southern Arizona (1938; New York, 1968), pp. 10 - 18; Frances Densmore, 'The Use of Meaningless Syllables in Indian Songs', American Anthropologist, 45 (1943), 160 - 62; and Dell Hymes, 'Some North Pacific Coast Poems: A Problem in Anthropological Philology', American Anthropologist, 67 (1965), 316 - 41.
15. See, for example, Alice C. Fletcher, 'The Hako: A Pawnee Ceremony', in Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology 1900 - 1901, in two parts (Washington, 1904), II, 5 - 368. A more detailed discussion of this practice, with examples, can be found in Peter Easy, 'The Treatment of American Indian Materials in Contemporary American Poetry', Journal of American Studies, 12 (1978), 81 - 98 (pp. 89 - 91).
16. The Path on the Rainbow: An Anthology of Songs and Chants From The Indians of North America, edited by George W. Cronyn (New York, 1918).
17. Printed versions of these Navajo songs appear in Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics, old series, no. 1 (Autumn 1970), 64; Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics, old series, no. 2 (Summer 1971), 94 - 95 (this issue also included a disc insert with

an oral rendition by Rothenberg); and Rothenberg, Shaking The Pumpkin, pp. 350 - 53. The most extensive recording is the cassette tape production, Jerome Rothenberg, Horse-Songs & other Soundings (Düsseldorf and Munich, 1975).

18. For a discussion of a specific re-working, see the study of Rothenberg's poem 'The Killer', taken from the work of James Mooney on the Cherokee, in Peter Easy, 'Ethnopoetics', Akros, 17, no. 49 (April 1982), 115 - 29 (pp. 117 - 20).
19. Rothenberg, Shaking The Pumpkin, p. 197.
20. Rothenberg, Shaking The Pumpkin, p. 437.
21. The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux, edited by Joseph Epes Brown (1953; Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1971), pp. 44 - 45.
22. William Bevis, 'American Indian Verse Translations', in Literature of the American Indians: Views and Interpretations, edited by Abraham Chapman (New York, 1975), pp. 308 - 23 (p. 319).
23. Rothenberg, Shaking The Pumpkin, p. xix.
24. Frederic Jameson, 'Collective Art in the Age of Cultural Imperialism', Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics, new series, 2, no. 2 (1976), 108 - 11 (p. 109).
25. Gary Snyder, 'The Incredible Survival of Coyote', The Old Ways, pp. 67 - 93 (pp. 81 - 82).
26. The six minor contributions are the previously noted interview, Tarn, 'From Anthropologist to Informant'; a reprinting of the poem, 'Without' (TI, p. 6), on the inside back cover, new series, 1, no. 1 (1975) chiefly for the art-work of Michael Corr which ornaments it; a brief essay, 'The Yogin and the Philosopher', new series, 1, no. 2 (1975), 2 - 3; his comments in a panel discussion which forms part of David Antin, 'Talking To Discover', new series, 2, no. 2 (1976), 112 - 19 (pp. 116 - 18); the brief essay on the Ainu of Japan, 'A Note on the Interface', new series, 3, no. 1 (1977), 2 - 3; and the uncollected poem ' "Lew Welch just turned up one day" ' in the same issue (p. 114).
27. Snyder, 'The Politics of Ethnopoetics', p. 18.
28. Paul Radin, The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology (1956; New York, 1972), p. xxiii.
29. Radin, The Trickster, p. xxiv.
30. Radin, The Trickster, pp. xxiii - xxiv, points out that the animal characteristics were always secondary to the basic personality of the Trickster.
31. Details from A Jaime de Angulo Reader, edited by Bob Callahan (Berkeley, California, 1979), pp. 249 - 53.
32. Jaime de Angulo, Indian Tales (1953; New York, 1974), pp. 4 - 5.
33. Jaime de Angulo, 'Coyote's Bones', A Jaime de Angulo Reader, pp. 175 - 84.
34. Gary Snyder, 'Review: Indian Tales', Earth House Hold, pp. 27 - 30.

35. De Angulo, Indian Tales, p. 228.
36. Jaime de Angulo, 'Indians in Overalls', A Jaime de Angulo Reader, pp. 187 - 246 (p. 236).
37. Snyder, 'The Incredible Survival of Coyote', The Old Ways, p. 84.
38. In a typical bear-mother myth, a young girl is abducted by a bear and forced to marry and mate with him. See A. Irving Hallowell, 'Bear Ceremonialism in the Northern Hemisphere', American Anthropologist, 28 (1926), 1 - 175. Snyder's use of this theme in Myths & Texts is discussed later.
39. C. G. Jung, 'On the Psychology of the Trickster Figure', translated by R. F. C. Hull, in Radin, The Trickster, pp. 193 - 211 (p. 200).
40. Jung, p. 201.
41. Jung, p. 202.
42. Jung, p. 207.
43. Snyder, 'The Incredible Survival of Coyote', The Old Ways, p. 75.
44. Paul Radin, Primitive Man As Philosopher (New York and London, 1927), p. 239.
45. Snyder, 'The Incredible Survival of Coyote', The Old Ways, p. 85.
46. Snyder, 'The Incredible Survival of Coyote', The Old Ways, p. 81.
47. A good example would be Barry Gifford, Coyote Tantras (Santa Barbara, California, 1973), where Coyote is placed in a variety of mythical, historical, and contemporary settings.
48. Snyder, 'The Incredible Survival of Coyote', The Old Ways, p. 85.
49. Radin, The Trickster, p. xxiii.
50. Snyder, 'The Incredible Survival of Coyote', The Old Ways, p. 82.

(iii) Myths & Texts

1. Gary Snyder, He Who Hunted Birds in His Father's Village: The Dimensions of a Haida Myth (Bolinas, California, 1979), p. 98. This is a reprinting, without amendment, of Snyder's undergraduate thesis, 'The Dimensions of a Myth' (Reed College, Oregon, 1951).
2. Snyder, He Who Hunted Birds, p. 70.
3. Campbell, p. 31.
4. Campbell, p. 31.
5. Paul Radin, The Evolution of an American Indian Prose Epic: A Study in Comparative Literature, in two parts (Basel, Switzerland, 1954), I, 8.

6. Radin, American Indian Prose Epic, I, 17.
7. Jungels, pp. 216 - 17.
8. Steuding, p. 69.
9. Snyder, Myths & Texts MS, p. 30. Other examples occur on pp. 3, 18, and 21.
10. Walt Whitman, 'Song of Myself', Leaves of Grass, edited by Sculley Bradley (1855; New York, 1959), pp. 23 - 77 (p. 77).
11. Snyder, 'Statement on Poetics', in Allen, The New American Poetry, p. 421.
12. Thoreau, Walden, p. 226.
13. Gary Snyder, Myths & Texts (1960; New York, 1978), p. viii.
14. Campbell, p. 35.
15. Campbell, p. 23.
16. Campbell, p. 24.
17. Campbell, pp. 58 - 59.
18. See The Origin of Life and Death: African Creation Myths, edited by Ulli Beier (London, 1966), p. 20.
19. Snyder took the English translation of this myth from John R. Swanton, 'Haida Texts and Myths', Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 29 (Washington, 1905), pp. 296 - 304. The importance of Swanton's work to Snyder is obvious since the title of Myths & Texts was probably inspired by this study, from which Snyder also took the myth which was the subject of his undergraduate thesis: 'He who hunted birds in his father's village' (pp. 264 - 68). Snyder also took the opportunity to reprint the whole of the 'Big-tail' myth in In transit: The Gary Snyder Issue, no. vol. (1969), 31 - 37.
20. Swanton, p. 298.
21. Swanton, p. 301.
22. Swanton, p. 302.
23. Swanton, p. 302.
24. Campbell, p. 91.
25. The account of shamanism here is indebted to Mircea Eliade, Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy, translated by Willard R. Trask (1951; London, 1964).
26. Eliade, pp. 4 - 5.
27. Eliade, pp. 297 - 98.
28. Ruth M. Underhill, Red Man's Religion: Beliefs and Practices of the Indians North of Mexico (Chicago, 1965), pp. 88 - 89.

29. Snyder, 'Poetry and the Primitive', Earth House Hold, p. 122.
30. Gene Fowler, 'Gary Snyder: An Interview', Literary Times, 4, no. 2 (December 1964), 22.
31. For the location of this allusion, I am indebted to Jungels, p. 68, who gives his source as Thelma Anderson 'Folktales of the Coast Salish', Memoirs of the American Folklore Society, 27 (New York, 1934).
32. Campbell, p. 90.
33. Snyder, 'Poetry and the Primitive', Earth House Hold, p. 120.
34. Snyder, 'Poetry and the Primitive', Earth House Hold, p. 121.
35. Snyder, 'Poetry and the Primitive', Earth House Hold, p. 122.
36. Details of this legend from Buddhist Scriptures, translated by Edward Conze (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1959), pp. 24 - 26.
37. Eliade, p. 62.
38. Eliade, p. 62.
39. Paul Radin, Winnebago Hero Cycles: A Study in Aboriginal Literature. (Baltimore, Maryland, 1948), p. 64.
40. Snyder, Myths & Texts MS, p. 42.
41. Muir, pp. 51 - 52. Apart from the occasional omission of a phrase to tighten the passage, Snyder's only substantial exclusion is Muir's own thoughts on the cause of his experience: "The other self, bygone experiences, Instinct, or Guardian Angel, - call it what you will, - came forward and assumed control" (p. 52).
42. The Buddhist Tradition in India, China and Japan, edited by W. T. de Bary (New York, 1972), pp. 198 - 99.
43. Thoreau, Walden, p. 227.
44. Radin, Primitive Man As Philosopher. p. 239.
45. Radin, Primitive Man As Philosopher, p. 347.
46. Radin, Primitive Man As Philosopher, p. 347.
47. Campbell, p. 30.
48. Fletcher, 'The Hako', p. 129.
49. Brown, The Sacred Pipe, p. 71.
50. Neihardt, Black Elk Speaks, p. xvii.
51. Campbell, p. 188.
52. Campbell, p. 213.
53. Campbell, p. 30.

