

TRADITION AND STRUCTURE
IN
TROUT FISHING IN AMERICA

Patricia Brennan Alpert

A THESIS
in
The Department
of
English Literature

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts at
Sir George Williams University
Montréal, Canada

May, 1972

ABSTRACT

Tradition and Structure in Trout Fishing in America
by Patricia Brennan Alpert.

Richard Brautigan's Trout Fishing in America disregards conventions of the novel, is disjointed in form and thoroughly ambiguous. Much of its complexity is resolved by studying it in relation to genre and analyzing its internal structures. Trout Fishing draws on fishing literature for its conventional contemplative narrator. Its form exaggerates the fishing books' tendency to follow whim rather than logic in structure and its pastoral themes come from angling tradition. Trout Fishing's whimsical order, its concentration on conflicting American myths and public symbols and its inclusiveness place it in the anatomy genre. Brautigan's concept of an aesthetic energy that functions in a fourth dimension links his images and upsets ordinary concepts of reality. Trout Fishing's quest theme, westward movement, movement between city and country and various linking or punctuating devices replace plot. Brautigan's vision of civilization's drive for stasis in conflict with nature's flux is imitated and expressed by his fluid images fixed in shifting points of view.

Dedicated to the memory of
A. Kenneth Keith III,
who, angling in the swamp
in back of his house,
hooked a fish too big
for his vaudevillean tackle;
when the line broke,
he jumped into the water
and caught the fish in his hands.

PREFACE

When I first started work on Trout Fishing in America, I thought it was the perfect Tralfamadorian novel, as Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. describes it in Slaughterhouse-Five.

. . . each clump of symbols is a brief, urgent message --describing a situation, a scene. We Tralfamadorians read them all at once, not one after the other. There isn't any particular relationship between all the messages, except that the author has chosen them carefully; so that, when seen all at once, they produce an image of life that is beautiful and surprising and deep. There is no beginning, no middle, no end, no suspense, no moral, no causes, no effects. What we love in our books are the depths of many marvelous moments seen all at one time.¹

I still think this a fitting description of Trout Fishing in America. But it is an evasion of critical responsibility to place Trout Fishing in the Tralfamadorian tradition and let it go at that.

In reading any work of literature the critic must assume that he is dealing with a perfect unity and that the work he is reading, no matter how original, has a certain place in the order of literature. If he does not make these two initial assumptions in his approach to a book, the only criteria for evaluation are extra-literary: personal taste, the charisma of the author, or current vogues in politics, philosophy or sociology. Trout Fishing in America in particular, invites non-literary critiques as

it seems a product of the hippie fad and openly resists analysis. Its first sentence is a lie and its last two chapters proclaim that it is the expression of a capricious and enigmatic "human need" rather than a work of literary craft. It requires a good deal of confidence or foolishness to take seriously a work that is so full of signs that say, "Hands off; this is a put-on." But the Master thesis, I think, is a supremely appropriate opportunity to accept a challenge of this sort. While no established reputations will stand or fall on the basis of my work here, I have done a necessary bit of pioneering and have tested to my own satisfaction the basic tenets of criticism, that literature forms "a coherent order of words", not a "wild heap of wit"², and that individual works of literature can be approached most fruitfully by assuming that they form a unity in themselves.

In the first chapter of this thesis I shall discuss the difficulties Trout Fishing in America presents to the reader and critic. In the second and third sections I shall deal with the work in terms of its generic context, its adaptation of structure and conventions from angling literature and its relation to the anatomy genre. The fourth chapter focuses on Brautigan's peculiar vision of temporal and spatial reality. And the last chapter is an analysis of the structural devices that unify Trout Fishing in America's vision of reality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am pleased to acknowledge my intrepid advisor, Dr. Lewis Poteet, for undertaking to supervise this work, for his criticisms, corrections and his encouragement.

This thesis grew out of a short paper written for Professor H. Fink's Utopian Satire course, a stimulating introduction to the complexities of generic criticism. I am grateful to Professor Fink and to my other professors, colleagues and students for making my leisurely stay in academia both instructive and delightful.

Many thanks to Marcy Fewkes and Lee Melching for their sensitive and appreciative listening, to Shabtai Bittman, Lawrence Zimmering, Eli Bonder and Joseph Sohmer for their sometimes distracting enthusiasm, to my father for introducing me to fishing in America and to Amy Robinson for introducing me to Trout Fishing in America.

My husband, Marty, typed my thesis, liberated me from housework and the duties of motherhood, and humored, nagged and supported me during the research and writing of this paper. For him and my daughter, Kate, whose contribution is hard to pin-point, but there nonetheless, I reserve my greatest appreciation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
I. <u>TROUT FISHING IN AMERICA'S CHALLENGE TO</u> <u>CRITICISM</u>	1
II. <u>TROUT FISHING IN AMERICA</u> IN RELATION TO ANGLING LITERATURE	16
III. <u>TROUT FISHING IN AMERICA</u> AS AN ANATOMY	39
IV. TEMPORAL AND SPATIAL REALITY IN <u>TROUT</u> <u>FISHING IN AMERICA</u>	49
V. THE UNIFYING STRUCTURES OF <u>TROUT FISH-</u> <u>ING IN AMERICA</u>	61
VI. FOOTNOTES	76
VII. LIST OF WORKS CITED	80

I

TROUT FISHING IN AMERICA'S

CHALLENGE TO CRITICISM

Trout Fishing in America is, in technique, the most original and important of Brautigan's four novels. In it, Brautigan seemingly ignores or deliberately distorts all types of connection: logic, chronology, cause and effect links, and symbolic structuring. The extreme lack of connection between chapters, the mixture of reality and fantasy, the ambiguity and patent falsehoods in the novel can annoy the new reader, even one who delights in Trout Fishing in America. Those who have little background in criticism feel there is a message that they aren't getting, while more experienced readers work to break what seems to be a code. But they are frustrated by the style of the novel. The central image, trout fishing in America, itself or himself, changes value from chapter to short chapter. Though the constant repetition of the words "trout fishing in America" gives a feeling of unity, at the same time it prevents the reader from forming a unified point of view towards the image. Both good and bad men are called Trout Fishing in America; there is the gentle traveler in American space and time and the screaming, legless wino; there are Trout Fishing in America witnesses for peace and Trout

Fishing in America terrorists.

It is not difficult to see that trout fishing in America is often equivalent to the American dream of freedom, strength, progress and moral backbone; that is, the freedom of the sign "GONE FISHING", the strength of steel made from trout, the progress made visible in Andrew Carnegie's Pittsburgh and the "moral" toughness of "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." Negatively, "trout fishing in America" indicates the perversion of America's dream. The dream becomes a baited hook, the cobra lily, luring the unaware and weak with sweetness. Trout fishing in America disguises the Mayor of the Twentieth Century, who comes to power not by hard work and ingenuity, but by murder in the night. Beyond this polarized configuration, the image, and hence, the meaning of the novel is difficult to penetrate. Since Trout Fishing in America has nothing like a plot and very little in the way of a consistent viewpoint, one thing doesn't happen because of the previous thing; there is no causal sequence. The chapters tell of events or spin fantasies that are complete in themselves as well as distinct parts of the whole narrative. In this sense the book is global in its structure: each unit of the whole is complete and finished, having one effect read for itself and other effects depending on juxtaposition with other chapters. To illustrate this in the book let us take a close look at the initial four chap-

ters; first, "The Cover for Trout Fishing in America".*

The cover for Trout Fishing in America is a photograph taken late in the afternoon, a photograph of the Benjamin Franklin statue in San Francisco's Washington Square.

Born 1706—Died 1790, Benjamin Franklin stands on a pedestal that looks like a house containing stone furniture. He holds some papers in one hand and his hat in the other.

Then the statue speaks, saying in marble:

PRESENTED BY

H.D. COGSWELL

TO OUR

BOYS AND GIRLS

WHO WILL SOON

TAKE OUR PLACES

AND PASS ON.

Around the base of the statue are four words facing the directions of this world, to the east WELCOME, to the west WELCOME, to the north WELCOME, to the south WELCOME. Just behind the statue are three poplar trees, almost leafless except for the top branches. The statue stands in front of the middle tree. All around the grass is wet from the rains of early February.

In the background is a tall cypress tree, almost dark like a room. Adlai Stevenson spoke under the tree in 1956, before a crowd of 40,000 people.

There is a tall church across the street from the statue with crosses, steeples, bells and a vast door that looks like a huge mousehole, perhaps from a Tom and Jerry cartoon, and written above the door is "Per L'Universo."¹

Up to this point "The Cover for Trout Fishing in America"

* In the discussion that follows my purpose is to imitate the reader's direct experience of the first four chapters, hence the shift in language to a more appropriate, if lower, level of diction.

brings up images of the America school children learn to love: Washington and Franklin, the promise of the future generations "who will soon take our places and pass on", refuge of freedom for the wretched of the earth, continuing reform in Adlai Stevenson's style. But a little more than half-way through the chapter Brautigan lays ironic color on that vision.

Around five o'clock in the afternoon of my cover for Trout Fishing in America, people gather in the park across the street from the church and they are hungry.

It's sandwich time for the poor.

But they cannot cross the street until the signal is given. Then they all run across the street to the church and get their sandwiches that are wrapped in newspaper. They go back to the park and unwrap the newspaper and see what their sandwiches are all about.

A friend of mine unwrapped his sandwich one afternoon and looked inside to find just a leaf of spinach. That was all.

Was it Kafka who learned about America by reading the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin . . .

Kafka who said, "I like the Americans because they are healthy and optimistic."

As the Benjamin Franklin statue welcomes all the world to his little stone house, so the church, at the given signal, welcomes the universe to its pitifully inadequate feast of spinach sandwiches. The people that come to the mousehole door, neither wealthy, nor, we presume, wise, would probably be healthy and optimistic only compared to Kafka and his characters. By itself the first chapter of Trout Fishing is a fine piece of ironic writing. One hardly notices the strange figures of speech as "Around five o'clock in the afternoon of my cover" and "Then the statue speaks, saying in marble". But, when you put the "Cover"

chapter together with the actual cover of the novel a new set of tensions comes in, because the cover is not "a photograph of the Benjamin Franklin statue"; it is a picture of two hippies. There is a man with a walrus mustache, long hair under a high-crowned hat. He wears an old man's vest over a psychedelic print shirt, jeans, a pea coat held open, beads, buttons and granny glasses. He is standing on the grass of a park. Seated next to him on a stool is a zany-looking woman with a wide, lace head-band and feather, and tiny Ben Franklin spectacles. She has buck teeth. She wears a buttoned-up cape over a long skirt and high laced-up boots. She looks like she may be smirking at us. In the blurry background there is a statue of Franklin, a Lombardy Poplar, leafless, and a building or two. Leafy poplars flank the photo's background. It is a striking cover with no writing on it. But who would say that it is "a photograph of the Benjamin Franklin statue in San Francisco's Washington Square"?

The narrator's description of the cover photo denies what we see, focusing on the background instead of the foreground. It ignores the main content of the very interesting picture and calls up more questions than it answers about the cover. The title of the first chapter is the bait, the diversion. It sets up expectations in the reader, who opens the book eagerly to find out more about the two hippies on the cover. The title positions the reader, and the contents are the exploding cigar, the ink-squirting flower

or kick in the pants he gets for his pains. But this Three Stooges joke has other results than laughs; it breeds deep ambiguity. Which is the real cover for the novel? What is the role of the narrator? This vaudevillian tactic breaks rigid rational expectations and the desire for strict causal sequence that, perhaps, blinds us to events and things that cannot be explained causally.

The second chapter, "Knock on Wood (Part One)" seems to get back to the track set by the title.

As a child when did I first hear about trout fishing in America? From whom? I guess it was a stepfather of mine.

Summer of 1942.

The old drunk told me about trout fishing. When he could talk, he had a way of describing trout as if they were a precious and intelligent metal.

Silver is not a good adjective to describe what I felt when he told me about trout fishing.

I'd like to get it right.

This is reassuring; this is a novel about trout fishing; very nice. The chapter goes on to talk about American history, Pittsburgh, Andrew Carnegie, the American colonists fishing in the dawn.

Maybe trout steel. Steel made from trout. The clear snow-filled river acting as foundry and heat.

Imagine Pittsburgh.

A steel that comes from trout, used to make buildings, trains and tunnels.

The Andrew Carnegie of Trout!

The Reply of Trout Fishing in America:

I remember with particular amusement, people with three-cornered hats fishing in the dawn.

