

NEITHER A MOTHER NOR AN OTHER: NATURE'S LITERARY  
EMANCIPATION IN WILLIAM GOLDING'S *LORD OF THE FLIES* AND  
LOUISE ERDRICH'S *TRACKS*

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EMANCIPATION IN WILLIAM GOLDING’S *LORD OF THE FLIES* AND  
LOUISE ERDRICH’S *TRACKS***

submitted by **RABİA ELİF ÖZCAN** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of **Master of Arts in English Literature**, the **Graduate School of Social  
Sciences of Middle East Technical University** by,

Prof. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI  
Dean  
Graduate School of Social Sciences

---

Prof. Dr. Çiğdem SAĞIN ŞİMŞEK  
Head of Department  
Department of Foreign Language Education

---

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Margaret J.M. SÖNMEZ  
Supervisor  
Department of Foreign Language Education

---

**Examining Committee Members:**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Margaret J.M. SÖNMEZ  
Middle East Technical University  
Department of Foreign Language Education

---

Prof. Dr. Nurten BİRLİK  
Middle East Technical University  
Department of Foreign Language Education

---

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Özlem ÖĞÜT YAZICIOĞLU  
Boğaziçi University  
Department of Western Languages and Literatures

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**Name, Last Name:** Rabia Elif ÖZCAN

**Signature:**



## ABSTRACT

### NEITHER A MOTHER NOR AN OTHER: NATURE’S LITERARY EMANCIPATION IN WILLIAM GOLDING’S *LORD OF THE FLIES* AND LOUISE ERDRICH’S *TRACKS*

ÖZCAN, Rabia Elif

M.A., The Department of English Literature

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Deriving from the comparative analyses of William Golding’s *Lord of The Flies* (1954) and Louise Erdrich’s *Tracks* (1988), this thesis discusses how ecocriticism and ecofeminism may, in particular cases, pose a discriminatory anthropocentric perspective despite bearing an eco-centered principle. Nature is mostly susceptible to being both otherized or/and motherized in these texts, that are constructed around an anthropocentric view. The novels represent the dialogue between human beings and nature through survival struggles in a colonialist context. However, the different representative discourses they adapt indicate human-centered perspectives and/or gender attributions in ecocritical and ecofeminist reading. Hence, this thesis argues that ecocritical and ecofeminist approaches may partly demonstrate anthropocentric essentialism, which necessitates an alternative empathetic approach towards nature. As a reading technique, the textual analyses make a close reading of the human-non-human transformations vis-a-vis the suggested hypothetical term “naturamorphism.” This term is presented as a thought experiment, explained as a transformation and reversal of anthropomorphism. Thus the thesis explores the literary construction of otherization in the novels from a feminist ecocritical perspective to fill the potential

deficiencies of ecofeminist criticism and ecocriticism. As a conceptual framework, Val Plumwood's master-other hierarchy provides the basis for analyzing the human/nonhuman relationship in the novels. Besides, in the light of Kristeva's theory of the semiotic *chora* and the abject, the thesis presents an alternative reading of the "context" nature as a "text." Thus, with the premise that nature is neither a mother nor an other, the thesis suggests the concept of naturamorphism, and investigates its applicability in practice.

**Keywords:** Nature, ecocriticism, naturamorphism, anthropomorphism, feminist ecocriticism.



## ÖZ

### NE BİR ANNE NE DE ÖTEKİ: WILLIAM GOLDING’İN *SİNEKLERİN TANRISI* İLE LOUISE ERDRICH’İN *TRACKS*’İNDE EDEBİ KURTULUŞ

ÖZCAN, Rabia Elif

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William Golding’ın *Sineklerin Tanrısı* (1954) ile Louise Erdrich’in *Tracks* (1988) adlı romanlarının incelemesinden hareketle bu tez; temelinde doğa merkezli bir ilke taşısa da ekoeleştiri ve ekofeminizmin bazı durumlarda insan merkezli bakış açısının ayrımcı yaklaşımını sergileyebileceği görüşünü tartışmaktadır. İnsan merkezli bir bakış açısı etrafında şekillenen bu metinlerde doğa hem ötekileştirilmeye hem de “ana”laştırılmaya büyük ölçüde açık hâldedir. Her iki roman, sömürgeci anlayışın yer aldığı bir bağlam içindeki yaşam savaşında insanlar ile doğa arasındaki diyalogu gösterir. Ancak romanların bu diyalogu yansıtmaya ve doğayı tasvir biçimleri, ekofeminist ve ekoeleştirel okumalarla insanı önceleyen veya doğaya cinsiyet roller atfeden bir tutum sergiler. Bu bulguların temelinde tez, ekoeleştirel ve ekofeminist yaklaşımların kısmen insan merkezli bir tözcülük gösterebileceğini ve bu durumun doğaya karşı daha anlayışlı, alternatif bir yaklaşımı gerektirdiğini savunmaktadır. Roman analizlerinde yöntem olarak romanlardaki insan/insan dışı varlıkların birbirine dönüşümlerinin yakın okuması yapılmıştır. Bu dönüşümleri açıklamak üzere antropomorfizmin tersi olarak kuramsal ve deneysel “naturamorfizm” kavramı öne sürülmüştür. Bu okuma tekniği ile tez, romanlardaki ötekileştirmenin metinsel

inşasını, ekofeminizm ve ekoeleştirinin muhtemel eksikliklerini giderme amacıyla yeni bir anlayış olan feminist ekoeleştirici yaklaşımıyla inceler. Kavramsal çerçeve olarak Val Plumwood'un efendi-öteki hiyerarşisi, romanlardaki insan/ insan dışı ilişki analizlerinin temelini oluşturmuştur. Ayrıca Kristeva'nın semiyotik *chora* teorisi ve iğrenç (abject) kavramı doğrultusunda "bağlam" niteliğindeki doğanın bir "metin" olarak alternatif okumasına yer verilmiştir. Romanların incelemesinden hareketle tez; doğanın ne bir anne ne de bir öteki olduğu görüşüyle doğaya empatik bir yaklaşım için önerilen naturamorfizm kavramının pratikte mümkün olup olmadığını sorgular.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Doğa, ekoeleştirici, antroposentrizm. naturamorphism, antropomorfizm, feminist ekoeleştirici.

*To my wonderful family*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

*Lord of the Flies*    *LOTF*



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The literary representation of nature in texts where the natural environment interacts with humans indicates an ideologically, economically, and culturally loaded concept of (m)other nature. This thesis presents a comparative reading of the ecocritical semiosis presented in William Golding's *Lord of The Flies* (1954) and Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* (1988) and reveals tensions within these novels' representations of the relationships between the distinct categories of humans, non-humans, and nature. While examining these representations and tensions, the thesis will explore how the examples of first-wave ecocritical and ecofeminist literature demonstrate the partly essentialist nature of dominant Western discourse. Social and cultural heritage both constructs and maintains our identities, and perspectives, and molds our stances and attitudes towards our environment. Representations of these environments within the products of cultural heritage – literature, in this case -should be regarded as influential factors in our development of paradigms of identity, and can serve as agents that support specific ideologies such as colonialism, otherization, social inferiorization, and gender roles. Taking this into consideration, a feminist ecocritical analysis should point out that *LOTF* and *Tracks* pose the colonialist master-slave hierarchy from different stances and deal with otherness in cultural, sociological, and gender-based perspectives. Hence, they could invite ecofeminist and ecocritical theories to synthesize an assumedly nonessentialist approach towards nature: What would a feminist ecocritical reading of these novels presenting colonialist understandings and discourse reveal about human beings' conception of nature? Majorly with ecological concerns, the thesis applies the early understanding of feminist ecocriticism as an alternative theory to examples 20<sup>th</sup>-century literature. Thus, it aims to find if the literary representation of the natural environment could be

emancipated from the essentialist reductions of Western dualisms and the discursive attributions of human affairs.

Being attentive to social, political, and cultural matters, and effectivity of matter in its various forms and processes, feminist ecocriticism aims at producing a more capacious sexual and environmental understanding, and at paving the way to new ecocritical interpretations of literary and cultural narratives that are more encompassing of intersections of sexuality and nature, bodies and the environment, and their materializing effects. To put it briefly, feminist ecocriticism suggests an emancipatory stance that proceeds in a dialectical relation to practice. Exploring literary and cultural texts where female corporeality and nonhuman bodies are problematized, contested and disrupted, feminist ecocriticism discloses how literature intersects with life itself. (Oppermann 80)

As Oppermann explains, a feminist ecocritical analyses of literary works based on dichotomies offers an empathetic perspective towards nature by “disclosing” (80) the culturally and symbolically constructed boundaries not in terms of biological distinctions but concerning human beings’ utilitarian and colonialist approaches. Yet it would be considerable that even before the theoretical adoption of feminist ecocriticism, the examples of anthropomorphism from the ancient texts to the contemporary literature, might be empathetic steps with the same intention of disclosure Oppermann mentions. On the other hand, however, the type of anthropomorphisms that attempt to reflect the human decadence may enforce the human/ non-human dichotomies and hierarchies propelled by the Western discourse. In the light of feminist ecocriticism, the thesis explores the reversed anthropomorphisms in the novels to undermine the “otherness” applied to the natural environment and women by their Western discourse.

Rosi Braidotti explains how feminist ecocritics conceive of otherness with respect to their particular focus of interest. She states that we find discursive otherness with respect to the representation of women wherever texts render “the sexualized bodies of women; the racialized bodies of ethnic or native others and the naturalised bodies of animals and earth others” (170). According to this understanding, the thesis questions the materiality of women and nature with a particular focus on transformations. One significant transformation in the novels is a reversed anthropomorphism, which I shall offer a hypothetical term *naturamorphism* and use as an alternative concept to eliminate the symbolic implications of the already

anthropocentrically-loaded language<sup>1</sup>. Thus, I will argue that within texts nature can become neither the mother nor the other through the technique of naturamorphism. To test this hypothesis in practice, I will comment on the transformations of the novels' main characters in the light of Val Plumwood's master-other hierarchy, and these characters' otherization not just in ecofeminist terms, but also on the basis of Lacan's "Law of the Father" and Kristeva's "abject." A brief introduction to the novels provides the background to the study.

