

**Going Wild Hunting, Animal Rights, and the  
Contested Meaning of Nature**

By  
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## Going Wild Review

*Going Wild Hunting, Animal Rights, and the Contested Meaning of Nature* is a book written by Jan E. Dizard in 1999. This book has 230 pages and is divided into the following seven major chapters:

- (a) What is wild?
- (b) Let nature be.
- (c) Taking care of nature.
- (d) Sport, management, or murder: ambiguity and ambivalence in modern hunting
- (e) Nature's rights and human responsibility
- (f) Constructing nature
- (g) Stewards or curators? Caring for nature.

The main goal of this book as Dizard stated "my goal in *Going Wild* is to explore people's ideas and positions, not their motives or personalities" (p. xv). Dizard examined the controversy surrounding a specific area in the state of Massachusetts as well as the use of hunting as a valid and effective control on the deer population in Massachusetts. He showed the problems that hunters may create to the environment and its creatures. To achieve such a goal, Dizard conducted several interviews representing various perspectives toward the environmental issues.

## **Chapter I: what is wild?**

Dizard described how hunters prepared to hunt before December 2, 1991. The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) passed a bill to the governor to be signed in which hunters would be permitted to hunt in the Quabbin area.

### *The Quabbin as Wilderness*

In the late seventeenth century, the area was known as *Quabbin* and was settled by the Europeans. However, before the Europeans, Native Americans had settled the same area, where it was called *Swift River Valley*. They used fire to clear up the land in order to plant crops and attract the game animals that they depended on as food resources. The negative impact of the native hunters was very apparent at that time. The valley area, by the late of nineteenth century, became a home for four small towns with populations approximately of three thousand people.

In the early of the twentieth century, Boston officials realized the necessity of increasing the sources of drinking water to meet the needs of the expanding metropolis. As a result, Swift River Valley was the most appropriate target to build a large reservoir. However, the valley's residents opposed the notion of the project, but their voices and unorganized efforts were not sufficient to be considered. Thus, the project was completed in eleven years. The area was managed by the MDC to protect any human activity since 1928, where the last person was evacuated from the area.

By 1950, having established such a large reservoir created an opportunity for the area to become a heavy forest. The wildlife was abundant and diverse, especially the white-tailed deer. That is, there were neither hunting activities nor harvesting. The nature in the area was completely left to its own self.

By time, many problems grew in the area due to the imposed restrictions by the MDC. For instance, the red pines began to crowd little trees and bushes that were under them. Also, the fire suppression became more dangerous. Another problem was the declining of the commercial value of the pines when they were ready to be cut down.

The problem expanded to include the reservoir. Water distribution network became old and full of leaks, which forced the Boston water official to conduct several water conservation campaigns aiming at reducing water consuming. Eventually, the reservoir began to refill, and the problem was mostly ceased.

The situation improved and everything returned back as almost as it was before. However, because solutions that were done, including clear cuts and thinning the forest's covers, the deer herd population began to decrease (e.g. 60 to 25 per square mile). Later, the deer herds were able to recover and become more stable in their population in the reservoir. The deer became the symbol of the Quabbin. As a result, Quabbin was regarded as an ideal representation of the wilderness in that area, where all kinds of activities were forbidden. Various fish species were stocked in the reservoir, and bald eagles were introduced to the area.

*Managing a Wilderness: Paradox or Oxymoron*

Dizard confuted some wilderness definitions. He stated that wilderness is not something that had ends nor a "raw and self-defined." It was our land, our wildlife that we intentionally made and took care of. Moreover, he revealed that Thoreau was the first American who had insisted on preventing humans' activities, and humans should learn to live in a positive manner with their nature. I like Dizard's credibility and objectivity when he said, "we seem to be ambivalent about nature ... Being unsettled, they [traditions] allow considerable room for disagreement, controversy, and bitter division... This ambivalence has been played out again and again over the last century" (p. 18). Here, Dizard tried to voice an important message. That is, we need to work collectively to preserve our Mother Nature. Also, we need to put all conflict issues between conservationists and preservationists behind and precede further steps ahead.