Who is this Trout Fishing in America? What is he replying to? How can he remember people in three-cornered hats? In a novel called Trout Fishing in America, apparently

about a kid going trout fishing (in America), there is also a character named Trout Fishing in America, who apparently has a two hundred year old memory. Is this science fiction?

"Knock on Wood (Part Two)" relates the narrator's first experience of trout fishing. Like the reader he is deceived by his expectations. The trout stream he imagines on top of the hill is a flight of stairs. He consumes his own bait. Trout Fishing in America, like a Talmudic commentator with special powers, regrets that he couldn't make the flight of stairs conform to the boy's desires and relates a similar experience which is far more ambiguous than the narrator's.


The same thing once happened to me. I remember mistaking an old woman for a trout stream in Vermont, and I had to beg her pardon.

"Excuse me," I said. "I thought you were a trout stream."

"I'm not," she said.

We can picture mistaking a distant flight of stairs for a waterfall, but an old woman in Vermont? However, with this bit of sequential narrative we have almost forgiven Brautigan for the first chapter. "Red Lip", though, jolts us out of complacency. It starts with: "Seventeen years later I sat down on a rock." What happened to our hero in those seventeen years? What rock? Where? Bewilderment piles on bewilderment; the outhouse that talks dirty, the salmon fly game and the red lip; is it the rusty roof clanking in the hot wind, or is it the narrator's lip, burnt by the fifty-cent piece sun? It is all fun, but it leaves us up in the air. There is no security about where Brautigan is taking

us next.

These deliberate dislocations, both within chapters and between chapters, are basic to the technique and structure of the whole book. The absolute extreme of this technique is the juxtaposition of the two chapters "Prologue to Grider Creek" and "Grider Creek". If there is any direct link between these two chapters it is a private back road to Brautigan's imagination. For the reader's purposes the connection between the pieces is in the titles alone. "The Prologue to Grider Creek" joins the images of pretty, wholesome girls to "child-eyed rats" who eat their dead companions for popcorn and recall Deanna Durbin as they are massacred in the "Great Theater in Mooresville, Indiana: the John Dillinger capital of America." In the next chapter, Grider Creek, clear-running and out of reach, is represented by a "nice" map, "Drawn with a heavy dull pencil on a piece of paper bag. With a little square  for a sawmill." Because of its incongruous pairing with "The Prologue to Grider Creek", the chapter is thrown beyond the reach of logical interpretation and its little non-event takes on the aura, satisfying, yet stubbornly senseless, of a Zen Koan.

We have come to be at ease with flashbacks, dream episodes, digressions and zig-zag story lines as far out as Tristram Shandy's. In all these types of literary structure there is some unifying factor: plot, stream of consciousness, the logic of images as in Catch-22, that allows

the reader to identify with the narrative viewpoint or to follow the development of the theme. With Brautigan there is, apparently, only the image/activity/person of trout fishing in America to give the semblance of thematic unity to the narrative. This supposed novel doesn't fit into the category of episodic or digressive fiction; there is no sequential order for episodes and no line to digress from. Juxtaposition takes the place of linear development, causality or chronological order. Each piece that is added changes the nuance of meaning for every other piece. Taking out or adding chapters subtly changes the feel of the vision, as the Brautigan fan may have discovered on reading the "Lost Chapters of Trout Fishing in America", published years after the book was written.

Readers most often find the discontinuity of Trout Fishing disturbing. One reviewer implied that Trout Fishing was nothing more or less than an anthology of short fictions exactly like Revenge of the Lawn.² A more critically responsible view is John Clayton's:

It isn't true that parts of Trout Fishing in America could be shuffled at random--some, for instance, are necessary preconditions for others to make sense, but we are intended to feel that there is absolutely no ordering.³

If random illogicality is part of Brautigan's technique, indeed, part of the "message" of Trout Fishing, how do readers react to it? The spectrum of response could almost serve as a measure of the politics of readers. In two freshman classes that I taught at Sir George Williams Uni-

versity, shortly after the War Measures Act (Québec, 1970), we worked with Trout Fishing. The most politically conservative students felt they were being put on, that Brautigan was making jokes at their expense, that his book was a hippie manifesto and all its irony directed at the straight, middle class. They found the novel pointless and episodes with unappetizing sexual content like "Worsewick" and "Sea, Sea Rider" both senseless and revolting.

One engineering student found my choice of novels "appalling". On the other side, the aspiring radicals and those who took an anti-establishment stance in general were delighted with what Trout Fishing "did to their heads", even if they were as far from making literary or practical sense out of the novel as the hostile group. The a-political center was a bemused group, who enjoyed the jokes and shrugged their shoulders over the difficulties of the book. No one was hip enough or thoughtful enough to come up with a system, like Clayton's, which could include Brautigan's random narrative without radical modifications. For Clayton, Brautigan's rambling, disconnected style is a paradigm for the revolution that has already happened in the hip sub-culture.

Part of the magic is in the discontinuity itself. If Trout Fishing in America is in part a life-style of freedom and rambling, these qualities are present not only in the metaphorical transformations and illogical connections but in the apparent looseness, casualness, easy rambling of the narrator's talk.⁴

The book runs profoundly counter to the bourgeois instincts of the novel. It runs counter to the bourgeois world view of practicality, functionality,

rationality. But it isn't a rebellious, individualistic book. . . It accepts everything, even the world that is destroying the pastoral possibilities it asserts. And even though the chapters are often solitary adventures, it is still the book of a subculture, of a WE who are so different from bourgeois expectations as not to need explanations about our way of life.⁵

I quote Clayton at length because he is the first writer on Brautigan to make positive sense of the most disturbing elements in Trout Fishing's style. This style depends for its success on the subversions of the reader's expectations for continuous development of plot, theme and character as in the traditional novel; or if not a strictly continuous development, his expectations of a narrative that can be re-formed in the mind into a continuous and causally related sequence. The reader who does not immediately identify himself as a member of a subculture for and to whom Brautigan is speaking, finds that Trout Fishing reverses and evades his expectations of what a novel or any narrative should be. In spite of the title page, it is not really a novel, if the novel is an imitation of what is commonly conceived of as reality. Though the creature called Trout Fishing in America is without a doubt related to the helpful old man of Faërie, it is not a fairy tale; it has a natural setting, recognizable "real" characters and lacks the conventional fairy-tale plot. It does not give an easy entrance into its fantasy world like Alice's rabbit-hole or looking-glass. More, the narrative does not have the internal consistency that induces the reader to suspend disbelief. Rational judgement co-exists with, and

is constantly upset by, irrational events and illogical associations in the narrative. It is necessary that disbelief not be suspended for Brautigan's style to function. The reader must assume that continuity is a basic constituent of reality to be jolted out of that assumption by Trout Fishing. And part of the exhilarating feeling of freedom that reading Trout Fishing gives comes from Brautigan's parodies, subversions and denials of continuity.

Hulme in his Speculations of 1924 speaks for most non-hip readers of Brautigan when he says:

What I see and hear is simply a selection made by my senses to serve as a light for my conduct. My senses and my consciousness give me no more than a practical simplification of reality. In the usual perception I have of reality all the differences useless to man have been suppressed. My perception runs in certain moulds. Things have been classified with a view to the use I can make of them. It is this classification I perceive rather than the real shape of things. I hardly see an object, but merely notice what class it belongs too--what ticket I ought to apply to it.⁶

What Brautigan's prose does is to trick the mind out of its customary train of associations--its perception of continuous, homogenous time and space, and classifiable actions and objects. Derailing it often enough makes the reader aware of his perceptual bias, aware of the rigid selections and repression of experience his mind automatically takes care of for practical purposes. In Clayton's words again:

Brautigan's style says I can discard categorized living, since his perceptions are free to bounce in and out of categories at will. It says I can discard consciousness of causality and rational connections. . . The style says I can ignore moral dicta, says this by

its acceptance of people and events without even asking whether they should be accepted. Things simply are.⁷

Brautigan's style then, is both medium and message in Trout Fishing in America. It offers escape to the ultimate, inviolable Utopia through creative perception. Instead of seeing the world as a source of useful things, and a cluster of events, people and things to control, cultivate or eliminate, Brautigan's style demonstrates that the temporal world is the name of a set of given data, to play with in the mind, to connect, separate and re-form into infinite and pleasing combinations. To see things and accept them, as Brautigan does, is a way out of despair. If one can participate in the visions of the winos of "Walden Pond for Winos" by building one's own fantasy at the same time, it is not necessary to pity the winos, change the system that produces them, find a cure for alcoholism or loan them quarters. Exaggerating absurdity to the point that it becomes beautiful is a way to avoid struggle, rage, guilt and hopelessness.

"The Cleveland Wrecking Yard" chapter is the best illustration of this technique of changing confrontation with the outrageous into active perception of the delightful absurd. The trout stream at the Cleveland Wrecking Yard has been transported in pieces from Colorado and laid up in a warehouse to be sold by the foot. The hero's attitude is objective and interested as he views the come-down of the beautiful stream to the status of a factory product. He contemplates buying a section of stream even

though it's obvious that one cannot buy a piece of running water when it has no place to come from and no place to run to. In the same way America cuts up its soul into salable pieces and advertises its dream in hopes of profit, choosing to ignore that the soul and the dream, like the creek, are whole things with an indestructible past and an undetachable future to them. None of these things can be owned or sold. On one hand, the idea of cutting up something whose beauty and essence is in its wholeness is evil. And it is easy to identify with the stream when the reader too has been split into marketable fragments. Yet, wouldn't it be lovely to have a section of trout stream in the living room, with a bird or two and no black flies?

Clearly, Trout Fishing is rich ground for moral, social and political criticism. Its underlying social assumptions mark a definite break with recent American writings. Its persona is good-natured and gentle, yet not a victim. The women in the book are neither bitchy, nor vapid, nor ethereal; they have children (not to mention menstrual cramps and good jobs); they work, drink, make love and go fishing. The persona, his woman and child stay together for the whole book as a family. The characters that we meet in Trout Fishing may be poor, alcoholic, crazy or eccentric but they are not portrayed as victims of a ruthless society, nor are they pitied. Their absurdity lies not in the harshness of restrictions applied from outside but in the fact that their worlds are narrowed and circumscribed

by their own visions. In Trout Fishing man makes himself not through his existential actions but through his visions. The narrator assumes every person's essential freedom of visions. That is the base of Brautigan's satire.

II

TROUT FISHING IN AMERICA IN RELATION TO ANGLING LITERATURE

Without a grasp of large structural patterns, it is difficult to determine with sureness the work's ultimate vision of reality, and the place of image, theme, and generic structure within that vision. I have examined Brautigan's small-scale style in the first pages of this thesis because it is, as an implicit model for a new lifestyle, the most immediately disturbing element in the book. This discussion is also meant to show that Trout Fishing in America is indeed far from mainstream categories of fiction and that it is deliberately random in its style and form; as such, it presents a serious and enjoyable problem to the literary critic. I will now turn to questions of structure.

In spite of Brautigan's apparent rejection of logical, chronological and hierarchical order, what gives the feeling of unity to the book? What kind of literature does it belong to, derive from, or parody? How do images and characters relate to each other in this "novel" without point or plot?

First of all let us examine Trout Fishing's claims to being a novel, for these claims can be dealt with summarily.

Thrall and Hibbard in A Handbook to Literature first give the broadest meaning of "novel" as "any extended fictional prose narrative"; they then restrict its meaning to narratives with a main interest in either character development, or at the other extreme, plot, as in the picaresque novel. That the essence of their view of the novel is continuity, whether in plot, or in development of theme or character, is shown in their comment on Rabelais' Gargantua, "while not at all a novel, nevertheless has a certain sustained narrative interest which warrants its inclusion in this summary."¹ A. A. Mendilow's tentative definition of the novel represents the consensus of thought on the matter:

The novel is a fictitious narrative in prose which seeks to illustrate and illuminate human experience and behavior within the limitations imposed by the medium of language and by the necessities of form, by approximating as closely as possible to what we apprehend as reality.

The test of its immediate success is its power to evoke the feeling of presentness (in a double sense) in and at that reality; this assumes that the reader will cooperate with the author to the extent of accepting the conventions on which the illusory reality is based by yielding to "the willing suspension of disbelief".²

Trout Fishing in America is not continuous; it has no plot; development of character and theme is so concealed that it gives almost no sustained focus to the narrative. It does not approximate "what we apprehend as reality", and while it "evokes a feeling of presentness", it breaks all conventions that induce the suspension of disbelief. As noted above, it depends for its effect on the reader's sustained disbelief. In calling Trout Fishing in America a novel,

Brautigan may have had a dual purpose: first to set up the reader's expectations for a "story" only to upset them, and second, to get his book on the shelves that are read by a literary audience, with fiction rather than fishing books. For, though Trout Fishing in America is literary and fictitious, its closest relatives, The Compleat Angler, I Go A-Fishing, Trout Madness and Just Fishing are on the non-fiction shelves of the library.