### 1.1. Introduction to William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*

Published in 1954, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (*LOTF* hereafter) focuses on a group of English children aged between five and fourteen, who experience a plane crash while being transported to a safer place during what is implied to be a World War. After the tragic accident, the children find themselves on the coast of an uninhabited island, where they struggle to survive and to signal to rescuers, unaware of the ever-increasing hostility between each other.

In an interview with Patricia Marx, Golding stated that his underlying attempt was to indicate human "cynicism" and the "innate evil" lurking in human intentions (Marx 1963). In this regard, he originally gave the novel the title *Strangers from Within*. Discussion of the concepts of other and estrangement in this text, in fact, legitimizes this earlier title, since *strange* is a recurrent word in the novel, used variously to suggest different meanings according to varying contexts, until the estranged savage becomes the otherizing force. The novel achieves this by reversing anthropomorphism and introducing humans who take up a nonhuman identity in terms of imitation to overcome the restrictions of being an other within nature.

Substantially loaded with colonial discourse and perspectives, *LOTF* demonstrates how humans establish their relationships based on culture and physical

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<sup>1</sup> While I suggest naturamorphism as an attempt to permeate the conceptual boundaries by establishing a bridge between humans and non-humans, I shall accept that the concept itself is still based on the assumption that there is a distinction between humans and non-humans. Therefore, it is significant to clarify that naturamorphism does not and cannot eliminate the material and conceptual distinctions totally, but provides an alternative perspective to disclose these distinctions in Oppermann's terms.

power. It may be considered a product of colonialist Western thought, which is based on dualisms and otherization. The language of the novel emphasizes the distinction between humans and nonhumans through two-sided, dualistic representations that pose different stances of the members within the same categories. Thus, it structurally illustrates otherization in literary terms. On the other hand, the novel embodies humans' constructive/destructive attempts during the formation of their social relations through their natural environment. Although *LOTF* is written in a pre-eco-consciousness era, showing (as it does) how humans easily and simultaneously destroy their natural environment along with each other implies an ecocritical perspective (in the representation of nature) *avant la lettre*. More precisely, humans' attitudes toward one another resonate with their conception and treatment of nature. While a group of boys in the novel struggles to be rescued from the desolate natural environment, and use the island's natural resources for this purpose, some prefer to comply with the natural challenges. Instead of withstanding the metaphorical "filth" (*LOTF* 85) the island bears, they take it as a mask to cover their human identity in order to liberate themselves from cultural and social moralities. In this sense, identifying one's self with the natural environment in the novel means denouncing the human identity and hence becoming something else, an Other that is able to survive in the Lockean state of nature. Here, the novel recognizes nature as the context where only the non-human can and should belong. This assumption brings us to question colonial discourse and intentions that are also part of the novel, which shows them as hindrances in the way of eco-consciousness.

## **1.2. Introduction to Louise Erdrich's *Tracks***

Resonating with this discussion from an ecofeminist standpoint, the 1988 novel *Tracks* by the American writer and poet Louise Erdrich attacks the social norms that waste nature along with feminine identity for the sake of maintaining patriarchy. As a clear example of an antagonistic approach to women and nature's repression in a patriarchal society, *Tracks* calls for solidarity against the imposition of fixed gender identities that, the novel suggests, damage both nature and women.

*Tracks* tells the historical story of Matchimanito and its inhabitants, who experience a threat of extinction during a severe winter. In order to survive what they call “consumption” (2), the natives are forced to make trade with the “whites” (3) from the west and to pay “impossible taxes” (173) just to meet their basic needs. Besides, the whites want to purchase the land to make several constructions and turn the legendary Matchimanito Lake into a fishing lodge, while the natives aggressively reject this demand at first until they are likely to starve to death if they do not sell the land. During this argument between the natives and the whites, the novel introduces radical woman characters beginning with the protagonist Fleur, who is often depicted as half-human, half-animal. By her radical stand in both physical and social terms, Fleur challenges the situated norms of gender. She questions what it is to be a human and whether it matters in “nature’s language” (210). In order to survive primarily the patriarchal norms, she and several other characters, such as Pauline, one of the narrators of the novel, and Margaret, an elderly strong native woman, undertake a transformation by which they become identical with nature sometimes being described to demonstrate animalistic bodily features and behaviors, which will further be discussed in detail. Thus, the novel offers a parallel reading of nature and naturamorphized human characters, and therefore shows the use of naturamorphism in an ecofeminist text.

*Tracks* is the third book in a tetralogy. The reason why *Tracks* was chosen for this thesis is that this novel, unlike the others in the tetralogy, focuses on the ecological history of the Matchimanito land, drawing a parallel between its fate and that of its inhabitants. The other novels center on various Native American literary forms such as oral storytelling, mythology, and folklore. While these themes explore the natives’ culture and conception, *Tracks* adds the history of the land and the ecological language to the story. Thus, it is open to ecocritical and ecofeminist readings. Most literary studies of Erdrich’s novels focus on their historicity, however, leaving the question of nature unexamined. This thesis is, therefore, original in taking this approach to *Tracks*, and can rely on only very few secondary sources.

### 1.3. The Outline, Methodology, and the Conceptual Framework of the Thesis

The two novels have received criticism and praise for their ecocritical concerns, and, as introduced above, they may also be the objects of an ecofeminist reading that postulates a feminine or feminized personification of nature. However, such a reading, in assuming a feminine identity for nature, remains anthropocentric: while human beings in the novels emancipate themselves from social norms, nature continues to be represented as an other in *LOTF* and a mother in *Tracks*. On the other hand, as a recent approach to literary criticism, ecocritical theory seeks answers to two main problems that derive from the same basis: the discriminatory approach of the anthropocentric perspective, already described here as nature being both otherized by a utilitarian understanding and “motherized” by the feminine attributions. This outcome, however, is an inevitable consequence of any logocentric understanding of the universe, in which human beings inevitably assume the center and necessarily situate nonhumans towards the periphery. However, an ecofeminist criticism of the novels would tend to reduce nature to a form of feminine identity rather than suggesting nature as an interdependent, embedded entity. Therefore, the thesis also alerts us to the need for alternative approaches that abandon the anthropocentrism in analyses of the representation of nature and the natural context.

Following this Introduction chapter, Chapter II will provide a theoretical background to the essential concepts that construct the framework of the thesis. Citing the work of Eagleton, Derrida, Hawkins, Marx, Lacan, and several other critics and theoreticians, the chapter will explain the ways approach ecofeminism, ecocriticism, and feminist ecocriticism approach discrimination. Examining the ecocritical approach to representations of nature, Plumwood, Kristeva’s, and Serpil Oppermann’s theories and terminologies will be used as the conceptual framework. With the question of human beings’ position within the universe, logocentric understanding evolves into anthropocentrism and otherizing, and so the theoretical background also includes a brief examination of anthropocentrism in literature. In this regard, the narrative and interpretative location of human beings within and with nature will be argued against the perspective of nature’s position according to human beings’ symbolically constructed context. As a hypothetical thought experiment, the chapter will introduce the term “naturamorphism” as a reversal of anthropomorphism, by

which human beings come closer to a non-human state if not completely and essentially transform into another being.

Having introduced the conceptual framework of the thesis, Chapters III and IV will analyze the novels from two different perspectives. Chapter III focuses on the conceptual effects of an anthropocentric approach to nature in *LOTF* and questions the applicability of an eco-consciousness reading to a product of British colonialism. The basis of this approach stretches to human beings' assimilation in the Lacanian symbolic register, whose effects and impositions dominate human thought. According to Lacan, human beings are born into a pre-existing symbolic structure, which is the language that necessarily forms humans' identity and ego. However, this relation suggests that language is culturally and ideologically coded, and it transmits these codes to the subjects who entirely base their conception and comprehension upon that language they use (Eagleton 143). In *LOTF*, human beings strive to position themselves within their environmental context while claiming the center due to being assimilated by the anthropocentric discourse. However, the novel attempts to overcome the human-centered approach through several illustrations of anthropomorphisms and naturamorphisms, a represented human response of which the chapter will analyze the examples. The chapter will then discuss naturamorphism as a literary tactic used in the deconstruction of represented anthropocentric social regulations.

Chapter IV will provide a detailed analysis of *Tracks* in the light of the Kristevan concept of the abject as explained in her *Powers of Horror*. The chapter will consider abjection as an attempt to transcend symbolic attributions imposed upon women, such as a necessary motherhood, or gender roles. The novel also assumes an economic value for nature in capitalist terms. The patriarchal intonation of the symbolic register brings us to the question of a coded culture. This idea of a culture as a production of Western civilization appears in the novel as a savior from different aspects. As for its effect on the social texture, those who adapt to cultural norms are appreciated, while any deviation from these impositions, be it physical or with reference to characters, is declared inappropriate is otherized and becomes the target of abjection. The chapter will argue that in *Tracks* abjection serves as a means to deny the social norms and open a passage to individuality without any external attributions. The novel points out that emancipation from a gender-culture-based identity can be

possible through rejection of the imposed symbolic titles and ideological norms. Therefore, the argumentation will focus on the scenes in which the characters strive to disembody themselves from their culturally constructed names and etiquettes, with a drive to be naked in nature, literally and metaphorically.