54. Radin, Primitive Man As Philosopher, p. 172.
55. See the discussion, for example, in K. K. Ruthven, Myth (London, 1976), pp. 56 - 58.
56. Snyder, He Who Hunted Birds, p. 98.
57. Snyder, He Who Hunted Birds, p. 113.
58. Snyder, Myths & Texts (1978), p. viii.
59. 'Craft Interview with Gary Snyder', New York Quarterly, no. 22 (1978), 13 - 27 (p. 18).
60. Snyder, He Who Hunted Birds, pp. 109 - 10.

III. THE LYRIC POEMS

(i) The Lyric Mode and the Modern Lyric

1. The boundaries of this period are fixed by Snyder's first published poems, the earliest of which, in fact, appeared in 1950 in Janus, a student publication of Reed College, Oregon, which Snyder attended from 1947 to 1951. Titled simply 'a poem', the text is most easily available in Robert Ian Scott, 'The Uncollected Early Poems of Gary Snyder', North American Review, 262, no. 3 (Fall 1977), 80 - 83 (p. 80). The date marking the end of the period, 1968, is the first publication of the American edition of The Back Country.
2. These poems were dated thus in Critical Quarterly, 8 (1966), 10 - 11.
3. The card is in the manuscript collection at the Kent State University Library, Ohio.
4. Ernest Rhys, Lyric Poetry (London, 1913), p. vi.
5. The Spanish Traditional Lyric, edited by John G. Cummins (Oxford, 1977), p. 3.
6. J [ames] W. J[ohnson], 'Lyric', in Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, edited by Alex Preminger, enlarged edition (1965; Princeton, New Jersey, 1975), pp. 460 - 70 (p. 460).
7. Edward Bliss Reed, English Lyrical Poetry From Its Origins to the Present Time (1912; New York, 1967), p. 234.
8. H. J. C. Grierson, Lyrical Poetry From Blake To Hardy (London, 1928), p. 12.
9. Rhys, p. v.
10. Reed, pp. 2 - 3.
11. Johnson, p. 461.

12. Cummins, p. 19.
13. American Lyric Poems From Colonial Times to the Present, edited by Elder Olson (New York, 1964), pp. 2 - 4.
14. Herbert Read, Form in Modern Poetry (London, 1932), p. 57.
15. Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Philosophy of Composition', Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe, edited by David Galloway (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1967), pp. 480 - 92 (p. 482).
16. Reed, p. 8; Rhys, p. vi; Reed, p. 234.
17. Olson, American Lyric Poems, pp. 1 - 2.
18. Lee Bartlett, 'Interview: Gary Snyder', California Quarterly, no. 9 (Summer 1975), 43 - 50 (p. 47).
19. Johnson, pp. 460 - 61.
20. Reed, p. 9.
21. Gerard Manley Hopkins, Selected Prose, edited by Gerald Roberts (Oxford, 1980), p. 66.
22. Hopkins, Selected Prose, p. 70.
23. Hopkins, Selected Prose, p. 137.
24. Geneson, 'An Interview with Gary Snyder', p. 72.
25. 'Craft Interview with Gary Snyder', p. 24.
26. Ezra Pound, 'Vers Libre and Arnold Dolmetsch', Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, edited by T. S. Eliot (London, 1954), pp. 437 - 40 (p. 437).
27. Ezra Pound, ABC of Reading (London, 1951), p. 23. See also the musical analogies used in 'Treatise on Metre' in this volume, pp. 195 - 206.
28. T. S. Eliot, 'Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry', To Criticize the Critic and Other Writings (London, 1964), pp. 162 - 82 (p. 170).
29. Pound, 'Vers Libre and Arnold Dolmetsch', p. 437.
30. Pound, 'How to Read', Literary Essays, pp. 15 - 40 (p. 25).
31. T. S. Eliot, 'Matthew Arnold', The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (1933; London, 1964), pp. 103 - 19 (pp. 118 - 19).
32. Grierson, p. 17.
33. William Carlos Williams, introduction to a poetry reading of 4 December 1951, recorded in The Poet's Voice: Poets Reading Aloud and Commenting Upon their Works, edited by Stratis Haviaras (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1978).
34. Robert Creeley, 'Poems are a complex', A Quick Graph: Collected Notes & Essays, edited by Donald Allen (San Francisco, 1970), pp. 53 - 54 (p. 53).

35. F. S. Flint, 'Imagisme', Poetry, 1 (1912 - 13), 198 - 200 (p. 199).
36. Pound, 'A Retrospect', Literary Essays, pp. 3 - 14 (p. 6).
37. Quoted in Mike Weaver, William Carlos Williams: The American Background (Cambridge, 1971), p. 82.
38. Eliot, 'Reflections on Vers Libre', To Criticize the Critic, pp. 183 - 89 (pp. 184, 189).
39. Some Imagist Poets 1916 (London, 1916), pp. v - xii (pp. viii - x). Although unacknowledged in the volume, Amy Lowell was the editor and therefore presumably the author of the preface.
40. Some Imagist Poets 1916, p. viii.
41. Pound, 'A Retrospect', p. 9.
42. T. E. Hulme, 'Lecture on Modern Poetry', in Michael Roberts, T. E. Hulme (London, 1938), pp. 258 - 70 (p. 267).
43. Edward Storer, Mirrors of Illusion (London, 1908), p. 107.
44. The Letters of Ezra Pound 1907 - 1941, edited by D. D. Paige (London, 1951), p. 91.
45. Some Imagist Poets 1915 (London, 1915), pp. v - viii (pp. vi - vii). Although Amy Lowell is generally acknowledged as editor of this volume, in this case the preface was probably written by Richard Aldington. See John Press, A Map of Modern English Verse (Oxford, 1969), p. 43.
46. Ferdinand Brunetière, L'Evolution de la poésie lyrique en France au dix-neuvième siècle, 2 vols (Paris, 1894), I, 154. (The lyric poem is the expression of the poet's personal feelings in rhythms analogous to the nature of his emotions.)
47. John Gould Fletcher, Irradiations/Sand and Spray (London and Boston, 1915), p. xi.
48. Eliot, 'Reflections on Vers Libre', p. 185.
49. Imagist Poetry, edited by Peter Jones (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1972), p. 38.
50. H. D., 'Oread', Some Imagist Poets 1915, p. 28.
51. Quoted in B. L. Reid, The Man from New York: John Quinn and his Friends (New York, 1968), p. 489.
52. William Carlos Williams, 'The Red Wheelbarrow', The Collected Earlier Poems of William Carlos Williams (New York, 1951), p. 277.
53. Creeley, 'A Statement about the Poem "The Name" ', A Quick Graph, p. 55.
54. Linda W. Wagner, 'A Colloquy with Robert Creeley', in Robert Creeley, Contexts of Poetry: Interviews 1961 - 1971, edited by Donald Allen (Bolinas, California, 1973), pp. 71 - 124 (p. 77).
55. Wagner, 'A Colloquy with Robert Creeley', p. 77.

56. Bartlett, 'Interview: Gary Snyder', p. 47.
57. Gary Snyder, review of Ch'ü Yüan, Li Sao, A Poem on Relieving Sorrows, translated by Jerah Johnson, Journal of American Folklore, 74 (1961), 82 - 83 (p. 83).
58. Chowka, 'The Original Mind of Gary Snyder', III, 22.
59. For an example of Snyder reading this poem, see Gary Snyder, Poetry Reading (Berkeley, California, 1965), a taped recording of his contribution to the Berkeley Poetry Festival, 13 July 1965. Even more vivid is the video-tape of the same occasion in the N. E. T. Outtake Series, Gary Snyder and Lawrence Ferlinghetti (San Francisco, 1977).
60. E. E. Cummings, 'in Just-', Selected Poems 1923 - 1958 (1960; Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1969), p. 1.
61. An example of this can be found in the reading in Haviaras, The Poet's Voice, where Williams reads 'This Is Just to Say' practically as a line of prose, pausing only at the two stanza breaks, but giving little or no oral indication of lineation.
62. 'Craft Interview with Gary Snyder', p. 14.
63. Charles Olson, 'Projective Verse', Selected Writings of Charles Olson, edited by Robert Creeley (New York, 1966), pp. 15 - 26 (p. 22).
64. Olson, 'Projective Verse', p. 19.
65. Olson, 'Projective Verse', p. 21.
66. Olson, 'Projective Verse', p. 22.
67. Pound, 'A Retrospect', p. 6.
68. Pound, 'A Retrospect', p. 7.
69. Eliot, 'Reflections on Vers Libre', pp. 188 - 89.
70. Chowka, 'The Original Mind of Gary Snyder', East West Journal, 7, no. 7 (July 1977), II, 34 - 44 (p. 36).
71. Creeley, 'A Statement about the Poem "The Name" ', p. 55.
72. Olson, American Lyric Poems, p. 7.
73. Ezra Pound, 'Papyrus', Selected Poems, edited by T. S. Eliot, revised edition (London, 1948), p. 116.
74. Pound, 'In a Station of the Metro', Selected Poems, p. 113.
75. Williams, 'Poem', Collected Earlier Poems, p. 340.
76. Rhys, p. vii.
77. Johnson, p. 462.