Angling literature is a minor species that falls outside the student's notice in the normal course of study. While one is quick to recognize parodies of Hemingway and hints of Huckleberry Finn in Trout Fishing in America, the reader long fails to see that it derives from the literature of fishing. This happens in spite of the title and the fine little fishing bibliography in the "Trout Death by Port Wine" chapter, happens because angling literature is so far out of the mainstream of literary study, and because Brautigan deliberately confuses the reader as to the form of his book. It is called a novel and on the back cover of the first paperback edition is this note: "Incidental intelligence: 'Mr. Brautigan submitted a book to us in 1962 called TROUT FISHING IN AMERICA. I gather from the reports that it was not about trout fishing.'" That is a moot point. It is, to a certain extent, about trout fishing, though it is no more a true fishing book than it is a novel. But when one recognizes that Brautigan's book comes from angling literature, the inconclusive, capricious narrative can be

handled as a lucid and specific form, built on and in certain ways departing from, traditional principles.

Angling literature is by no means homogeneous except in the subject matter of fishing. But if we cut out the strictly technical books on entymology, pisciculture, artificial flies, baits, equipment and its use, there is left a respectable body of books with certain loose conventions of attitude, structure and symbol. The structure of angling books is always relaxed and almost invariably a mixture of dialogue, meditative essays, stories and instruction. As to organization, the genre depends on fairly primitive techniques of a spatial, temporal or topical nature, never on plot. Brown Waters (1948) by W.H. Blake, is an amalgam of essays and adventures on Québec fishing waters. Fisherman's Spring (1951) and A River Never Sleeps (1946) by Roderick Haig-Brown are both organized to follow seasonal changes. Just Fishing (1961) by Ray Bergman and Angling Successes (1967) edited by Mortimer Norton, use an encyclopedic approach to shape their material on angling for particular fish from bullheads and calico bass to sunnies, trout and whitefish. Other books like Trout Madness (1960) and I Go A-Fishing (1873) use only the whims and associations of their authors to order the tales, anecdotes and essays. What all these books have in common, besides their rambling, disjunctive structures, is their subject's traditional associations, questions and extensions, which may range far indeed. Prime says in I Go A-Fishing,

". . .there is no subject in the world which does not properly and naturally belong to trout fishing as one of its accompaniments."³ Prime acts on this bit of justification and, save Brautigan himself, strays farther from the trout stream than any other writer on fishing.

All angling writers think it proper to include in their books their favorite topics and theories along with the material directly related to fishing. Traver , a lawyer, uses comic courtroom scenes in his Trout Madness; Bergman is particularly concerned with stream-side etiquette; Walton is known for his preaching, and Charles Cotton for his love of the countryside of his birth. The writers weave these interests into their primary subject or leave them unconnected without apology. Prime in particular, in his obsession with beautiful, young girls who die in romantic situations, goes a long way from topics with direct relation to going a-fishing. A case may be made for him in that he secretly associated dying beauties with Christianity's heaven; since Christ was a fisherman it follows, etc. But one doesn't have to justify the genre's inclusive tendencies and narrative dislocations if one acknowledges, as angling writers do, the symbolic meaning of fishing; that is, angling in the mind for wisdom. The randomness and inclusiveness of fishing books marks them in structure as products of the associative movement of a seeking and contemplative mind. Brautigan's formless form is exceptional in this group only in its use of very short chapters, and

this is an extension of the tradition of fragmented, discontinuous writings, rather than a break with tradition. The deliberate randomness, the dependence on associative links, the lack of plot and character development, which cause confusion if Trout Fishing is dealt with according to conventions of the novel, clearly belong in a book that derives from and often parodies the literature of fishing.

In angling literature, as I have noted above, the fisherman is conventionally a figure whose hobby engenders an analogous mental activity, meditation or fishing in the mind. This is W.C. Prime's meaning when he praises his hobby by stressing its part in the beginnings of Christianity. Christ was a fisherman and his favorite disciples were anglers. It follows, at least to Prime and Walton, that fishing is a habit that predisposes man to Christian virtue; he discovers and refines Christian principles in himself by fishing. Prime's book is a farrago of urbane conversation, highly romantic tales little connected with fishing, and pious reflections, with a few actual fishing trips and a bit of trout lore thrown in. Its main thrust is towards a moralizing praise of progressive Christian civilization and it is this fruit of contemplation plus romantic stories designed to refine the sentiment that Prime is fishing for in his preface:

Will You Go?

Good friend, you have read the title-page hereof, telling you that I propose to go a-fishing, and the table of contents, which has given you some idea as to where I think of going. If you turn over this leaf it

will imply that you accept the invitation to go with me. But be warned in time. The best of anglers does not always find fish; and the most skillful casting of a fly does not always bring up trout. Often chubs and perch and redfins--yea, even pickerel and pumpkin-seeds--rise to the fly, and you may be thereat disgusted. You can not be sure that you will find what you want, or what you will like, if you go beyond this page. If, however, you have the true angler's spirit, and will go a-fishing prepared to have a good day of it, even though the weather turn out vile and the sport wretched, then turn over the leaf and let us be starting.⁴

Trout fishing is not only made analogous to this plumbing of the mind for truths as in Prime, or the search for vision as in the Gospels, but it can be a metaphor for any sort of blind search.

There is a peculiar excitement in fishing, which perhaps arises from somewhat of the same causes which makes the interest in searching for ancient treasures, opening Egyptian tombs, and digging into old ruins. One does not know what is under the surface. There may be something or there may be nothing. He tries, and the rush of something startles every nerve.⁵

In the words of the entry under "Fishing" in Cirlot's

Dictionary of Symbols:

Fishing amounts to extracting the unconscious elements from deep-lying sources--the 'elusive treasure' of legend, or, in other words, wisdom.⁶

The fishermen/authors of the genre are for the most part surprisingly aware of this mystical significance of their avocation. I say surprisingly because one does not expect this recognition of archetypal meaning from a sporting book. In Trout Fishing in America the symbolic meaning of fishing is the implicit first premise for both the method and the theme. The persona fishes in American space and time, plumbs his own psyche and memories, and casts his imagination over American events for the "elusive treasure", his

"vision of America".⁷ But if the form of Trout Fishing grows out of the higher meaning of fishing, it grows as a new branch on the stem of angling literature that has its roots in the actual and symbolic practice of the gentle art.

In the genre, contemplation and contact with nature, concomitants to going fishing, have a direct effect on the personality of the fisherman. The famous Ray Bergman, author of Trout, the vade mecum of fly-fishermen, writes in his conclusions to Just Fishing:

My wife . . . claims that fishermen all have a sweetness in their nature which others lack. Well, how could one ever spend countless hours following the gentle art, listening to the song of nature, without absorbing some of its atmosphere?⁸

Izaak Walton details the beneficent effect of fishing on the fisherman in this passage from The Compleat Angler:

. . . this man was also a most dear lover and frequent practiser of the Art of Angling; of which he would say, 'Twas an employment for his idle time, which was then not idly spent': for Angling was, after tedious study, 'a rest to his mind, a cheerer of his spirits, a diverter of sadness, a calmer of inquiet thoughts, a moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness': and 'that it begat habits of peace and patience in those that professed and practised it.' Indeed my friend, you will find Angling to be like the virtue of humility, which has a calmness of spirit, and a world of other blessings attending upon it.⁹

Conventionally, the angler is peaceable and gentle, though, in American fishing books, there is a tendency to aggressiveness and the vice of drink. Walton is the type of the gentle angler and in this passage from a section of dream-like ichthyology he fixes the tradition's image of the fisherman:

There is also a fish called . . . the Adonis or Darling of the Sea; so called because it is a loving and innocent fish, a fish that hurts nothing that hath life, and is at peace with all the numerous inhabitants of that vast watery element; and truly I think most Anglers are so disposed to most of mankind.¹⁰

Prime speaks of "the gentle and purifying associations of the angler's life"¹¹ and later says, "Trout fishing is employment for all men, of all minds. It tends to dreamy life, and it leads to much thought and reflection."¹²

The fisherman/narrator of Trout Fishing has the conventional blessings of the genre. He is gentle, managing his child with a womanly softness, refusing to kill garter snakes in the garden of the old woman for whom he did "dozens of little tiny things"(82). He is thoroughly compassionate. In fantasy he casts the poor-people's graveyard into the evening star (21). He brings nickels to the Kool-Aid wino, crowns victims of capital punishment in his imagination and participates in the Thoreauesque economic discussions of the Washington Square winos. His association with the poor, outcast and criminal classes does not corrupt him, but gives him a Christlike dimension. In his humility and through his detached contemplation of life, he does not presume to make judgements on people or society. Though Trout Fishing in America is profoundly concerned with morality, its narrator is beyond moral judgement and makes his observations without accusation or justification. This bit of dialogue from "The Surgeon" gives insight into the narrator's humility or, if you like, acceptance of things as

they are:

"I've never turned away a patient in my life, and I've never known another doctor who has. Last year I wrote off six thousand dollars worth of bad debts," he said.

I was going to say that a sick person should never under any conditions be a bad debt, but I decided to forget it. Nothing was going to be proved or changed on the shores of Little Redfish Lake . . . (71).

Besides these conventional modifications of the fisherman's personality, Brautigan brings the skills of the fisherman into his writing. His persona is inobtrusive to the point of invisibility, and where Brautigan as author appears--in the cover photo, in talking about "his cover" and in "Prelude to the Mayonnaise Chapter"--his presence is insubstantial and he is gone before his image registers on consciousness. The fisherman's patient thorough casting, careful observation and experimental variation of tackle and technique are mirrored in Brautigan's style. His persona is a transparent medium of communication, rarely a subject or object that the reader can observe in his turn. He varies subject, setting, tone and at times, persona as if tempting a trout's uncertain fancy. The range of his cast is all of American space and time, which Brautigan facetiously comments on in "Forgiven" from Revenge of the Lawn:

I'm quite aware that Richard Brautigan has written a novel called Trout Fishing in America that deals thoroughly with trout fishing and its kaleidoscope of environments, so I'm a little embarrassed to try something in the same theme . . .¹³

Trout fishing here is meant in its visionary sense, for the book handles trout fishing qua fishing only in the sketchiest manner.

In terms of much of the angling sub-genre, written on or taking its tone and values from the civilized, urbane, middle-class of England, trout fishing in America is trout fishing without class. For example, fishermen traditionally learn their art from a venerable, old gentleman, or an up-country natural philosopher; Ray Bergman learns pike fishing from a man with a decidedly Waltonian accent.¹⁴ In contrast, Brautigan's narrator first hears about trout fishing from " . . . a stepfather of mine . . . The old drunk told me about trout fishing . . . When he could talk"(3). In the genre, companions converse on topics meant to instruct and delight, while fishing or over a dish of trout. In "Trout Death by Port Wine" the persona's companion compares Owl Snuff Creek to Evangeline's vagina, commenting, "Longfellow was the Henry Miller of my childhood"(31). Trout Fishing in America and Maria Callas make exotic walnut catsup which ends up on their hamburgers.

The fishermen of the genre mix urbanity, cultured appreciation of natural beauty, and rural simplicity. American angling writers often drop the urbanity and culture, but they still tend to idealize the countryside and its inhabitants. These "complete anglers" meet fresh-faced country girls, backwoods philosophers, honest farmers and jolly inn- or tavern-keepers in their travels. In the America of Trout Fishing we meet crazed hermits, winos, cripples, ex-whores and rabid anti-communists--in general the inhabitants are outcasts, criminals, the poor and the neurotic. The

pastoral charm and wilderness grandeur of the genre are Americanized as well. With Walton:

We sit on cow-slip banks, hear the birds sing, and possess ourselves in as much quietness as these silent silver streams which we now see glide so quietly by us.¹⁵

With Brautigan the scene changes:

There was a green slime growing around the edges of the tub and there were dozens of dead fish floating in our bath . . . We played and relaxed in the water. The green slime and the dead fish played and relaxed with us and floated out over us and entwined themselves about us (43).

One of Brautigan's silent silver streams "was soft and spread out in the grass like a beerbelly"(49). In this as in other instances, Brautigan parodies the class assumptions of the angling books, which, cutting both ways, satirizes the America of the common man, who is proud of his lack of polish, his low tastes and his defiance of authority, often expressed in petty vandalism.

