# Rumination of Ecological Ethics in *Green Hills of Africa*: Hemingway's Instrumentalized Ego and the Ecologist Val Plumwood's Ecological Ego

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper tends to analyze human instrumental intentionality in Earnest Hemingway's Green Hills of Africa in accordance with Australian ecologist, Val Plumwood's argument over "instrumentalized ego." By probing into Hemingway's African hunting memoir defined as ecological literary demonstration, the following content will be positioned with three orientations: first, criticizing human instrumentalized intention relating to egoism; second, examining how human beings are bound with profit intention with fictitious anthropocentric attitude toward other creatures on earth; third, exploring possible solutions to cope with human-centered crisis for maintaining amicable correlation between humans and nonhumans in ecological system.

**KEYWORDS:** val plumwood, ecological ethics, hemingway, instrumentalized ego, ecological ego

The dominant tradition of western culture has viewed relationship to plants, rivers, animals, places and ecosystems as entirely instrumental, and defined human relations to others in nature in the same terms as the egoist defines his relations to others—humans stand apart from a nature conceived only as a means to satisfy essentially self-contained human interests.

### --Val Plumwood, Feminism and the Mastery of Nature.

This paper tends to analyze human instrumental intentionality in Earnest Hemingway's *Green Hills of Africa* in accordance with Australian ecologist, Val Plumwood's argument over "instrumentalized ego." By probing into Hemingway's African hunting memoir defined as ecological literary demonstration, the following

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content will be positioned with three orientations: first, criticizing human instrumentalized intention relating to egoism; second, examining how human beings are bound with profit intention with fictitious anthropocentric attitude toward other creatures on earth; third, exploring possible solutions to cope with human-centered crisis for maintaining amicable correlation between humans and nonhumans in ecological system.

In the aspect of emphasized ecological protection awareness nowadays, Hemingway's hunting insinuates that in his perception, animal creatures are deficient in cerebration and embrace no subsistence right and dignity. It is apparent that Hemingway possesses the faith that humans controlling right to randomly treat all creatures are masters of nature. In the author's generation, no one would associate *Green Hills of Africa* with the issue of ecocriticism or life ethics because at that time, beyond doubt, hunting was regarded as a natural form of recreation. Accomplishment of this novel was originally attributed to the plan for answering detractors who calumniated his works. Trogdon elucidates the primordial motivation of the author: "The book supposedly describes Hemingway hunting animals in Africa, but under the surface is the story of Hemingway hunting the critics of his books. Hemingway takes specific criticisms of these works and, by giving his own aesthetic opinions as replacements, answers his detractors" (2). If Hemingway were alive presently, he would feel astonished about the connection between instrumentalism and his work.

In the memoir, for demonstrating masculine power in hunting competition, animals are relentlessly sacrificed during safari, and Hemingway's ambition is nothing more than beating Karl by catching enormous trophies the more the better. As an instrumental oriented hunter, he presents typical examples to interpret correlation between means and purpose, such as "hunting and animals," "painting and canvas," and "writing and pencils" in following utterance:

The way to hunt is for as long as you live against as long as there is such and such and animal; just as the way to paint is as long is there is you and colors and canvas, and to write as long as you can live and there is pencil and paper or ink or any machine to do it with, or anything you care to write about, and you feel a fool, and you are a fool, to do it any other way. ( $GHOA^1$  12)

Devoting all his energies in retrieving horns, leather or heads, the final purpose of the huntsman is merely for displaying one's masculinity and dominance. And such behavior which appears in the light of human inclination and treats other beings as means to attend one's goal, corresponds to distinguishing features of "instrumentalism," defined by Plumwood as "the kind of use of an earth other which treats it as entirely a means to another's ends, as one whose being creates no limits on use and which can be entirely shaped to ends not its own" and it's a way of unfairly use that does not respect others' independence or fullness of being, or acknowledge their agency. Its aim is to subsume the other maximally within the sphere of the user's own agency. It recognizes no residue or autonomy in the instrumentalised other, and tries to deny or negate that other as a limit on the self and as a centre of resistance" (142).

