

## CHAPTER III

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MAIN CHARACTER AND ITS EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT PORTRAYED IN *THE REVENANT: A NOVEL OF REVENGE***

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the answers to the research questions. Before discussing the answers, it is important to understand how ecocentrism connects with ecocriticism theory. Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment (Glotfelty xviii). As already known, character is the part of literature and it is usually portrayed as human, while ecocentrism deals with the relationship between human and the environment. So, the researcher uses ecocentrism to discuss the answers of the research questions.

This chapter is divided into two main parts. In the first part, the researcher describes how the relationship between the main character and the environment is portrayed in the novel, *The Revenant: A Novel of Revenge*. In the second part, the researcher analyzes the effect of the relationship between the main character and the environment.

#### **3.1 The Relationship between the Main Character, Hugh Glass, and the Environment**

Based on Cheryl Glotfelty's theory, the researcher first describes how the nature is represented in the novel and then the researcher analyzes how human treat the environment and what the effect is in the novel.

As mentioned before, an ecocritic named Lawrence Buell mentioned there are two waves of ecocriticism. This novel is classified into first wave because from a human perspective in the novel, environmental issues involve concerns about employment, profits, politics, ethics and economics. The novel shows the relationship of the main character, Hugh Glass, with the environment. Living in 1800s when hunting is the main livelihood in the Fort Brazeau have made Hugh Glass a master woodsman, a sharpshooter and game hunter since he was young. On August 1823, Hugh Glass joins the hunting along the wild life of Missouri river and the trading of fur with other ten men led by a captain named Andrew Henry. They bet their lives albeit the environment is still wide in order to get the trade work successfully and to get money as much as they can. As far as they get the profit from the nature, wilderness is not a big deal for them and they think that environment exists to fulfill their needs. From a human point of view, environmental issues involve around science, nature, health, employment, profits, politics, ethics, and economics (Enger and Smith 5).

### **3.1.1 Nature is Profitable and Wild: Nature as a Provider for Human's Needs**

In *The Revenant: A Novel Of Revenge*, the fur traders regard that nature is the place where they can rely their lives on. They do everything for getting what they need, although the environment is still wild. They are even willing to destroy the nature to fulfill their needs in life. It is explained in the book how the environment's state after human do the hunting is.

“HE SMELLED THE BUFFALO CARCASS before he saw it. He heard it too. Or at least he heard the clouds of flies that swirled around the heaping mass of hide and bone. Sinews held the skeleton mostly intact, although scavengers had picked it clean of any meat. The massive, bushy head and swooping black horns lent the animal its only measure of dignity, though this too had been undermined by the birds that had picked away the eyes.”(Punke 101)

The situation of the environment after the hunting is explained in the middle of the book. The fur traders leave what they have already destroyed from the nature. In this case is in the form of buffalo carcass. They hunt the buffalo and take the meat and all of the important parts of the buffalo with them. They leave the carcass which is only bones and its head left haphazardly without having any idea of what they have done. Hugh Glass finds the carcass in his way to where his fellow traders head to. This explanation clearly shows how human are willing to do anything to fulfill the needs for their lives, even destroying the balance of the nature by hunting the animals which live in it.

Human do not only kill the animals to fulfill their needs for food especially meat. They also cut down some trees in the forest which they think can provide them in their days in the forest alongside the Missouri River where the group of eleven men (Glass' group) stays for awhile. It is explained in the novel when Hugh Glass is asked by the captain of the group, Captain Andrew Henry, to do the scout or the round to go hunting for the group's food with Black Harris.

“I want you and Black Harris to scout tomorrow,” said Captain Henry. Glass looked up, disappointed that he could not respond to the beckoning call of sleep.”(Punke 16)

When Glass scouts in the next morning, he walks around alone at the camp site and he finds plum trees that have been cut down and used by another group before.

“Glass noticed plum trees scattered among the willows, a lucky break. They could grind pemmican from the combined fruit and meat.”(Punke 23)

Glass finds the scattered trees to help the group to grind for their food. He does not clean the mess and makes the environment to be a better place. He also uses the trees for his group. Glass’ deed also represents the idea that human will do everything to get the profit from the nature.

Human also think that nature can provide what they need in their lives. In the book, it is explained that all of the frontiers from the group who come into the forest do not carry food with them.