(ii) Snyder and Chinese Poetry

1. Details of nine meetings of this seminar up to 8 December 1955 can be seen in the manuscript collection of the Kent State University Library, Ohio, where they are included in Snyder's workings and notes for the Han-shan translations. This body of material will hereafter be referred to as Cold Mountain MS and specific references given by numbering from the first page.
2. For example, Anthology of Chinese Literature, edited by Cyril Birch (1965; Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1967), pp. 211 - 20. Further evidence of Snyder's reputation as a translator can be seen in the comment of the noted American Orientalist, Burton Watson, in his introduction to a new edition of the Japanese poet Miyazawa Kenji, whom Snyder had previously translated: "In the 60's the distinguished American poet and translator Gary Snyder produced translations of eighteen of Miyazawa's poems...the finest and most extensive selection of Miyazawa's work at that time available to the English reading public. With Snyder's striking and deeply sympathetic renditions, Miyazawa for the first time became a poet of international importance.
It is no easy task to follow in Snyder's footsteps, as I myself learned in making translations from the Chinese poet Han-shan, whom Snyder had previously translated." Burton Watson, 'Introduction', Spring and Asura: Poems of Kenji Miyazawa, translated by Hiroaki Sato (Chicago, 1973), pp. xv - xix (p. xix).
3. Snyder, Cold Mountain MS, pp. 29 - 32.
4. The discussion of Chinese poetry which follows is indebted to: John L. Bishop, 'Prosodic Elements in T'ang Poetry', in Indiana University Conference on Oriental-Western Literary Relations, edited by Horst Frenz and G. L. Anderson (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1955), pp. 49 - 63; James J. Y. Liu, The Art of Chinese Poetry (1962; Chicago, 1966); Poems of the Late T'ang, translated by A. C. Graham (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1965); Hans H. Frankel, 'Classical Chinese', in Versification: Major Language Types, edited by W. K. Wimsatt (New York, 1972), pp. 22 - 37; Li Po and Tu Fu, translated by Arthur Cooper (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1973).
5. Snyder in Antin, 'Talking to Discover', p. 117.
6. Bishop, pp. 52 - 53.
7. Liu, p. 35.
8. Wai-lim Yip, Ezra Pound's 'Cathay' (Princeton, New Jersey, 1969), pp. 22 - 23.
9. Liu, p. 36.
10. Pound, Selected Poems, p. 135.
11. Pound, Selected Poems, p. 130.
12. A. R. Davis, 'Introduction', The Penguin Book of Chinese Verse, translated by Robert Kotewall and Norman L. Smith (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1962), pp. xxxix - lxx (pp. lxiii - lxxv).

13. Liu, pp. 147 - 48.
14. Frankel, p. 31.
15. Liu, p. 147. Tonal parallelism is not included in this discussion since it is a wholly untranslatable element.
16. Snyder, Cold Mountain MS, p. 52. Arthur Waley, in an earlier translation of the same poem, made a similar decision to retain the general parallelism whilst varying the openings of each line; see '27 Poems by Han Shan', Encounter, 3, no. 3 (September 1954), 3 - 8 (p. 4). For a more detailed examination of Snyder's Han-shan translations see Ling Chung, 'Whose Mountain Is This? - Gary Snyder's Translations of Han Shan', Renditions: A Chinese-English Translation Magazine, no. 7 (Spring 1977), 93 - 102.
17. Gary Snyder, 'Late October Camping in the Sawtooths', Berkeley Bussei, no vol. (1957), 8. The poem remains uncollected presumably because Snyder has 'raided' it for line 7, "Drinking hot tea from a tin cup", which has been modified for use as line 8 in 'Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout': "Drinking cold snow-water from a tin cup" (RCM, p. 1).
18. Bartlett, 'Interview: Gary Snyder', p. 47.
19. Paul, 'From Lookout to Ashram', I, 86.
20. Williams, 'This Is Just to Say', Collected Earlier Poems, p. 354.
21. Quoted in Gregory Orr, 'Symposium on Chinese Poetry & the American Imagination' (panel discussion including Gary Snyder), Ironwood, 9, no. 1 (Spring 1981), 11 - 21, 38 - 51 (p. 13).
22. Flint, 'Imagisme', p. 199.
23. Snyder, 'Statement on Poetics', in Allen, The New American Poetry, p. 421.
24. Cooper, p. 74.
25. Bishop, p. 59.
26. In the context of this discussion, it is interesting to note one of the more comic passages from Kerouac's The Dharma Bums in which "Ray Smith" (Kerouac) visits "Japhy Ryder" (Snyder) whilst the latter is making his Han-shan versions. Ryder carefully explains the process of translation which is detailed here in the text, whereupon Smith asks why the transliterated version could not be presented as it stands. Ryder points out that a line such as "The long gorge choked with scree and boulders", from the eighth poem of the series, would have to read "Long gorge choke avalanche boulders". "Well that's even better!" exclaims Smith (p. 19). Snyder did not take Kerouac's advice.
27. Snyder, Cold Mountain MS, p. 37.
28. Quoted in Orr, 'Symposium on Chinese Poetry', p. 13.

(iii) 'Riprap' and 'The Back Country'

1. Snyder, 'Statement on Poetics', in Allen, The New American Poetry, p. 421.
2. Snyder, 'Statement on Poetics', in Allen, The New American Poetry, p. 420.
3. Snyder, Cold Mountain MS, p. 30.
4. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', p. 21.
5. Fowler, 'Gary Snyder: An Interview', p. 22.
6. Olson, 'Projective Verse', pp. 24 - 25.
7. Liu, p. 41.
8. Snyder, Cold Mountain MS, p. 6.
9. Kern, 'Clearing the Ground', p. 164.
10. Williams, Collected Earlier Poems, pp. 196, 199, 332.
11. Williams, 'Tract', Collected Earlier Poems, pp. 129 - 31 (p. 130).
12. Kern, 'Clearing the Ground', p. 164.
13. Quoted in Almon, 'The Imagination of Gary Snyder', p. 65.
14. Snyder, Cold Mountain MS, p. 6.
15. Snyder, 'Poetry and the Primitive', Earth House Hold, p. 118.
16. Kern, 'Clearing the Ground', p. 172.
17. Basil Bunting, Briggflats (London, 1966), p. 14.
18. Abraham Rothberg, 'A Passage to More than India: The Poetry of Gary Snyder', Southwest Review, 61 (1976), 26 - 38 (pp. 36 - 37).
19. From a 1957 interview given to the New York Post, quoted in Interviews with William Carlos Williams: "Speaking Straight Ahead", edited by Linda Wagner (New York, 1976), p. 74.
20. Louis Simpson, 'New Books of Poems' (review of The Back Country included), Harper's Magazine, 237 (August 1968), 73 - 77 (p. 76).
21. Quoted in Graham, Poems of the Late T'ang, p. 7.
22. William Carlos Williams, 'Against the Weather: A Study of the Artist', Selected Essays of William Carlos Williams (New York, 1954), pp. 196 - 218 (pp. 197 - 98).
23. William Carlos Williams, 'The Banner Bearer', The Collected Later Poems of William Carlos Williams, revised edition (1963; London, 1965), p. 81.
24. Williams, 'Author's Introduction', Selected Essays, pp. 255 - 57 (p. 256).

25. Williams, 'Fine Work with Pitch and Copper', Collected Earlier Poems, p. 368.
26. Williams, Collected Earlier Poems, pp. 78 - 79, 92, 99, 101, 124, 206, 223, 243, 408.
27. Williams, 'To a Poor Old Woman' and 'Proletarian Portrait', Collected Earlier Poems, pp. 99, 101.
28. R. H. Blyth, Haiku, 4 vols (Tokyo, 1949 - 52), I, 247.
29. Blyth, Haiku, I, 288.
30. F. S. Flint, 'The History of Imagism', The Egoist, 2 (1915), 70 - 71 (p. 71). The confused early appreciation of haiku can be seen in the nomenclature used. Haikai was originally the term designating a renga (a long linked verse) which was deliberately witty or humorous in intent. Pound often used the term hokku which was the opening seventeen syllables of a renga. Haiku, as an independent verse form, developed from both. See Kenneth Yasuda, The Japanese Haiku (Tokyo, 1957), pp. 123 - 41.
31. Quoted in Yasuda, p. 25.
32. Pound, 'A Retrospect', p. 4.
33. Blyth, Haiku, I, 277.
34. Blyth, Haiku, I, 369.
35. Blyth, Haiku, I, 382.
36. Snyder, 'Lookout's Journal', Earth House Hold, pp. 1 - 24 (p. 7).
37. R. H. Blyth, Senryu: Japanese Satirical Verses (Tokyo, 1949), p. 12.
38. Blyth, Senryu, p. 7.
39. Blyth, Senryu, pp. 37 - 38.
40. Pound, 'A Retrospect', p. 4.
41. Robert Langbaum, The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Literary Tradition (1957; London, 1972), p. 46.
42. Yasuda, p. 24.
43. Altieri, 'Gary Snyder's Lyric Poetry', p. 56.
44. Pound, ABC of Reading, p. 52.
45. Pound, Selected Poems, pp. 92 - 93, 93 - 94, 105, 112, 113.
46. Hugh Kenner, The Pound Era (London, 1972), p. 367.
47. See Hugh Kenner, The Poetry of Ezra Pound (London, 1951), p. 63.
48. McKenzie, 'Moving the World', p. 141.

49. See, for example, Rexroth, 'The New Poetry', p. 193; 'Poetry in the Sixties', pp. 75 - 76; and 'The New American Poets' in The Rexroth Reader, edited by Eric Mottram (London 1972), pp. 267 - 76 (p. 276).
50. See Steuding, p. 111.
51. Kenneth Rexroth, 'The Great Nebula of Andromeda', In Defense of the Earth (New York, 1956), pp. 19 - 20 (p. 19).
52. Rexroth, 'Time is the Mercy of Eternity', In Defense of the Earth, pp. 33 - 37 (pp. 36 - 37).
53. R. H. Blyth, A History of Haiku, 2 vols (Tokyo, 1963 - 64), II, vii. For a more detailed discussion of the application of this and other 'furyu' to Snyder's lyric poetry, see Almon, 'The Imagination of Gary Snyder', pp. 70 - 73.
54. Rexroth, 'Marthe Away', In Defense of the Earth, pp. 12 - 13 (p. 12).
55. Rexroth, 'Blood on a Dead World', In Defense of the Earth, pp. 24 - 25.
56. Eliot, 'Philip Massinger', Selected Essays, pp. 205 - 20 (p. 206).
57. 'Craft Interview with Gary Snyder', p. 22.
58. Parkinson, 'The Poetry of Gary Snyder', p. 618.