In addition, he continued by saying that, as Leopold had explained, humans should not stand aside and left the nature to do its own things. Rather, they have choices to select from in order to do what is appropriate and to avoid what does not without diminishing the diversity and putting more unnecessary pressure on their environment.

*The Quabbin as Battleground*

People in Boston were no longer ignoring the hazards around the reservoir, which were caused by the large herd of deer. The overly abundant of deer was due to the large quantity of food supplies as well as to the ideal habitats, which created by the MDC, around the reservoir. Times went, these habitats became heavy forests, leading to more complex problems.

In 1989, different ideas were emerged, including the overpopulation of deer, close some small area around the reservoir to keep deer away from the reservoir. One way to lessen the deer population was controlling birth, but this was discarded because several studies had shown the sharpen mortality rate of such a technique. Having such a complicated situation, the only solution for the MDC to control the deer herd was to increase the deer mortality.

The MDC carefully studied the main two predators on the reservation, bobcats and coyotes. Their aim was to investigate the effectiveness of these predators in reducing the herd deer population. However, the result was disappointing because these predators no longer preferred the deer in the area. Thus, the MDC thought of other predators, wolves and mountain lions, but the problem with these predators was their large sizes, and there were no sufficient spaces that can harbor them in the reservation.

In retrospect, the situation turned to be an obdurate problem that was out of the MDC's grasp. Therefore, it became obvious that the alternative option was to bring "people" to the reservation to accomplish the goal, reducing the deer herd. In 1989, the MDC selected specific names to be invited to the reservation to kill the deer herd. However, such a selection created wide and different views and perspectives, which made the MDC to reconsider its plan again. Deer reduction program was a result of a series of several meetings and conferences. There was a strong controversy among the MDC agencies and public rights. However, the inevitable conclusion was as Campbell clarified that the deer must be controlled, and the way to do that is to kill them.

Finally, on May 1991, a bill was signed by the governor allowing the MDC to open the Quabbin to the hunters. However, issuing such permission did not end the conflict. The controversy over the hunting created gear divisions on the Quabbin. Mainly, how should we conceive of nature and our relationship with natural forests?

## **Chapter II: let nature be**

Generally, this chapter discussed the division over how nature should be conceived and the division's outcomes. The MDC encountered opposition stance from the Quabbin Protective Alliance (QPA). The QPA opposed the management policies of the MDC in the reservation.

*Could Deer Be a Problem?*

It seemed that there were no problems from the outside, but if someone looked carefully, they would know that exactly what the forest looked like in the present of the deer. Dizard described the Quabbin forest in terms of its vegetations and trees. He showed that well-known people, Martin Dodge and Joan William, were claiming that there was no deer problem in the reservation. Those people said that if there was any problem, it was caused by humans.

Furthermore, if the ultimate goal of the MDC was logging practices, here the deer became a serious problem. To achieve their goal, the MDC endeavored to allow hunters to hunt in the reservation. However, the MDC took member of the Friend of the Quabbin and other people from various environmental and conservation agencies to a tour in areas where the deer had feed on their vegetations leaving just ferns. The MDC also showed those people other areas that had been fenced where the vegetations were very dense. It was obvious that the tour aimed to show the negative impact of having deer in the reservation. The MDC did not intended to stop their logging practices, even if the QPA allows for a short-time hunt in order to decrease the deer population as Ray Asselin explained.

*Deer, Trees, and Water: the connection challenged*

The controversy was not ended, but it became more complex. Several people and agencies, Massachusetts Audubon's Hubley, argued that the MDC did not do what they were supposed to accomplish or did not conduct sufficient studies before they implemented their plans in the area.

I would agree with Peter Gomes in his opinion that the problem is not our nature, but it is thinking. "Not only has it [thinking] brought us plenty, and made us the most powerful predator, but it's also going to be our demise. ... We're so disconnected from who we are, ... we're separate from our thought" (p.46).