With a discussion of naturamorphism and representation of the abject in the novels, the concluding Chapter V provides a synthesis of the arguments and evaluations of the main discussions mentioned in each chapter. The conclusion of the analyses shows how the different colonial discourses affect the applicability of ecofeminist and ecological readings. Accordingly, the conclusion will strengthen our understanding that our perception of nature derives from the paradigms of cultural, ideological, and economic affairs, which are characteristically anthropocentric. As a necessity for human beings to communicate with the external world, language is culturally and ideologically encoded. On the other hand, the logocentric construction of discourses about nature tends to separate the human from the nonhuman. In other words, otherizing is an inevitable consequence of the cultural and ideological dimensions of language and discourse. Accordingly, the concept of mother nature bears an affinity to both the other and the mother –the feminized other- and assumes a feminine identity for nature. However, this reduction of nature leads to a one-sided, anthropocentric interpretation. In this sense, the conclusion will discuss the practical applicability of naturamorphism to eliminate discrimination of the dualistic Western discourse. Secondly, contrasting semiotic fluidity with symbolic reductivism, the chapter will point out that the transition from the latter to the realm of semiotics can be considered an epiphanic moment for the characters and becomes their means of emancipation from the norms imposed upon them. This assertion suggests naturamorphism as way of artistic representation whereby anthropocentrism's inferiorizing and otherizing attitude towards nature may be eliminated. However, the conclusion shows that naturamorphism still remains a naïve attempt that falls short in such elimination but provides a disclosure between humans and non-humans with an empathetic approach.



## CHAPTER II

### A 'GREEN LIGHT' ON LITERATURE: FEMINIST ECOCRITICAL THEORY

Situating the human within the universe is a significant element in the formation of environmental perception, culture, and social relationships, because we think, behave, and develop according to how we relate to our surroundings. This relation assumes a homogenous dialogic interaction with our environment. However, the texts demonstrate that the colonialist and capitalist drives assume a hierarchy that enforces human superiority over nature. In this sense, the colonialist and capitalist human denies an interdependent structure of the natural environment by claiming to be its master, or possessor. As a result of this denial, nature is distanced from the concept of human society. Once it is constrained within anthropocentric terminology (expressed in the symbolic register), it is otherized. Besides, we find in the ecofeminist narratives the implication that textual representations construct an association between female nature and the concept of nature resulting in the culturally reinforced idea of a Mother Nature. Beginning from these assumptions, this thesis aims to explore how the (m)otherizing attributions we assume for nature are constructed in culture and social formations.

Hitherto, ecocritical studies have focused on negotiations between the human and nonhuman in literature. As a relatively recently emerging theoretical branch of ecocriticism, which d'Eaubonne first introduced in *Féminisme ou la Mort* (1974), ecofeminism has been striving to underline parallelism between women and nature in terms of their shared imposed inferiority and the degradation they are exposed to under a patriarchal hegemony. Serpil Oppermann, who provided a comprehensive literature review of the early conception of ecofeminist criticism, nevertheless pointed out an assault on its assumed essentialist basis. According to her early studies and conception, unlike feminism and ecocriticism as separate theories, feminist ecocriticism did not

support an anthropocentric foundation as a basis of its theory. On the contrary, it tried to decentralize human beings in the critical approaches to nature, which was its essential feature that distinguished it from ecofeminism and ecocriticism. As an alternative, and to avoid criticism that these latter disciplines receive, Oppermann argued that “feminist ecocriticism brings a more pronounced feminist dimension to ecocritical studies, expanding ecocriticism’s scope and critical trajectory toward environmental and women’s reproductive justice, trans-corporeality of bodily natures, material feminisms, animal studies, and queer ecologies” (67). Taking a critical distance from Oppermann’s view of an “essentialist ecofeminism and ecocriticism” (67-69) this thesis discusses women and nature as otherized in patriarchal discourse. The main hypothesis is that the early concepts of ecocriticism and ecofeminism attempted to pose a biocentric approach, yet the unavoidable theoretical discourse they express this argument could not avoid anthropocentric perspective. Nevertheless, mutual transformations of human beings and non-humans enable disclosing the dualisms by providing an embedded context in which the dichotomies are permeated.

An empathetic approach to the environment is not a new appeal since so-called green-language has deep historical roots in different geographies. However, recognizing environmental concerns as a theory with a related critical practice is a relatively recent phenomenon in ethics and literature. As Eagleton asserts, theory “comes about when we are forced into a new self-consciousness about what we are doing” (Eagleton 27); and worsening ecological conditions have called out to us for consideration. For Eagleton, this moment is “a symptom of the fact that we can no longer take those practices for granted. On the contrary, those practices must now begin to take themselves as objects of their own inquiry” (Eagleton 27). In light of this concern, ecological sympathy evolved into an ecological movement, which has become methodized under the label of ecocriticism in literary theory.

## **2.1. The Seeds of the Forest: What Ecocritical Voices Bring**

A pioneer of the ecocritical movement, Glotfelty basically defines the term *ecocriticism* as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (xviii). According to this definition, ecocriticism introduces an “earth-

centered approach to literary and linguistic studies” (ibid.). Literary texts from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century indicate hierarchical understandings of the human position, and they create a fiction of man in which the protagonist appears as the sole subject, voice, and rational power of domination over the natural order. The quintessential addressee of this fiction is humankind, and its discourse aims to reaffirm its dominant position in the environmental hierarchy. Thus, literature has presented humankind’s focal position and reflected a passion for our own human affairs since the Renaissance up to and continuing alongside the first so-called green articulations of our current age.

According to Soper, during the period of “industrial capitalism and its progressive globalization,” by which he means the sixteenth century until the present, “our economic, social, and cultural life was shaped by the uncurbed commitment to economic growth and hence to a dynamic of production and consumption, work and spend” (18). As Marx explained in *Das Kapital* (1867), nature was considered a “valuable source of raw material” for the ever-growing market industry (127-128), and it was labor and the worker that determined the value of an object. This claim is significant in understanding the historical contexts in *LOTF* and *Tracks*, and, more generally, the criticisms directed to environmental representations in literature. According to Marx, “[m]oney as a measure of value, is the phenomenal form that must of necessity be assumed by that measure of value, which is immanent in commodities, labor time” (67). However, discussion of the literary representations in the following chapters show that money is also, uncontrovertibly, an evaluative influence in social formations and our environmental perception.

In both novels, the land and the things on it become commodities serving humanity’s demands. This perception is an outcome of the industrialized and cultivated minds produced during this era, whereby “Nature is the consumer’s right” (Talwar 205). Both novels appropriate the land as a functional context to support their narratives, and their approach is based on an industrialized or commodified view of nature. The basic tendency of these representations was to pursue rational utility. Even within seemingly natural descriptions of the landscape, the environmental context as shown within the narratives, has been not an unspoiled nature but an artificially, ideologically, and industrially constructed representation.

In order to emancipate nature from this symbolic construction's artificiality, late -twentieth-century literary scholarship attempted to come up with a new discourse and terminology that positions nature at its center. Rueckert, proposing it be recognized and theorized within literary criticism, coined the term ecocriticism in 1996. In "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism," he suggested that ecocriticism should be seen as "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature" (107). Here, the term bears two stances: a critical approach and a theoretical discourse. Glotfelty argues that "as a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on land; as a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between the human and nonhuman" (xix). A need for such a bridge term takes the following stance: as a branch of art, literature is a means to reflect nature and the environment on a symbolic ground. In this sense, nature has been one of the essential subjects, particularly in contemporary criticism in which ecological concerns are getting more and more onto the stage.

According to environmental philosophers such as Roach Brown and Toadvine (16), it is necessary to suggest a particular discourse that empathizes with nature and speaks from within it in order to discuss the aesthetic value and potential of the environment. Supporting this idea, Culler, who has underlined the societal significance of environment writing, brought another dimension to the concept, seeing ecocriticism as the "study of literary representations of nature and the environment and the changing values associated with them, especially evocations of nature that might inspire changes in attitude and behavior" (146). Here Culler suggests an approach that approves of representations of nature as transformative and fluid rather than the hitherto empirical attempts to provide a categorical structure of the environment. Change becomes his essential principle and motivation and enables a dynamic dialogue between humans and nature. Nevertheless, Buell has interestingly discussed ecocriticism as the legacy of anthropocentrism (105-107) claiming that the first wave ecocriticism tends to focus on human being's relation to nature rather than adopting a biocentered perspective. "While accepting that this legacy must be negotiated rather than negated, [Buell] wants to propose a transition from the 'ecological self' to the 'ecological self,' by way of an 'aesthetics of relinquishment'" (Coupe 416). On these artistic grounds, this negotiation requires a means of representation, a communicator.

When it comes to literature, this representation is inevitably enabled by human language either through fictional text or eco-literary theories.

At this point, ecocriticism poses a question: By which discourse should we approach environmental concerns and discuss the ethics of ecology? Still today, most literary criticism focuses on the relationships between the writer, text, and readers. The essential concerns of the influential modern schools of criticism are human-centered, allowing only a limited amount of attention to be paid to environmental accounts. Even in an article about “Ecofeminism and Nonhumans,” the human sociological perspectives on nature and her own work are major focusses of Hawkins’ discussion, which therefore also concerns itself more with the human subject rather than with suggesting an approach towards the natural environment. Hawkins examines the nature of the political construct underlying the relationship between humans and nonhumans. According to her, “we conceive of nonhumans both as individuals and as members of groups that differ significantly from our own species-group, enmeshed in ‘political’ relations with us that in some ways parallel relations among human groups” (159). From this statement it is understood that humans’ conception of nature is assimilated within a politically constructed relation, and nature is given non-intrinsic attributes such as gender roles or economic values.

The notion of the contextual environment is closely related to an understanding of the constructedness of nature. It will be important in the analyses of *LOTF* and *Tracks*. The term, in its political and social sense, is derived from the ever-widening colonization experiences of the nineteenth-century during which the invaded, colonized, seized, and abused lands, and their inhabitants were recognized only for their utility, not for their autonomy (Linton 84-90). As we read Golding and Erdrich’s landscape depictions, we will observe that they are often presented as strange, unknown, dark, and inferior settings. Representations like this show how foreign or colonized land had come to be defined as precisely what the colonizing subject was not, namely the other. This is, in fact, a contextual understanding that is dependent upon persons, locations, time, history, and culture.