IV. THE POETRY SINCE 1968

(i) 1968: A Turning Point

1. See, for example, Steuding, p. 93, or Almon, Gary Snyder, p. 31.
2. Snyder, 'Suwa-no-Se Island and the Banyan Ashram', Earth House Hold, pp. 135 - 43.
3. Keith Lampe, 'The Return of Japhy Ryder', Berkeley Barb, 3 - 9 January 1969, pp. 12 - 14.
4. Kerouac, The Dharma Bums, p. 27.

(ii) The Mythic Poem in Crisis: 'Mountains and Rivers without End'

1. Kerouac, The Dharma Bums, p. 144.
2. Snyder, 'Statement on Poetics', in Allen, The New American Poetry, p. 421.
3. Gary Snyder, 'Letters to Philip Whalen', Origin, second series, no. 2 (July 1961), 31 - 32 (p. 31).

4. The sections already in print which will be included in the final version of Mountains and Rivers without End are listed below. After the first seven entries, which are collected in Six Sections from Mountains and Rivers without End Plus One, they have been placed in chronological order of publication, although this may not necessarily indicate their arrangement in the completed poem. Each entry consists of the title of the section; the place and date of first publication; and a note confirming its inclusion in the poem.
- (a) 'Bubbs Creek Haircut'; Origin, second series, no. 2 (July 1961), 6 - 10. Collected in MR.
 - (b) 'The Elwha River'; first published and collected in MR.
 - (c) 'Night Highway Ninety-nine'; Origin, second series, no. 4 (January 1962), 29 - 40. Collected in MR.
 - (d) 'Hymn to the Goddess San Francisco in Paradise'; Fuck You/ A Magazine of the Arts [Erratic publication data given throughout the run of this magazine. This issue is "Volume 7, No. 5", although it is only the eleventh of the series, and dated "September 1964" on the title page, but "August 1964" on the back cover. Items are paginated separately, for example, pp. 1 - 6 for this poem by Snyder. Counting by issue number and paginating from the title page, a reliable reference would be: no. 11 (1964), 49 - 59]. Collected in MR.
 - (e) 'The Market'; Origin, second series, no. 12 (January 1964), 38 - 42. Collected in MR.
 - (f) 'Journeys'; Wild Dog, no. 17 (June 1965), 1 - 4. Collected in MR.
 - (g) 'The Blue Sky'; Caterpillar, no. 5 (October 1968), 133 - 38. Collected in MR.
 - (h) 'The Circumambulation of Mount Tamalpais'; Agenda, 4, nos 5 and 6 (April 1966), 32 - 35. Designated as from MR in this printing.
 - (i) 'Three Worlds, Three Realms, Six Roads'; Poetry, 109 (1966), 147 - 52. Designated as from MR in this printing.
 - (j) 'The Rabbit'; Poetry, 111 (1968), 353 - 54. Designated as from MR by Snyder, see Almon, 'The Imagination of Gary Snyder', p. 267.
 - (k) 'Kumarajiva's Mother'; In transit: The Gary Snyder Issue, no vol. (1969), 47 - 48. Designated as from MR in this printing.
 - (l) 'Down'; Iowa Review, 1, no. 4 (Fall 1970), 85 - 86. Designated as from MR in this printing.
 - (m) 'The California Water Plan'; Clear Creek, no. 8 (November 1971), 25. Designated as from MR in Steuding, p. 94.
 - (n) 'The Hump-Backed Flute Player'; Coyote's Journal, no. 9 (1971), 1 - 4. Designated as from MR in Steuding, p. 94.

- (o) 'The Flowing'; Kyoi/Kuksu, no. 3 (Spring 1974), 67 - 69. A letter from Snyder to Will Petersen, 12 October [1961?], states "another section of Mountains and Rivers almost finished: called 'The Riverbed' ". This is the title of one of the four parts of 'The Flowing'. The letter is in the manuscript collection of the Kent State University Library, Ohio.
- (p) 'Ma'; Coyote's Journal, no. 10 (1974), 29 - 32. Designated as from MR in Steuding, p. 94.
- (q) 'Up'; City Lights Anthology, edited by Lawrence Ferlinghetti (San Francisco, 1974), p. 83. Confirmed as part of MR by Snyder in a letter to the present writer, 17 February 1975.
5. 'Interview: Gary Snyder', Towards A New American Poetics: Essays & Interviews, edited by Ekbert Faas (Santa Barbara, California, 1978), pp. 105 - 42 (pp. 133 - 34).
 6. See Stuart Gilbert's tabulation of the novel in James Joyce's 'Ulysses': A Study, revised edition (London, 1952), p. 41.
 7. Howard Nemerov, 'Poetry & Meaning', in Contemporary Poetry in America: Essays and Interviews, edited by Robert Boyars (New York, 1973), pp. 1 - 15 (p. 13).
 8. Robert Duncan, 'Towards an Open Universe', in Allen and Tallman, Poetics of the New American Poetry, pp. 212 - 25 (p. 224).
 9. Denise Levertov, 'Some Notes on Organic Form', The Poet in the World (New York, 1973), pp. 7 - 13 (p. 7).
 10. Peter Brooker, 'The Lesson of Ezra Pound: An Essay in Poetry, Literary Ideology and Politics', in Ezra Pound: Tactics for Reading, edited by Ian F. A. Bell (London, 1982), pp. 9 - 49 (p. 40).
 11. Levertov, 'Some Notes on Organic Form', p. 11.
 12. Ezra Pound, 'Canto CXVI', The Cantos of Ezra Pound, revised collected edition (London, 1975), pp. 795 - 97 (pp. 795 - 96).
 13. Daniel Cory, 'Ezra Pound: A Memoir', Encounter, 30, no. 5 (May 1968), 30 - 39, (p. 38).
 14. Pound, Letters, p. 247.
 15. Donald Hall, 'Ezra Pound: An Interview', Paris Review, no. 28 (Summer - Fall 1962), 22 - 51 (pp. 47, 49).
 16. William Carlos Williams, 'Author's Note', Paterson: Books I - V (New York, 1963), pp. 7 - 8.
 17. Irving Howe, Decline of the New (New York, 1970), pp. 22 - 23.
 18. Robert Duncan, 'from Notes on the Structure of Rime', Maps, no. 6 (1974), 42 - 52 (p. 49).
 19. Ezra Pound 'Foreword', Selected Cantos of Ezra Pound (London, 1967), p. 9.
 20. Duncan 'from Notes on the Structure of Rime', p. 51.

21. Robert Duncan, Bending the Bow (London, 1971).
22. Jack Kerouac, 'Essentials of Spontaneous Prose', in Parkinson, A Casebook on the Beat, pp. 65 - 67 (p. 66).
23. Ginsberg, Howl, pp. 7, 22.
24. Allen Ginsberg, Planet News 1961 - 1967 (San Francisco, 1968); The Fall of America: Poems of these States 1965 - 1971 (San Francisco, 1972); Iron Horse (Toronto, 1973); Mind Breaths: Poems 1972 - 1977 (San Francisco, 1977); Plutonian Ode and Other Poems 1977 - 1980 (San Francisco, 1982).
25. Faas, 'Interview: Allen Ginsberg', Towards A New American Poetics, pp. 269 - 88 (p. 280).
26. Faas, 'Interview: Gary Snyder', p. 131.
27. Williams, Paterson, p. 7.
28. 'Craft Interview with Gary Snyder', p. 27.
29. Steuding, p. 93.
30. Faas, 'Interview: Gary Snyder', p. 135.
31. McKenzie, 'Moving the World', p. 150.
32. McKenzie, 'Moving the World', p. 152.
33. Geneson, 'Interview with Gary Snyder', p. 74.
34. Faas, 'Interview: Gary Snyder', p. 134.
35. Reproductions of all the scroll paintings mentioned in this discussion can be seen in James Cahill, Hills Beyond a River: Chinese Painting of the Yüan Dynasty, 1279 - 1368 (New York, 1976), and Michael Sullivan, Symbols of Eternity: The Art of Landscape Painting in China (Oxford, 1979).
36. Snyder made this comment as a preface to reading several sections of Mountains and Rivers without End at the Berkeley Poetry Festival, 13 July 1965.
37. George Rowley, Principles of Chinese Painting (Princeton, New Jersey, 1947), pp. 61, 62.
38. Laurence Sickman and Alexander Soper, The Art and Architecture of China (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1956), p. 108.
39. A. Priest, 'Southern Sung Landscapes: The Horizontal Scrolls', quoted in Sickman and Soper, p. 108.
40. Snyder, 'Glacier Peak Wilderness Area', Earth House Hold, pp. 94 - 102 (p. 94).
41. Waley, Nō Plays, p. 290.
42. Pound, 'Noh Plays', p. 222.