*The critique of management*

Almost all agencies and organizations put a great deal of blame on the MDC because its logging practices in the reservation and its failure management plan. The MDC should have not harvested the red pines, if they were planning to decrease the deer population. However, clear-cutting of the red pines created more productive browses for

the deer, which in turn increased food resources. That is, higher rates of reproduction and survival will be. As a result, the main problem was neither the deer population nor the clear-cutting in the reservation. It was thy way the reservation was managed in general.

Dizard provided an intensive explanation about the animal rights. He said, “animals ... have the most fundamental right, the right of liberty, the right to be left alone” (p.55). Therefore, “let nature take care of herself” (p.57). What Wagner said was very reasonable and logic. He said, “the nature is a better manager than man will be ever” (p. 58).

#### *Nature’s Balancing Act: Old-growth Forest*

Dizard explained the differences between the northwest old-growth forests and the eastern old-growth forests. Also, he provided various definitions for old-growth forests. One definition was that the old-growth forest is a forest that has never been cut and managed by humans, where the average of its trees around 150 years. However, it is not only the character of ages that make it different, but also trees of many kinds of species and the countless creatures in it, including insects and small plants and animals.

### **Chapter III: taking care of nature**

Dizard said that id the MDC was aware of the nature could take care of itself, they would not have been burdened. Also, he explained how, to some extent, important to keep humans’ hands out of the nature. However, the proponents of the hunt opposed this idea claiming that humans are regarded as a part of the nature. Even though the MDC permitted fishing in 1950s, hunting was not welcomed in the reservation.

#### *Reluctant Managers*

The MDC managers were aware of their management’s mistakes and were ambivalent among themselves in terms of the reservation management. However, the MDC agency claimed that the large deer herd population would still be a serious problem, even if there were no logging practices. Furthermore, the cleared cut land, the hunting ban, and the lack of predators, all created a great habitat for the deer to multiply. Therefore, “it is not fair to blame the MDC for not planning for a wilderness area ...” (p. 78), said Elisa Campbell. The MDC was cautiously in selecting trees that to be harvested by using effective and specialized equipment to avoid any possible damages to the reservation.

*Nature id disturbance*

Elements in the nature are connected to one another. These connections are defined as a balance by management and hunt critics. Therefore, humans must learn how to live in harmony with their nature in order to for all – humans and nature – to be well. However, that does not mean that humans stand aside and do not improve their scientific knowledge about the nature as well as effective management plans.

Balance is not natural. Rather, “it is a human contrivance” (p. 84) in the Quabbin reservation. So, we, as humans, have the decision to do better or worse things that nature cannot do to itself.

*What is “Good” forest?*

The reservation is not considered as “healthy”, and the source of the illness is the MDC in the eye of the critics, but what makes the forest sick in the reservation is the deer herd. Dizard revealed that the type of sickness was a simplification, reduction of the “range and variety of species” (p. 85). That is, humans changed the ecosystem. As earlier mentioned, the MDC simplified the ecosystem in the Swift River Valley. They did not consider these alterations as mistakes because the goal was to maintain the watershed pure as much as possible.

In addition, the dominant tree species were the oak trees due to the burning history in the area. Thus, the MDC was convinced that suppress fire would be the best solution to eradicate oak trees in the reservation, but Bruce Spencer did not express his intent in this regard, which was maintaining the oak trees for commercial purposes. However, within the MDC, most, if not all, critics advocated the idea of diversity of unmanaged old-growth forests, whereas the MDC’s administration insisted that management would create the same diversity but with less risk. Management would stop, or at least lessen, deer from preventing a wide range of tree species from growing.

In the conclusion of this chapter, Dizard insisted that we must be knowledgeable of our nature and lessen the risk that our nature encounters as much as we possible can. Protecting the nature is our obligation in order to maintain balanced and healthy forests.

## **Chapter IV: Sport, Management, or Murder**

### Ambiguity and ambivalence in modern hunting

In this chapter, Dizard starting by talking about the “ideal of the sportsman”, where a group of monthly magazines devoted to readerships about various hot fishing topics, including equipment, techniques, and places for fish and/or game.

