



2012

# Reintegrating Human and Nature: Modern Sentimental Ecology in Rachel Carson and Barbara Kingsolver

Richard M. Magee

*Sacred Heart University*, [mageer@sacredheart.edu](mailto:mageer@sacredheart.edu)

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## Recommended Citation

Magee, Richard M. "Reintegrating Human and Nature: Modern Sentimental Ecology in Rachel Carson and Barbara Kingsolver." *Feminist Ecocriticism: Environment, Women, and Literature*. Ed. Douglas A. Vakoch. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012.

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## Chapter Three

# Reintegrating Human and Nature

*Modern Sentimental Ecology in Rachel Carson and  
Barbara Kingsolver*

Richard M. Magee

When Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* was first published in 1962, an outraged chemical industry and its constituents set out to discredit Carson's findings, and if that were not possible, to discredit Carson herself. Many of her critics charged her with sentimentality and insisted that such an emotional argument that she presented could not be scientifically sound. *Time* magazine called the book "unfair, one-sided, and hysterically over-emphatic" (Jezer 1988: 3). The subtext of *Time*'s charge clearly implies that a woman scientist is not to be trusted, that she will overreact and become emotional, that, in short, she will be "hysterical." The chemical industry that Carson's research indicts reacted no less strongly, dismissing her as part of a "vociferous, misinformed group of nature-balancing, organic gardening, bird-loving, unreasonable citizenry that has not been convinced of the important place of agricultural chemicals in our economy" (Jezer 1988: 3). The terms used to criticize and undermine Carson's argument attempt to establish a clear divide between the "reasonable" discourse of chemical companies and the "unreasonable" and "misinformed" language preferred by those who seek to balance nature. By being "nature-balancing," these citizens who drew the greatest ire of the chemical companies sought to reimagine and reconfigure the relationship of humans with the natural world so that humans and nature are no longer opposing forces but important elements of a single system.

Even more telling, however, is an irate letter received by the *New Yorker*, the only magazine willing to take the risk of publishing the work and possibly alienating readers and, worse, advertisers. The letter, from H. Davidson

of San Francisco, was not originally published in the magazine but finally made it into print in the seventieth anniversary edition in 1995. After supposing that Carson most likely has “Communist sympathies,” the writer asserts “[w]e can live without birds and animals, but, as the current market slump shows, we cannot live without business” (Glotfelty 2000: 158). By insisting that humans can live “without birds and animals,” Davidson’s letter reflects the common modernist schism where humans are viewed as separate from the natural world and are not even animals themselves. From an environmental point of view, this schism is dangerous, placing humans outside of the natural forces that govern their lives and ignoring the complex set of ecological interconnections that bind humans with their fellow living creatures. By using the language of interconnection, emotion, and feeling, Carson reintegrates human existence and the experience of the natural world along emotional and affective lines; humans thus become part of a community that includes their ecosystem instead of discrete entities who presume the non-human environment has only mechanical or pragmatic value. In *Prodigal Summer*, the novelist Barbara Kingsolver takes Carson’s integration of arcadian and imperial ecology further, and clarifies the relationship to sentimental literature by crafting a narrative that is both scientifically informed and charged with emotional interrelationships symbolizing ecological interdependence. The language and tone used by both authors illustrates their reaction against a strictly mechanistic and modernistic view of nature as separate from and inferior to humans.

In his discussion of modernism and ecology, Max Oelschlaeger presents two conflicting ideologies in the human relationship to the natural world. This very structure, which suggests that humans and nature are separate, is an indication of the pervasive and problematic modernist construction of the world and the place of humans in it. Arcadian ecology, according to Oelschlaeger, is best exemplified by Gilbert White, “who moved not toward increasing scientific rigor and causal knowledge but toward an empathetic view of wild nature” (1991: 104). On the other side of the equation is imperial ecology, represented by Linnaeus, which presented a “tradition that sought the mastery of nature” and did not “recognize that humankind is part of nature” (1991: 105). Modernism supported the Linnaean mechanical model of the world (which is probably why Leo Marx’s book title, *The Machine in the Garden*, is so provocative), and posited a finitely reducible, ultimately understandable, and mechanically rational universe made up of pieces with clear purposes and uses (Oelschlaeger 1991: 128). Linnaeus’ modern scientific model emphasizes a mechanistic and rational paradigm that has forced us to choose between a worldview that understands nature as a living thing with which we have a “fundamental corelatedness,” and a worldview that presents nature as a machine, and which “isolates [us] . . . in a silent world” (Oelschlaeger 1991: 128–29). We become isolated from nature when it be-

comes something in a test tube or beaker, or when it is removed from us to appear as little more than the mechanistic processes outlined in the hard sciences. The language itself is revealing: we become “isolated” and the world becomes “silent,” both terms suggesting a fundamental separation from the natural world; the use of the word “silent” in the title of Rachel Carson’s book further emphasizes the separation.