43. Waley, Nō Plays, p. 52.
44. Waley, 'Kumasaka', Nō Plays, pp. 92 - 101 (p. 92).
45. Antony Hunt, ' "Bubbs Creek Haircut": Gary Snyder's "Great Departure" in Mountains and Rivers without End', Western American Literature, 15 (1980), 163 - 75 (p. 164). The following discussion is indebted to Hunt's detailed analysis of this single section.
46. Snyder, 'Buddhism and the Coming Revolution', Earth House Hold, pp. 90 - 93 (pp. 91 - 92).
47. Hunt, p. 167.
48. Heinrich Zimmer, Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization, edited by Joseph Campbell (Washington, 1946), pp. 159, 157.
49. Parkinson, 'The Poetry of Gary Snyder', p. 627.
50. Snyder, 'Three Worlds, Three Realms, Six Roads', pp. 149, 150, 151, 152.
51. Snyder, 'Three Worlds, Three Realms, Six Roads', pp. 147 - 48.
52. 'Craft Interview with Gary Snyder', p. 17.
53. Chowka, 'The Original Mind of Gary Snyder', III, 23.
54. 'Craft Interview with Gary Snyder', p. 17.
55. 'Craft Interview with Gary Snyder', p. 18.
56. Snyder, 'The Rabbit', p. 354.
57. Snyder, 'The California Water Plan', p. 25.
58. Snyder, 'The Hump-Backed Flute Player', p. 1.
59. Snyder, 'The Hump-Backed Flute Player', p. 3.
60. Snyder, 'The Flowing', pp. 68 - 69.
61. See Steuding, p. 104.
62. Tarn, 'From Anthropologist to Informant', p. 112.
63. Faas, 'Interview: Gary Snyder', p. 140.
64. Faas, 'Interview: Gary Snyder', pp. 135 - 37.
65. Faas, 'Interview: Gary Snyder', pp. 135 - 36.
66. James Cahill, Chinese Painting (Lausanne, Switzerland, 1960), p. 112.

(iii) The Lyric Poem in Crisis: 'Regarding Wave' and 'Turtle Island'

1. Pound, 'Causa', Selected Poems, p. 96.
2. Gary Snyder, Poetry and the Primitive, taped lecture given at the Berkeley Poetry Conference, 16 June 1965 (Berkeley, California, 1965).
3. McKenzie, 'Moving the World', p. 147.
4. Chowka, 'The Original Mind of Gary Snyder', East West Journal, 7, no. 6 (June 1977), I, 24 - 38 (p. 29).
5. Ginsberg, 'America', Howl, pp. 31 - 34 (pp. 32, 34).
6. Charles Altieri, 'Gary Snyder's Turtle Island: The Problems of Reconciling the Roles of Seer and Prophet', Boundary 2, 4, (1976), 761 - 77 (p. 761).
7. Altieri, 'Gary Snyder's Turtle Island', p. 762.
8. Snyder, 'Poetry and the Primitive', Earth House Hold, pp. 124 - 25.
9. Julian Gitzen, 'Gary Snyder and the Poetry of Compassion', Critical Quarterly, 15 (1973), 341 - 57 (p. 355).
10. Snyder, 'Spring Sesshin at Shokoku-ji', Earth House Hold, pp. 44 - 53.
11. Dom Aelred Graham, 'LSD and All That', Conversations: Christian and Buddhist (New York, 1968), pp. 53 - 87 (p. 74).
12. Philip Rawson, The Art of Tantra, revised edition (London, 1978), p. 9.
13. Bert Almon, 'Buddhism and Energy in the Recent Poetry of Gary Snyder', Mosaic, 11, no. 1 (Fall 1977), 117 - 25 (p. 120).
14. Gary Snyder, 'A Curse on the Men in Washington, Pentagon', Critical Quarterly, 10 (1968), 173.
15. Steuding, p. 157.
16. Charles Webb, 'Review: Turtle Island', Madrone, 3, nos 9 and 10 (1975), 60 - 63 (p. 60).
17. Mark Twain, 'The Awful German Language', The Complete Humorous Sketches and Tales of Mark Twain, edited by Charles Neider (New York, 1961), pp. 439 - 55 (p. 442).
18. Snyder performs this song on the cassette tape compilation, There Is No Other Life: Selected Poems 1954 - 1974 (Düsseldorf and Munich, 1975).
19. Gary Snyder, Six Sections from Mountains and Rivers without End (London, 1967), p. 1.
20. McKenzie, 'Moving the World', p. 154.
21. Altieri, 'Gary Snyder's Turtle Island', p. 771.
22. Altieri, 'Gary Snyder's Turtle Island', p. 774.

23. Gary Snyder, 'Working on the '58 Willys Pickup', Kuksu, no. 4 (1975), 4 - 5 (p. 4).
24. L. Edwin Folsom, 'Gary Snyder's Descent to Turtle Island: Searching for Fossil Love', Western American Literature, 15 (1980), 103 - 21 (p. 103).
25. Folsom, p. 107.
26. Kherdian, A Biographical Sketch, p. 12.
27. Almon, 'Buddhism and Energy', p. 123.
28. Webb, 'Review: Turtle Island', p. 61.
29. Snyder, 'Re-Inhabitation', The Old Ways, pp. 57 - 66.
30. Snyder, 'Passage to More Than India', Earth House Hold, pp. 103 - 12.
31. Snyder, 'Why Tribe', Earth House Hold, pp. 113 - 16 (pp. 115, 113).
32. Almon, 'The Imagination of Gary Snyder', p. 168.
33. Snyder, 'Poetry and the Primitive', Earth House Hold, p. 120.
34. Alvin M. Josephy Jr., The Indian Heritage of America (1968; Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1975), pp. 124, 134.
35. Adrienne Marcus, 'Dialogue with Gary Snyder', Red Clay Reader, no. 4 (1967), 96 - 103 (p. 97).
36. Although collected in Turtle Island, the essay 'Four Changes', from which this extract is taken, was written in the summer of 1969 (see TI, p. 91).
37. Gary Snyder, 'Little Dead Kids Butts', Caterpillar, no. 17 (October 1971), 118 - 19 (p. 119).
38. Thoreau, Walden, p. 13.

V. CONCLUSION

1. Wright ["Crunk"], 'The Work of Gary Snyder', p. 25.
2. Kern, 'Clearing the Ground', p. 177.
3. Steuding, p. 18.
4. Geneson, 'An Interview with Gary Snyder', pp. 70 - 72.
5. Pound, 'A Retrospect', p. 10.
6. 'Four Poems by Gary Snyder', Critical Quarterly, 7 (1965), 103 - 106.
7. 'Hamatreya', The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Volume IX, Poems (Boston and New York, 1904), pp. 35 - 37 (p. 35).
8. C. B. Cox, 'Editorial', Critical Quarterly, 8 (1966), 195.

9. Barry Gifford, Coyote Tantras (Santa Barbara, California, 1973); Will Staple, Coyote Run (Grand Terrace, California, n.d.); Peter Blue Cloud, Coyote & Friends (Brunswick, Maine, 1976); Simon J. Ortiz, 'Telling About Coyote', Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics, old series, no. 4 (Autumn 1972), 15 - 19; Joseph K. [pseud.], Coyote Meets Kafka (n.p., 1983).
10. Keith Sagar, The Art of Ted Hughes (Cambridge, 1975), p. 3.
11. Ted Hughes, Poetry in the Making (London, 1967), pp. 57 - 58.
12. Ted Hughes, Crow: From the Life and Songs of the Crow (London, 1970). Crow, in fact, was a popular animal myth figure for many Indian tribes. One modern instance would be his appearance in Simon J. Ortiz's 'Telling About Coyote' where he acts as a foil for the Trickster.
13. Kuksu, no. 6 (1977), 59, 70, 74, 97 - 100.
14. Parkinson, 'The Poetry of Gary Snyder', p. 630.
15. Chowka, 'The Original Mind of Gary Snyder', II, 40.
16. Chowka, 'The Original Mind of Gary Snyder', III, 22.
17. Snyder, 'Statement on Poetics', in Allen, The New American Poetry, p. 421.
18. Snyder, Myths & Texts (1978), p. vii.
19. Naked Poetry: Recent American Poetry in Open Forms, edited by Stephen Berg and Robert Mezey (Indianapolis and New York, 1969), pp. 328 - 58.
20. Julian Gitzen, 'Transatlantic poets and the tradition trap', Critical Quarterly, 25, no. 2 (Summer 1983), 53 - 71, argues exactly this case with the modern American lyric, suggesting that "the American tradition has now endured long enough to begin taking its toll" (p. 70). Significantly, whilst criticizing what he perceives as the unimaginative application of past models in contemporary American poetry, he singles out Snyder not only as a "contemporary master" of some elements of the tradition, for example, the "elliptical style" of Pound and Williams, but also as a poet whose work continually escapes what is for him the increasingly uniform tone and nature of recent American poetry.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

There is no complete bibliography of Gary Snyder at the time of writing. David Kherdian, A Biographical Sketch and Descriptive Checklist of Gary Snyder (Berkeley, California, 1965), is now obviously dated and contains several inaccuracies; David Norton, 'Gary Snyder: A Checklist', Schist, no. 2 (Summer 1974), 58 - 66, gives no uncollected poetry other than a number of broadsides, and has no listing of critical work on Snyder at all. Although indebted in part to both of the above, this bibliography is as comprehensive as possible; in particular, it is the first complete compilation of both Snyder's uncollected poetry and prose and the critical writing on his work.

Contents

- I. Primary Bibliography of the Works of Gary Snyder
- (i) Books and Pamphlets: Poetry and Prose
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- (iii) Interviews
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I. Primary Bibliography of the Works of Gary Snyder

Arranged in chronological order of publication within the three separate sections; where relevant, publisher is given to indicate edition.

(i) Books and Pamphlets: Poetry and Prose

Riprap (Ashland, Massachusetts: Origin Press, 1959).

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The Wooden Fish: Basic Sūtras and Gāthās of Rinzai Zen, with Kanetsuki Gutetsu (Kyoto, Japan: The First Zen Institute of America in Japan, 1961).

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The Back Country (New York: New Directions, 1968).

Earth House Hold: Technical Notes & Queries To Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries (New York: New Directions, 1969).

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Cold Mountain Poems (Portland, Oregon: Press-22, 1970).

Earth House Hold: Technical Notes & Queries To Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970).

Regarding Wave (London: Fulcrum Press, 1970).

Regarding Wave (New York: New Directions, 1970).

Six Sections from Mountains and Rivers without End Plus One (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1970).

Manzanita (Bolinas, California: Four Seasons Foundation, 1972).

The Fudo Trilogy (Berkeley, California: Shaman Drum, 1973).

Turtle Island (New York: New Directions, 1974).

The Old Ways: Six Essays (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1977).

Myths & Texts (New York: New Directions, 1978).