“In the hierarchy of challenges the trappers faced each day, obtaining food was the most immediate. Like other challenges, it involved a complicated balancing of benefits and risks. They carried virtually no food with them, especially since abandoning the flatboats on the Missouri and proceeding on foot up the Grand. A few men still had tea or sugar, but most were down to a bag of salt for preserving meat. Game was plentiful

on this stretch of the Grand, and they could have dined on fresh meat each night. But harvesting game meant shooting, and the sound of a rifle carried for miles, revealing their position to any foe within earshot.”(Punke 24)

The men’s thinking is that nature can fulfill their needs to provide their food. Environment, for them, is like the old conception of nature for man. Nature is gendered female, while women, from the men viewpoint, are the territory for adventure, wildness to be tamed, owned and controlled (Kerridge and Sammels 6). They even use the term ‘game’ for the hunting. The term is clearly intended that hunting for them is a fun adventure and it is not a problem for them to kill the animals in the forest. By not bringing some food with them and hunting the animals and even cutting down the trees in the forest near the Missouri River, it can be seen that they can rely their lives on the nature.

In their trading journey, it is unavoidable that they can face many obstacles. The wilderness becomes their main obstacle to deal with. The form of the wilderness in the book is portrayed into two kinds of wilderness. First is the Indian tribe and the second is the nature itself. They have to avoid those as much as the can. They believe if they can avoid the obstacles, they can get the profit from the nature without being harmed and come back in the town successfully.

“Since leaving the Missouri, the men had held closely to a pattern.

Each day, two scouted ahead of the others. For the time being their path was fixed—they simply followed the Grand. The scouts’ primary



In a letter written by William H. Asley—the businessman who runs the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, where Hugh Glass and his group work in—it is clearly stated that the prior group is killed before and the Arikara steals their horses. The Arikara wants to take the control of the region along the Upper Missouri. The attack of Arikara is an obstacle written in the book that the group must avoid. The Arikara is the wilderness that can turn their profit into death. The wilderness in Arikara means they willingly kill the group of traders and steal the group's things without provocation. This means that the Arikara can prevent Glass' group to go trading and hunting in the forest.

Besides the Arikara, there is the wilderness of the nature itself that can be the obstacle. The wild animals in the forest can also endanger their lives. It is unavoidable that many wild animals live in the forest, especially in the forest alongside Missouri River. Some of the wild animals even attack one of the eleven men in the group, which happens to be Hugh Glass.

“...The bear brought down her paw, and Glass felt the sickening sensation of the animal's six-inch claws dredging deep into the flesh of his upper arm, shoulder, and throat. The blow threw him to his back. The knife dropped, and he pushed furiously against the earth with his feet, futilely seeking the cover of the willows.

The grizzly dropped to all fours and was on him. Glass rolled into a ball, desperate to protect his face and chest. She bit into the back of his neck and lifted him off the ground, shaking him so hard that Glass wondered if his spine might snap. He felt the crunch of her teeth striking

the bone of his shoulder blade. Claws raked repeatedly through the flesh of his back and scalp. He screamed in agony. She dropped him, then sank her teeth deep into his thigh and shook him again, lifting him and throwing him to the ground with such force that he lay stunned—conscious, but unable to resist any further.”(Punke 25-26)

When Glass is asked to scout by the leader of the group, Captain Andrew Henry, he accidentally sees some bear cubs not far from the camp. He does not aware that the sow has been watching him. He is transfixed by the cubs. However it is too late for him to realize that the danger comes his way. The mother bear comes his way and attacks him while she is roaring. The bear attacks him mercilessly. The bear attacks him because the bear sees the man as a threat for them. Wild animals usually attack when they see a stranger and their instinct sees that stranger as a threat.

After being attacked badly by the grizzly bear, Hugh Glass is injured at the point that he cannot do anything. Even breathing is hard for him because his windpipe is ripped by the bear’s claws. He is getting treatment from his fellows. Unfortunately, his fellows later leave him alone because they feel that it is too hard for them to reach Fort Union by carrying a badly injured person who is hard to regain his consciousness with a stretcher. When he cannot do anything but lying in the camp site, he regains his conscious only to watch a snake appeared before him.

“Glass had no idea how long he had been lying there when the snake appeared.”(Punke 72)





materials designed to be used exclusively by humans, to serve the needs of humanity, is in the profoundest sense humanity's source and support: its ingenious, inventive life-giving matrix.”(106-107)

These beliefs and these understandings lead humans to do exploration and exploitation of nature. Being attacked badly by the bear and the snake and being left by his friends alone with only a razor in the state where he needs the others' help, makes Hugh Glass furious and wants to avenge what his fellows have done to him. It makes him do some exploitation of the environment in order to save his life from death.