The discriminative language that defines nature and the natural environment by materialism-based categories necessitates consulting the postcolonial conception of ecology. As DeLoughrey explains,

[p]ostcolonial approaches to environmental thought tend to highlight alterity, difference, and rupture, which are vital methods of deconstructing the discourses of Enlightenment universalism. Some of the work of postcolonial ecocriticism includes examining the implications of foundational narratives, problematizing assumptions of a universal subject and of an essentialized nature, and examining how forms of dominance are naturalized. (Deloughrey 312)

The “essentialized nature” and “naturalized dominances” are also illustrated in *LOTF* and *Tracks*. In this sense, the novels open up the discussion of a “natural discrimination” of human discourse, by which I mean the inherent discriminative and categorizing side of the verbal and symbolic language.

Concerning the discriminative nature of the human discourse, one of the foundational questions of this thesis is whether or not ecocriticism is also contextual and biased. As a possible answer, Utsler states that “[e]nvironmental understanding is a contextual understanding” (Utsler et al. 10). In a word, it is the discourse of the context that shapes how we perceive and interpret the environment -and it is preconditioned by language’s ideological construction. However, the analyses of the texts will show that such an understanding can only add to a recognition of the broader contextual value of the environment, setting up a necessarily utilitarian evaluation.

There should be more than mere environmental writing in the literary canon, for this limitation tends to suggest a preconditioned and structured representation of nature, which is understood within a particular necessary context. This step demands a new discourse of interpretation, which Utsler mentions as the need for an “environmental hermeneutics,” which assumes “a dialogical relationship between humans and environments” (10). Utsler’s environmental hermeneutics, hence, promotes a reciprocal interaction in meaning-making, whereby the meaning-making process and the individual’s situatedness are mutually informing. Campbell explains this interdependency clearly and frankly:

All readings are situated. We always read from within a system of social, political, economic, cultural, and personal circumstances –and thus a set of conceptual structures- that direct us to a particular reading. Even facts are subjective –a fact is only a fact inside an interpretation, and interpretations are human. (129)

Every word in the text gains its meaning according to the interpreter, who is human. In this regard, the text’s history-in-progress depends on our contextual and conceptual background, which also directs our perception.

Later theories suggested a hopeful future for ecology by problematizing human beings' centralization. Commenting on posthumanism as one of this significant theories, Helena Feder defends "revaluing of human animality" (226) enabled by this approach. She argues that "[p]osthumanism may challenge the primacy of humanity, the idea of the Human as the all-pervasive legacy of Enlightenment essentialism, or it may champion a new teleology, a race for infinite technological power over material life (ibid.). However, this hopeful possibility is challenged by language barrier.

When it comes to literary representation, the necessity and indispensability of the verbal representation of the environment must be acknowledged. However, it is also apparent that when we represent nature through art, a bare nature without the ideological attributions that we assimilate as norms is not possible. Before discussing the concept of normal as the other's opponent, it is essential to identify these terms concerning our conception process. How do we assume the normal for ourselves and construct a periphery? Is this a characteristic tendency or a historical thrust?

## **2.2. In the Center and *the Center*: Roots of the Anthropocentric Perception**

One significant Lacanian conception essential to these questions is the symbolic order or the symbolic register. Lacan used the term to indicate a framework authority that externally regulates psychic expressions (158-161). In "Freud's Papers," he explained that "the symbolic is the pact with links [...] subjects together in one action. The human action par excellence is originally founded on the existence of the world of the symbol, namely on laws and contracts" (230). With "laws and contracts" he refers to language, the fundamental dominator in identity construction, that essentially creates a distance between the self and the outer world where "identities come about only as a result of difference that one term or subject is what it is only by excluding another" (144). Lacan here suggests the concept of the Law, or the Father, also termed *The Name of the Father* (Holland 46)- preexists the individual subject; "it is always already 'in place,' waiting to assign us our places within it. It is ready and waiting for us rather as our parents are, and we shall never wholly dominate it or subdue it to our own ends" (Eagleton 151). The ever-controlling and dominating *Law of the Father* in *LOTF* and *Tracks* is primarily the Western civilization, and it supports

a hierarchical social structure as a result of its colonialist stance. The novels show that Western civilization conquers the natural environment both physically and symbolically by identifying the land in linguistic representations exemplified in the novels. These abstract representations obviously address human discourse only, and therefore lead to an anthropocentric conception and perception of the natural environment. This is where ecocriticism's fundamental concerns begin, comprising the targets of the main criticisms of this thesis.

Critical of Renaissance humanism's human-centered discourse, Manes points out the creation of an "immense realm of silences, a world of 'not saids' called nature" (Glotfelty 17) and accuses the positivist rationality and discourse of post-enlightenment society of further obscuring and exhausting these already silenced words. According to her,

[i]f the domination of nature with all its social anxieties rests upon this void, then we must contemplate not only learning a new ethics, but a new language free from the directionalities of humanism, a language that incorporates a decentered, postmodern, post-humanist perspective. In short, we require the language of ecological humility that deep ecology, however gropingly, is attempting to express. (Glotfelty 17)

Here, by stating "a new ethics" and language, Manes calls for a structured understanding of the environmental phenomenon, addressing human affairs through an environmental discourse. Such a complex and comprehensive language challenges modern thought that focuses on the artificial communication between humans and nonhumans. Considering this human-centered approach, however, is the ecocritical theory sufficient to establish a non-hierarchical negotiation between human language and nature?

Taking Hegel's master-slave hierarchy as the philosophical basis and rendering it as a "master-other" hierarchy, Plumwood provides a theoretical basis for the nature-as-other concept that is the object of discussion in this thesis. Plumwood begins by introducing the presence of essential dualisms in social hierarchies. According to her, "a dualism is an intense, established and developed cultural expression of such a hierarchical relationship, constructing central cultural concepts and identities so as to make equality and mutuality literally unthinkable" (*Feminism* 47). Therefore, it is a relation of "separation and domination inscribed and naturalized in culture and characterized by radical exclusion, distancing and opposition between orders



constructed as systematically higher and lower, as inferior and superior, as ruler and ruled” (47-8). To illustrate her argument, Plumwood maps this relation through five characteristic features (48), which will be the particular paradigms for the concepts framing the analysis of otherization and hierarchical formation in the novels: backgrounding (denial), incorporation (relational definition); instrumentalism (objectification); homogenization (stereotyping), and lastly radical exclusion (hyperseparation). The last feature is significant in shedding light on the human/nature relationship in the novels. Plumwood suggests radical exclusion whereby the inferior’s being becomes a part of a lower order, providing an occasion for other relative inferiorities –the slave is corporeal, animal, body, and the male inferior is feminized (48-55). She regards this condition as the fundamental reason for or cause of master-master-another dualism. Besides, instrumentalism “is a way of relating to the world which corresponds to a certain model of selfhood, the selfhood conceived as that of the individual who stands apart from an alien other and denies his own relationship to and dependency on this other” (142). Therefore, it explains the human approach to nature and how humans centralize themselves in their environment while treating it as an instrument that serves as a context for human affairs.

Turning back to dualities, upon which the conceptualization and hierarchy are based, Plumwood focuses on environmental philosophy by referring to Hegel’s master-slave relation, and she finds that “virtually everything on the ‘superior’ side can be represented as forms of reason, and virtually everything on the underside can be represented as forms of nature” (44). The second of her features, hyperseparation, suggests a disordered and unstable idea of nature as opposed to cultivated, refined human regulations, connoting that reason is a quintessential determinant that distinguishes human beings from nonhuman entities. Considering the process of Darwinian evolution, Plumwood takes the “construction of the normative (the best or ideal) human identity as mind or reason” as the most significant step in establishing a human/nature dualism (107). Such a construction “inferiorizes the whole range of nonhuman characteristics or recognizes them as inessential because of lacking this fundamental and differential characteristic,” namely the mind or reason (*ibid.*). The second step, according to Plumwood, is taking this construction as “exclusive of and oppositional to nature” (*ibid.*). The opposition drawn here directly situates humans against natural phenomena. The initial dialogic connection we develop with our

environment during our infancy now transforms into an exclusivist discourse, which I shall name *duellogic* communication, that makes nonhuman entities face estrangement. By nature, the duellogic communication is not constructive but exclusive; it favors only one side and does not establish a dialogic relationship. The third step is the “construction of nature itself as mindless,” which reinforces oppositions and “constructs nature as ineluctably alien” (ibid.). This last step transgresses the disposition of continuity since it is established upon the premise that nature is an inherently inferior context. Besides, it appoints a central position and agency to humans within the environmental context. Thus, the last step lays out humanism’s fundamental motivation and introduces a crucial term: anthropocentrism.

Modern theory and politics focus on the concept of centrism for their criticism. While few of these approaches consider the nonhuman realm, most are generally centered around humans and human affairs and are thus anthropocentric.

The environmentalist Callicott claims that anthropocentrism not only prioritizes human perceptions and interests but recognizes only humans as “worthy of ethical considerations” while “other things are mere means to human ends” (Callicott 119). This understanding brings us to two corollaries in a utilitarian approach directed to nonhumans: firstly, it draws attention to the view that human identity is considered *sine qua non* for ethical discussion, or even for being a subject in such a discussion; secondly, it denies “the other things” autonomy and restricts their positions or functions as subservient to humans. For Reuckert, “man’s tragic flaw is his anthropocentric (as opposed to biocentric) vision, and his compulsion to conquer, humanize, domesticate, violate, and exploit every natural thing” (113). Anthropocentrism thus attributes an intrinsic value to human beings and gives them the right to claim authority over all other entities. In such an order, artistic articulations and representations recognize the nonhuman entity by ‘likening’ it to humans, or in other words, by anthropomorphizing.