#### Hunters on the firing line

The ideal sportsman’s publications “hooked” hunters and made them as the “vanguard” of “conservation, true environmentalists, bound by a code of honor that respects property, [and] the nobility of wild animals, ...” (p. 99). In turn, the ideal of honorable was conveyed informally for father to son. However, Dizard stated that all interviews that he had conducted with all hunters, except one, had the perception that hunters must be sufficiently knowledgeable of their limits as well as the environment that they deal with.

With respect to the Quabbin deer, it became obvious that the deer were no longer represent what nature intended them to be. Thus, hunters argued, “deer were not only ruining the forest, [but also] they were ruining themselves” (p. 103). Reducing deer herd, as hunters claimed, would return them to their true state. Although they, as hunters, were not scientific knowledgeable of animal behaviors, they were thoroughly know what species that they want to hunt. They are the “students of nature”, and they are not marauders killing anything that moves.

In terms of the reservation at the Quabbin, hunters really knew what the nature was like and wanted to see the reservation restored again. Thus, they believed that hunting was one strategy of the restoration processes. The MDC, on the other hand, wanted to use hunters as tools to manage the reservation, but hunt, as Tom Berube put it, “wasn’t about sport at all; it was about bringing things back to normal, back to a point where the deer could be honored and respected for their real traits, not for their tameness” (p. 105).

Hunters saw themselves as a part of the nature cycles and laws. This was how they wanted other to think of them. Therefore, as a result, hunting was a responsibility and management strategy rather than a sport of killing creatures.

Dizard discussed how hunters misbehaved in the wood regardless what had been minted in the previous paragraph. He used several examples of hunting opponents as evidence of such disgusting behaviors. For instance, Ray Asselin was a hunter who had killed anything and everything. Asselin was not responsible himself and careless and saw many “slob hunters” in his life. So, he knew what it was about in the wood. To prevent such a thing, Asselin said stop all things

Dizard concluded this section by saying that the MDC tried all possible means to avoid hunting in the reservation. However, it was very necessary to integrate some types of hunt in the Quabbin area. That was, sportsman was necessary as an immediate remedy. *Hunters: “Tools of Management”*

Even though the reduction of deer was necessary, sport hunting was not appropriate to the Quabbin reservation. The MDC preferred sharpshooters because they could do the job in a short period of time without much harm to the reservation. However, the demand of sharpshooters began gradually to diminish due to various reasons, including who would be defined as a sharpshooter and experienced hunter and, as the same time, knowledgeable of areas and habits of deer. In addition, sharp-shooting notion may not succeed. For example, it was implemented in Crane’s Beach, a small reserve, but did not work because deer had not shown any cooperation after the first shots, but when the area was opened the public, the number of deer remarkably decreased.

Since the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife were the first responsible for wildlife animals, the MDC had almost no other options, except accepting hunters to control deer, which meant that hunters were used as tools of management. The MDC wanted managers rather than hunters to carry out the efforts in the Quabbin, so they were worried that hunters would be careless and irresponsible for their actions in treating the reservation like other public hunting areas. As a result, the MDC had required all selected hunters to attend an orientation session before the actual hunt began. The MDC also planned an outline of a series of rules and regulations to be followed.

*Death or pleasure: one Man’s meat anther Man’s poison*

The main theme in this section was the animal’s rights. Humans should admit the animal’s rights, which include life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. People who

proposed this nation believed that stopping violent toward nature by killing, hunting, and using herbicides and pesticides would create a new era of peace and freedom for both humans and nature. In the light of this notion, hunting is regarded as awful because of what it does to animals.

I like the statement with which Dizard concluded this chapter. He said, “ For all ... differences, hunters and the MDC faction spoke of nature in the language of responsibility. Their opponents spoke of nature in the language of rights” (p. 130).