The literature of fishing is very close, in its themes, conventions and imagery, to the pastoral mode. Like the pastoral it expresses a close, loving relationship with nature, linking virtue with country places and vice with the town. The figure of the fisherman, like the shepherd, finds contentment and peace in contemplation and in the practice of his art; his labor is pleasure rather than harsh necessity; and finally, he is identified with Christ, the archetypal good shepherd and fisher of men. The crucial thematic difference between the ancient pastoral and angling literature's pastoral vision, is that the fisherman

does not live in the pastoral place. He commutes between town and country. Going out of the city to the forests or fields sharpens appreciation of nature, and return from them to civilization clears moral vision and refreshes the fisherman for his secular work.

Eleanor T. Lincoln has defined the pastoral in her introduction to Pastoral and Romance: Modern Essays in Criticism (1969). Her definition is broad enough to unify the widely divergent "versions of the pastoral" now circulating in criticism, yet deep enough to make it a functional term, and to lay to rest the notion that all pastorals can be dismissed as literature of nostalgia and escape.

In its widest sense pastoral becomes a figure for the contemplative life, a withdrawal from action that affords a perspective upon battlefield and market place. . . .The shepherd may be a hunter, a fisherman, a king, a child, or a shipwrecked mariner; his circumstance is pastoral because he is separated . . .from commitment to the sophisticated and active world of strife. The essentials that shape the pastoral are withdrawal to a place apart and from that place a perspective of what man has made of man. The viewer is at once sophisticated and shepherd, his "disguise" offers the double view that is necessary to contrast and that dramatizes the ironic differences implicit in the situation. Those ironies insist on a comparison of worlds --a reassessment of accepted values . . .Shepherd and reader re-emerge from the place apart to return, strengthened and enlightened, to active engagement in the imperfect world.¹⁶

The fisherman does not usually retreat from the active world a single time and return to the world for good, but maintains the resolution of contrasts between nature and civilization by repeated withdrawals and returns. His balanced point of view is the product of dynamic equilibrium rather than a fixed perspective attained through a

single goal-oriented quest. The fisherman of angling literature sets process above product, cycle above quest, flux above stasis. He has a foot in both the world of nature and of art.

The values placed on these two worlds are fairly homogeneous throughout the angling books except for one clear difference which distinguishes most American fishing books from their English counterparts. For the English-- Dame Juliana, Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton--nature is restful; the countryside is inhabited by simple, pleasant people, domestic and game animals; it is ornamented with flowers and trees, refreshed by showers and mild breezes. Fishing is an escape from the life of the town and court, which is complex and artificial, tempting one to vice, luxury and ambition, distracting one from duty and self-knowledge. Most American angling books are far more ambivalent in their view of both country and city. Consistent with Leo Marx' theory put forward in The Machine in the Garden, their pastoral vision is tripartite. Though their "ideal pasture" is a place in the mind, sustained by shuttling between civilization and nature, Marx' analysis of the Virgilian pastoral is appropriate to the American angler's attitude towards city and country.

In Virgil the ideal pasture has two vulnerable borders; one separating it from Rome, the other from the encroaching marshland . . . Although the shepherd is free of the repression entailed by a complex civilization, he is not prey to the violent uncertainties of nature. His mind is cultivated and his instincts are gratified. . . . In the pastoral economy nature supplies most of the herdsman's needs and, even better,

nature does virtually all of the work . . . Hence the pastoral ideal is an embodiment of what Lovejoy calls "semi-primitivism"; it is located in a middle ground somewhere "between", yet in a transcendent relation to, the opposing forces of civilization and nature.¹⁷

The fisherman frees himself physically from "the repression entailed by a complex civilization" when he goes fishing and sustains spiritual freedom by the revitalizing contact with nature and by the contemplation that is analogous to fishing in the mind. His life and "real" work in the world preserve him from the degenerating brutality of the wilderness, sharpen his appreciation of nature and save him from the hardships of a primitive life, in that he can choose the terms and terrain on which he will go back to nature. For Roderick Haig-Brown fishing "is intimate exploration of a part of the world that is hidden from the eyes and minds of ordinary people. It is a way of thinking and doing, a way of reviving the mind and body." It cannot be a way of life ("a healthy man's work should be the most important thing in his life"¹⁸) for that would be a degenerate escape from responsibility; but it mediates between the "world that is too much with us" and the something less than human life of primitivism. For Robert Traver fishing is an escape from wife, family and work to a free, drunken, all-male revel; yet, it can never be more than a periodic retreat. He sets his alcoholic, unregenerate father, who escaped permanently to the woods, as an example of the danger of succumbing to the temptations of irresponsible freedom in nature.

In Trout Fishing in America the ambivalence of the American angler's pastoral vision becomes exceedingly complex. Here, as in the angling books, civilization is repressive, yet a secure place; nature is a source of vitality, yet a source of deadly uncertainties; the fisherman takes the best from both worlds. But in addition to these themes Brautigan shows that civilization's efforts to preserve wilderness, to integrate nature into cityscapes and to get "back to nature", drive the wilderness farther away or enclose it within civilization. Nature in Trout Fishing is represented not only by pastoral scenes, but by anti-social forces. They carry the values of freedom, wit, appetite and creativity but those positive values are contradicted by the images of nature: including murderers, vermin, snakes and slime. Trout fishing is not only "the contemplative man's recreation", but a guerilla war against civilization and an attack on nature as well.

Civilization struggles to order the environment temporally, spatially and mentally. It works to keep chaos and flux in abeyance by dividing time, measuring it, assigning specific activities to specific times and by constructing physical and mental artifacts that do not show the marks of time. It organizes space by dividing it, seeks to know the proper place for everything, keeps things in their categories and either suppresses or contains whatever disrupts boundaries, or threatens to change things irregularly. The most obvious images of civilization's thrust

towards order and stasis in Trout Fishing are the time-defying monuments, among them the outhouse in "Red Lip", the statue of Benjamin Franklin, The John Dillinger Museum and Washington Square. Perhaps the gentlest image of society's need for order and stasis is the little, old, stuffed lady in "Trout Fishing on the Street of Eternity", who has an "imaginary proper place" for everything in her house, which is "stuffed to the gills with stuff"(83). She controls her small portion of nature by having her trees pruned, blackberry bushes cleaned out of her lilacs, her grass cut, her snakes killed and her Canadian thistles chopped, poisoned and cursed out of existence. It is a running battle with growth and change; as for the Canadian thistles, "curses were music to their roots. A blow on the back of the neck was like a harpsichord to them. . . .they were there for keeps."(81). And the persona subverts the stuffed lady's organization by refusing to kill garter snakes. He would "catch them and deport them to a yard across the street, where nine old ladies probably had heart attacks and died from finding those snakes in their toothbrushes"(82).

When he goes from individual to social ordering of the environment, Brautigan's tone is more satiric. In contrast to the poor people's graveyard that suffers all the effects of the seasons, the graveyard of the well-to-do, "kept Peter Pan green all year round"(20), is unnaturally cheerful. Likewise, all the persona's sympathy is with the

coyotes of Salt Creek and the victims of the gas chamber over and against the sheep grazing in the valley and the "tracts of three-bedroom houses with wall-to-wall carpets and plumbing that defies the imagination"(54).

In the same class as the rich people's graveyard in "Trout Fishing on the Bevel" are the campsites of "A Note on the Camping Craze that is Currently Sweeping America", and the Big Redfish Lake site, "the Forest Lawn of camping in Idaho, laid out for maximum comfort"(61). These camps are plush, fully serviced and crowded; the people who stay in them stay for a long time. In "A Note on the Camping Craze", Mr. Norris, who goes camping to do some trout fishing in hopes that it will help him remember the names of his children, has to wait for a camper to die before there is a site for him to pitch his tent. Logically, in terms of the graveyard imagery, the dead camper's body is returned to the site. Other campers are more put out by the disturbance the "body-bringers" cause, than unnerved by the prospect of having a dead man in the next plot.

The Coleman lantern, a "symbol of the camping craze" (73), amplifies the association of camping with death. Like the tents, trailers, air clocks and sleeping bags, the lantern makes a barrier against the forest. The campers do not get "back to nature"; they merely extend the walls that society erects to keep nature out of life. In the color symbolism of Trout Fishing, the "unholy white light" of the Coleman

lantern in the forest follows the pattern of linking white with death.* The description of the Deanna Durbin movie in Great Falls fixes white snow in tension with darkness.

There was a darkness to that theater different from any theater I've been in since. Maybe it was the snow outside and Deanna Durbin inside.

The dark movie theater is replete with possibility.

. . . She sang a lot. Maybe she was a chorus girl who wanted to go to college or she was a rich girl or they needed money for something or she did something. Whatever it was about, she sang! and sang! but I can't remember a God-damn word of it.(90)

Other images exploit the traditional association of darkness with the potential for both birth and death. Adlai Stevenson speaks under the cover's cypress tree, the standard tree of death, which is "almost dark like a room"(2); and the persona's baby is conceived in a new apartment before the lights were turned on(96). Port wine, a more significant and ambiguous image, is described as dark and sweet(18). It is linked with the cobra lily's honey and is a known trout killer, yet the narrator and his friends drink it "like fish". Compared with the fluid, unfixed value of darkness, the identification of white with death is unambiguous. The white light of the Coleman lantern unites the

*Many images connect white and death. There is a "fungus that crawls like sugar-colored ants over its body until the trout is in death's sugar bowl"(29); the trout of "Worsewick Hot Springs" have their bodies "turned white by death, like frost on iron doors"(43); and the chub killed by the surgeon lays at the bottom of the lake, white belly up like a school bus covered with snow"(71).

color of death with the symbol of civilization, yielding "unholy" brilliance; the forests are dark, potentially good or evil, but at least alive.

In Trout Fishing nature includes all that organized society casts out of its order: wilderness, pastoral scenes, the criminal underworld and society's underlife, comprised of people who refuse or fail to conform to mainstream culture's definitions of the good life, among them alcoholics, the poor and beatniks. Wild creatures and anti-social humans are continually linked, coyotes with murderers, cut-throat trout with Jack the Ripper, rainbow trout with winos and rats with John Dillinger. The character, Trout Fishing in America, very much a nature spirit, advises, visits and commiserates with petty criminals. The creatures of the underworld, the world of pest and vermin, and the natural world, however undesirable, are full of humor and energy-- often gallows humor and a very dangerous energy.

The chapters that transform trout fishing in America into a subversive struggle also place positive value on disruptive forces. In "Trout Fishing in America Terrorists" the "bad ones" of the sixth grade, "first by accident and then by premeditation", initiate a "terrorist" campaign among the first-graders. They intercept the first-graders and write "Trout Fishing in America" on their backs in chalk.

This pitting of trout fishing as a playful guerilla activity against a repressive social order appears briefly

in "The Teddy Roosevelt Chingader'". At a store in Stanley, the persona asks about trout fishing in Cuba and provokes the violent response, "You're better off dead, you Commie bastard"(60). The opposition is amplified in the chapter, "Witness for Trout Fishing in America Peace", which by imitating the voice and jargon of an anti-communist of the McCarthy era, stresses the revolutionary, subversive character of trout fishing. For this persona, "Trout Fishing in America Peace" is a disguise, like the Mayor's, or a bait, "the legendary mad rapist's piece of candy." It draws attention away from the true, evil intent of the peace marchers, in this persona's eyes, "the Communist world conquest line: the Gandhian nonviolence Trojan horse"(98). Though the language of this chapter tends to throw the reader's sympathies on the peace marchers' side, the ambiguity remains. The cobra lily's honey glands and the Mayor's disguise lead victims into a trap; the same may be true of "Trout Fishing in America Peace". However, where Brautigan connects it with war, trout fishing in America is on the side of freedom and creative play and antagonistic to rigid social orders, which, in their repression of exuberance, engender violence and paranoia, or, at best, a sterile, dying order, typified by the little, old, stuffed lady.