In the beginning of *The Revenant: A Novel Of Revenge*, readers can see the letter by William H. Ashley that states there are another competitor of their fur trading company. Ashley writes that the Rocky Mountain Fur Company has to arrive to Fort Brazeau quicker than the others because they cannot lose their buyers to the others. This clearly fuels the group led by Captain Andrew Henry to hunt and arrive quickly at the Fort Brazeau.

In the afternoon before Hugh Glass is attacked by the grizzly bear, he is ordered to do the scouting together with a man named Black Harris by Captain Henry. He asks Glass and Harris to go for hunting for their supply of meat.

“After shooting a deer or buffalo calf, the scouts prepared the camp for the evening. They bled the game, gathered wood, and set two or three small fires in narrow, rectangular pits.”(Punke 24)

Glass and Harris already do their task in hunting for meat using Glass's rifle. This clearly represents the exploitation of the nature by hunting and shooting the buffalo. They kill the animals in the wood only to get profit for them. One of the men is even wearing a coat from wolves' skin which is also a kind of exploitation to the nature especially animals.

“The man in the wolf skin looked up briefly, then disappeared into the woods.”(Punke 70)

After hunting, Glass and Harris continue to do the round. Glass is just walking not far from the camp and Black Harris is nowhere to see. He sees some bear cubs. When he realizes the presence of the mother bear who thinks he will catch her cubs, the mother bear is already approaching him furiously. He uses the Anstadt, his great rifle, to attack the bear.

“Glass pulled the hammer to full-cock and raised the Anstadt, staring through the pronghorn sight in stunned horror that the animal could be, at the same time, enormous and lithe.” (Punke 26)

“She towered three feet over Glass as she pivoted for the raking swipe of her lethal claws. Point-blank, he aimed at the great bear's heart and pulled the trigger.”(Punke 26)

He attacks the bear because his life is in danger. The writer of the novel even writes the detail of the attack. The grizzly bear will not attack Glass if he does not stand closer to her baby bears while carrying a rifle. She senses a danger from Hugh Glass and attacks him. Although after being shot straight in the heart

by Glass' rifle, the bear is not dead. Glass is badly attacked by the grizzly bear until he faints and finally his fellows come and rescue him after shooting the bear dead. He is being carried by his group for three days using stretcher until Captain Henry decides to leave him in the hands of Fitzgerald and Bridger.

The exploitation continuously happens in the book. After being left by Fitzgerald and Bridger, Glass does everything to save his own life. Even in his state where he cannot walk, only crawl on the ground, he keeps hunting to kill his hunger. It may be not as big as the fur hunting that he does with his group, but still what he does is exploit the nature for his own safety.

“Glass crawled cautiously toward the snake, the imagery of his horrific dream still vivid. He moved to within six feet, stopping to pick up a walnut-size rock. With his left hand, he rolled the rock, which skipped toward the snake, bumping its body. The snake didn't move. Glass picked up a fist-size rock and crawled within reach. Too late, the snake made a sluggish move toward cover. Glass smashed the rock on its head, beating the serpent repeatedly until he was certain it was dead.” (Punke 94)

Several days of crawling with his poor condition, he finally feels hunger. He is left with only a razor by Bridger. He does not have any other weapon with him because Fitzgerald has taken all of his belongings including his rifle, the Anstadt. In his state now, Glass still manages to hunt animals for his food. It pictures in the book when he sees a snake not far from him. He struggles to attack the snake using a rock to hit the snake's head until the snake dies. Hugh glass

does not care at all about him killing the animals. As long as he can live well by hunting them, he does not care at all about the animals' life.

“He sliced down the belly beginning at the neck. The razor dulled quickly, reducing its effectiveness with each inch. He managed to cut the length of the snake, nearly five feet to the vent. With the snake laid open he pulled out the entrails, throwing them aside. Beginning again at the neck, he used the razor to peel the scaly skin away from the muscle. The meat now glistened before him, irresistible in the face of his hunger.”(Punke 95)

He without hesitation skins the snake cruelly using the razor given by Bridger. He even throws away the snake's skin without any thinking that he has already destroying the environment around him. He eats that raw meat of snake.

“Next Glass searched for the three sticks he needed to support the deadfalls. The downed cottonwood provided an array of choices. He selected three branches about an inch in diameter and broke them off at a span about the length of his arm.”(Punke 105)

“For the trigger sticks, Glass selected three slender willows, cut to a length of about sixteen inches.”(Punke 105)

However, the exploitation does not end there. Hugh Glass cuts the plants he meets to create the deadfalls for trapping a small animal in the ground to eat. He even cuts a willow tree to support his plan in making the trappers. It may be

not causing a fatal damage into the forest, but still it clearly exploits the nature if he does this hunting continuously.