### **Chapter V: nature’s rights and human responsibility**

Generally, the controversy over the Quabbin reservation was a struggle over a place. Dizard said that everything had a function and a place. Had humans not interfered, nature would achieve equilibrium among its components. As humans, we must stop our foolishness and greed, so nature will have the chance to restore and fix itself in order to become more stable. Moreover, Dizard listed several good questions regarding nature’s choices and how humans should deal with such choices.

#### *The language of Rights*

The opponents of the hunt and the MDC were more likely to be preservationists. They aimed to protect what was left of nature as much as possible. The Quabbin was one example of the remaining natural environments. These people spoke the language of rights, where nature should be left alone without any single intervention. Preservationists were regarded as speakers on behalf of the animals and trees. They can ask the courts to prevent, or at least lessen, any harm to wildlife species, including animals, plants, habitats, ... etc.

Dizard provided a clear explanation of how the language of rights had historically arisen in the west as a result of the idea of *individualism*. He went further arguing that humans were still struggling on many issues regarding what constitutes a *right*. That was, humans were still not strongly settled on the issue.

Dizard raised an important issue regarding what it meant to “*grant rights that protect the ‘autonomy’ of an organism that clearly is not autonomous*” (p. 137). Dizard described how deer plainly needed to be autonomous, but they could not make their claims heard. Claiming rights was not a simple matter because it involved more than the presumption of autonomy. Moreover, the language of rights would be meaningless if

there was no action taken to reestablish the balance and harmony of nature. The absence of such equilibrium would create unpleasant conflicts among creatures in nature. The main point was if everything in nature was left alone, things would become as they were before.

As a conclusion to this section, Dizard revealed that such an emphasis on animal rights had created some tension between animal rights advocates and traditional environmentalists. This tension was under control since both sides had a basic understanding of nature. Both sides also considered that human's interventions have been a major factor in the disruption of nature.

#### *The language of responsibility*

Unlike the language of rights, the language of responsibility referred to those people who had advocated the hunt. They had a different perspective about nature. Although they shared some views with the opponents of the hunt about humans' negative impact on nature, they resisted placing all blames on humankind. Here, Dizard listed several important questions regarding how it was imperative for humans to use their imaginations to restore environments for their benefit when unexpected disruption conditions were present. And to be able to live, humans were "obliged ... to seek advantage by utilizing [their] capacity to reason, to modify, to invent" (p. 145).

The MDC faction realized the responsibility over their shoulders since changes took place. The MDC faction was seen as, in the eye of the rights supporters, irresponsible toward nature. However, the MDC did not accept such an attack. They said that without being active interventionists, we would be an endangered species. Furthermore, the MDC rejected the notion that the Quabbin could be treated as a separate island, and it could be an area of wilderness since humans made it.

Dizard saw this nation as an "*irony view*" because the managing and manipulating the Quabbin reservation to keep its appearance as a wild area would leave wilderness meaningless. He logically elucidated why this view was not reasonable in terms of the management of the Quabbin reservation. In addition, Dizard said that the MDC thought that it was very wise to create as diverse forests as plausible. The MDC's foresters could, as they claimed, create such a biodiversity.

*Rights and Responsibility Reconsidered*

Dizard stated that we, as humans, still think in *rudimentary* manners of our nature. He also showed how controversy was there over coming up with a universal definition of “*normality*.” Such a controversy would impede us from solving serious disputes regarding nature issues. For example, the Quabbin reservation had been an important issue for many years. Dizard suggested that more research were needed to enable people to live in harmony with their nature in the area of the Quabbin.

Finally, Dizard concluded this chapter by giving more valuable suggestions. That was, the biggest problem that we encountered was a result of the ignorance of our accountability toward the nature in which we live.