In particular cases, anthropomorphic representations of natural phenomena in artistic works may partly be by the indications of a felt human superiority. They are indeed the productions of anthropocentric drives rather than empathetic interpretations of the environment articulated in human terms. Thus, the nonhuman entity finds literary- representation whereby it is recognized, situated in a passive position orchestrated by human perception. Rather than being appreciated and embraced for

their particular existence, nonhuman entities are often enslaved by representations as human attributes. Plumwood rejects this anthropocentric force and argues that there is nothing inevitable about adopting the stances and assumptions characteristic of human-centeredness (122-124). In other words, mankind is not an inevitable center, yet it has occupied the center of the Western discourse since Renaissance humanism. She argues that this should be neither a matter of selection nor of a necessary choice “between basing our resistance on human concerns or basing them on nonhuman ones”; what we need is a homogenous approach and technique of interpretation (124). Literary interpretations are conditioned by history; therefore, they are already biased and considerably anthropocentric. On the other hand, environmental ethics produces a relatively normative discourse that indicates how humans ought to behave towards and regard nonhumans. While both approaches fall short in providing a comprehensive understanding and articulation of the environment, Plumwood’s suggestion of adopting counter-centric ethics that “enables us to advance both arguments based on our own species’ welfare and on that of the other” (ibid.) grants an equal share to humans and nonhumans in common discourse. Such a counter-centric understanding first requires a determining of the Center’s norms, before they can be deconstructed. Accordingly, this attempt calls us to understand the language of the “other.”

### **2.3. The Semiotic *Chora*: The Fluid, The Plural, The Pleasurable**

Eagleton states that “[t]he semiotic is the ‘other’ of language, which is none the less intimately entwined with it” (163). Elaborating on this assertion, Eagleton points out the Kristevan association between the concept of the semiotic and femininity, with the symbolic being connected to the “Law of the father” (ibid.). As Kristeva explains the semiotic *chora* in relation to the experience of the sensual perception, it is her use of the terminology and emphasis on “fluidity” that will be used in this thesis to explore the gender-based assumptions and representations in the novels.

Kristeva explains and uses her definitions of the semiotic as a technique (“The Bounded Text” 1966). She makes a comprehensive definition in *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974), beginning with distinguishing the semiotic from “the realm of

signification which is always that of a proposition or judgment. In other words, a realm of positions” (43). What we understand of the semiotic in her terms is the “distinctive mark, trace, index, precursory sign, proof, engraved or written sign, imprint, figuration” (25). In *Desire in Language* (1969), Kristeva explains that the “arbitrariness” of meaning comes to take an expressive form through the semiotic, allowing us a systematic presentation with a “precise modality in the signifying process” (25). Eagleton particularly notes that the semiotic is “by no means a language exclusive to women, for it arises from a pre-Oedipal period that recognizes no distinctions of gender” (163). That is, its fluidity and unstructured nature correspond to a characteristic assumed to be somehow associated with femaleness, yet it does not necessarily exclude the male gender from its discourse. As an alternative, an environmental discourse, which tries to eliminate anthropocentric attributions, gender, and fixations should offer a “fluid, plural, pleasurable creative excess over precise meaning” (164) that would reflect nature’s unstable and ever-changing transformative characteristic. In his explanation of Kristeva’s theory, Eagleton gives an insightful account of the semiotic from a critical stand against logocentric texts, arguing that

since the ideologies of modern male-dominated class-society rely on such fixed signs for their power (God, father, state, order, property and so on), such [semiotic and non-logocentric] literature becomes a kind of equivalent in the realm of language to revolution in the sphere of politics. The reader of such texts is equally disrupted or ‘decentered’ by this linguistic force, thrown into contradiction, unable to take up anyone, simple ‘subject-position’ in relation to these polymorphous works. The semiotic throws into confusion all tight divisions between masculine and feminine; it is a ‘bisexual’ form of writing - and offers to deconstruct all the scrupulous binary oppositions proper/improper, norm/deviation, sane/mad, mine/yours, authority/obedience - by which societies such as ours survive. (164)

In this sense, the semiotic reading enables the text –be it a literary text or environment itself- to transcend the dualities and hierarchies within social frames. Herein, while Kristeva considers the semiotic in a feminine framework, Eagleton explains the position of women in the male-dominant order:

The woman is both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ male society, both a romantically idealized member of it and a victimized outcast. She is sometimes what stands between man and chaos, and sometimes the embodiment of chaos itself. This is why she troubles the neat categories of such a regime, blurring its well-defined boundaries. Women are represented within male-governed society, fixed by sign, image, meaning, yet because they are also the ‘negative’ of that

social order there is always in them something which is left over, superfluous, unrepresentable, which refuses to be figured there. (165)

Eagleton emphasizes women's negating characteristics within the male discourse, pointing out the underlying source of the dualistic understandings "fixed by a sign" and social hierarchies. In other words, fixed meanings and signs intrinsically define the boundary between what is and what is not on a symbolic ground. Kristeva, therefore, suggests examining artistic practices in which the semiotic "is revealed as that which also destroys the symbolic, and this revelation allows us to presume something about its functioning" (50). According to her, "the sign is dualist, hierarchical, and hierarchizing," whereas the semiotic practice of the sign "assimilates the metaphysics of the symbol and projects it onto the 'immediately perceptible'" (992). Thus, the artistic representation "crosses" the symbolic border that captivates the meaning (70). In this regard, the thesis will use the word and concept of the semiotic to refer to what is beyond the situated, the structured, and the stable.

Another essential term and concept that the thesis will borrow from Kristeva is abjection. The two novels describe both a "filthy" (*LOTF* 83) environment and a femininized nature in physical and metaphorical terms. While *LOTF*'s representation of the island as (in some places and at some times) impure seems to infect and defile the children as they try to establish civilizations, *Tracks*' land and women characters are intrinsically abnormal, bestial, and abject. In her essay compilation *Powers of Horror* (1982), Kristeva defines the abject as lying in the realm of the "outside" (1). It is "beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable" –which we assume for any symbolic structure (ibid.). According to her, the "abject has only one quality of the object –that of being opposed to I" (ibid.), and therefore it is "immoral, sinister and dark" for the superego (2-4). Here, Kristeva analyses the abject's representation in particular literary texts and explores it through a feminist-psychoanalytic discourse, revealing the close relationship between feminine corporeality and semiotic fluidity (2-5). She begins with her own body and refers to Lacan in locating her *self* in the symbolic register:

I experience abjection only if an Other is settled in place and stead of what will be "me." Not at all an other with whom I identify and incorporate, but an Other who precedes and possesses me, and through such possession causes me to be. A possession previous to my advent: a being-there of the symbolic that a father might or might not embody. (10)

Although Kristeva acknowledges the preexistence of the symbolic order, namely the Other, she later undermines such a possession through which she comes to be. For this emancipation, she suggests there is a “sublimation” that “keeps the abject under control” (11). Considering the representation of abject figures in the *LOTF* and *Tracks*, Kristeva’s technique and conception bring us to a new reading of feminine characters and nature, both of which are seen abject by the other people in their community. In this light, the novels exemplify how nature and femininity are otherized through abjection with different representations of female characters and landscapes.

With respect to resisting othering or abjecting perceptions of nature, Roach gives a separate and comprehensive account and criticism of the concept of Mother Nature, exploring the psychological motivations underlying the feminization of nature. She begins with the capitalist approach and explains that

[A]lthough it might seem paradoxical to develop a book on environmental ethics out of consumerist advertising that commodifies nature, such imagery reveals much about the ways that human relations shape relations to nature. Precisely for this reason the imagery provides fertile material for a heart-of-darkness environmental ethic. If a key to motivating environmental action lies in revealing and resolving ambivalence toward nature, then a prime site for the work is exactly this Mother Nature imagery. (8)

This imagery mirrors the human psyche is found in both *LOTF* and *Tracks*. In this respect, uncovering and analyzing it enables us to read the subtexts embedded into the descriptions of nature and natural elements, because “images of Mother Nature -even when putatively environmentalist-can portray a response toward nature that is ambiguous and uneasy. Such imagery can undermine its own activism and support a non-environmentalist stance” (9).

Ecocriticism’s theoretical background has shown that the movement began as a reaction to the anthropocentric conceptions that fundamentally focus on humans’ relation to their environment and nature’s value in relation to human affairs (Buell 19). However, here it is significant to distinguish between the first-wave and the second-wave ecocritics in terms of their projections. Garrard asserts that the former is “inclined to celebrate nature rather than querying ‘nature’ as a concept” (1), while he summarizes the second-wave ecocritics as “complex” and “ambivalent” (ibid.). Building on this distinction, here I consider ecocritical discourse as a kind of

metalanguage of the environment and question how literature uses the natural environment as a concept and context. On the other hand, one should note that human language bears “social purposes and conditions” that separate humans from nonhumans (Eagleton 179). This understanding unavoidably leads us to take an exclusionist approach towards nature, recognizing it as an other. While Lavery suggests that phenomenological hermeneutics is applicable to contextualize anthropomorphic nature, as explained above it continues to evaluate texts through human perspectives and norms, and it cannot proceed beyond an anthropocentric interpretation. In the analyses of the novels, Plumwood’s master-other relation well explains the basis of dualities such as nature/culture, male/female, reason/instinct, and in distinguishing constitutions that Kristeva considers “indispensable for communicating with other” (48), as she is critical of an absolute signification that considers the meaningless as abject.

Overall, a close reading of the fluid representations and transformations in the novels will question if any state or meaning of an already defined concept could be deconstructed by destabilizing norms, appearances, and perceptions, denying an ideologically-culturally fixed symbolism.