"Room 208, Hotel Trout Fishing in America", and the "Knock on Wood" chapters are parodic pastoral visions. In the cheap, old Hotel Trout Fishing in America in the

slums of San Francisco, Art and his girlfriend, an ex-whore, make a pastoral oasis. They have a "good life going for them", in a room filled with green plants, decorated with magazine cut-outs of kittens and puppies in crayoned frames. They have a goldfish, a savage red cat, "totally unafraid", and a hot plate on the floor. The pastoral scene needs a good deal of protection to guard it against the intrusions of the girl's erstwhile pimp, a huge, black man. They defend it with "about a hundred locks, bolts and chains and anchors and steel spikes and canes filled with acid", and a .32 pistol(68). The arsenal of locks and guns succeeds in keeping Jack out, but "The pistol's right there beside the bed, just in case the pimp has an attack of amnesia and wants to have his shoes shined in a funeral parlor"(67). Art and his woman must work hard to pay off the debts that Jack ran up on the girl's account; like the Virgilian pastoral, room 208 is threatened by both civilization and chaos. As the pastoral in the city is a contradiction in terms, so is the narrator's perverse identification of trout fishing with a vision of Pittsburgh. For the boy persona, fishing is like Carnegie's conquest of nature and the business world that won him a "steel empire" in Pittsburgh. If the boy is to trout as Andrew Carnegie is to steel, an equation compressed in the phrase "trout steel", then covering the land with "buildings, trains and tunnels", is an irresponsible, escapist pastime like fishing and, conversely, trout fishing is a progressive, con-

structive enterprise, a way to success and pre-eminence.

From another perspective, however, the "Knock on Wood" chapters are a poetic compression of images of the American dream. The chapters are concerned with beginnings, the start of the book, the first knowledge of trout and the first fishing trip. Brautigan relates these beginnings to the opening of American history, "people in three-cornered hats fishing in the dawn", so that the vision of Pittsburgh is like the New Jerusalem the first settlers envisioned when they confronted the untouched expanse of the New World, the distant goal of a great adventure. The insistent irony of these chapters, though, underscores the pun in "Pittsburgh", with its foundries and heat; instead of establishing a new Jerusalem, the American adventurers raised a city from the Pit.

III

TROUT FISHING IN AMERICA AS AN ANATOMY

The task of placing Trout Fishing in America in its generic context becomes more difficult once we are off the comparatively firm ground of angling literature. The other broader literary category relevant to Trout Fishing is Northrop Frye's anatomy. It is a new, tentatively postulated and, hence, unexplored class of long prose fiction. One can not come to a satisfyingly final conclusion about Trout Fishing's relation to the anatomy until more pioneering work is done on that genre. But, though it may be premature, I will consider Trout Fishing as an anatomy: first because it is more like the works Frye cites as examples of anatomy than any other kind of fiction; second, because it fits the small amount of definition of anatomy we have; and third, for the very reasons Frye gives for positing his four categories of long prose fiction--considering Trout Fishing as an anatomy prevents its being judged by the standards used for the novel or, worse, by non-literary standards.

Of Northrop Frye's four genres for long prose fictions, then, the anatomy is the least well-defined. This genre is bound to become a center of controversy for gen-

erations of literary critics. Obviously, there is a body of prose works that is neither novel, romance nor confession (I use Frye's terms here in place of the many names of sub-species of the novel, satire and autobiography that have been used for long prose works in the past); equally plain is that at least part of this unclassifiable portion of prose works is a cohesive, related group. This group would include prose satires, utopian novels, satiric utopias, some science fiction and some "fairy-tales" (Frye cites Carroll's Alice books as anatomies; I would bring the reader's attention to Tolkien's Lord of the Rings, which though basically a romance has a strong dose of anatomical elements as well). The danger is that the anatomy may become a catchall category; any new hybrid is destined to be called an anatomy if its eccentric angles will not fit other recognized genres. I shall run the risk of blame by including Trout Fishing in America and many of its angling relatives in this genre; it is a way of testing this aspect of Frye's theory and of enlarging understanding of the anatomy.

To summarize Frye's discussion from Anatomy of Criticism¹, the anatomy is a satiric form tracing its ancestry back through Petronius, Alpuleius and Lucian to Menippus, whose works are lost, and Varro, who has left no complete works. Frye includes Boethius, Erasmus and Rabelais in the line that runs through Candide, Gulliver's Travels, Erewhon, Peacock's works and much of Huxley. Frye

takes the genre's name from Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy; "the word 'anatomy' in Burton's title means a dissection or analysis, and expresses very accurately the intellectualized approach of his form." (311). For, in comparison with the other three genres for long prose fictions, the anatomy is "extroverted and intellectual" (308). In it, ideas rather than characters, as such, are in conflict, so that its characters are stylized and are "mouthpieces of the ideas they represent" (309). The novel's "interest is in human character as it manifests itself in society" (308); the characters of romance "expand into psychological archetypes" (304); and the confession centers on a single person's life, its integration or its coherence with a philosophical idea. In form, the anatomy tends to be "loose-jointed" but distinct from the similarly loose romantic form in that it does not follow "the exploits of heroes, but relies on the free play of intellectual fancy", which often results in "violent dislocations in the customary logic of narrative" (309-310). Its satire may range from the fantasy of Alice in Wonderland to the moral seriousness of a utopia. Traits of the genre are the tendency to make long catalogues and lists, the inclusion of incidental verse, ridicule of target figures by imitation, the dialogue or symposium form and use of digression.

As a satiric form the anatomy demands a narrative voice that is detached enough from the events or social setting of the narrative to maintain distance and thus

the objectivity necessary for intellectual rather than empathetic or "interested" presentation. In Candide and Melincourt there is an omniscient narrator and characters that are two-dimensional. Another common distancing device is the tale told by or from the point of view of a visitor, traveller, child or someone else not integrated into the social order of the narrative. It is used in Gulliver's Travels, Utopia's first book, Alice in Wonderland and Catch-22. Catch-22's Yossarian, who with fanatic single-mindedness pursues pleasure and life and avoids pain and death, provides a point of view that is outlandish and insane in that satiric world. The technique of The Praise of Folly and The Anatomy of Melancholy is to dispose of characters almost entirely in order to examine society in terms of a "single intellectual pattern"(310).

The traditional persona of the angler, who tends to view the whole of his society from the detached, gently ironic perspective of his avocation, is the convention that often links angling books to the anatomy genre. Frye sees The Compleat Angler as an anatomy because of its

mixture of prose and verse, its rural cena setting, its dialogue form, its deipnosophistical interest in food, and its gentle Menippean raillery of a society which considers everything more important than fishing and yet has discovered very few better things to do.(312)

The conventional narrator of the angling books provides the "single intellectual pattern" that informs and controls the vision of the work. His perspective is most explicitly

stated in Robert Traver's Trout Madness.

The true trout fisherman is like a drug addict; he dwells in a tight little dream world all his own, and the men about him, whom he observes obliviously spending their days pursuing money and power, genuinely puzzle him, as he doubtless does them. . . .sometimes he fishes not because he regards fishing as being so terribly important but because he suspects that so many of the other concerns of men are equally unimportant.²

Each trip he takes to a trout stream undercuts the angler's involvement in the "world"; each fishing trip refreshes his senses and renews the "thoughtful and contemplative attitudes it fosters".³ All of this sets him a bit apart from other men who are constantly in the thick of things, and gives him the small distance that is necessary to show the absurdity of most human endeavor. From the angler's point of view, fresh from the woods and streams, the hierarchy of values that men judge their lives by is bizarre. In terms of pleasure and humanizing influence, fishing is more precious than the pursuit of worldly success and fame. That is one wildly exaggerated point of Brautigan's multi-edged satire of "A Half Sunday Homage to a Whole Leonardo Da Vinci"(108). The Americanized Leonardo's invention of the ultimate trout lure surpasses "such shallow accomplishments as Hiroshima or Mahatma Ghandi." The chapter mocks the seriousness of war, peace, conquest, independence, religion and great art. It refers satirically to the purely American lunacy of doing away with problems by technological obliteration--the irresistible trout lure cancels the challenge of fishing--and putting technology in the place

of spiritual goods; Leonardo calls his lure "The Last Supper."

Traver makes his point in a calmer way:

Under his smiling coat of tan there often lurks a layer of melancholy and disillusion, a quiet awareness--and acceptance--of the fugitive quality of man and all his enterprises. If he must chase a will-o'-the-wisp he prefers that it be a trout. And so the fisherman fishes. It is at once an act of humility and a small rebellion. And it is something more. To him his fishing is an island of reality in a world of dream and shadow.⁴

Brautigan's persona is true to type in his awareness and acceptance of "the fugitive quality of man and all his enterprises", as well as in his gentleness. At the side of a creek he is the involved, intent fisherman. An index of his involvement is the dialogue of "Trout Death by Port Wine". His attention to fishing scrambles what he hears of his companion's comments. He registers, "I think I'll watch you fish. The stolen painting is in the house next door", "It reminds me of Evangeline's hearing aid" and "Giraffe races at Kilimanjaro!"(31). When not involved in fishing the persona is the disinterested observer and recorder of the things that pass through his vision.

Brautigan stresses his persona's separation from the broader society: first, by his willingness to let things go by, apprehending them without judgement or analysis; second, by his easy passage from the real world to a fantasy world; and third, by his evident strange impact on the people he encounters. In addition, the company he keeps marks him as one who doesn't belong to the mainstream of

society. The persona's Ishmael-like detachment makes credible his eccentric brand of objectivity, his dispassionate interest in what goes on. All of Brautigan's long prose works share this characteristically withdrawing or detached persona, from Jesse, who at his return from Big Sur to San Francisco says, "At first I could barely contain my amusement at human and public surroundings. I was pretending very hard that I was a human being . . ." ⁵, to the narrator/author of In Watermelon Sugar, who has no regular name, to the Librarian of The Abortion who is a hermit until Vida drags him out of his hiding place. Though all these narrators are out of the main flow of the social order, except for Jesse they are by no means alienated from it. While Jesse and his friend Lee do show outlaw qualities, as in their encounter with the two teenage boys whom they fleece of six dollars and seventy-two cents in an elaborate bluff, the librarian is devoted to America Forever, etc. and his vocation of welcoming to the library "the unwanted, the lyrical and haunted volumes of American writing" ⁶. The narrator of In Watermelon Sugar fills the rarely used but acceptable niche of the writer in his society. In all of these fictions there is a movement into and out of society. Through this retreat and return cycle, the personas maintain the freshness of vision that a stranger or a child has, and with it, a sense of wonder and a keen feeling for the absurd in society. They all have at least two sets of values, the comparison of which leads to insight into the

world they are in at the moment. The shuttle movement is most evident in Trout Fishing, where the town perspective is brought to the streams and woods, and the fishing perspective is brought to the town. The aspect of each environment is renewed.

Most of the characters of Trout Fishing in America, the store-clerks, the silent farmer, the Italians and Mr. Norris, are flat and stylized; they represent types rather than individuals. Many characters are vehicles for a typical point of view, like the shallowly pious "Mother and Nancy" of "The Mayonnaise Chapter", the fanatically anti-communist persona of "Witness for Trout Fishing in America Peace" and the surgeon in the chapter of that name. Mr. Hayman is a classic American misanthrope. Pard is one of the good "bad guys" descended from the line that runs from frontier folklore, through the outlaws with a heart of gold to Jack Kerourac's heroes and Henry Miller's literary self. Some characters, though, are not typical of the anatomy. Trout Fishing in America is very close to the helpful old man of Faërie and the Mayor of the twentieth century is less a character than an emblem of the malevolent spirit of nature and the chaos of the sub-conscious mind.

Trout Fishing in America's form "relies on the free play of intellectual fancy", so much so that its structuring devices are practically invisible. It is free of the chains of logic and time, so that the narrative is chaotically disjunct. The impulse that gives rise to digressions

in A Tale of a Tub, Tristram Shandy, Pantagruel and The Anatomy of Melancholy is totally unleashed in Trout Fishing; structurally it is a compendium of digressions, a tangle of intermeshing tangents. The dialogue, symposium or country-house weekend that brings together warring theories in Frye's examples of anatomy is replaced in Trout Fishing by the conflict of American social myths, monuments and public characters, including Benjamin Franklin, political right and left wingers, John Dillinger, Deanna Durbin and Andrew Carnegie.

More peripheral features of the anatomy are the catalogues of fishing places, the list of Alonso Hagan's lost trout, the series of recipes in "Another Method for Making Walnut Catsup" and the recitation of natural ways for trout to die (29). Brautigan's play with academic forms, another mark of the anatomy, shows up in the trout fishing bibliography in "Trout Death by Port Wine", the authorities cited in "The Prelude to the Mayonnaise Chapter" and the internal cross-referencing as in the footnote chapters. Somewhat similar to the use of verse and song in Frye's examples of the anatomy, such as The Compleat Angler and the works of Rabelais and Peacock, is Brautigan's inclusion of notices, inscriptions, advertisements and posters in Trout Fishing--"NO TRESPASSING/ 4/17 OF A HAIKU"(6), 'O, THERE ARE COYOTES UP ON SALT CREEK"(53). This is a kind of public literature that has replaced nationally possessed poetry in our day.