In the preface of the novel, Hemingway stresses that displaying the authentic aspect of human behaviors with regard to human relationship with the land is the purport of the text. Although during Hemingway's life the issue of ecocriticism had not developed yet, his original purpose, composing a novel with factual plot coming about in Africa for competing with other novels composed of imaginative literary content, embraced undesigned coincidence characteristics of ecocriticism. Hemingway's enthusiasm for African nature sceneries and concerns for animal hunting remind readers to ponder how human-centered viewpoint not only regards people as the unparalleled absolute beings holding inherent value and the standard of judgment, but conclude that nature and nonhuman beings exist with "instrumental value" rather than intrinsic value. Accordingly, the threshold and destination of human practice are both out of human benefits. In other words, anthropocentrism eliminates nature from the sphere should be ethically cared by individuals who fallaciously suppose there is no direct ethic obligation toward nature. Actually, hunting is a war that takes destroying living environments of animals as means and sets the death of animals as ultimate objects for anthropocentric desire.

Ostensibly, Hemingway's highly praising nature for its beauty persuades readers that he faces nature and all creatures in deep respect. Actually, hidden instrumentalism

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> "GHOA" stands for the abbreviation of Ernest Hemingway's work, "Green Hills of Arica."

does exist in his hypocritical appreciation of nature. In the wilderness, animal creatures described in the novel possess no significance or value as living beings. Plants are plants, and animals are merely animals and they subsist just for serving human endless desire for hunting. Unyeilding characteristic and jealousy prompt Hemingway to compete with Carl by taking Africa as a "heaven" for dominant huntsmen to hound unassisted animals. Human excessive egoism manifestly makes animals negligible. Mentioning hunting contest, in the following dialogue between Hemingway and Pop, animals distinguished as scapegoats of human instrumentalism unquestionably become negligible.

"I love it," I said. "But I don't want that guy to beat me. Pop, he's got the best buff, the best rhino, the best water-buck—"

"You bet him on oryx," Pop said.

"What's an oryx?"

"He'll look damned handsome when you get him home."

"I'm just kidding."

"You beat him on impala, one land. You've got a first rate bushbuck. Your leopard's as good as his. But he'll beat you on anything where there's luck. He's got damned wonderful luck and he's a good land. I think he's off his feed a little." (GHOA 153) The main attempt for Hemingway to come to Africa is hunting for pleasure; therefore, the place he likes or not frequently depends on how much advantage it provides. Owing to human ambitious competition, animals are forced to be valued based on their "size and quality" in anthropocentric world and the mode of "trophy-measurement" conceals deeper meaning for huntsmen to adopt as the criterion to evaluate their performances (Ryan 38 and Strychacz 41). Nature in the author's writing has become the percolate product of human sensory awareness. The wilds and animals both become the segments of humanized nature-the wilderness proves to be the territory for satisfying human conquering desire, animals play as various subordinate characters and Hemingway proclaims himself as the subject endowed with supreme right of speech in a prominent position. Such individual egoism with anthropocentric desire presumes the hunted as "excluded others" which temporarily exist as the result of huntsmen's ambition. What hunters take to heart is their personal goal instead of sacrificed animals' relation with human hunting purpose. For instance, while successfully shooting a rhinoceros, Hemingway photographs the

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rhino on the moment and appreciates the beauty of the bleeding creature without thinking any ethic issue of respecting animal beings: "When the whole outfit came up, we rolled the rhino into a sort of kneeling position and cut away the grass to take some pictures. The bullet hole was fairly high in the back, a little behind the lungs. [...] he's a beauty. Let me get the camera and take some pictures of him" (GHOA 79 and 84). The process of chasing after animals is exhaustively recorded and the writer calls hunting "happiness." Failure hunting brings him despondency and jealousy; successful hunting brings him wild excitement and pride. Through Hemingway's photolike portrayal, we smell reeking of animal blood; hear the shot that devastate animals' living in peace and nose out human beings' brutality and arrogance from the face of hunting victors. Animal's death can be scented out while Hemingway succeeds in slaughtering a Kudu, as he refers to, "He was lying on the side where the bullet had gone in and there was not a mark on him and he smelled sweet and lovely like the breath of cattle and the odor of thyme after rain" (GHOA 231). His remarried wife, P. O. M. even uses the word, "wonderful" to praise the moaning of a bull on the edge of death, as she remarks, "It was wonderful when we heard him bellow [ . . . ] It's such a sad sound. It's like hearing a horn in the woods" (GHOA 119).