The history of nature writing can be seen in many ways as a history of serious attempts to ameliorate that separation and present new ways of perceiving the interconnections that complicate the human relationship with the natural world. Gilbert White’s *Natural History of Selbourne*, Susan Fenimore Cooper’s *Rural Hours*, and Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden*, to name just three examples, all demonstrate the authors’ attempts to articulate their understanding of their place within their respective environments. Each author uses his or her home as the central point from which to explore the world and reintegrate humans and nature in order to combat the sense of isolation. The desire to overcome this isolation by rediscovering a sense of connection to the natural world finds an important parallel in the sentimental literature of the nineteenth century, where sentimentalism seeks to redress isolation and detachment by exploring and emphasizing human connection through empathetic understanding; as Joanne Dobson points out, separation is the ultimate tragedy in sentimental literature (1997: 267). These three writers frequently used sentimental rhetorical tropes of attachment and community to emphasize their sense of the interconnections of the natural and human worlds.

However, by pointing out that some nature writing and nineteenth-century sentimental literature share fear of separation we run the risk of fatally undermining the goals of the nature writer because of the intense devaluation sentimental discourse has undergone in the past century and a half. Roland Barthes called the sentimental “unwarranted discourse” and contends that Modernism is the opposite of sentimental (Clark 1991: 1). Ann Douglas has argued that “the sentimental undermines the serious” (Clark 1991: 3). Sentimentalism bears, or seems to bear, connotations of weakness, frivolity, hysteria, immaturity, and runaway emotionalism, all of which are exactly the accusations fired at Rachel Carson’s work. With sentimentalism’s emphasis on an empathic emotional connection to other humans, it can appear to be a subversive enemy of modernity, which often looks with suspicion upon an empathy which may very well mislead with a falsely shared subjectivity. When we couple this mistrust with the aversion that science has to emotional appeals—appeals, which, after all, are not quantifiable or easily proven in the scientific method—it may border on heresy to suggest that Rachel Carson, one of the most influential scientists of the twentieth century, used sentimental tropes in her writing.

An important trend in late nineteenth-century nature writing further emphasizes the difficulties inherent in examining the sentimental rhetorical techniques in contemporary nature writing. Ralph Lutts traces the history of the so-called nature fakers, writers whose books “carried an extraordinary freight of Victorian sentiment and gushing, syrupy prose that left many of their authors open to serious criticism” (Lutts 1990: 172). Again, this critique of the nature-writing prose echoes in many ways the critique of Carson’s work: the language invests too much emotion and not enough rational thought in attempts to sway readers to a suspect point of view. However, as Lutts further points out, the nature lovers who wrote passionately, if a little too gushingly, of their experiences in the natural world did provide an important corrective to the rational-mechanistic view of nature as they “gave voice, though sometimes in a faltering and poorly conceived manner, to a new relationship between humans and nature” (Lutts 1990: 173).

Despite the claims that the sentimental is weak or somehow flawed, such writing does present a formidable argumentative strategy by employing the readers’ emotions as a link between the textual world and the world the reader inhabits. This link also partly ameliorates one of the weaknesses that “traditional nature writing” holds for modern readers. As Lawrence Buell points out in *Writing for an Endangered World*, traditional nature writing, with its emphasis on the exemplary landscape, tends toward the “downplay if not the exclusion of social justice concerns” (2001: 230). When traditional nature writing extols the beauty of, for example, a Yosemite sunrise, it perpetuates the nature/culture divide by presenting a pristine landscape untouched by human hands as somehow the only model for environmental concern. Such thinking, moreover, elides the social realities of this model of environmental concern: that elites, usually white males, work for the preservation of exemplary landscapes while ignoring the problem of something less aesthetically pleasing, such as, for example, South Bronx air pollution.