Although there is a marked tendency to romance in Trout Fishing in America in some of the characters and landscapes that "expand into psychological archetypes" and in the almost invisible quest theme, these features of romance are subordinate to forms from the anatomy tradition.

IV

TEMPORAL AND SPATIAL REALITY IN TROUT FISHING IN AMERICA

The anatomy tradition and the influence of angling literature account for the disjunctive rhetorical form of Trout Fishing in America and Brautigan's associative style explains much of the quirky illogicality of the book. Yet, in accepting the fact that Trout Fishing is intentionally random and granted that the randomness may be part of the message of the book, one must still come to terms with the consistent patterns of distortion in Trout Fishing in America to grasp its particular astigmatic vision of reality.

What we accept as Reality, in fact demand from it, is first of all, continuity. If there is a break in continuity, cause and effect rules don't work, logically developed thought doesn't "follow". There can be no predictive science, nor explanations of the past based on present experiment. Concomitant to continuity in ordinary "reality" is the absolute homogeneity of time and space. Time is made up of precisely equal, measurable units which follow each other in an irreversible, uni-directional sequence. Space is said to have three dimensions but in ordinary perception there is no space, just as there is no

"nothing"; it is all filled with matter. Matter has three dimensions; its effect on our senses can be measured; its inherent energy is equal to mc^2 , no more or less, and in giving off energy, matter is changed to another form of matter or into energy. In Trout Fishing, Brautigan, at one point or another, distorts all that we consider essential to objective reality (ordinary ideas of reality don't yet include relativity theories--Brautigan comes closer to that than we do).

Brautigan commits crimes against continuity, a human failing and only a venial sin which could be corrected and atoned for. His mortal sin against Reality lies in his creation of an aesthetic energy. He posits a synesthetic sense that perceives aesthetic energy and on that he builds a new physics, as if the aesthetic energy of an act or object were measurable and functioned according to causal principles like, "for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." This is what happens in the following poem:

Horse Race

July 19, a dog has been run over by an airplane,
an act that brings into this world the energy
that transforms vultures into beautiful black
race horses.

Yes, the horses are waiting at the starting gate.
Now the sound of the gun and this fantastic race begins.
The horses are circling the track.¹

In "normal" perception it is the smell or stillness of the dead dog that causes the vultures to circle above him, anticipating a feast. In Brautigan's perception, the plane

running over the dog is an act that releases energy which has the effect of changing vultures into race horses on a round track. Scientific conceptions of reality require that the release of energy follows a change of matter. That is basic to the laws of conservation of matter and energy, which would not apply here. Brautigan does apply the laws. Aesthetic energy is what changes vultures into race horses. The Cobra Lily Ballet is less straightforward. Here it is not the plant itself, or the event of its death that provides energy for the ballet. The potential energy of the words of the description, which no non-human instrument could measure, powers the ballet. Not even aesthetic theory can explain or quantify the way a pattern of words gets changed into a dance, how an artist converts his experience into song or drama, or how a landscape is transmuted in the imagination to a symphony. Yet Brautigan invents a physics of aesthetics, applying it to questions of creation; he wins his readers to his new science because he leads them along the "secret paths of the imagination".² It's a kind of post-Einsteinian Alchemy that is constant in Brautigan's works.

In Revenge of the Lawn the story "I Was Trying to Describe You to Someone" depends on the existence of aesthetic energy. The persona tries to describe a girl to somebody and ends up describing her as a movie of the New Deal Era that is both story of and homage to "Rural Electrification".

" . . .the movie showed Electricity like a Greek god com-

ing to the farmer to take away forever the dark ways of his life." The short piece ends with: "I wanted electricity to go everywhere in the world. I wanted all the farmers in the world to be able to listen to President Roosevelt on the radio. That's how you look to me."³ The girl and the movie have the same potential and affect their audience and environment the same way. In The Abortion, Vida's beauty, " . . .quite ruthless in its own way. . .", has its own energy, which Vida and her librarian think of bottling under the name, "Vida Pop".⁴ The whole economic order of the In Watermelon Sugar world is based on Brautigan's physics that can make lanterns, planks and dresses out of watermelon sugar and get light from watermelontrout oil.⁵ A Confederate General From Big Sur (1964) gets its contrapuntal civil war theme from the action of Lee Mellon's belief that his grandfather was a general for the Confederate States on the imagination of the narrator, Jesse. Jesse promises to believe in the Mellon Family General, though there is no evidence for it. The ambiguity of his faith comes out in the fragments describing the Battle of the Wilderness where the 1860's Mellon avatar is a panic-stricken, thieving private. There is a regiment from Big Sur consisting of perfectly primitive Digger Indians who feed limpets and roots to General Lee's horse during the battle. Yet, the beauty of heroic defeat in the Battle of the Wilderness flows from these fragments of narrative back onto Lee Mellon's pathetic faith in his family's

general, so that he wins the lovely Elizabeth, who in the last chapters is dressed like a statue of the spirit of the South.

These transformations of aesthetic and emotional energy, though they are a species of metaphor, go beyond usual meaning of metaphor. Perception of metaphor starts from simple juxtaposition. A:B is understood as A is like B, or A is to C as B is to C. "A Candlelion Poem", here given in full, operates on the conventional use of metaphor.

Turn a candle inside out
and you've got the smallest
portion of a lion standing
there at the edge of the
shadows.⁶

The juxtaposition--heart of candle; essence of lion--is understood as heart of candle is to hot, intense brightness as essence of lion is to hot, intense brightness. In Brautigan's perception of the aesthetic energy of objects and events, the third term common to the two factors in a metaphor has a vivid existence. It is the imaginative vitality of the object that can be transferred to or transformed into another thing. The energy of the Cobra Lily description that Brautigan uses to make a ballet for Trout Fishing in America could as well be used "as a welcome mat on the front porch of hell or to conduct an orchestra of mortuaries with ice-cold woodwinds or be an atomic mailman in the pines, in the pines where the sun never shines."(15). Of the hunchback trout that puts up a fantastic, jumping

fight, Brautigan says, "I only wish I could have made a death mask of him. Not of his body though, but of his energy. I don't know if anyone would have understood his body." (57). The electrical power from the three deer that Brautigan's daughter receives in "A Short History of Religion in California" moves her physically. She gets a "little jolt of electricity", "enough perhaps to light a couple of Christmas tree lights or make a fan turn for a minute or toast a half a slice of bread."⁷ On Carrie Creek of "The Message", the inertly stupid sheep with their "Adolph Hitler but friendly shepherd" give off the energy to send the message to the narrator, "Stalingrad". (35-36).

Brautigan's stretched metaphors often leave out the common term of energy. In Trout Fishing in America's reply in "A Return to the Cover of This Book", the heat, humidity and survival-of-the-fittest atmosphere trigger Trout Fishing in America into concrete awareness of the jungle gestalt.

I woke up in the middle of the night and the room was filled with steam rising off the sheet, and there was jungle stuff, abandoned equipment and tropical flowers, on the floor and on the furniture.

I took the sheet into the bathroom and plopped it into the tub and turned the cold water on it. Their dog came in and started barking at me.

The dog barked so loud that the bathroom was soon filled with dead people. One of them wanted to use my wet sheet for a shroud. I said no, and we got into a big argument over it and woke up the Puerto Ricans in the next apartment, and they began pounding on the walls. (76-77)

This is not to say that all of Brautigan's metaphors depend on aesthetic energy as the term common to the

two parts of the metaphor. In fact the episode of the dog who wakes the dead can be explained, without resorting to the middle term, as a concretization of a colloquial formula, exactly like the cat and dog storms of the old Farmer Brown cartoons. Far-fetched similes like "The old woman lived by herself in a house that was like a twin sister to her", are merely comparisons based on an unusual common term. The old house with its multitude of rooms cluttered with "stuff" is like the woman in age and its intent but spurious organization of old stuffing.(80-81). Likewise, association balloons into metaphor. The age of the house, the old woman and the medieval lawnmower is transferred to Alonso Hagan's fishing equipment called, "trout fishing armor". His hat is a "weatherbeaten fishing helmet" and worms are "petrified" to their hooks.(83).

We learn that the middle term of Brautigan's stretched metaphors is energy early in Trout Fishing in America. This helps in understanding some of his dislocations of time and space, which are standard features in Trout Fishing as well as in his other fiction and poetry. One time/space confusion central to Brautigan's perception of history in Trout Fishing and elsewhere, appears, appropriately enough, in "Trout Fishing on the Street of Eternity".

She had a big radio from the 1920's in the living room and it was the only thing in the house that looked remotely as if it had come from this century, and then there was still a doubt in my mind.

A lot of cars, airplanes and vacuum cleaners and

refrigerators and things that come from the 1920's look as if they had come from the 1890's. It's the beauty of our speed that has done it to them, causing them to age prematurely into the clothes and thoughts of people from another century.(81)

It is as if time moves faster over our things, streamlining them, eroding their forms like water over rock to give them a beauty that is a function of speed. The air-flow design of the '36 Chrysler immediately outmoded other forms as it, itself, was outmoded by later cars which looked and were faster. The torpedo-shaped vacuum cleaners of the forties and fifties, the rounded refrigerators with streaks of chrome, sleekly modeled TV's, alarm clocks, radios, buildings, silverware, bee-hive hairdos , gas pumps, all the things of the fifties and sixties look like they're moving or about to be launched into orbit even when stationary or fixed in place. This built-in look of forward motion is "the beauty of our speed", which is powered by an exponentially increasing desire for and attainment of progress. Our desire for speed makes time flow faster so that the subjective time that lies between the 1960's and the 1920's is equal to the objective time that lies between the 1960's and the 1890's. In their lack of the particular beauty and energy of speed, objects and people of the 1920's are very much older than their dates indicate. Looking at our 1970's with this insight, we seem to be putting the brakes on time with long tangles and haloes of hair, blunted shoes, cumbersome bags and ornaments. Trout Fishing in America's cover photo of Brautigan and his

woman dressed in thrift-shop style illustrate this slowing down by reclaiming clothes from slower times. In contrast, the ideal body of the sixties was streamlined by tapered pants, pointed shoes, close-trimmed hair, small-brimmed hats and large forward-pointing breasts, all saying "full-speed ahead". The old-time clothes, long skirts, big hats and capes express a rootedness-in-place or a poise-in-space.

Brautigan refers to the time-form of the fifties and sixties again in the story of a white cat that fell or was thrown from a height down onto a parking lot.

The fall had not appreciably helped the thickness of the cat, and then a few people had parked their cars on the cat. Of course, that was a long time ago and the cars looked different from the way they look now.

You hardly see those cars any more. They are the old cars. They have to get off the highway because they can't keep up. (57)

This makes a "normal" kind of sense; the old cars are not as fast as new cars. Normal explanation breaks down, though. There is a slow lane on highways and highway driving is not a race or survival contest. "They can't keep up" cannot be explained using normal concepts of time, space and velocity. What the old cars can't keep up with is the faster time flow of the sixties; they are left in the past, not on the side of the objectively real highway, but on the side of the highway of time. This spatialization of time is a consistent feature in Brautigan's works. In the "Street of Eternity" chapter, it is as if in our increased speed we have covered a greater distance since the twen-

ties. From our perspective the twenties are indistinguishable from the 1890's.

"The Lost Chapters of Trout Fishing in America", a story from Revenge of the Lawn, is a lucid example of Brautigan's way of giving time the dimensional attributes of space. He explains that he lost two chapters from Trout Fishing in 1961, and says:

" . . . I've decided to return to the winter that I was twenty-six years old, living on Greenwich Street in San Francisco, married, had an infant daughter and wrote these two chapters toward a vision of America and then lost them. I'm going back there now to see if I can find them."⁸

After presenting the two lost stories Brautigan comments, "It's interesting that I didn't rewrite them back there in 1961 but waited until December 4, 1969, almost a decade later, to return and try to bring them back with me."⁹

One way of going back in time or moving a past time forward is by imaginatively grasping events and images connected with the past time. In "Sandbox Minus John Dillinger Equals What?", the energy of the little girl's red dress against a background of crucifixion images triggers the recurrence of Dillinger's betrayal and murder, as if in their proximity, the red dress and the Catholic Church reach critical mass and the energy from the ensuing aesthetic explosion brings Dillinger's last scene into the present. "The Prologue to Grider Creek" is the other half of Brautigan's "secret message" about John Dillinger. That chapter's powerless, child-eyed rats who are emotionlessly

killed symbolize the essential innocence of Dillinger*, reversing Hoover's intended meaning in calling Dillinger a "public rat".¹⁰ All the Christian images of the "Sandbox" chapter, the three trees, the water fountain crucified on the side of a public toilet, the Catholic church towering in the background and the betrayal, support Dillinger's role as an innocent victim. But in the "Sandbox" the false woman is a little child and the humorless state's assassins pay her off in ice-cream cones. The human actors in "Sandbox" are portrayed as child-like, in a children's world. Neither the criminal nor the child in red are wholly innocent or wholly guilty. The stage and the props determine events; as the narrator says, "My daughter . . . couldn't talk yet, but that didn't make any difference. The red dress did it all."(88).