He Who Hunted Birds in His Father's Village: The Dimensions of a Haida Myth (Bolinas, California: Grey Fox Press, 1979).

Songs for Gaia (Port Townsend, Washington: Copper Canyon Press, 1979).

(ii) Uncollected Poetry and Prose

As with many contemporary poets, Snyder's contributions to books and periodicals, broadsides, poster poems, and other miscellanea, are so numerous as to require an exhaustive, and repetitious, listing. This section is confined to those items which are uncollected. Where collected material appears in the same source, this is indicated by using the standard

abbreviations employed in the main text of the thesis with the addition of EHH for Earth House Hold. All items are poetry unless otherwise indicated.

Janus, 1, no. 1 (January 1950), n.p.

'a poem'

Janus, 1, no. 2 (February 1950), n.p.

'a poem'

Janus, 2, no. 2 (November 1950), n.p.

'The Death of Rhea'

'An Autumn Poem'

Janus, 2, no. 3 (February 1951), n.p.

'Tell me if I am not glad'

'A Sinecure for P. Whalen'

Janus, 2, no. 4 (May 1951), 3 - 5.

'Three Mantic Poems'

Gurgle, no. vol. (1951), n.p.

'For George Leigh Mallory: Missing on Mt. Everest'

'By the North Gate, Wind Blows Full of Sand'

Occident, no vol. (Fall 1955), 21.

'Song To Be Sung Later'

Berkeley Bussei, no vol. (1955), 15.

'Epistemological Fancies'

Ark, no. 3 (Winter 1957), 18 - 19.

'What I Think About When I Meditate'

Berkeley Bussei, no vol. (1957), 8.

'Late October Camping in the Sawtooths'

Evergreen Review, 1, no. 3 (1957), 132 - 34.

'Letter from Kyoto' (prose)

Yugen, no. 2 (1958), 20.

'Chion-in'

Liberation, 4, no. 4 (June 1959), 11.

'Note on the Religious Tendencies' (prose)

Foot, no. 1 (September 1959), n.p.

'Two Letters from Gary Snyder to Richard Duerden' (prose)

Vigil, 1, no. 2 (Autumn 1959), 6 - 7.

'Seven Quick Flips' (Seven short poems of which the first is cancelled from Myths & Texts MS, p. 28, and the fifth collected in BC; otherwise uncollected.)

Between Worlds, 1, no. 1 (Summer 1960), 127 - 29.

'Vapor Trails' (BC)

'A Dry Day Just Before the Rainy Season' (BC)

'The Rainy Season'

Poetry Score, no vol. (Fall 1960), 22 - 29.

'Six Month Song in the Foothills' (BC)

'The Lookouts'

'Baker's Cabin in 1952'

'The Feathered Robe'

'This Poem is for Birds' (MT - 'Hunting', 3)

'Numerous Broken Eggs'

The Beats, edited by Seymour Krim (Greenwich, Connecticut, 1960),

pp. 144 - 48.

'Letter from Kyoto' (prose)

'Note on the Religious Tendencies' (prose)

The New American Poetry, edited by Donald M. Allen (New York, 1960),
pp. 307 - 22, 420 - 21.

'Praise for Sick Women' (RCM)

'Riprap' (RCM)

'For a Far-out Friend' (RCM)

'This Tokyo' (BC)

'Burning', 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17 (MT)

'Statement on Poetics' (prose)

Yugen, no. 6 (1960), 33 - 37.

'A Walk' (BC)

'Wild Horses'

'After Work' (BC)

'On Vulture Peak'

Origin, second series, no. 2 (July 1961), 1 - 10, 31 - 33, 63 - 64.

'Letters to Allen Ginsberg, Will Petersen, and Philip Whalen' (prose)

'Bubbs Creek Haircut' (MR)

'Pine River' (BC)

'Yase: September' (BC)

A Casebook on the Beat, edited by Thomas Parkinson (New York, 1961),
pp. 136 - 56.

'The Late Snow & Lumber Strike of the Summer of Fifty-four' (RCM)

'Milton by Firelight' (RCM)

'Cold Mountain Poems' (RCM)

'Spring Sesshin at Shokoku-ji' (EHH - prose)

'Note on the Religious Tendencies' (prose)

Journal of American Folklore, 74 (1961), 82 - 83.

Ch'ü Yüan, Li Sao, A Poem on Relieving Sorrows, translated by Jerah
Johnson (Miami, 1959) - (review)

Junge Amerikanische Lyrik, edited by Gregory Corso and Walter Höllerer
(Hamburg, 1961), pp. 134 - 35.

'Makings'

Kulchur, no. 3 (1961), 26.

'The Ship in Yokohama' (prose)

Yale Literary Magazine, 131, nos 3 and 4 (April 1963), 31 - 33.

'Four at Sea' (Four short poems of which the first, second, and fourth are collected in BC; the third, 'metal', uncollected.)

'The Levels' (BC)

The Outsider, 1, no. 3 (Spring 1963), 15.

'Some Square Comes'

'Madly Whirling Downhill' (BC)

Joglers, 1, no. 1 (Spring 1964), 3.

'3. XI. 60'

Arizona Quarterly, 21 (1965), 189 - 91.

Fosco Maraini, Where Four Worlds Meet: Hindu Kush, 1959 (New York, 1964) - (review)

C. Plymell and Ari Publications (San Francisco, 1965), poster poem.

'Dear Mr. President'

Agenda, 4, no. 3 (Spring 1966), 30 - 35.

'The Circumnambulation of Mt. Tamalpais'

'The Truth like the Belly of a Woman Turning' (BC)

'For the Boy who was Dodger Point Lookout' (BC)

Coyote's Journal, nos 5 and 6 (1966), 1 - 7.

'The Circumnambulation of Mt. Tamalpais'

'What Do They Say' (BC)

'The Truth like the Belly of a Woman Turning' (BC)

Poetry, 109 (1966), 147 - 52.

'Three Worlds, Three Realms, Six Roads'

Salted Feathers, nos 8 and 9 (March 1967), 18.

'Letter from Gary Snyder' (prose)

Coyote's Journal, no. 8 (1967), 36 - 37, 94 - 96.

'A Lion Dream' (part prose)

'Early Morning Orissa' (prose)

'Banaras' (prose)

'The Temples at Khajuraho' (prose)

Zeitgeist, 2, no. 3 (March - April 1968), 86 - 88.

'Letter to the Editor' (prose)

Critical Quarterly, 10 (1968), 173.

'A Curse on the Men in Washington, Pentagon'

Poetry, 111 (1968), 353 - 62.

'Eight Songs of Cloud and Water' (RW; except 'The Rabbit', uncollected)

Unicorn Broadsheets, no. 1 (1968), broadside poem.

'Dear Mr. President'

War Poems, edited by Diane di Prima (New York, 1968), pp. 75 - 79.

'In the House of the Rising Sun' (RW)

'Dear Mr. President'

'A Curse on the Men in Washington, Pentagon'

In transit: The Gary Snyder Issue, no vol. (1969), 2 - 3, 44, 47 - 48.

Tetsuo Nagasawa, 'Au I Lu Mahara' (translation)

Mao Tse-Tung, 'The Long March' (translation)

'Kumarajiva's Mother'

Naked Poetry: Recent American Poetry in Open Forms, edited by Stephen Berg and Robert Mezey (Indianapolis and New York, 1969), pp. 328 - 58.

'Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout' (RCM)

'Hay for the Horses' (RCM)

'Above Pate Valley' (RCM)

'Piute Creek' (RCM)

'Noonsack Valley' (RCM)

'Logging', 3, 5, 8, 14, 15 (MT)

'Hunting', 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 16 (MT)

'Burning', 4, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17 (MT)

'The Market' (MR)

'Foxtail Pine' (BC)

'The Late Snow & Lumber Strike of the Summer of Fifty-four' (RCM)

'Things to do Around a Lookout'

'Things to do Around Kyoto'

'For the West' (BC)

'Some Yips & Barks in the Dark' (prose)

Quixote, 4, no. 9 (1969), 141 - 49.

'Comments by Snyder' (prose)

Wind Bell, 8, nos 1 and 2 (1969), 23 - 29.

'On Rinzai Masters and Western Students in Japan' (prose)

Caterpillar, no. 11 (April 1970), 139.

'Song to the Raw Material'

Chinook, 2, no. 16 (April 1970), 3 - 4.

'Gary Snyder on Ecology' (prose)

Iowa Review, 1, no. 4 (Fall 1970), 85 - 86.

'Down'

Hudson Review, 23 (1970), 449.

'O'

Caterpillar, no. 17 (October 1971), 118 - 27.

'Little Dead Kids Butts'

'Charms' (TI)

'The Bath' (TI)

Philip Whalen, On Bear's Head (New York, 1969) - (review)

Coyote's Journal, no. 9 (1971), 1 - 4.

'The Hump-Backed Flute Player'

Not Man Apart, no. 4 (1971), 22.

'A Note on Wild Japan' (prose)

Io, no. 12 (February 1972), 5 - 22.

'On Earth Geography' (interview)

'Pelton Wheel Notes' (prose)

Io, no. 14 (Summer 1972), 76 - 113.

'Letters from Gary Snyder' (prose)

Caterpillar, no. 19 (October 1972), 1 - 99.

'Now India' (prose)

Maidu Press (San Francisco, n.d. [1972]), broadside poem.

'Swimming Naked in the Yuba River'

Manzanita (Bolinis, California, 1972), Pp. 32.

The poems in this pamphlet were collected as the 'Manzanita' section of TI except, 'Song to the Raw Material' (p. 12), uncollected.

Toucan, 3, nos 1 - 3 (1972), 4.

'Letter to Will Petersen' (prose)

Caterpillar, no. 20 (June 1973), 71 - 72.

'Greasy Boy'

'I Saw the Mother Once'

Chinook Centrex, no. 2 (Summer 1973), 232.