#### **2.4. Denouncing Essentialism: *Feminist Ecocriticism* as a Synthesis of Ecofeminism and Ecocriticism**

Given that human identity is a complex union of interacting cultural, social, and ideological codes, we must accept that we are also formed by the thrusts of history. It has long been understood that we tend to develop our conceptions upon what we have been exposed to. Dualisms lie at the foundation of many, perhaps most, ideas produced by Western thought. Perceived oppositions between nature and culture, male and female, natural and artificial, reason and irrationality are among several dichotomies that have led to a superior-inferior hierarchy, as Plumwood explains, leading to a “dualistic otherness” (Oppermann 68). Recognizing this, feminist and ecocritical theories have attempted to demolish this hierarchical configuration of things and concepts. However, although there have been several attempts to provide a homogenous (nonhierarchical) understanding of the environmental context both

humans and nonhumans share, as Oppermann revealed in her early studies on ecofeminism<sup>2</sup>, she still found a need to offer a new discourse that would aim to avoid any essentialist implications. For this purpose, she presented feminist ecocriticism as an alternative concept and a way of attaining conceptual emancipation.<sup>3</sup> In her article “Feminist Ecocriticism: The New Ecofeminist Settlement,” Oppermann explained that

feminist ecocriticism is the paradigmatic form of this new approach that attempts to bring sustaining meanings in the realm of materiality, discourse, and cultural imaginary for the purpose of dismantling dualistic otherness framed by “the gendered and dualistic symbolism” in Western thought. (68)

This symbolism in *LOTF* and *Tracks* appears as the primary challenge for a feminist ecocritical reading of these novels, as it installs cultural codes within the representation of the natural context and woman characters (and/or feminine connotations). In order to transcend the encompassing conceptualization of the dualistic symbolism, feminist ecocriticism

offers a vision of ecology without gender. This is not to say that the human is reduced into a neutral category. On the contrary, the human (also the nonhuman) is a highly gendered and sexed category, but must be thought outside the confines of gendered dichotomies, and thus outside of their abductive power imbricated in heteronormative expectations, language, and what some theorists call heteropatriarchy. (68)

Here, it is understood that the initial aim of feminist ecocriticism was to provide a homogenous ground for its arguments, where gender is not a paradigm in the interpretation of the element within the natural context. With this objective, from Oppermann’s early conception, feminist ecocriticism offered this homogeneity as its

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<sup>2</sup> Theory, especially when it comes to ecological theories as one of the most recently emerged fields, is constantly evolving and developing. However, to specify my study as possible, I employed the early works and conception of Oppermann’s feminist ecocriticism in my study. Therefore, hereby I should acknowledge that applying the recent feminist ecocritical arguments to this thesis might contradict with my discussion. Therefore, according to Professor Özlem Ögüt Yazıcıoğlu’s -as my jury member- advise, I particularly note that the discourse of feminist ecocriticism has changed with the emergence of new materialism, and Oppermann’s early the conception of feminist ecocriticism is adopted in the analyses while inquire its applicability in practice.

This preference is because the concepts of ecocriticism and ecofeminism have entered the literary theory in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century as a reaction and/or response to non-eco-conscious narratives, when these two novels were written. In this sense, by employing their early meanings, the thesis also tests whether these critical approaches have achieved their attempt.

<sup>3</sup> In the mentioned article, Oppermann borrowed Serenella Iovino’s words to add to her explanation, stating that trans-corporeal relations that feminist ecocriticism brings was “essential to a process of emancipation and liberation” (Iovino 136) (of concepts from the installation of Western thoughts and impositions).



essential paradigm while still acknowledging the unavoidably and inherently dualistic characteristics of *things*.

Many new materialist feminists endorse this emerging paradigm with interesting accounts of how sexual diversity, sexual relations in both the human and the nonhuman world, and material agency transform our biocultural formations and our still persistent anthropocentric conceptions of nature, culture, sex, gender, and matter. (72)

As Oppermann explained, the initial understanding of feminist ecocriticism undermined the anthropocentric conceptions through its homogenous and gender-free discourse. However, Astrid Bracke finds Oppermann's definition of feminist ecocriticism "implying a fairly limited ecocritical canon, as well as a high risk of prescriptiveness" (424). Interestingly, Bracke brings out the impossibility of ecocritical reading of the contemporary novel stating that "the novel itself has also proven to be an obstacle to ecocriticism" (eco-conscious novels in particular) since drawing attention to the form rather than human-nature relations or "environmental matters" (ibid). Nevertheless, the development of feminist ecocriticism owes much to Oppermann's initiations: Her conceptional concerns sought a term that would unite the diverse ecological theories and approaches.

At the beginning of studies, Oppermann found that ecofeminist criticism was assumed by several literary scholars<sup>4</sup> to have had an essentialist stance that relatively focused on the gender-based distinction within the natural environmental context instead of seeking a non-biased approach (Oppermann 57). For this reason, primarily, she emphasized the necessity of feminist ecocriticism's novel discourse. Besides, quoting Plumwood's words, Oppermann discussed that "human-centered conceptual frameworks are a direct hazard to non-humans, but are also an indirect prudential hazard to Self, to humans, especially in a situation where we press limits" (Plumwood 117). This suppression finds its illustration, particularly in *Tracks*, through the several female characters analyzed in Chapter IV. Yet it is evident in both novels that the anthropocentric perspective in constructing the human relationships within a society is the dominant determinant in one's self-development, and it also affects how humans conceive their natural environment individually. Therefore, for a feminist ecocritical

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<sup>4</sup> In her chapter titled "Origins of Feminist Ecocriticism" in *International Perspectives in Feminist Ecocriticism*, Oppermann cites "Marilyn Daly, the early work of Carolyn Merchant, Susan Griffin, and certain French feminists such as Hélène Cixous and Xaviere Gauthier" (Oppermann 57) within the essentialist phase of ecofeminism.

reading, the characters' identity development in relation to their understanding of nature should be taken into consideration in the discussion. Accordingly, reciprocal material transformations between human and non-human entities shall be the foci of the examination to question a non-essential conceptualization.

This compelling reconceptualization of bodily natures in action, especially the emphasis on the interchanges between human or nonhuman corporeality and the environment, and the theorizing of the permeable boundaries between the human and the nonhuman clearly indicates the infallible trans-corporeal proximity of intermingled bodies and horizons, consonant with feminist ecocriticism's objective of eliminating naturism, sexism, speciesism, and homophobia as dualistic othering processes. (Oppermann 80)

With this objective, feminist ecocriticism directly attacked the discriminating Western thought and discourse based upon the rejection of these "permeable boundaries" (ibid.). Hence in the light of feminist ecocriticism, the main contribution of this thesis to the literary scope will be introducing the hypothetic term "naturamorphism" as a thought experiment of the textual application of feminist ecocritical theory that is assumed to reveal the deconstructive function of the permeable boundaries.

Despite not being able to avoid anthropocentrism essentially, anthropomorphism at least may be considered a step towards an empathetic stance towards nature. However, when it comes to non-eco-conscious texts like *LOTF*, anthropomorphic figures tend to function to fortify, support, or reflect the anthropocentric discourse. In other words, these figures are reflected as a part of human beings or their affairs in a different form. In Golding's novel, for example, the Lord of the Flies is represented as the confessional voice of human decadence, announcing that "[he] is a part of [them]" (206). Therefore, it might not be possible to have a biocentric ecological and eco-empathetic stance in the interpretation of such particular non-human anthropomorphic figures. Yet, still with an attempt to permeate the human- nonhuman boundaries, particularly in non-eco-conscious text, here I suggest a new vision to consider the transformations to see if one can achieve a much more biocentric foundation: naturamorphism.

To make a definition, naturamorphism stands for the reversed version of anthropomorphism. That is, it suggests the human characters transforming into a nonhuman being. While the anthropomorphism presents the nonhuman beings/entities with human-like attributions or appearance, this reversal transformation, so to speak *nonhumanizes* the human characters, requiring them to denounce their culturally,

politically, ideologically, socially, and religiously constructed identities. It is crucial to clearly state that naturamorphism is a thought experiment remaining on hypothetical grounds. While the possibility of its application in practice is in question, I suggest the term as an alternative way to provide a different perception of nature, necessarily *from* a biocentric and nonhierarchical perspective. Such a biocentric approach's essential principle in literature should be eliminating the discriminatory discourses that locate human beings over the nonhuman entity. Nevertheless, I shall accept the unavoidable impossibility of entirely eliminating -if not denying- a nondiscriminatory illustration of nature through naturamorphism. One reason is the fact that, just like anthropomorphism, the term is based on the premise that there exists a human-nonhuman distinction to be overcome. In this sense, naturamorphism basis its attempts to demonstrate what it is like to see, feel, or act like a nonhuman being on this distinction. Secondly, while coming close to a nonhuman state might be possible -as exemplified in the novels- it would be impossible to essentially transform into *something else*. Humanness is essential to human beings; therefore, such a transformation would only remain as an imitation, rather than an essential change.

Nevertheless, it would be unfair to discard the awareness and alternative biocentric perception naturamorphism provides, at least, to reevaluate and/or reconsider a world where human beings are not in the center and emphatically understand nature on the basis of sensations, without verbal discourse or artificial representations.

### CHAPTER III

#### IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE: INVESTIGATING OTHERIZATION IN *LORD OF THE FLIES*

Accepting that cultural products, including artistic works, construct, shape, and manipulate our attitudes towards all aspects of our lives and environment, critics examine and bring to light the functions of representations in these works. When it comes to investigating literature, a close reading and comprehensive understanding of any text that provides representations of a natural context must ask what the function of the setting in this literary work is, and What are the agencies of the language that describes it? And does the text include any literal or metaphorical relations between the represented nature and human affairs? While the physical impacts of humanity upon nature are evident in reality, these questions expose the human influence over our very ideas of and about the natural environment as shown through artistic representation. In this sense, all culturally-valued texts (which are read generation after generation), even a seemingly pre-eco-conscious text, will have some effect on present-day and future perceptions of our natural environment.