The aesthetic power of the red dress works on the imagination to resurrect an event out of the past. In the same way the narrator imagines his first trout stream will bring him a vision of Pittsburgh. By focusing in on key elements of the associations that cluster about an event or image, or even by the chance juxtaposition of key items in the cluster, the narrator brings the past event or dis-

*In a popular retelling of the Dillinger legend, Lew Louderback says, "Of the eleven killings that are usually linked with his name, only one can personally be laid at his doorstep--and there are some who claim that he wasn't responsible for that one, either." Lew Louderback, The Bad Ones: Gangsters of the 30's and Their Molls (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1968), p. 172.

tant object into present time. One can also go back in time to recover things of the past. These two ways of recovering the past indicate two aspects of Brautigan's time sense that are as paradoxical as science's vision of the nature of light. For Brautigan time and space are not divisible. Time in Trout Fishing is sequential, transient, irreversible and, paradoxically, simultaneous; so that by an act of imagination one can travel up or down stream and bring things from nearer the source to the present time. Time is like a river, with a fourth spatial/temporal dimension in which all things that have happened or been, exist at once and eternally. The imagination can utilize the aesthetic energy of objects to travel in time's dimension of simultaneous existence.

V

THE UNIFYING STRUCTURES OF
TROUT FISHING IN AMERICA

In a continuously developed narrative, the action of the metaphor throws images onto the plane of simultaneous existence, both subliminally, during the reading, and consciously, after the reader disengages himself from the linear narrative. But the importance of an image and its logical relation to other images are determined by plot or character development. In Trout Fishing, because images are not fixed in a strongly structured matrix of plot or point of view they are fluid, ambiguous in value and in their relation to each other. Any one character, image or event can have a multiplicity of meanings depending on the context the reader chooses to put it in. For example, the child-eyed and cannibalistic rats in "The Prologue to Grider Creek" have different values depending upon whether they are connected with the poor people that gather near the "mousehole" door for sandwiches, the hundreds of mice in the Cleveland Wrecking Yard, with John Dillinger--"public rat", or with the persona's baby, who sleeps in the basement in the California Bush. Though the ambiguity of images immediately confuses the reader, there are unifying patterns in Trout Fishing in America that transcend the

multiplicity.

The most pervasive thematic pattern is the struggle between civilization and nature, between society and its outcasts, organization and chaos, clock time and nature's cycles, secure conformity and uncertain freedom, social order and subversion. This pattern is repeated in every order of imagery. In the plant imagery the "Peter Pan green" graveyard, the orderly campsites as plush and comfortable as Forest Lawn and the old woman's garden in "The Street of Eternity" contrast with the poor people's graveyard, which grows green and dies in harmony with the seasons, the dark forest, and the wild Canadian thistles and blackberry bushes that invade the garden. In the animal order, civilization is represented by sheep and doves, nature by coyotes and rats. In the human world the school principal, right-wing anti-communists, the FBI, store-clerks and surgeons represent the mainstream culture; winos and criminals, the poor, and the politically alienated are linked with chaos, subversion, darkness and vermin. The divine order in Trout Fishing is also dichotomous. Brautigan makes Christian constructs the vehicle for society's worship of mechanical order and opposes to this a pagan divine order with Trout Fishing in America as its spirit and the Mayor of the twentieth century as the body of its created world. In all these orders of imagery, civilization has the qualities of stasis, repression, security, order and light, and nature the qualities of irrationality, dark-

ness and danger, but also freedom, humor and energy.

Brautigan's vision of America shows that in trying to drive chaos and death from the continent by subduing the wilderness, America has succeeded in encysting the wilderness within its labyrinthine organization. In other words, whether there are virgin forests or not, the chaos, vitality, and uncertainty of wilderness are irreducible and will crop up persistently as Canadian thistles. The trout stream can be transported into a civilized context; it can be bought in the Cleveland Wrecking Yard, but the insects come free with a minimum purchase; the pests are an inevitable part of the bargain. Trout Fishing in America changes from the positive figure of wilderness because the original wilderness is gone. But he moves into the new wilderness contained by civilization, the underlife of winos, poor people and criminals. It is as socially unacceptable as the old wilderness, but it, too, is the spring of life and death in the dialectical struggle between chaos and civilization.

Three broad narrative movements replace plot and character development in Trout Fishing in America. They are the structures which provide a context of valuation for images and resolution of the nature/civilization dialectic. They are the quest and return movement (which contains the other two motions), the shuttle movement from cityscape to forest and stream, and the general movement towards the West which is aimed at San Francisco's Washington Square.

The quest and return motif frames the narrative. In the second chapter, "Knock on Wood (Part One)", the narrator, as a boy, first learns about trout fishing and in the next chapter he goes fishing for the first time. The fishing trips, tales and fantasies that follow all take place within the context of this trout fishing journey, which ends "In the California Bush":

I've come home from Trout Fishing in America, the highway bent its long smooth anchor about my neck and then stopped. Now I live in this place. It took my whole life to get here . . . (92)

The first sentence indicates that the narrator has come home from either a place or an activity, but the capital letters show that it is the character Trout Fishing in America he has come home from. This sustains the ambiguity of the name. It is also significant as the climax of a specific fishing journey contained within the quest. This journey is initiated in "The Autopsy of Trout Fishing in America". The two listings of Idaho waters that Trout Fishing in America will supposedly never see again, "Carrie Creek, Worsewick Hot Springs, Paradise Creek, Salt Creek, and Duck Lake," . . . "Stanley Basin, Little Redfish Lake, the Big Lost River . . . Lake Josephus and the Big Wood River" (33), name in correct order, places that the narrator stays in or hears about in his trout fishing journey. Roughly every other chapter after "The Autopsy" concerns a place listed in that chapter. Since the persona visits these places after the supposed death of Trout Fishing in America his journeys become an extended autopsy and a

pilgrimage. This specific series of fishing trips amplifies the quest theme and its climax coincides with the end of the quest in "The Last Time I Saw Trout Fishing in America". Thus, "I've come home from Trout Fishing in America" suggests that Trout Fishing in America is person, place and activity at once and that the quest was a penetration into trout fishing in America in all its guises.

The shuttle movement between the city and the forest's streams imitates in miniature the penetration into nature and return to civilization. This movement makes for a peculiar vision of the world. The persona applies city images to country landscapes and vice versa, so that the fishing trips become explorations of urban images and, in the returns to the city, the narrator "fishes" in the urban environment. He fishes in natural surroundings as if they were ordered like civilized institutions--department stores, plumbing systems, Pittsburgh's foundries--and acts in the urban places as if they were a wilderness--finding the trout stream in the junkyard, Walden pond for winos in Washington Square and locating the room in Hotel Trout Fishing in America by the hotel's "geography". This double vision blurs the distinction between civilization and nature by assigning the values of art, order and civilization to the forest and the values of wildness, brutality and uncertainty to the city.

The third broad movement is towards the West; specifically towards San Francisco. The persona, Pard and

his girlfriend, the bookstore owner, Rebel Smith, Art and his woman, all come from the East to the West. Trout Fishing in America Shorty comes from Fort Lauderdale to San Francisco, and after a brief foray into San Jose, the nut-house or jail, returns to San Francisco. The trout stream in the Cleveland Wrecking Yard is imported from Colorado. Trout Fishing in America, though freemoving, cites the westward movement of Lewis and Clark, and when his travels are mentioned they are journeys from Greece to England and from New York to Alaska. The westward flow of people matches the historical retreat of the wilderness before civilization and marks the fact that now nature is contained within civilization where before the reverse was true.

The structuring device of the returns to the cover reinforces the framing quest, the movement between country and city and the westward movement. As the background for the cover photo and the subject of the first chapter, Washington Square in San Francisco is the reader's gateway into the book. In the course of the book, six chapters take place "in" the cover: chapters one, ten, twenty-one, thirty-three, thirty-seven and forty ("The Cover for Trout Fishing in America", "A Walden Pond for Winos", "The Shipping of Trout Fishing in America Shorty to Nelson Algren", "A Return to the Cover of This Book", "Sandbox Minus John Dil-

linger Equals What" and "The Last Mention of Trout Fishing in America Shorty"). The cover chapters punctuate the narrative up to "The Last Mention of Trout Fishing in America Shorty", just after the persona's return from Trout Fishing in America. They give in great detail the map of the square and incidently develop a series of alternate meanings for "cover". It is a refuge, in the sense of "run for cover", where the winos can drink in safety from the police. It becomes a "cover story" or alibi that conceals and protects a true identity.

The cover, Washington Square, is the mythic center of society's religion of the machine and as a latent Gol-gatha is the scene for a series of partial resolutions between thrust toward civilization's mechanical order and anti-social resistance to regulation, generally identified with wilderness. The dominant features of "the cover" are arranged around the "metal works of Benjamin Franklin, which is like a clock" (46) that stands on a pedestal that looks like a house containing stone furniture". (1). There are three poplar trees in the middle of the park (17) and the statue is in front of the middle tree (10). It stands between the church with the mousehole door, "Per L'Universo", and the cypress tree, "almost dark like a room" and its pedestal says WELCOME to the east, west, north and south. In short, the Benjamin Franklin statue stands at the exact center of all dimensions; it is at the center of the four corners of the earth and between the spiritual

poles of hell, represented by the dark, funereal cypress, and the gates of heaven, here, the Catholic Church. It stands at the intersection of the sub-lunar plane and the spiritual plane of existence. The dedication of the statue locates it in the eternal present, in which moment, the generations "take our places and pass on." The crucifixion imagery flowers in "Sandbox Minus John Dillinger Equals What?" and "The Last Mention of Trout Fishing in America Shorty". In these chapters the Benjamin Franklin statue is a clockwork saviour; the good thief against the right hand tree is Trout Fishing in America Shorty, half man and half "magnificent chrome-plated steel wheel-chair"; the bad thief, John Dillinger, is shot down before he reaches the left-hand tree.

Like the other Christian imagery in Trout Fishing, this central landscape is the vehicle for Brautigan's mockery of civilization's adoration of an order that shields it from uncertainty, violence and death by suppressing energy, appetite and freedom. In Trout Fishing the good shepherd is Adolph Hitler and the obedient flock is a senseless army docilely marching to defeat.

Although Brautigan parodies organized religion, pulling it down from the divine order to a mechanical order, he takes demonic elements to construct a new supra-human world of value. Over and against society's religion of mechanism stands this pre-Christian divine order made up of the things American civilization tries to obliterate

or ignore. A coyote-crowned criminal is its Christ and king. Physical nature here is not the snakeless garden, the lit-up forest or the eternally green cemetery; it is represented by the Mayor and Trout Fishing in America and is lovely and gentle, evil and murderous at once. Its human followers are society's outcasts, thieves, drunks and the poor who are linked, not with submissive sheep and doves, but with rats, insects, coyotes and trout.

This new order emerges only after "The Autopsy of Trout Fishing in America", a pivotal chapter in that it intensifies the quest theme, marks the change in status of Trout Fishing in America, preceeds the appearance of his double, Trout Fishing in America Shorty, and his shadow, the Mayor of the twentieth century.

Before "The Autopsy", Trout Fishing in America is a muse linked with aristocratic society. He is invoked by the young persona's visionary excitement about trout fishing and appears to be a repository of American tradition. "Another Method for Making Walnut Catsup" and "The Ballet for Trout Fishing in America", in connecting him with elite culture may be offerings to the muse, but they are quite ambiguous in intent. Trout Fishing in America's meal with Maria Callas is oddly disjointed; after apples, an empty pie crust and a pudding, they pour the exotic walnut catsup on hamburgers. "The Ballet's" theme is defeat and final, total annihilation. "The Autopsy" postulates the death of Trout Fishing in America. Though it is a hero's

death, in the guise of Lord Byron, followed by an impressive embalming, an autopsy and a lovely dirge, it is clear that this is not an offering for Trout Fishing in America; he is the sacrifice. The fact that he does come again to the "shores of Idaho" links him to Adonis, the nature spirit whose yearly death and return was imitated in the ritual sacrifice of kings that insured tribal fertility. On his return, Trout Fishing in America is a footloose hobo, slumming in New York with a burglar, advising petty criminals, sitting with the baby, kibbitzing while the narrator fishes. Though he retains his long historical memory and reveals a prescient grasp of the ins and outs of chance, he no longer associates with the cultured elite in luxurious settings.