In the sentimental ecological model of nature writing, the human concerns are not ignored, but are presented as parallel to, and inseparable from, the concerns of nonhuman nature. The central human concern is community. William Shutkin, an environmental lawyer and activist, writes about what he calls “civic environmentalism” in *The Land that Could Be*. He sees parallels between the “rise in economic and social inequality” and “the deterioration of the American environment, both built and undeveloped” (2000: 3). For Shutkin, the most important force for change is community-based environmental action (2000: 13–14). Furthermore, according to Buell, “contemporary ecopopulism” is most notable for the inclusion, even the leadership, of “nonelites” who emphasize community. The community mindedness creates an “‘anthropocentric’ emphasis on environmentalism as instrument of social justice as against an ‘ecocentric’ emphasis on caring for nature as a good in itself” (Buell 2001: 33).

Rachel Carson's book created a new environmental awareness precisely because it reimagined a new connection between humans and nature, and it frequently presented this new vision using sentimental language. The first and most obvious sentimental trope in the book is the title. Paul Brooks, the Houghton editor, recalls a letter from a woman whose property had been sprayed with insecticide, killing off all of the birds; she missed their songs. Brooks suggested that the chapter about the effects of insecticide on birds be called "Silent Spring." When the publishers had trouble coming up with a title for the whole book, Brooks thought that "metaphorically, *Silent Spring* applied to the book as a whole" (2000: xvi). The title is not scientific—a more scientific title would probably be something like *The Effects of Chlorinated Hydrocarbon Insecticides on the Environment*—but it nevertheless has a powerful emotional resonance while referring to one of the central concerns of the book. Significantly, the title also reflects the silence that reigns, in Oelschlaeger's formulation, when humans are viewed as separate from or alien to the natural environment.

The opening of *Silent Spring* introduces the sentimental tropes that Carson uses with such effectiveness, and it also establishes the central conceit that is reflected in the book's title. "There was a strange stillness," Carson writes in the middle of the first chapter, which serves as a simple introduction to the complex science that comes later. She continues, "The birds, for example—where had they gone? . . . only silence lay over the fields and woods and marsh" (Carson 1962: 2). The silence of the title is the deathly silence that pervades after all of the birds had been killed by the overuse of pesticides and other agricultural and domestic chemicals that escape into the environment and cause damage far beyond what the makers first imagined. By using the birds' fate as a metaphor for humans' fate, Carson reaches past the cliché of the canary in the coal mine to the domestic iconography that informed the work of some sentimental authors. The birds are not just what biologists call "indicator species," but are metonymically connected to humans. Just as a sentimental writer might look at bird nesting in the eaves and see a model of domestic harmony and industry, Carson looks at the silencing of the birds as a frightening harbinger of our own possible fate. A reader's sympathy toward the birds is partly based upon a sense of shared experience or empathy, a central aspect of the sentimental ethos.

Many of the examples that Carson uses to illustrate her claims about the dangers of chlorinated hydrocarbon poisons come from a meticulously noted list of sources. The list of sources covers fifty-five pages at the end of *Silent Spring*, and includes several hundred articles from scientific and medical journals as well as popular mass-market magazines. Carson "borrows" the language of these sources in a Bakhtinian sense by paraphrasing and even quoting (Harris 2000: 127). The "borrowing" or paraphrasing is necessary in many cases to make unfamiliar or highly specialized language more access-

ible to a general audience. Carson's style is marked by "focusing emotion" and "increasing the strength of claims and instilling drama," all of which are "extremely common when material moves into public discourse from the more tentative and qualified world of scientific literature" (Harris 2000: 134). The important qualification remains that Carson does not manufacture claims or statistics. Instead, her tactic, which infuriated the chemical industry, is to manage the emotional potential of the scientific findings by carefully choosing language with greater pathos. As Randy Harris puts it, she "manages the pathos; she does not exploit it" (2000: 134).

Harris also points out some of the specific techniques Carson uses to manage the pathos she invokes. Carson describes a poisoning case that occurred when a "year-old child" had been taken to Venezuela by his parents where they encountered cockroaches in their new home. The cockroaches were killed with a spray containing the chlorinated hydrocarbon endrin, while the child and the family dog were taken out of the house. When they returned, after the floors were washed, the dog quickly sickened and died, and the baby went into convulsions and a comatose state. The baby was taken back to New York, where doctors held out little hope of recovery (Carson 1962: 27). The anecdote is powerful, with many elements—the dog's death, the child's convulsions and vomiting—that could have a strong emotional effect on the readers.