Colonialist literary works tend to emphasize the distinctions between the colonizer and the colonized through otherization, which is an essential current running through and thematized in *LOTF*. Although the 1954 novel does not primarily aim to convey eco-consciousness, the representation and function of the natural environment as the setting reveals how anthropocentric language, both within and beyond the diegetic level, affects representation of the nonhuman. The novel presents an excellent case for adopting a feminist ecocritical perspective in literature that offers an environmentally-centered story and a thematized representation of nature and humans in interaction.

So far, literary scholars have dealt with otherization between the characters in the novel, which has provided sociological and anthropological analyses, critical

approaches that leave nature aside as an other -or otherized- element. this chapter presents an ecological analytic reading of *LOTF* that allows an exploration of how nature is otherized by the different perspectives of narrator and characters. The chapter will then explore the function of the character transformations and their contribution to a feminist ecocritical reading of the novel.

Before the analysis, however, it is necessary to clarify how the thesis employs the term and concept of otherization, which is now commonly used in very general and imprecise ways. As explained in Chapter II, we have an ontological *other* in relation to ego development, which starts after the state of nature as Lacan defines it. Lacan conceives an other's<sup>5</sup> existence as a fundamental factor that determines one's identity construction (1993). In *LOTF*, this "other" is represented by certain rules that are implicit<sup>6</sup>. However, the novel itself employs the term *other* in order to define entities that do not fit into the paradigms of European civilization. Therefore, otherization would mean placing the otherized subject – for our investigation this is the nonhuman entity - on the periphery within a context where human beings occupy the center. In the novel, though, otherizing is also internal within the population of human characters. The first step in otherizing is to create distinctions between the parts of an entity, and Ralph's group and the hunters, elder boys and the "littluns", and two faces of the ocean are among the examples that will be discussed further in this chapter.

Another term that needs further explanation with respect to how it is used in this chapter and thesis is *nature*. Nature is here regarded as that environment which is firmly distinguished from human civilization and artifice. The phenomena in nature are unintentional and contingent. They deny assumptions of a particular meaning and reasons other than physical laws. Therefore, what will be called nature's language, that is frequently detected in both novels, refers to the rhythm of the natural phenomena. The whispers of the winds, sounds of sea shells, and roars of the ocean (*LOTF*); and "the language of the leaves" and harsh storms (*Tracks* 204) are among the examples found in the novels. Concerning Buell's ecocritical hermeneutics, this natural rhythm, or nature's language, does not necessarily convey a meaning, but it is essential in

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<sup>5</sup> "Other" refers to an external controlling power here.

<sup>6</sup> The function of the rules will be explained in the further analysis.

representing nature's autonomy. In this sense, nature's language addresses Kristeva's semiotic, a different ground for meaning than the human language of symbols.

Taking into consideration these meanings of the word *nature*, *naturalization* comes to mean -in this thesis- entering the context of nature where human civilization is not or has not hitherto been included. Therefore, the term is not used to express one's taking up of an original state. Instead, by naturalization, the thesis will mean the characters' adoption of nature's language and their acting independently of the paradigms and norms of human civilization. I indicated in the introduction that the thesis aims to seek the possibility within a literary work of a homogenous ground in literary terms where human beings and nature are treated in the same way without any hierarchies. Although the term nature in this sense appears to create a distinction that denies homogeneity, one should note that nature excludes not the human beings but, rather, their civilization and its artificialities. Since human beings are also physically and biologically a part of nature, it would be contradictory to distinguish them as unnatural beings or entities that could be naturalized in the novel. However, according to ecocritics, the unnatural (in literary terms) is the ideological, economic, political, cultural, sociological, or religious assumptions and attributions that human discourse bears. In other words, while the symbolic meanings installed by these unnatural human-made assumptions and attributions dominate human language, they do not have correspondences in nature's language.<sup>7</sup> They can only come to mean when nature is either anthropomorphized or metaphorized, so to speak.

This is where *LOTF* fluctuates between two realms: "the signifying process results from a particular articulation between the semiotic and the symbolic" (*Desire* 7) in Kristeva's terms. According to her, this is the "eventual split nature" (ibid.) of the speaking subject and cannot be denied. For this reason, a concept of pure nature<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> "Nature's language" is an expression directly taken from *Tracks* (210), which is, ironically an oxymoron in the context of this thesis because I use "language" to refer to human-made set of symbols to convey human ideologies and culture. In this sense, my conception of nature denies to communicate with or be defined by any symbolic set of structure. However, here and throughout the thesis the expression shall refer to the non-symbolic, nonverbal, "nonhumane" impressions and phenomena found in the natural environment. These expressions do not convey an idea but imply the ecological and biological changes, transformations, dynamism, and movement.

<sup>8</sup> "pure nature" in the sense that entirely independent of any assumption or meaning within a particular discourse/language; in other words, nature without necessarily representing something, or providing a meaningful context for another thing.

in human discourse would be impossible. Nevertheless, a feminist ecocritical reading can still reveal “what an independent nature is not” by analyzing “what nature is” according to the human approach and within the human discourse, which will be the technique used in the discussion in this chapter.

### **3.1. The Fundamental Perceived Distinctions That Lead to Otherization**

It has previously been stated that the first attempt in otherizing is to make distinctions between the units of an entity. Following this pattern in the plot, *LOTF* begins by illustrating two of the main characters’ situations on the island where they find themselves after their plane crashes. The first, Ralph, is a charismatic and relatively empathetic boy who exhibits the behavior of a leader. In contrast, the second boy, Piggy, has no leadership qualities. He is the one who “has the brains” (*LOTF* 97) among the other boys and he is characterized by his attempts at keeping an empirical, material, and scientific approach to his situation. The text states that even before going into the water, “he took off his shoes and socks, ranged them carefully on the ledge, and tested the water with one toe” (*LOTF* 14), while Ralph (the protagonist) recklessly immerses himself within the water without hesitation. Comparing the two boys, these particular characteristics of charisma and schooled intelligence can be considered among the examples of the novel’s discrimination between different perspectives toward nature: the former holds the perspective of a dominating power, while the latter approaches from a rational and empirical side.

As these two protagonists try to locate themselves on the unknown land, they meet other boys of diverse appearances and ages. Among them is the human antagonist, Jack, who is another boy with leadership qualities. He is an “intimidating” (28) character with a dark appearance, wearing the school choir’s uniform of a black cloak (28) and showing aggressive responses to Ralph throughout the novel. Upon Jack’s arrival, Piggy clearly expresses his dread as he “shrinks to the other side of Ralph” (28). Then, “secure on the other side of Ralph, he speaks timidly” (28). Here, the emphasis on the “other side of Ralph” indicates the start of a division between “Ralph’s side” and Jack’s, which is the necessary prerequisite for otherization. Jack is the otherized in this case. While Piggy finds security at Ralph’s side, he is “intimidated

by the uniformed superiority and the offhand authority in [Jack] Merridew's voice" (28). This reaction implies that Ralph might be constituted the safe side for the more vulnerable or less adventurous boys, while Jack (who enters the island with his own band of followers, and has his own brand of charisma) may appear threatening to them. These two sides point out a second distinction between the charismatic characters dominating power within the group in terms of how they establish their leadership. It is critical to note these intrinsic distinctions in order to follow how they lead to developing different otherizations toward nature in the novel.

When the boys agree that they "ought to have a chief to decide things" (29), they choose Ralph over Jack, for "there was a stillness about Ralph [...] his size and attractive appearance" (30) that naturally drew them to him. Nevertheless, Jack gains his own following, becoming the chief of the self-appointed "hunters" (31), a group at first constituted of the choir who arrived with him on the island. In this way, the novel presents how the social distinctions between the groups of boys develop on the island.

Although it may appear initially as a division between two groups of boys, the growing distinction among them becomes a difference between the paradigms according to which they conceive the other and otherize people or things. That is, Ralph and Jack represent two entities that clash, increasingly violently, throughout the novel: civilization and savagery, these being also the words often associated with them by the text. This distinction is not explicit at the beginning of the novel, nor do the characters at first recognize it; it emerges through the characters' actions and speech, and can be explored through the boys' character development.

To begin with, Ralph is the initiator of social gatherings. He mediates during common activities such as building shelters, distributing the workload, finding water and food, and making a fire. More than addressing physical needs, the shelter, food, and fire gain a symbolic meaning referring to the maintenance of human civilization. On several occasions, Ralph states that the fire is "the most important thing" on the island (50, 100, 185, 204) since "without the fire they can't be rescued" (204). The issue of being rescued will be discussed later in this chapter; however, it should be noted that Ralph's insistent emphasis on keeping the fire alive to be rescued implies that he does not entertain the idea of continuing his life on the island. Although he accepts that (like Jack and his followers) he too wants "to put on war-paint and be a savage," he still reminds the other boys that they "must keep fire burning" (204). Here,



in Ralph's expression, the fire supposed to bring the the civilized world back in, is opposed to the savagery of wresting sustenance from nature. Additionally, the light of the fire could stand somewhat conventionally for the enlightenment of human civilization, or anthropologically as an ability of humans that distinguishes them from other animals. If the boys cannot maintain the burning fire, they would lose the opportunity to be rescued from life as savages on the island, and never achieve their civilization again.

On the other hand, the war-paint that Ralph mentions is an identifier of both being a hunter and "being a savage" (204). Portraying an opposition to the enlightenment of civilization, the masks and war-paintings the hunter group puts on are "black and green" (253). While the novel points out a correlation between civilization and brightness, for example, through the frequent fire motif, the illustration of the bus stop with lamps (237), and the sunlight gathered by Piggy's specs (94), savagery constitutes a darker side of existence. It conceals certain deeds the boys would not commit otherwise in their civilized lives, such as killing a pig, skewering it with a stake (96), and even attacking a human being (the example of Simon).