'Gary Snyder on Regionalism' (prose)

America, A Prophecy: A New Reading of American Poetry, edited by George Quasha and Jerome Rothenberg (New York, 1973), pp. 75 - 78, 307 - 308.

'For Plants' (BC)

'The Hump-Backed Flute Player'

Kyoi/Kuksu, no. 3 (Spring 1974), 25, 67 - 69.

'The Wild Mushroom' (TI)

'The Flowing'

City Lights Anthology, edited by Lawrence Ferlinghetti (San Francisco, 1974), pp. 81 - 83.

'Straight Creek - Great Burn' (TI)

'LMFBR' (TI)

'Up'

Coyote's Journal, no. 10 (1974), 29 - 32.

'Ma'

North Pacific Rim Alive (San Francisco, 1974), essay issued as a broadside.

'North Sea Road' (prose)

Thunderbolts of Peace and Liberation, edited by Tina Morris and Dave Cunliffe (Blackburn, Lancashire, n.d. [1974?]), pp. 89 - 93.

'A Curse on the Men in Washington, Pentagon'

'To Fire' (RW)

'In the House of the Rising Sun' (RW)

'Regarding Wave' (RW)

'Revolution in the Revolution in the Revolution' (RW)

California Quarterly, no. 9 (Summer 1975), 51.

'No Shoes No Shirt No Service'

Transatlantic Review, no. 52 (Autumn 1975), 24.

'No Shoes No Shirt No Service'

An Alleghany Star Route Anthology, edited by Franco Beltrametti (n.p., 1975), pp. 7 - 13.

'Getting There'

'All in the Family'

'Fear Not--'

'Pelton Wheel Notes' (prose)

Contemporary American Poetry, edited by A. Poulin Jr., second edition
(Boston, Massachusetts, 1975), pp. 366 - 81.

'Piute Creek' (RCM)

'Milton By Firelight' (RCM)

'Things to do Around a Lookout'

'Things to do Around a Ship at Sea'

'Burning the Small Dead' (BC)

'Logging', 5 (MT)

'Hunting', 8, 16 (MT)

'Vapor Trails' (BC)

'Song of the Taste' (RW)

'The Bath' (TI)

'As for Poets' (TI)

Holy Uncertainty, no. 2 (n.d. [1975?]), postcard poem.

'The Songs at Custer's Battlefield'

Kuksu, no. 4 (1975), 4 - 6, 46 - 47.

'Work Song' (prose)

'Working on the '58 Willys Pickup'

'Painting the North San Juan School'

New York Times Magazine, 4 July 1976, p. 174.

'For All'

'The Grand Entry'

Hard Pressed, no. 2 (n.d. [1976?]), broadside poem.

'The Earth's Wild Places'

Kuksu, no. 5 (1976), 72 - 79.

'To Thorofare Meadow and Back' (journal)

'Money Goes Upstream'

Simple Living, 1, no. 7 (1976), 3 - 6.

'Suwanose Yearly Cycle' (prose)

Sand Dollar Books: New Titles List No. 17, 28 March 1977, front cover.

'Arts Councils'

East West Journal, 7, no. 7 (July 1977), 39.

'The Cool Around the Fire'

'For All'

Ohio Review, 18, no. 3 (Fall 1977), 106 - 108.

'Talking Late with the Governor About the Budget'

'Bows to Drouth'

'Walked Two Days in Light Snow, Then It Cleared for Five'

Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics, new series, 3, no. 1 (1977), 2 - 3, 114.

'A Note on the Interface' (prose)

' "Lew Welch just turned up one day" '

Les Ecrivains Beats et le Voyage, by Jacqueline Starer (Paris, 1977),
pp. 226 - 27.

'Ballad of Rolling Heads'

Hand Prints (Port Townsend, Washington, 1977), broadside poem.

'O Mama'

Kuksu, no. 6 (1977), 77 - 80.

'The Cool Around the Fire'

'The Wandering Lapps'

'Fence Posts'

New Directions, no. 35 (1977), 92 - 94.

'Berry Territory'

'Bows to Drouth'

'Walked Two Days in Light Snow, Then It Cleared for Five'

The Penguin Book of American Verse, edited by Geoffrey Moore
(Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1977), pp. 566 - 71.

'A Walk' (BC)

'Things to Do Around a Lookout'

'The Hudsonian Curlew' (TI)

The Co-Evolutionary Quarterly, no. 19 (Fall 1978), 39 - 46.

' "Wild" in China' (prose)

Zero, no. 1 (1978), 42.

'The Songs at Custer's Battlefield'

Field, no. 20 (Spring 1979), 21 - 39.

'Poetry, Community, & Climax' (prose)

'For All'

'Axe Handles'

'Old Rotting Tree Trunk Down'

Plucked Chicken, no. 4 (May 1979), 84.

'Under the Sign at Toki's'

Copper Canyon Broadside (Port Townsend, Washington, 1979), broadside poem.

'Axe Handles'

Picture Poems, no. 2 (1979), broadside poem.

'A Mind Like Compost'

Plucked Chicken, no. 6 (April 1980), 8.

'Zen, Why?' (prose)

Houdini, no. 1 (1980), 36.

'For Alan Watts'

Minus 31 and the Wind Blowing (Anchorage, Alaska, 1980), pp. 129 - 43.

'Poetry, Community, & Climax' (prose)

Contact II, 5, no. 26 (Summer 1982), 28 - 29.

'I am sorry I disturbed you'

'Old Woman Nature'

New Departures, no. 15 (1983), 11, 64.

'Fence Posts'

'For/From Lew'

(iii) Non-Book Material

On Bread and Poetry (Berkeley, California: Pacifica Radio, 1964).

Tape: discussion with Gary Snyder, Lew Welch, Philip Whalen, and Jack Nessel.

Poetry Reading Berkeley, California: University of California, 1965).

Tape: reading given at the Berkeley Poetry Conference, 13 July 1965.

Poetry and the Primitive (Berkeley, California: University of California, 1965).

Tape: lecture given at the Berkeley Poetry Conference, 16 July 1965.

Gary Snyder reads 'Six Years' (Berkeley, California: Pacifica Radio, 1966).

Tape.

Philip Whalen and Gary Snyder (New York: NET, 1966).

Film: reading by each poet.

Today's Poets: Their Poems - Their Voices, Vol. 4, edited by Stephen Dunning (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Scholastic Records, 1968).

L.P. disc: readings by Philip Booth, Adrienne Rich, Gary Snyder, and Robert Hayden.

The Writer's Forum: Poets on Video-Tape (Albany, New York: State Education Department, 1972).

Film: reading by Gary Snyder followed by discussion with Stan Sanvel Rubin and A. Paulin Jr.

John Hollander and Gary Snyder (Washington: Library of Congress, 1973).

Tape: reading by each poet at the Coolidge Auditorium, 26 November 1973.

Gary Snyder (Washington: Library of Congress, 1973).

Tape: reading at the Library of Congress Recording Laboratory, 27 November 1973.

Biting the Tongue of the Corpse (New York: Giorno Poetry Systems, 1975).

L.P. disc: readings by Gary Snyder et al.

There Is No Other Life: Selected Poems 1954 - 1974 (Düsseldorf and Munich: S Press Tonbandverlag, 1975).

Cassette tape.

Gary Snyder (San Francisco: The American Poetry Archive, 1977).

Film: reading given at Berkeley, 13 February 1976.

Gary Snyder and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, NET Outtake Series (San Francisco: The American Poetry Archive, 1977).

Film: reading given at the Berkeley Poetry Conference, 13 July 1965.

II. Secondary Bibliography of Critical Work on Gary Snyder

All entries are listed alphabetically by author's surname.

(i) Books and Pamphlets

This section also includes unpublished dissertations referred to in the thesis.

Almon, Bert. Gary Snyder (Boise, Idaho, 1979).

Almon, Bert. 'The Imagination of Gary Snyder' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of New Mexico, 1971).

Jungels, William J. 'The Use of Native-American Mythologies in the Poetry of Gary Snyder' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1973).

Kherdian, David. A Biographical Sketch and Descriptive Checklist of Gary Snyder (Berkeley, California, 1965).

McCord, Howard. Some Notes to Gary Snyder's 'Myths & Texts' (Berkeley, California, 1971).

Steuding, Bob. Gary Snyder (Boston, Massachusetts, 1976).

White, Kenneth. The Tribal Dharma: An Essay on the Work of Gary Snyder (Llanfynydd, Dyfed, 1975).

(ii) Articles in Books and Periodicals

This section also includes major reviews and review-articles of Snyder's work referred to in the thesis. Where these are anonymous, they are listed in the alphabetical sequence by title.

Allen, Frank. 'East and West: Works of Robert Lowell and Gary Snyder', Chandrabhaga, no. 1 (1979), 34 - 56.

Almon, Bert. 'Buddhism and Energy in the Recent Poetry of Gary Snyder', Mosaic, 11, no. 1 (Fall 1977), 117 - 25.

Almon, Bert. 'Keeping Sane', Cafe Solo, no. 1 (1969), 125 - 35.