Carson's source for the story was Harold Jacobziner and H. W. Raybin's article "Poisoning by Insecticide (Endrin)" in *New York State Journal of Medicine*, published May 15, 1959. Randy Harris traces the long path the language took from the original to Carson's recounting. The authors of the article were not the attending physicians, so they are paraphrasing that doctor, who in turn must have been paraphrasing (and perhaps even translating) language from the site of the poisoning, Venezuela. However, Carson's paraphrase is the most revealing. While the authors of the medical report use the term "exposure" to discuss the patient's contact with the poison, Carson uses the term "fateful contact." Throughout the medical report, the child is referred to as an "infant," a "child," or a "patient." Carson, on the other hand, frequently uses the much more emotionally resonant term "baby" (Harris 2000: 134). Before telling the story of the dead child, Carson states that endrin has been responsible for a number of animal deaths and has also endangered human lives (Carson 1962: 27). Why then use this particular story to illustrate the dangers of the chemical, when there are, presumably, other stories? The answer is simple: it is about family, the sentimental staple, and stories about poisoned cattle do not have the same empathetic potential as stories about poisoned family dogs and babies. She chose the story for its impact and chose her language for the same reason: a domesticated story will hit her readers with a greater emotional impact and perhaps elicit more attention.

The image of the dead or suffering child is, moreover, an important trope in sentimental literature because of the salvific qualities the image implies. Part of the power the suffering child image wields derives from the innocence and powerlessness implicit in childhood. The baby that suffers from toxic chemicals had no power to escape the danger, nor was the child responsible for the original distribution of the chemical. Because the child is innocent and pure, the pathos of the situation is magnified. Just as importantly, the child's innocence lends a redemptive quality to the illness. In its weakness and innocence, the child suffered from the pesticide use so that the adults might be saved—perhaps redeemed—and learn from the tragedy of the dangers of certain household chemicals. Without explicitly mentioning religious motivations in any way, Carson implicitly links her example to the evangelical Christian underpinnings of sentimental literature through the Christ-like suffering child.

Rachel Carson's legacy to the modern American environmental movement has been exhaustively identified, and few, if any, writers of environmental literature after 1962 can avoid her influence. Barbara Kingsolver, whose writing is frequently informed by environmental issues, makes no attempt to escape the Carson legacy in her novel *Prodigal Summer*. Instead, she names a character Rachel Carson Rawley, creates another character who embodies Carson's enlightened approach to agriculture, and digresses often to lecture her readers on environmental and ecological issues that would have interested Carson. Finally, and most important for this discussion, Kingsolver structures her narrative around a rural community and several women who personify several ecological concerns, and she does this by deploying nearly all of the expected sentimental tropes. In some ways, *Prodigal Summer* exemplifies modern sentimental ecology and its attempts to reintegrate humans and nature.

The theme of ecological and sentimental interconnectedness is immediately evident by the overall structure of Kingsolver's novel. She interweaves three plots: "Predators," "Moth Love," and "Old Chestnuts." Each plot deals with a female protagonist and a male antagonist, where the female character represents an enlightened environmental understanding and the male character usually represents a reactionary and hubristic anti-environmental stance; to use the terms mentioned earlier, the women are arcadian ecologists while the men are imperial ecologists. The three plots are interconnected by various family connections and other rural community ties. Although the book is flawed by its too-neat juxtaposition of ecological woman and toxic man and its frequent preachy digressions, it does create a vibrant fictional universe and a forum for considering ecological issues.

Kingsolver's book fits well into a number of the constructs outlined in modern ecofeminism. All of the main female characters clearly represent nature, and the men represent (agri)culture, similar to the formulation Sherry

Ortner (1974) critiques in her important work. Not only do the women represent nature, but they also represent different stages of nature. Deanna is the primitive, maternal (by the end of the novel she discovers she is pregnant), and primal earth-goddess. Nannie Rawley is the old woman with the lifetime of natural folk wisdom stored up in her head. Lusa is the modern, educated woman who uses her intelligence as well as her fierce determination and family attachments to become a more ecologically sensitive farmer than any of the men who farm around her could hope to be.