“He thrust the torch toward the wolf with one ear. Flames singed the animal’s face and it jumped backward with a yelp.” (Punke121)

Several days after eating the snake, he still does not make a far move by crawling. Going on crawl only prolong his destination to the Fort Union. He feels hungry again. And then he sees a group of wolves and a buffalo who was being captured by the wolves. Glass makes a torch from a wood stick and fire. He then thrusts the torch toward the wolf but it does not make the wolf and its group retreat. He attacks the wolf once again with the help from the rain and the lightning; he succeeds in make the wolves which already eat the carcass of the buffalo run and takes over the captive buffalo.

Eating a small bit of carcass can fuel him to continue his journey again until he meets two Indians who happen to be the member of Indians and are working with Mountain Fur Company. They help Glass and bring him to their settlement, the Sioux Camp. In there, Glass gets the treatment for his injuries and gets a new riffle. They heal Glass and give him a new riffle and they make Glass feels more spirited to take his revenge on his fellows who leave him, especially Fitzgerald who steals his Andstadt.

On his journey after getting medication, he meets the wild Arikara. Without hesitation he attacks and kills the Arikara by shooting the horse.

“Glass cocked his rifle and aimed. At first he tried to line his sights on one of the riders, but both Arikara hunched low behind their ponies’

heads. He moved his aim to one of the horses, picking the hollow spot just below the neck.

“He squeezed the trigger and the rifle spit forth his shot. The horse screamed and its legs seemed to fold in front of it. Dust flew as it ploughed to an abrupt stop, its rider flying over the dead animal’s head.”(Punke 202)

Shooting the horse means he does not change his behavior in hunting. Although he shoots the horse because his life is in danger, but still it can be called as exploitation of the environment.

After parting way with another Indian tribe who works with his company and also the enemy of Arikara, he continues his journey to the Fort Union by walking along the river. He then feels cold and he builds a fire. Hunger once again consumes him and makes him search something that is edible enough for him. Now, with rifle in his hands, it eases him in hunting. He sees a rabbit and he shoots it for his night supper.

“Hugh Glass sat cross-legged beside a small fire, the flames tickling at the lean carcass of a rabbit suspended on a willow spit.

As he waited for the rabbit to roast...”(Punke 215)

Several days later, he unites once again with his fellows that led by Captain Henry. He beats Jim Bridger, who has left him before but he does not meet John Fitzgerald. Captain Henry offers him some helps to pay for the guilt of leaving him and believing Fitzgerald that he is dead. Captain Henry asks two of his men, Red and Chapman, to accompany Glass on his journey to avenge







territory for adventure, wildness to be tamed, owned and controlled (Kerridge and Sammels 6). That is why the men in *The Revenant: A Novel Of Revenge* treat the nature the way they want to get the profit from the nature around them. There are some effects from the way human treat the nature, whether the effects are harmful for the nature or harmful for the human being itself.

### 3.2.1 The Effects on the Nature

From the relationship between the main character, Hugh Glass, and the environment explained above, there are some effects from what Glass has done to the environment, whether the effects have a major or a minor impact on the environmental change.

A group of eleven men led by Captain Henry is walking in the forest alongside the Missouri River for fur trading to the Fort Union which is miles away from their place. On their journey in the forest, they hunt and cut some trees to support their lives. From the way they think that nature can provide what they need, they do not need to worry about their foods.

To survive in the middle of the forest, the men build a camp and do the scout hunting for their foods. One day, the captain of the group, Captain Andrew Henry asks Hugh Glass and Black Harris to hunt.

“After shooting a deer or buffalo calf, the scouts prepared the camp for the evening. They bled the game, gathered wood, and set two or three small fires in narrow, rectangular pits.”(Punke 24)

“Glass noticed plum trees scattered among the willows, a lucky break. They could grind pemmican from the combined fruit and meat.”(Punke 23)

Glass and Harris already do their task in hunting for meat using Glass’s rifle, the Andstadt. This clearly represents the damage of the nature by hunting and shooting the buffalo. They also cut some trees to get the wood for making a fire. It can change the balance of the nature by hunting and killing the animals and cutting trees in the wood only to get profit for human.