**Chapter VI: constructing nature**

Two days before the hunt was opened, several vehicles’ tires that parked at the access of the reservation entrance were slashed. No one claimed responsibility of the destruction. In the morning of the first day of the hunt, Dizard said that the staccato of shotgun fire was very intense in the first hour, and then it stopped. There was nobody that knew what was happening in the Quabbin reservation for certain. On one hand, after all discussions and orientations that had been done prior the hunt, hunters were worried in case they had not been successful. On the other hand, the MDC, outside the reservation, huddled to “share their anxiety ... to turn back the raw cold of the morning that they had much to be anxious about. They had invested a lot of themselves and their professional reputations in this hunt. One hunter fatality or dead eagle and there would be hell to pay” (p. 155-156). The public was very upset because of the hunting situation in the reservation. TV news cruised the Daniel Shays Highway looking for news. Protesters showed up, but were easily prevented from interfering with hunters. The situation was very messy and in disarray.

By the midmorning, the MDC was relieved and pleased because things went very well in the reservation (e.g., no confrontations, no accidental shootings, no injuries, and no hunters’ loss). Later, all hunters were requested to check their deer under the supervision of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife staff. Dizard stated that it was very impossible, as vehicles left the reservation, for anyone and even for the officials of the MDC to get a sense of how successful those hunters were.

By the end of the day, it became obvious that the job was done very successfully by the hunters. Over the nine-day-season, the 300 hunters killed 123 deer on the first day. The MDC was expecting 170 deer to be killed over the entire season. Therefore, protesters claimed that extending the hunt period for eight more days was unnecessary. However, the MDC explained that the estimated number was not the sought goal, but it was only a guess as to what might result from the hunt. The real goal was to reduce the deer in the reservation as quickly and safely as possible.

By the end of the nine-day-season, 900 hunters killed 576 deer, which was an unexpected number. The hunt was declared to be a success. In contrast, the opponents of the hunt were very horrified and disappointed with what happened to the deer in the reservation.

#### *Living with nature*

Nature is there for humans who want to see what is there and who need things from there. Humans differ in their perspectives on nature from one another. Such various perspectives might be close to each other but are not the same. However, Dizard said that humans still struggle to understand their relationship with nature. For thousands of years, humans altered and modified nature (e.g., harvesting, irrigation, degradation, and drought) to survive.

Dizard raised an important question. That was, should humans fit themselves to the cycle of nature? The answer is not an easy matter. It is almost impossible to imagine how humans always break their promises toward nature. He stated that leaving nature alone would result in valuable wilderness. Unfortunately, if nature means areas are not affected by humans' actions, it ended millennia ago as Mckibben had concluded. Nature in the Quabbin reservation is not easy to restore to its original conditions.

#### *Living with ourselves*

We, as humans, have grown more conscious of the ways that we affect nature. We attempt to manage, control, and manipulate nature for our selfishness and greed. More often, we try to stay away from the most fundamental problem, *extracting the earth's resource and changing nature*. Furthermore, it is impossible to determine the ideal number of humans and deer as well because we do not have the entire image of what ecosystems should look like.

In respect with the Quabbin, there were two argumentative sides. One argument supports the notion of leaving the reservation alone, so the forest would cover itself and the deer population would gradually decrease. Another argument advocates the idea of managing the reservation. For instance, if any species (animals and plants) begins to compete with other species and/or to do damage in the reservation, interventions must take place to keep things under control by hunting and/or logging. Even though both sides agree upon the necessity of finding a more sustainable relationship between humans and the environment, the controversy is very deeply rooted and intense. Dizard explained that having such different perspectives “framed the debate in ways that virtually precluded accord” (p. 172).

In conclusion of this chapter, Dizard revealed that the controversy over the Quabbin reservation management warned a sharp division over environmental policies and natural resource management. It is really “grievously sad” that people who live on the land cannot unite and agree on how best to defend it.

### **Chapter VII: Stewards or Curators? Caring for nature**

In the 1930’s, the MDC created a problem when they cleared the area in the Swift River Valley of populations, buildings, and woods. As a result, nature in the area began to produce oak, maple, cherry, ash trees ... etc. Such tree species were preferred by the white-tailed deer as a food source. In the area, an absence of predators and an abundance of food made it possible for the deer to duplicate their population. In the 1980’s, the MDC realized that the impact of the problem they had created in the 1930’s, so they began to develop plans to reduce the deer herd by a controlled hunt. Eventually, the controversy over the Quabbin reservation took place between the MDC and its faction and the environmentalists who were completely against the hunt of deer.