The two main themes of *Prodigal Summer* are closely related. Kingsolver stresses the ecological interconnectedness of all life, and the biological imperative toward species survival. In her view, these two elements point toward sex. Procreation is the first, middle, and last purpose of nature, and thus a lavish—or prodigal—amount of energy is devoted to this end. Several times in the early scenes of the novel, Deanna notices how explosively nature works to perpetuate species. She thinks the “extravagant procreation” that she is witnessing “could wear out everything in its path with its passionate excesses, but nothing alive with wings or a heart or a seed curled into itself in the ground could resist welcoming it back when it came” (Kingsolver 2000: 51). The “passionate excesses” of nature struggling to reproduce means that different species become connected to and dependent upon each other. In trying so hard to reproduce, an oak tree produces thousands more acorns than can reasonably grow in an area, but this prodigality means that wildly reproducing mice have something to eat and feed their young, which, in turn, means that predators, such as Deanna’s beloved coyotes, have something to eat and feed their young.

Kingsolver develops two distinct yet related themes of interconnection: ecological and social or sentimental. The ecological interconnections run throughout the novel and often reflect the impact that human intervention has on the ecosystem. Several times Kingsolver describes the problem of cocklebur, a plant whose seeds grow in burs that cling tenaciously to everything they touch, especially the pants and socks of unsuspecting hikers. At one point, Garnett wonders to Nannie why God created so many cockleburs and speculates that he may have gotten carried away in his enthusiasm for the nuisance plant (Kingsolver 2000: 219, 335). He triumphantly tells Nannie, who has argued that human meddling has created many of the pest problems, that he, and by extension, other farmers, cannot be blamed for the cocklebur problem (Kingsolver 2000: 336). Garnett, though, is wrong. Deanna calls the burs “parakeets’ revenge,” because the burs were once the favorite food of the Carolina parakeet, and the two species—predator bird and prey plant—had coevolved to form a complex balance. The Carolina parakeet had been hunted to extinction very soon after settlers arrived in the Appalachians, and the cockleburs, with no natural predator, proliferated at a great rate. The plants, Deanna wryly thinks, were “trying to teach a lesson that people had

forgotten how to know" (Kingsolver 2000: 247). The lesson, of course, is that the balance of predator and prey in an ecosystem is incredibly complex, and ignorant human meddling can wreak serious havoc on that balance.

Traditional nineteenth-century sentimental literature frequently employed a strong evangelical Christian theme, and the young heroines of these works generally found redemption or comfort in biblical teachings. The case in Kingsolver's modern take on the sentimental is more complicated than that, and further illustrates the problems inherent in the modernist reduction to clear binaries that separate humans from the natural world. The human/nature dichotomy finds a parallel in the science/religion battle that informs so much of the public debate in our society. Kingsolver, however, demonstrates as Stephen Jay Gould argues, that science and the humanities (which include religion in Gould's formulation), while composing non-overlapping magisteria, nevertheless act in the "service of a common goal" (Gould 2003: 8).

The most obvious conflict between science and religion appears clearly in an exchange between Nannie and Garnett. Garnett, the self-described "scholar of creation science," had ridiculed Nannie's belief in evolution, or, in his words, "put [her] straight on that" (Kingsolver 2000: 277). To refute his argument in favor of creation science, Nannie points out that Garnett himself is involved in a bit of *un*-natural selection in his attempts to cross breed a blight-resistant strain of chestnut tree. Garnett agrees that he is performing artificial selection in his breeding program, but he notes that he is not creating a new species, saying that only God can "make a chestnut into an oak" (280). Nannie's triumphant reply to this is that Garnett could perform this feat of evolution if he "had as much time as God does" (Kingsolver 2000: 280).

For Nannie, God has become a metaphor for the evolutionary process. She argues that the difference between Garnett's chestnut-breeding program and evolution is that Garnett has a goal in mind, while in nature "it's predators [or] a bad snap of weather" that make decisions about which organism or species will survive and which will die (Kingsolver 2000: 280). The pantheistic view of nature greatly disturbs Garnett, who cannot conceive of living in a world of "godless darkness" where there is no plan, only blind chance. The "glory of an evolving world" is, in Nannie's eyes, the transcendent experience that obliterates the darkness Garnett fears. Her sense that she is "part of a bigger something" equates with Garnett's religious beliefs, but the bigger something is not an anthropomorphic God but a huge and intricately structured web (Kingsolver 2000: 277).