“HE SMELLED THE BUFFALO CARCASS before he saw it. He heard it too. Or at least he heard the clouds of flies that swirled around the heaping mass of hide and bone. Sinews held the skeleton mostly intact, although scavengers had picked it clean of any meat. The massive, bushy head and swooping black horns lent the animal its only measure of dignity, though this too had been undermined by the birds that had picked away the eyes.”(Punke 101)

Several days later, after Glass hunts the buffalo, he and his group leave the carcass recklessly. They hunt the buffalo and take the meat and all of the important parts of the buffalo with them to eat. They leave the carcass, which is only bones and its head left, haphazardly without having any idea of what they have done to the environment. The forest that is used to be clean will be dirty. The carcass stains the environment and it also changes the environment’s state if the hunting is done continuously.

The day after Hugh Glass and his group enjoys the game they have harvested, a grizzly bear attacks Hugh Glass. The mother bear's attack is enough to make Glass comatose and injured badly. One day, his fellows leave him alone and take all of his belongings including his rifle named Anstadt and his knife. He has to survive no matter how is. So, he decides to kill animals and cut trees around him with only a razor that is left by his fellows for him.

“Next Glass searched for the three sticks he needed to support the deadfalls. The downed cottonwood provided an array of choices. He selected three branches about an inch in diameter and broke them off at a span about the length of his arm.”(Punke 105)

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“He managed to cut the length of the snake, nearly five feet to the vent. With the snake laid open he pulled out the entrails, throwing them aside. Beginning again at the neck, he used the razor to peel the scaly skin away from the muscle.”(Punke 95)

By killing some animals and cutting the trees, Hugh Glass manages to stay alive. In his mind, it is okay to do the deeds because he thinks that nature can provide what he needs. Killing one or two animals may be not a major exploitation, but it still can change the balance of the nature.

Glass has to survive and stay alive, because he has to take revenge on Fitzgerald and Bridger for leaving him alone and stealing his Anstadt which is very valuable for him. He has lived in the frontier with the Anstadt. He can shoot

and hunt very well with his Anstadt. So, he will do everything to relieve his hunger and stay alive in order to take his Anstadt back although it means that he has to kill animals and cut down some trees.

Weeks after he regains his health back after getting treatment from the Indians who is his colleague in trading with Rocky Mountain Fur Company, Glass walks to Fort Atkinson. He also gets a new rifle named Kentucky rifle. In the middle of the storm, he finds his fellows who have abandoned him before. He is given four horses and two companies by Captain Henry. He also gets some knives. He continues his journey to Fort Atkinson and that is when he sees a group of buffalo which is stuck because of the storm. Glass and his two friends shoot eleven buffalo for their food. This clearly makes a major impact to the environment.

“Five minutes later eleven bulls lay dead in the little vale. It was more than they needed, but Red and Chapman were caught in a frenzy once the shooting started. Glass pushed his ramrod hard to reload. The flurry of shooting had fouled his barrel. Only when the charge was seated and the pan primed did he approach the closest bull. “Chapman, get up on that ridgeline and take a look around. That’s a lot of noise we just made.

Red, start putting that new knife to use.”(Punke 260)

They even make a boat from the buffalos’ skin. Killing one for their food may cause a minor impact to the environment, but killing eleven might be not. It causes a major impact to the animals’ lives. They also throw the unused cow’s head just like they left the buffalo’s head before in the Grand forest.



folding into massive shoulders, and above all the silvery hump that identified her as a grizzly.”(Punke 25)

In the middle of his scout hunting, Hugh Glass sees cubs play around and he comes closer to them without knowing that their mother bear sees him not far from them. She sees him as a threat because he is holding his rifle and coming closer to her cubs. She runs towards Hugh Glass and attacks him brutally. The attack shows the mother bear’s fear of human and she tries to defend her cubs from the hunter. It is the form of her alertness towards something that she sees as a threat. For Hugh Glass, it is the impact of him who brings the rifle and hunts animals. The way he treats the nature can be reflected from the way the nature acts towards him.

“Glass slipped in and out of consciousness, though one state differed little from the other. He could occasionally take water, but the throat wounds made it impossible to swallow solid food. Twice the litter spilled, dumping Glass on the ground. The second spill broke two of the stitches in his throat.”(41)

“...His wounded throat rendered him mute, his only sound the pathetic wheeze of his breathing.”(41)

He has to accept the consequence and bear the pain from the attack because of his deeds towards the nature. His injuries are bad enough and it makes him disable to do anything by himself, even it is only breathing. His throat’s wounds do not allow him to swallow water. His fellows abandon him in this state and take all of his belongings according his rifle and those make him suffer more. The attack