- Altieri, Charles. 'Gary Snyder's Lyric Poetry: Dialectic as Ecology', Far Point, no. 4 (Summer 1970), 55 - 65.
- Altieri, Charles. 'Gary Snyder's Turtle Island: The Problem of Reconciling the Roles of Seer and Prophet', Boundary 2, 4 (1976), 761 - 77.
- Altieri, Charles. 'Process as Plentitude: The Poetry of Gary Snyder and Robert Duncan', Enlarging the Temple: New Directions in American Poetry during the 1960s (Cranbury, New Jersey, 1979), pp. 128 - 65 (pp. 131 - 50).
- Benoit, Raymond. 'The New American Poetry', Thought, 4 (1969), 201 - 18 (pp. 203 - 206).
- Berry, Wendell. 'A Secular Pilgrimage', Hudson Review, 23 (1970), 401 - 24 (pp. 423 - 24).
- Burns, Jim. 'Gary Snyder: Back Country Zen', Comstock Lode, no. 4 (n.d. [1977?]), 7 - 12.
- Burns, Jim. 'His Own Man, Anarchy, first series, 3 (October 1963), 326 - 27.
- Burns, Jim. 'The Lone Ranger' (review of A Range of Poems), Ambit, no. 29 (1966), 43 - 46.
- Charters, Samuel. 'Gary Snyder', Some Poems/Poets: Studies in American Underground Poetry Since 1945 (Berkeley, California, 1971), pp. 57 - 63.
- Cheng, Lok Chua and N. Sasati. 'Zen and the Title of Gary Snyder's "Marin-an" ', Notes on Contemporary Literature, 8, no. 3 (May 1978), 2 - 3.
- Chung, Ling. 'Whose Mountain Is This? - Gary Snyder's Translations of Han Shan', Renditions, no. 7 (Spring 1977), 93 - 102.
- Curry, David. 'Apple Recommends...', Apple, no. 2 (1968), 30 - 32.
- Denney, Reuel. 'The Portable Pagoda: Asia and America in the Work of Gary Snyder', in Asian and Western Writers in Dialogue: New Cultural Identities, edited by Guy Amirthanayagam (London, 1982), pp. 115 - 36.
- Dickey, James. 'Five First Books' (review of Myths & Texts included), Poetry, 97 (1961), 316 - 20.

- Dodsworth, Martin. 'Body Rhythm' (review of Earth House Hold), The Review, no. 23 (September - November 1970), 55 - 60.
- Eshleman, Clayton. 'Notes on Earth House Hold', Caterpillar, no. 10 (January 1970), 216 - 20.
- Faas, Ekbert. 'Essay: Gary Snyder', Towards A New American Poetics: Essays & Interviews (Santa Barbara, California, 1978), pp. 91 - 104.
- Fackler, Herbert V. 'Three English Versions of Han-Shan's Cold Mountain Poems', Literature East and West, 15, no. 2 (1973), 269 - 78.
- Folsom, L. Edwin. 'Gary Snyder's Descent to Turtle Island: Searching for Fossil Love', Western American Literature, 15 (1980), 103 - 21.
- Gitzen, Julian. 'Gary Snyder and the Poetry of Compassion', Critical Quarterly, 15 (1973), 341 - 57.
- Goldstein, Lawrence. 'Wordsworth and Snyder: The Primitivist and His Problem of Self-Definition', Centennial Review, 21 (1977), 75 - 86.
- Gunn, Thom. 'Interpenetrating Things' (review of A Range of Poems), Agenda, 4, no. 3 (Spring 1966), 39 - 44.
- Gunn, Thom. 'Waking with Wonder' (review of British editions of The Back Country and Six Sections from Mountains and Rivers without End), The Listener, 2 May 1968, pp. 576 - 77.
- Howard, Richard. ' "To Hold Both History and Wilderness in Mind": The Poetry of Gary Snyder', Epoch, no. 15 (Fall 1965), 88 - 96.
- Hunt, Antony. ' "Bubbs Creek Haircut": Gary Snyder's "Great Departure" in Mountains and Rivers without End', Western American Literature, 15 (1980), 163 - 75.
- Hunt, Antony. 'Snyder's "After Work" ', Explicator, 32, no. 8 (April 1974), n.p. (item 61).
- Janik, Del Ivan. 'Gary Snyder, the Public Function of Poetry, and Turtle Island', Notes on Modern American Literature, 3, no. 4 (Fall 1979), n.p. (item 24).
- Kern, Robert. 'Clearing the Ground: Gary Snyder and the Modernist Imperative', Criticism, 19 (1977), 158 - 77.

- Kern, Robert. 'Recipes, Catalogues, Open Form Poetics: Gary Snyder's Archetypal Voice', Contemporary Literature, 18 (1977), 173 - 97.
- Kern, Robert. 'Towards A New Nature Poetry', Centennial Review, 19 (1975), 198 - 216 (pp. 213 - 16).
- Kherdian, David. 'Gary Snyder', Six San Francisco Poets (Fresno, California, 1965), pp. 21 - 26.
- Kirby, David K. 'Snyder, Auden, and the New Morality', Notes on Contemporary Literature, 1, no. 1 (January 1971), 9 - 10.
- Lewis, Peter Elfed. 'Robert Creeley and Gary Snyder: A British Assessment', Stand, 13, no. 4 (1972), 43 - 47.
- Lewis, Thomas C. 'Gary Snyder at St. Mark's', Mountain Gazette, no. 36 (August 1975), 22 - 26.
- Lin, Yao-fu. ' "The Mountains Are Your Mind": Orientalism in the Poetry of Gary Snyder', Tamkang Review, 6, no. 2 and 7, no. 1 (October 1975 - April 1976), 357 - 91.
- Lyon, Thomas J. 'The Ecological Vision of Gary Snyder', Kansas Quarterly, 2, no. 2 (Summer 1968), 117 - 24.
- Lyon, Thomas J. 'Gary Snyder, A Western Poet', Western American Literature, 3 (1968), 207 - 16.
- McCord, Howard. 'Gary Snyder: An Appreciation', Lillabulero, second series, no. 7 (Summer - Fall 1969), 51 - 54.
- McLeod, Dan. 'Gary Snyder in Hokkaido', Poetry Nippon, no. 21 (December 1972), 18 - 21.
- McLeod, Dan. 'Some Images of China in the Works of Gary Snyder', Tamkang Review, 10 (1980), 369 - 83.
- Mao, Nathan. 'The Influence of Zen Buddhism on Gary Snyder', Tamkang Review, 5, no. 2 (October 1974), 125 - 33.
- Mitgusch, Waltraud. 'Gary Snyder's Poetry: A Fusion of East and West', in Essays in Honour of Edwin Sturzl on His Sixtieth Birthday, edited by James Hogg (Salzburg, 1980), pp. 424 - 54.

- Nelson, Rudolph L. ' "Riprap on the Slick Rock of Metaphysics": Religious Dimensions in the Poetry of Gary Snyder', Soundings, 57 (1974), 206 - 21.
- Norton, David. 'Gary Snyder: A Checklist', Schist, no. 2 (Summer 1974), 58 - 66.
- Novak, Robert. 'Coming to Terms with Gary Snyder: Smokey the Bear Sutra', Windless Orchard, no. 17 (Spring 1974), 29 - 30, 51 - 52.
- Parkinson, Thomas. 'The Poetry of Gary Snyder', Southern Review, 4 (1968), 616 - 32.
- Parkinson, Thomas. 'The Theory and Practice of Gary Snyder', Journal of Modern Literature, 2 (1971 - 72), 448 - 52.
- Paul, Sherman. 'From Lookout to Ashram: The Way of Gary Snyder', in two parts, Iowa Review, 1, no. 3 (Summer 1970), I, 76 - 89.
- Paul, Sherman. 'From Lookout to Ashram: The Way of Gary Snyder', in two parts, Iowa Review, 1, no. 4 (Fall 1970), II, 70 - 85.
- Paul, Sherman. 'Noble and Simple' (review of Turtle Island), Parnassus, 3, no. 2 (Spring - Summer 1975), 217 - 25.
- Peach, Linden. 'Earth House Hold: A Twentieth Century Walden?', Anglo-Welsh Review, 25, no. 3 (1975), 108 - 14.
- Peach, Linden. 'The Pure Present: An Introduction to Gary Snyder's Writing', Planet, nos 37 and 38 (1977), 40 - 43.
- Pleasants, Ben. 'Ontology of Language in the Poems of Eliot & Snyder', Tuatara, no. 12 (Summer 1974), 53 - 63.
- Robbins, David. 'Gary Snyder's "Burning Island" ', in A Book of Rereadings in Recent American Poetry, edited by Greg Kuzma (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1979), pp. 429 - 51.
- Rothberg, Abraham. 'A Passage to More than India: The Poetry of Gary Snyder', Southwest Review, 61 (1976), 26 - 38.
- Scott, Robert Ian. 'Gary Snyder's Early Uncollected "Mallory" Poem', Concerning Poetry, 2, no. 1 (Spring 1969), 33 - 37.

Scott, Robert Ian. 'A Sense of the Past: Two Early Uncollected Poems by Gary Snyder', West Coast Review, 13, no. 1 (June 1978), 9 - 11.

Scott, Robert Ian. 'The Uncollected Early Poems of Gary Snyder', North American Review, 262, no. 3 (Fall 1977), 80 - 83.

Simmons, Chuck. 'Gary Snyder's Turtle Island', Mountain Gazette, no. 36 (August 1975), 20 - 21.

Simon, John Oliver. '"Sinking Deeper and Deeper in Earth": A Review of Turtle Island', Kuksu, no. 4 (1975), 121 - 25.

Simpson, Louis. 'New Books of Poems' (review of The Back Country included), Harper's Magazine, 237 (August 1968), 73 - 77 (p. 76).

Tarbett, David W. 'Contemporary American Pastoral: A Poetic Faith', English Record, no. 23 (Winter 1972), 72 - 83 (pp. 77 - 80).

Webb, Charles. 'Turtle Island: A Review', Madrone, 3, nos 9 and 10 (1975), 60 - 63.

Williamson, A. 'Gary Snyder: An Appreciation', New Republic, 1 November 1975, pp. 25 - 30.

Wright, James ["Crunk"] . 'The Work of Gary Snyder', The Sixties, no. 6 (Spring 1962), 25 - 42.

Yaguchi, Yorifumi. 'On "Clear-Cut" ', Poetry Nippon, no. 20 (September 1972), 21 - 22.

Zahniser, Edward. 'Poet in Today's Wilderness', The Living Wilderness, 33, no. 105 (Spring 1970), 34 - 36.

Zahniser, Edward. 'Turtle Island: Essay Review', Western American Literature, 10 (1975), 69 - 72.

(iii) Interviews

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