Plumwood's explanation concerning "egoism" in human instrumentalism directly echoes characters' behavior in plot:

Egoism is that even in the case of enlightened self-interest the welfare of others can figure only in the secondary set, never the first, primary set of ends. The resulting agents are conceived as hyperseparated and self-contained because no internal relations of interest or desire bind people to one another, and primary goal sets are exclusive, without overlap. The primary interest set of such a rational agent is assumed to concern only himself. The welfare of others may be considered, but only in ways which treat it as secondary to primary goals. (144)

In explaining the definition of egoism, apparently, Plumwood operates the concept of "binary opposition" to distinguish the self (without being restricted by ethics or the other's emotion) from the other (often utilized due to human instrumentalism). Howbeit, such assumption of self-other dualism suits to interpret human and nonhuman relationship in nature rather than human mutual relationship in society<sup>2</sup>. At

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 $<sup>^2</sup>$  Plumwood has asserted that the central problem for a society for individuals conceived is ethics, and 40

any rate, animals and humans are not both composing members in the same society or the territory of the wilds.

"Egoism" and "intrumentalism" both belong to the self-dominant mode. The ego wipes the other away from the network of ethics, and the other impersonates not only the obstacle in fort of the ego when it is unnecessary but also a sort of resource to satisfy the ego's desire when it becomes necessary once in a while. Even though human ego tries to stand on the point of the other, "self requirement and desire" still can hardly be discarded.

In *Green Hills of Africa*, successfully letting creatures dead with one shooting is the prerequisite condition for avoiding animals prolonging their last gasp with torture. Because of the failure in hunting the baboon with one-gun shot, Hemingway reproaches himself for bringing the baboon torture and pain. In narrative, he expresses sense of guilt in first person narrative, "But further on we came on some droppings in the rocks with blood in them and then for a while he had dropped dung wherever he climbed and all of it was blood-spotted. It looked, now, like a gut shot or one go through the paunch. I was more ashamed of it all the time." (*GHOA* 113). Human sympathy revealing in his utterance seemingly persuades readers how the huntsman is sympathetic over how the baboon severely suffers from his maladroit shooting technique. Further examining into the hunter's behavior, the truth of animal slaughtering for "self requirement and desire" can not be varied. Again, unsuccess in murdering the sable bull with one shot makes Hemingway humiliated, as he pronounces with exposed tone,

I felt a son of a bitch to have hit him and not killed him. I did not mind killing anything, any animal, if I killed it cleanly, they all had to die and my interference with the nightly and the seasonal killing that went on all the time was very minute and I had no guilty feeling at all. We ate the meat and kept the hides and horns. But I felt rotten sick over this sable bull. Besides, I wanted him. I wanted him damned badly, I wanted him more than I would admit. Well, we and played our string out with him. (272)

<sup>&</sup>quot;dominant ethical mood will be ethical nihilism" in human society if individuals treat the other with egoism and self-interest orientation (144-5). Human being is the animal of emotion in the disciplinary society and it can not be uncomplicated for the self to avoid the moral or emotional restriction from the other.

In the declaration above, we've obtained the message that owing to the "benefit" of acquiring the animal's horns and hides, the hunter murders it. In ethic aspect, it is controversial to comment that "I had no guilty feeling at all" in killing the hunted because they will die after all. As visual beings, people's sense of sight results in the phenomenon that everything on earth could be resources at hand for taking advantage of the other as the instrument to content human surplus longing. Inspecting Hemingway's disgrace of bringing the bleeding animal torment but discrepantly proclaiming that there is not fault to finish its life by shooting it with one shot at the same moment, we attribute the protagonist's behavior to his "nihilist morality" because "the domain of ethics is the domain of those who have not been intrumentalised, whose needs and agency must be considered" (Plumwood 154). As an intrumentalistic individual, the hunter maintains master perspective with hegemonic power, and his egoism controls "the prevailing ethical nihilism which accompany the predominantly egoist liberal account of the self within the boundary of nature as representing the kingdom of means" (154).