Trout Fishing in America Shorty, the abridged version of Trout Fishing in America, graphically represents the partnership between man and machine. It is a complex relationship as shown in the persona's double interpretation of the new wave film in "Footnote Chapter to 'The Shipping of Trout Fishing in America Shorty to Nelson Algren'"; Shorty is both a victim of man's use of the machine and a figure for the insane hubris that comes with technological success. Shorty is also identified with natural cycles--"the cold turning of the earth" and "the bad wind that blows off the sugar". But when linked with Shorty, nature takes on the aspect of mechanical fate; "He was the reason birds migrate in the autumn. They have

to." (45). Shorty is most sympathetic in his final appearance. In "The Last Mention of Trout Fishing in America Shorty", he is in the good thief's position under the right-hand tree, out of his wheelchair. He shows some human feeling in coaxing the persona's daughter to sit on his lap. But the baby passes him up in favor of the sandbox to the left of the Benjamin Franklin statue. Not only space but history, like "a river growing larger and larger" (97), separates the coming generations from the peculiar amputation of body and spirit that Shorty represents.

Because the narrator is unidentified, "The Mayor of the Twentieth Century" is open to a variety of interpretations. In the context of the divine order he is Trout Fishing in America's evil alter-ego, or Trout Fishing in America seen from the point of view of the speaker in "Witness for Trout Fishing in America Peace". In any interpretation the Mayor is a strange and certainly super-human figure. The list of dates identify him as Jack the Ripper¹, show that if he is not immortal he enjoys more than the usual life span, and no man could wear his disguise.

He wore a costume of trout fishing in America. He wore mountains on his elbows and bluejays on the collar of his shirt. Deep water flowed through the lilies that were entwined about his shoelaces. A bullfrog kept croaking in his watch pocket and the air was filled with the sweet smell of ripe blackberry bushes. (48)

The Mayor, then, is the landscape, from this unsympathetic point of view, a landscape possessed of a malevolent spirit. The Mayor and Trout Fishing in America are shadow and

self, respectively. This doubling is rare in Trout Fishing. Brautigan's usual technique for expressing duality is to present an image in terms of its opposite as in "trout steel", "Peter Pan" green graveyard, "the finger of a saint, surrounded by a mud puddle" (9), and the Forest Lawn campsites.

The logical place to find the resolution of the duality of nature and of its conflict with civilization is in the chapters following the return from Trout Fishing in America. Here is where the change in perspective, the consequence of the quest, should be revealed. But there are only subtle differences after the persona comes "home from Trout Fishing in America". He, his woman and baby do not settle down in the California bush with Pard and his girlfriend. The persona and his family return to San Francisco and the "cover". They leave before it becomes necessary to take care of their garbage (101). Thus, the strange life in a cabin overlooking Mill Valley is no final solution.

"The Last Mention of Trout Fishing in America Shorty", "Witness for Trout Fishing in America Peace", "The Cleveland Wrecking Yard" and "A Half-Sunday Homage to a Whole Leonardo Da Vinci" consolidate and give a slightly different turn to themes touched on before. In "The Last Mention", Shorty seems to be repentant. "Witness for Trout Fishing in America Peace" shows the forces of Trout Fishing in America gaining in adherents and power. "The Cleveland Wrecking Yard" demonstrates how far civilization has

gone in integrating nature into its order. More than any other chapter, this one brings home the dilemma of civilization; on every level of perception, owning a piece of trout stream is both exhilarating and repulsive. "A Half-Sunday Homage" unites excellence in art, technology and trout fishing in an equivocal vision of Leonardo Da Vinci, certainly the "Andrew Carnegie of Trout!"

It is in "Trout Fishing in America Nib", "The Prelude to the Mayonnaise Chapter" and "The Mayonnaise Chapter" that Brautigan hints at answers. After all the transformations of trout fishing in America, he dreams at last of a trout fishing in America pen nib.

I thought to myself what a lovely nib trout fishing in America would make with a stroke of cool green trees along the river's shore, wild flowers and dark fins pressed against the paper. (110)

Trout fishing in America's final and transcendent function is art. As if to answer the riddles posed by the authorities who document the mystery of language in "The Prelude", Brautigan says the source of language and art is desire; "Expressing a human need, I always wanted to write a book that ended with the work Mayonnaise." (111). The Artist creates visions to express his wish. Brautigan goes so far as to kill Mr. Good ("Gods will be done") to gratify his desire. But for all that he does not get perfect satisfaction. Mother and Nancy misspell it--"mayonaise" (112).

Brautigan's essential vision is satiric. Nothing rises or falls to an end, however much man strives for completion. There is no climax, only cycle. Everything in

the world is potentially related to everything else; patterns that emerge from one perspective are superceded by other patterns if the viewer or his position changes. Given this vision of reality, a plot makes nonsense of what the world is like.

In Trout Fishing in America's structure there are so many links between chapters that each one is potentially the center of the whole book. Focusing on one chapter or symbol subtly alters the thematic structure of the mosaic. Taking "The Mayor of the Twentieth Century" as the concentrated message of Trout Fishing throws the demonic images of nature into relief. The black pimp named Jack, the cut-throat trout and the murderers leap into consciousness; a shadow of suspicion falls on Trout Fishing in America and the trout fishing in America peace marchers. They could be the innocent bait in a trap as hellish as the honey-lined cobra lily. If we focus on "Worsewick Hot Springs", another pattern emerges. The created world is an obscene ferment, a warm bath where dead and amorphous things float. Death grades into life and back into death again, the whole cycle compressed into a meaningless copulation, a pointless intertwining of man and woman, of slime, dead fish and persona's live sperm. The uncreated world is threatened by life in the image of the school house threatened by the nose-diving plane. The poor people's graveyard suffers dissolution and rebirth while the Peter Pan green graveyard and the Forest Lawn campsites offer the eternal

repose of the unborn. Each new center changes the perception of Trout Fishing in America's overall design.

VI

FOOTNOTES

PREFACE

¹Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Slaughterhouse-Five (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1971), p. 76.

²Northrop Frye, The Well-Tempered Critic (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), p. 15.

CHAPTER I

¹Though all editions of Trout Fishing in America are uniform in layout, note that this and all subsequent quotations and references are to the first paperback edition: Richard Brautigan, Trout Fishing in America (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1967).

²R.Z. Sheppard, "Easy Writer", Time, XCVIII (November 1, 1971), X3.

³John Clayton, "Richard Brautigan: The Politics of Woodstock", New American Review; Number 11, ed. Theodore Solotoroff (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), p. 60.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 64.

⁶T.E. Hulme, Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art, ed. Herbert Read (2nd ed.; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1949), pp. 158-159.

⁷Clayton, p. 64.

CHAPTER II

¹William Flint Thrall and Addison Hibbard, "Novel", A Handbook to Literature, rev. and enl. C. Hugh Holman (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1960), pp. 318-324.

²Adam Abraham Mendilow, Time and the Novel (New York: Humanities Press, 1965), p. 238.

³W.C. Prime, I Go A-Fishing (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1873), p. 71.

⁴Ibid., Preface.

⁵Ibid., p. 13-14.

⁶J.E. Cirlot, "Fishing", A Dictionary of Symbols, trans. Jack Sage (New York: Philosophical Library, 1962), p. 103.

⁷Richard Brautigan, "The Lost Chapters of Trout Fishing in America: 'Rembrandt Creek' and 'Carthage Sink'", Revenge of the Lawn (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), p. 37.

⁸Ray Bergman, Just Fishing (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), p. 418.

⁹Izaak Walton, The Complete Angler; or the Contemplative Man's Recreation, 2nd ed. (London & Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis Ltd., 1925), p. 35.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 27.

¹¹Prime, p. 15.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Brautigan, "Forgiven", Revenge of the Lawn, p. 165.

¹⁴Bergman, p. 20.

¹⁵Walton, p. 99.

¹⁶Eleanor Terry Lincoln, ed., Pastoral and Romance; Modern Essays in Criticism (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), Introduction, p. 2.

¹⁷Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 22-23.

¹⁸Roderick Haig-Brown, Fisherman's Spring (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1951), p. 10.

CHAPTER III

¹For this and subsequent references to Anatomy of Criticism see: Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism; Four Essays (New York: Atheneum, 1969), pp. 304-314.

²Robert Traver, Trout Madness; Being a Dissertation on the Symptoms and Pathology of This Incurable Disease by One of Its Victims (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1960), "Preface", p. viii.

³Bergman, p. 418.

⁴Traver, "Preface", p. viii.

⁵Richard Brautigan, A Confederate General from Big Sur (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1968), p. 88.

⁶Richard Brautigan, The Abortion: An Historical Romance 1966 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), p. 96.

CHAPTER IV

¹Richard Brautigan, "Horse Race", The Pill Versus the Springhill Mine Disaster (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1968), p. 99.

²Robert Bly, "Looking for Dragon Smoke", Naked Poetry; Recent American Poetry in Open Forms, ed. Stephen Berg and R. Mezey (Indiana and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1969), p. 161.

³Brautigan, "I Was Trying to Describe You to Someone", Revenge of the Lawn, pp. 78-79.

⁴Brautigan, The Abortion, pp. 133 and 218.

⁵Richard Brautigan, In Watermelon Sugar (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1969), p. 28.

⁶Brautigan, "A Candlelion Poem", The Pill Versus the Springhill Mine Disaster, p. 48.

⁷Brautigan, "A Short History of Religion in California", Revenge of the Lawn, p. 111-112.

⁸Brautigan, "The Lost Chapters of Trout Fishing in America", p. 37.

⁹Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰Lew Louderback, The Bad Ones; Gangsters of the 30's and Their Molls (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1968), p. 206.

CHAPTER V

¹Colin Wilson and Patricia Pitman, "Jack the Ripper", Encyclopaedia of Murder (London: Arthur Baker Limited, 1961), pp. 302-304.

VII

LIST OF WORKS CITED

- Berg, Stephen and R. Mezey, eds. Naked Poetry; Recent American Poetry in Open Forms. Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1969.
- Bergman, Ray. Just Fishing. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961.
- Blake, W.H. Brown Waters. Montréal: The Reprint Society of Canada Limited, 1948.
- Brautigan, Richard. The Abortion: An Historical Romance 1966. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970.
- . A Confederate General from Big Sur. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1964.
- . In Watermelon Sugar. New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1968.
- . The Pill Versus the Springhill Mine Disaster. New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1968.
- . Revenge of the Lawn; Stories 1962-1970. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971.
- . Trout Fishing in America. San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1967.
- Cirlot, J.E. A Dictionary of Symbols. Translated by Jack Sage. New York: Philosophical Library, 1962.
- Clayton, John. "Richard Brautigan: The Politics of Woodstock", New American Review; Number 11. Edited by Theodore Solotoroff. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971.
- Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism; Four Essays. New York: Atheneum, 1969.
- . The Well-Tempered Critic. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963.

- Haig-Brown, Roderick. Fisherman's Spring. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1951.
- , A River Never Sleeps. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1946.
- Hulme, T.E. Speculation; Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art. Edited by Herbert Read. 2nd ed. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1949.
- Lincoln, Eleanor Terry, ed. Pastoral and Romance; Modern Essays in Criticism. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969.
- Louderback, Lew. The Bad Ones; Gangsters of the 30's and Their Molls. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1968.
- Marx, Leo. The Machine in the Garden. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Mendilow, Adam Abraham. Time and the Novel. New York: Humanities Press, 1965.
- Norton, Mortimer, ed. Angling Successes; by Leading Outdoor Writers. Freeport, New York: Books For Libraries Press, Inc., 1967. First published in 1935.
- Prime, W.C. I Go A-Fishing. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1873.
- Sheppard, R.Z. "Easy Writer", Time, XCVIII (November 1, 1971), X3.
- Thrall, William Flint and Addison Hibbard. A Handbook to Literature. Revised and enlarged by C. Hugh Holman. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1960.
- Traver, Robert. Trout Madness; Being a Dissertation on the Symptoms and Pathology of This Incurable Disease by One of Its Victims. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1960.
- Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr. Slaughterhouse-Five. New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1971.
- Walton, Izaak. The Complete Angler; or the Contemplative Man's Recreation. 2nd ed. London & Edinburgh: T.W. Foulis Ltd., 1925.
- Wilson, Colin and Patricia Pitman. Encyclopaedia of Murder. London: Arthur Baker Limited, 1961.