Nevertheless, after the successfulness of the first hunt in 1991, the hunt was repeated in 1992. In this hunt, 724 deer were killed. Like the 1991’s hunt there were no accidents, no dead eagles in 1992’s hunt. In 1994, the MDC began to develop an annual Quabbin Land Management Workshop, which became the “1995-2004 *Quabbin Land management Plan*.” This plan aimed to organize tree harvesting in the Quabbin reservation. As the MDC conducted “release cuts,” they opened additional areas in the reservation for hunters (e.g., Hardwick and New Salem areas were opened in 1993). In

four of six areas that were opened in 1993, 474 deer were killed, whereas 673 deer were killed in Petersham in 1994. However, the number of deer killed in 1995 decreased to 284. Further, 129 deer were killed in 1996, which was considered a very poor hunt, and it was 158 in 1997. The success of the MDC regarding the tree generation plan in 1997 was a serious problem for them. The Quabbin became a good habitat for deer where they could attain a herd growth rate of 50% per year if hunting for deer was stopped. That was, deer herd would return back as it had been in 1990!

By June 1998, the question of the deer herd size became all the more pressing. The Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee (QWAC) recommended that the hunt in New Salem area should be temporarily stopped as an experiment. Massachusetts Audubon and the MSPCA organizations argued that it was time to see if there was any need for the hunt continuum. New Salem area was an appropriate point to start. In 1997, only 9 deer were killed due to the heavy cover of the area. Also, regardless of the small number of killed deer, tree generation was very remarkable. In turn, low deer kill and high generation led to suspend the hunt in New Salem area.

Furthermore, more problems appeared on the surface, which made the MDC to be more worried and anxious about the complex situation in the Quabbin reservation. For instance, beavers, muskrats, moose were not given attention in 1991 because they were at a low growth rate and were not causing problems. However, in 1997, it was these species that began to threaten the reservation.

### *Loss and Hope*

Writing about nature called for an immediate protection. The tone of loss had gotten people's attention and made them think profoundly. For example, Dizard said, in the last twenty-five years, that people support the idea of spending tax money on the environment. Even beyond that, they said that the United States spent little on improving and protecting the environment. Dizard provided several examples from the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) surveys in 1993, 1994, and 1996. These examples showed how people were ready to spend their own money and sacrifice their own time for the sake of protection of the environment.

*Back from the Brink*

Dizard provided thorough explanations about habitat restoration, and how the state and the federal agencies give more attention currently than it was then. For example, turkeys, migratory waterfowls, black bears, beavers, moose, snow geese and ducks, and white-tailed deer, all have been growing steadily and successfully.

Dizard states that we, as humans, must develop and revive our habitats and reintroduce our extinct wildlife species. However, we ought to be more careful not to put ourselves in disconcerted situations again. We have to understand that what environmental conditions were there before Europeans settled the eastern part of the American continent cannot be returned again. He sealed his book by saying, “ For better or worse, we are in charge ... we’d be fools to put the fate of the environment, at this late date, in the lap of nature” (p. 211).

**Summary**

This book focused mankind’s relationship with wilderness, including various flora and fauna. Particularly, Dizard explored the tension controversy surrounding a certain area in Massachusetts, the Quabbin reservation. The novel story that Dizard told in his book was a huge story in history describing the white man's relationship with North American land, including its animals and plants.

Dizard is clearly concerned about the use of hunting as a valid and effective strategy to control the white-tailed deer population in the Quabbin reservation in the state of Massachusetts. However, he comprehensively explained the problems that hunters create and some of the myths, and especially lies, that they perpetrated. Dizard provided a great deal of animal rights/anti-hunting community views as well as their opponents.

All in all, I think this was an excellent book for anti-hunters, hunters, and nature and wildlife lovers and those people who desirably want to deeply understand their nature better.