Human egoism filled with the characteristic of self-centered individuality has denied the existence and being of others on earth, and such phenomenon usually leads to dominant positions. Notwithstanding, in hunting trips, aboriginals own more morality toward the land than foreigners: "The natives live in harmony with it. But the foreigner destroys, cut down the trees, drains the water, so that the water supply is altered and in a short time the soil, once the sod is turned under, is cropped out" (GHOA 284). Aboriginals definitely perceive how mankind subsists on Mother Earth. Beside human beings and land, they place significance on lives of other beings. As natives of African wilderness, Pop and M'Cola, who accompany Hemingway for hunting, deserve to be the paragon of ecological ethics. For striking the balance of animal ecology, Pop supplies a frame of reference, "no killing on the side, no ornamental killing, no killing to kill" (GHOA 16). Therefore, at the moment of Hemingway's lifting the rifle to shoot a cow, Pop sets his face against him for defending the cow's life in virtue of her dedication of propagation. Another native, M'Cola twice prevents Hemingway from shooting sow animals. Hemingway records the situation when a female rhinoceros is going to be sacrificed for hunting pleasure: "I heard M'Cola saying, 'Toto! Toto!' And he grabbed my arm. Droopy was

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whispering, 'Manamouki<sup>3</sup>! Manamouki! Manamouki!' very fast and he and M'Cola were frantic that I should not shoot. It was a sow rhino with a calf and as I lowered the gun" (*GHOA* 99). Being analogous to watchers, M'Cola and Pop rigidly abide by the rule of rudimentary need in animal communities.

In human self-absorbed relation with nature, how do their interests and values egoistically correlate with instrumental intention? Plumwood elaborates on relevant ratiocination concerning how human benefit intention is incorrectly assumed by individuals in their relation with nature as follows, "Values are determined through the preferences of valuers; valuers' preferences are determined through valuers' interests; valuers are humans; therefore, values are determined through human interests" (149). Mankind takes advantage of the profitable and indistinct strategy to fit what they want and exclude subjectivity of others. Insidiously, such irrationality of partiality becomes reasonable and internalized in human cognition. In instrumentalism, benefit intention is exclusive so individuals only take their own welfare and benefit to heart with preconception. In this novel, amusement (value) of animal slaughtering in hunting fits interests of characters (valuers). Before gunning a waterbuck, Hemingway measures it with the value of meat to decide if the animal being deserves to be shot or not, as he soliloquizes, "Waterbuck was the one animal we might get that I knew was worthless as meat and I had shot a better head than this one carried. I had the sights on the buck as he tore away, remembered about the worthless meat, and having the head, and did not shoot" (GHOA 52). Ironically, thanks to the philosophy of instrumentalism, "worthlessness" saves the innocent waterbuck's life. Huntsmen who outrageously trample on animals' lives for entertainment might commercialize animal bodies. One of companions emboldens Hemingway to shoot the rhinoceros and indicates, "You'll enjoy it, being by yourself. You can sell the horn if you don't want it" (GHOA 17). Besides, after hunting a lion, P. O. M. proudly voices her mental state, "I'd be too proud. Isn't triumph marvelous? [ . . . ] I feel so wonderful about just being supposed to have killed him. You know people never used to carry me on their shoulders much at home" (GHOA 43). Witnessing miserable animal's approaching death satirically arouses human amusement. Mercilessly, in hunting field with anthropocentric hegemony, the hunted at most play the role of instruments to ingratiate human nonessential and interminable requirements.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> In African language, "Manamouki" represents the meaning of "cows."

Referring to human egoism, the existence of the hunted is ravaged by people who had set their purpose in advance. Even though the requirement of the hunted has been beheld by men, that is on account of fortuitousness happening in the process of men's achieving their egoistic goal. In the work, after grumbling out the insufficient amount of kudus, Hemingway moves to next hunting field filled with kudus and sables. Shooting animals brings him sense of fulfillment but makes him guilty in the meanwhile like what he converses, "I was beginning to feel awfully good and Karl was very cheerful at the prospect of this new miraculous country where they were so unsophisticated that it was really a shame to topple them over" (143). Although the hunter's shame reflects that animal victimization has been perceived, such compassion is established on the undeniable actuality—the hunter slaughters animals for recreation. If there were no hunting motivation with egoism, there would be no victimized other beings, and no guilt feeling occurring on the hunter.