Nannie believes in natural selection, but when she refers to the "glory of an evolving world," she conflates evolution (which implies progress) with natural selection (which does not). While she is conflating the terms, she is essentially saying that this big process is so awe-inspiring that it is almost like God and therefore glorious. Darwin's ideas are simplified and become

metaphorical; “evolution” stands in for the whole process of natural selection, even on the level of the individual, let alone the species level. Her language, though, is anything but simple. By juxtaposing her scientifically informed views of evolution with elevated and evocative language, she links the emotional and spiritual longings of the human and the impersonal forces of natural processes, thus rhetorically reintegrating the apparent dichotomy of human and nature.

In one of the other plotlines of the novel, Kingsolver describes the dilemma Lusa, the young widow faces: she wishes to keep the family farm she inherited when her husband, Cole, died, but, because of her moral objections, she does not wish to farm tobacco. Cattle farming, though not morally repugnant to her, is too labor-intensive and difficult for her to do on her own. Complicating matters is Lusa’s background: she is a trained entomologist not a farmer. Her family background, though, does come to her rescue. The product of an Arab mother and a Polish Jewish father, Lusa is comfortable navigating the antagonisms of the traditionally opposed religious spheres. This unusual background helps her find a sustainable, ecological, and morally acceptable solution to her problem. One of her mother’s cousins is a New York City butcher who supplies milk-fed kid goats and sells many of them around religious holidays, and Lusa realizes that she could supply goats for Id-al-Adha, Orthodox Easter, and Passover, hitting the trifecta of Abrahamic festivals. Her scientific mind, her religious sense, and her family background all contribute to her ability to devise the scheme, follow through, and make it successful.

Kingsolver thus challenges the simple dichotomy of science and religion. Instead of separating the two magisteria and building an impenetrable wall around each, she allows the two sides to create a dialogic where their similarities reinforce each other and their differences create the friction that leads to more complex inquiry. When Nannie points out to Garnett that he is, in a small way, doing what evolution or God does, she is opening the doors to discussion rather than turning her back and refusing to countenance the old man’s stubborn beliefs. Similarly, Lusa’s unorthodox plan illustrates how human needs—her own need for economic stability and the religious communities’ need for fresh goat—can combine with nature for mutual benefit. In Lusa’s case, her understanding of science and her feelings for religion allowed the crucial dialogic to transform her previous way of thinking.

Kingsolver structures the novel so that the human community and the nonhuman environment overlap, calling into question the very notion of separate human and nonhuman ecosystems. The first chapter of the novel begins with the description of an unnamed character walking through the forest. Immediately, Kingsolver questions the assumption of anthropocentrism by responding to the initial statement of the character’s solitude: “But solitude is only a human presumption” (Kingsolver 2000: 1). She goes on to

note that quiet footsteps are not so quiet to the small organisms that live on the forest floor. For the first several pages, Kingsolver continues in the detached, scientific, and analytical manner of a field report describing the movements of a specimen. All of her observations point out that human activity is not the center of the world, and, furthermore, that human observation is flawed. If a "man with a gun" had been watching this character (who turns out to be Deanna), he would have thought her "an angry woman on the trail of something hateful" (Kingsolver 2000: 1). This, Kingsolver quickly tells us, is the wrong interpretation, the sort of misunderstanding, she implies, that informs so much of human interaction with the environment.

The opening description is made more remarkable by the manner in which Kingsolver returns to her theme at the end of the novel. The final chapter begins with a similar description of an unnamed "she" walking on the edges of fields that border the forest. Like Deanna in the first chapter, this female is intent on seeing, smelling, and experiencing the forest, but we quickly realize that this description is much more detailed, more earthy than the first, and it soon becomes clear that this "she" is a female coyote. The penultimate paragraph returns to the notion of the speculative "man with a gun" who might be watching the coyote. This man might believe that he and the coyote are "the only two creatures left here in this forest of dripping leaves" (Kingsolver 2000: 444). Like the hypothetical observer in the beginning, this man is wrong: "Solitude is a human presumption," Kingsolver reiterates. Everything is connected, an "impalpable thread on the web." In Kingsolver's view, all connections, including those emotional and familial connections termed sentimental as well as those between predator and prey, are inseparable parts of the ecosystem.

Rachel Carson and Barbara Kingsolver were both trained as scientists and may be expected to embrace the rationalist, mechanical view of nature as something separate from, and perhaps even inferior to, the world of humans. Yet these two women both promoted a more complex approach to modernism's scientific paradigm in which nature is not merely a separate entity for dispassionate study but also an integral part of the human community. Both women display in their rhetorical choices a keen understanding of the language of community and interconnection, and their language and writing styles constantly promote the reintegration of humans and the natural world.