Moreover, Rachel Carson, one of the most famous literary authors of ecology holds analogous attitude toward animals with African natives. Staying with birds and various animals in the orchard over a long period of time since the childhood, Carson perceived that she could spiritually communicate with these creatures and once disputed with her brother owing to that he stressed that hunting a hare in the orchard was quite delightful. Carson, who abominated hunting all her life especially in the name of recreation, emphasized that the hunted felt nothing pleasurable but torment. Correspondingly, she radically pushed through the domestic rule, "no hunting," and manifested her outlook that "hunting is the most serious disgrace for modern people" (Sterling 20). Carson also criticized that human religion preaches anthropocentric faith; thereupon, people take it for granted to occupy the dominant class and suppose all creatures or non-creatures on earth are God's presents for men. Similarly, in the plot, Hemingway feels grateful for God's giving him a "rifle" as an "instrument" to make triumphal shots on sable bulls: "I was thanking God I had the rifle reloaded before he came out" (GHOA 259). Even if sympathy for the hunted has delivered by the protagonist, hunting interest and excited mood cannot be concealed, as he exclaims, "But it was excited shooting, all of it, and I was not proud of it. I had gotten excited and shot at the whole animal instead of the right place and I was ashamed; but the outfit now were drunk excited. I would have walked but you could not hold them, they were like a pack of dogs as we ran" (GHOA 259). Howbeit, human behavior not

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only reveals his/her profit intention but the relationship between human and nature/animals. It is implied that in essence, human welfare and contentment substantially connect with ecological system and animals and plants' community, as what Plumwood delineates,

The actions and desires of the human species and its members can reflect not only their own interest (egoism), or the interest of other species (altruism), but a relationship between their own interest and that of another, and a relationship of a non-contingent kind. And such relationships can hold between humans, both individually and in social groups, and nature, in whole or in part. (151)

The authenticity of human dependence and correlation with other being on earth is disclaimed by anthropocentric awareness all the time. In ecological system, mutual affection does happen no matter to human or nonhuman creatures. Mentioning ethics of relationship between organisms and environments, when one's being intrinsically intertwines with other being, there is no need to feel anxious about the obliteration of one's benefit because aspiring other's profit equals pursuing one's welfare. As an individual, much positivity in human nature is possibly waited to be induced either through education or ethical rumination. Like Hemingway, his case reminds us that a person could be introspective animals as a result of his self-examination after suffering injuries in hunting. The wounded arm enables him to be a sympathizer revealing fellow feeling toward the hunted, as he expressed, "I thought suddenly how a bull elk must feel if you break a shoulder and he gets away and in the night I lay and felt it all, the whole thing as it would happen from the shock of the bullet to the end of the business and, being a little out of my head, thought perhaps what I was going through was as a punishment for all hunters" (GHOA 148). In the following paragraph, the idea of "ecological self" will be taken as the resolution to deal with the crisis and conflict of ecological balance resulting form human beings' instrumentalist sequela hunting at random.

Scrutinizing correlation between human egoistic requirement and purpose prompts us to transparently have a look at men's position in ecological circle, and to correct our arrogant rejection of conceding our dependency on nature. For coping with men's self-centredness, the notion of "the ecological self" suggests guiding awareness for

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men to get rid of negative practices in hurting other being in on earth. "The ecological self" recognizes that all other beings enfold identical status as mine on earth, and their existence with different<sup>4</sup> "agency and intentionality" affects and restricts me in ecological system (Plumwood 159). In order to specify more regarding "the ecological self," Plumwood discusses one of its elements, "mutual self," as a new potential for human being to solve the deadlocked relationship with nature and non-human animals, as she clarified, "I consider the mutual self as providing an alternative account of relations to nature which both breaks down self/other dualism and provides a model for relations of care, friendship and respect for nature, and hence for the ecological self" (142). To subvert self/other dualism caused by egoism, it is accentuated that dualistic relationship of "means" and "ends" should be overthrown as well:

As a movement beyond self/other dualism, the relational self concept also implies some breakdown of means/ends dualism, seeing means as constraining ends and vice versa, and resisting analysis in terms of a sharp division of the kingdom of ends and that of means so characteristic of domination and instrumentalism. (155)

In Hemingway's African hunting, we've recognized his attaining "ends" with "means"— the process filled with "desire" and "requirement," more often than not, imperceptibly menaces other nature beings.

Essential thoughts of "the ecological self" resemble the ones of "ecological ethics" which requests mankind to acknowledge and respect the whole creation on earth and its value and right of existence. The non-human race embraces the right to have exemption from being threatened by human race. When people's needs contradictorily collides with animal ones, rudimentary requirements are prior to non-basic ones. That is to say nonhuman creatures' basic needs cannot be eliminated due to human non-basic ones which might result in nonhuman creatures' destructive consequences. For instance, animals' lives (basic needs) cannot be relinquished for recreational hunting (non-basic needs). Like human beings, animal creatures feel

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The word, "different," is used to explain that self and other being's agency and intentionality is ambulatory. In addition to respect other beings, the self's welfare and goal is not totally tantamount to the other's which could flexibly be embraced in the self's but not decided by the self. Taking the plot for example, African native M'Cola feels relieved to successfully prevent Hemingway from shooting sow animals for their welfare, but it's unnecessary to live with them on the prairie for daily protecting them from being gunned by hunters.

excruciating while being gunned. If it is immoral to afflict people and the behavior of bringing creatures sufferings is also unethical (Smith 192). Consequently, Hemingway's intention of being a pleasure-hunter which is not on the basis of basic need, has been queried by Kandisky, an African native, "Why should any man shoot a kudu? You, an intelligent man, a poet, to shoot kudu. [...] At the end of that time you have shot everything and you are sorry for it. To hunt for one special animal is nonsense. Why do you do it" (GHOA 8)? Kandisdy is qualified to be an individual with "ecological ego" that tolerantly subsumes all biological communities' welfare into one's own, and provides people's incorrigible instrumentalistic ego with resolutions. In the way of identifying oneself with respecting and caring about other being, the self/other dualism might be dissolved and animals could avert from being conceived as exchangeable commodities, such as rhinoceros horns in hunting market. Hemingway's hunting comportment belongs to the so-called "shallow ecology," which asserts that men predominate over the earth by grouping multiplicity of the nature world into human occupied resources whose worthiness depends on its value and contribution to anthropocentric community. On the contrary, "deep ecology" similar to Plumwood's "ecological self," contains various distinctive tendencies: "efforts to satisfy vital needs rather than desires," "appreciation of ethnic and cultural differences," "a tendency toward vegetarianism," "acting nonviolently," "efforts to protect local ecosystems," and so forth (Sessions 213). Deep ecology asserts that all creatures existing with equivalent inherent values hold equal right in living, and men have to maintain harmonious relationship with nature and have no right to abate multiplicities in biological community. If we rewrite Hemingway's novel in accord with tendencies of deep ecology, there might be no elaboration relating to the subject of hunting competition. At present, environmental disasters unceasingly take place on earth on account of ecological disequilibrium resulting from human beings' constant pursuit of material requirement. Accidental catastrophes urge the necessity to introspect the relationship between humans and non-humans. Green Hills of Africa helps readers ascertain the relationship between nature and human culture by implying how people not only hunt for excessive requirements but treat the mother land with instrumental inappropriateness, like what Hemingway expounds, "The earth gets tired of being exploited. A country wears out quickly unless man puts back in it all his residue and that of all his beasts. When he quits using beasts and uses machines, the earth defeats him quickly. The machine can't reproduce, nor does it fertilized the

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soil, and it eats what he cannot raise" (284). Subjugating nature might bring humans self-righteous and transient exhilaration but we might ethically suffer form long-ranged torture once the harmonious relationship with nature has been devastated.

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