The narrator states and shows that the boys "understood only too well the liberation into savagery that the concealing paint brought: 'Well, we won't be painted,' said Ralph, 'because we aren't savages'" (248). With the juxtaposition of savagery and civilization as opposing states in Ralph's speech, the text draws a distinction between the two entities. Ralph takes up the responsibility of establishing and maintaining order as a constant struggle to keep alive the norms of civilization they have been taught at school. His initial enthusiasm towards the holiday adventure and exploration opportunities aspects of nature changes to nostalgia for their previously orderly life where there are "houses in succession," and everything looking "right and friendly" (144). Besides, although Ralph enjoys the liberty of freedom and a degree of savagery on the island, his daydreams reveal his yearning for his past civilized life:

When you went to bed there was a bowl of cornflakes with sugar and cream. And the books—they stood on the shelf by the bed, leaning together with always two or three laid flat on top because he had not bothered to put them back properly. [...] there was a book about people who had dug things up, Egyptian things; there was *The Boy's Book of Trains*, *The Boy's Book of Ships*. Vividly they came before him; he could have reached up and touched them, could feel the weight and slow slide with which *The Mammoth Book for Boys* would come out and slither down. Everything was all right; everything was good-humored and friendly. (*LOTF* 139)

In this description, the features that define civilized life simultaneously become the definition of what savagery is not. Reading the description in this respect, one would note “propriety,” “rightness,” “friendliness,” order, “good-humored” as the dominant features in the portrait. This definition implies the opposite for savagery, which is mentioned in the novel along with “restlessness” (108), “filth” (247), “threatening spears” (254), “unrecognizable appearance” (264), “danger” (279). While Ralph’s side is considered safe, there is a vibrant sense of a wild attraction on the savages’ side. In a word, civilization and savagery belong to two different worlds on the island, as revealed in a notable stance: “The two boys faced each other. There was the brilliant world of hunting, tactics, fierce exhilaration, skill; and there was the world of longing and baffled commonsense” (89).

Considerably different from Ralph, another main character, Jack, adds to the continuous distinction. Jack is presented as an opposing power to Ralph. He claims the hunter’s chieftom, while the boys choose Ralph as the chief of all. While “there is a stillness about Ralph” (28), Jack is “loud and active” (102), and he appears as an aggressor. He is merciless (42), and he mostly acts instinctively. Besides, unlike Ralph, he does not express nostalgia for their past, nor does he show any attempt to be rescued. On the contrary, he favors the wildlife on the island and invites the others to enjoy savagery. In several scenes, he even provokes Ralph to attend them (97), reporting how exciting the pig hunt was (97-98). Ralph thinks that “all Jack can talk about is pig, pig, pig” (75) while he personally prioritizes being rescued.

Unlike Ralph, with his focus on being rescued, Jack seems to be contented with their new situation. With “piles of meat on green leaves near him, and fruit, and coconut shells full of drink” (213), the island is Jack’s utopia. Therefore, rather than trying to return to their civilized lives, where everything is controlled by the grownups, he uses the island as a way to establish a unit under his control, which he calls “my hunters” (59). He wants Ralph to recognize this claim to leadership and invites him to join them: “If you want to join my tribe come and see us. Perhaps I’ll let you join. Perhaps not” (201). Jack’s invitation simultaneously indicates a political<sup>9</sup> power hierarchy and separation between the two groups, namely the hunters and the

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<sup>9</sup> “Political” in the sense that it creates a social class formation within the group of boys, whose power becomes a decision paradigm.

remaining boys. Jack's power is based upon physical strength and the ability to hunt, to survive in bare nature. At times, he appears even "less a hunter than a furtive thing, ape-like among the tangle of trees" (67). As Jack digresses from the group's initial school choir-boy appearance and identity, Ralph cannot even recall him. Before the "giggling savages," Ralph's mind "falters," and he tries "to remember what Jack looked like" (256).

The difference between Jack's introduction at the beginning and his later descriptions coupled with savagery indicates a visible transformation. When he first appears from the woods, Piggy is "intimidated by his uniformed superiority" (26). However, later this "uniformity" leaves its place to a savage outlook with paints and mask on Jack's face. Then, to see what he has become, Jack uses a coconut full of water as a mirror and looks "in astonishment no longer at himself but at an awesome stranger" (89). At this moment, Jack enters an identity of an "other" being, one that is obviously less human and less "Jack Merridew." He recognizes a different thing, a stranger in the reflection. Hence, in his natural mirror he is alienated from himself.

Nevertheless, Jack's alteration and otherization are not restricted to merely physical terms, but they also have psychological effects. Behind the mask, Jack "liberates himself from shame and self-consciousness" (89). As mentioned before, the "concealing paint" brings "liberation into savagery" (248), and frees the one who puts them on from the moral norms of the society, from Englishness. The distinction between the latter identity (Englishness) and savagery is stated in the novel when Ralph claims that they are not savages, after all, but they are English (58). In this sense, in adopting savagery, Jack renounces his civilized English identity as well, which was for him only valid and pertinent in the boys' previous lives, in civilization.

Interestingly enough, one should note that Jack is the only character in the novel whose surname is stated: Merridew (26). For some time, in the beginning, and as was common among the older schoolboys at the time, the choir calls Jack by his surname, as he demands, saying that first names are "kids' names" (27), he asks, "Why should I be Jack? I'm Merridew." (27) Thus, although he rejects much of his schoolboy identity, he chooses to hold on to the name by which his schoolmasters gave him power over the other choir boys (who are now his hunters). Jack distinguishes himself from the others who have dropped their surnames, and on the symbolic level, he alienates himself as well. His question implies that he initially regards his surname as an

indication of superiority over the other boys, the least powerful of whom are not even referred to by their names, but are simply called “littuns” by the older boys. Later, however, the boys use his first name until he takes up another title, chief of the hunter. Although he is not precisely called the chief of the hunters, the boys recognize Jack by this attribution (117). This means that he takes on the name and the power that his school vested in him when he first arrives, but the other older boys nevertheless call him by his first name after a while, and he then takes on another name, this time by the power he invests in himself, when he calls himself the chief. As a result of this transformation in symbolic terms, the name Jack in the novel comes to refer to a hunter and nonhuman identity as he is considered both (149, 67) while Merridew is no longer mentioned.

Nonetheless, there is another distinction concerning this change in Jack’s names/titles on the symbolic grounds. As explained, Jack initially attributes to his surname a social status, elevating him in the social hierarchy among the boys. When Ralph wants to know each of the boy’s names, Jack distinguishes himself: “Why should I be Jack? I’m Merridew.” (27) In doing so, Jack attempts to gain a social characteristic within the group whereas the choir is simply titled as the “hunters” (30) and the younger children are called “a crowd of kids” (52) or the “littuns” (63). However, he soon gathers that life on the island bears its own language with no titles to indicate social status, and that based on survival and considerably different from that of civilization. When the boys first investigate a track of a “village smoke” (30) or a “boat” (30), Jack focuses on more basic necessities such as hunting to “get food” (30). In the case of hunger and vulnerability, Jack understands that they are left in a “state of nature” in Locke’s terms, which equalizes every member of the social hierarchy. In that, survival is the main motivation, and it requires understanding the conditions of the natural environment. Moreover, this very environment possesses the necessary “information” (67) for the boys to survive, as Jack recognizes this, “[closing] his eyes, [raising] his head and [breathing in gently with the flared nostrils, assessing the current of warm air for information” (67). Thus, upon realizing the necessity to adopt nature’s language in order to keep alive, Jack pays more attention to the natural signs. For instance, he recognizes the animal tracks while the other boys assume different speculations (34). He knows how to trap and catch a pig, the ways of jamming “the soft throat” (196), and skewering the meat (103). As he claims the

hunter's chieftdom and then gradually turns into a "stranger" (89), he no longer regards the rules they agreed on. He expresses this, for example, by claiming that "the conch doesn't count on top of the mountain" (58) while the conch is one of the crucial significations in the text.

In another scene, he opposes Ralph, asking who cares about the rules (129). When Ralph says that "the rules are the only thing [they've] got (130), Jack aggressively silences him: "Bollocks to the rules! We're strong—we hunt!" (130) This particular assertion points out that the physical and psychological strengths brought by the hunter identity are, at least on this island, superior to the rules of civilization, and this hierarchical power is based on physical strength. Jack and his tribe are strong, because they possess hunting skills. Therefore, they do not need democratic regulations in order to survive. Instead, they constitute an other, self-sufficient power (although they have their own rules, which they develop by learning to be an effective hunting team, and they impose rules very strictly - for instance, territorial boundaries - on others). In distinguishing themselves as another group, the hunters concretize the social distinction between the two groups of older boys.

This distinction is also fortified by the boys' word choices when they address each other. When Ralph mentions Jack and his tribe, he makes a distinction by separating two groups as "we" and "them" (59) with an emphasis on the difference between these entities. Thus, he expresses otherization on a linguistic level. Nevertheless, this linguistic distinction is not simply inferred from the pronouns "we" and "them" (59). Notably, Jack and his tribe's title as "hunters" undertakes a second transformation, leaving its place to "savage" in the end. Ralph addresses the members of the hunters directly as savages without specifying their particular identity or name. In this respect, anyone who belongs to the group of hunters is considered savage.

Another distinctive character that diverges from the others in *LOTF* is Piggy. While Ralph and Jack can be considered the most apparent opposing figures, Piggy interestingly fits in neither of their groups. He is the one who first meets Ralph, and he constantly uses Ralph's authority as a backup. His behavior is mainly due to physical handicaps, which lead to a lack of self-confidence. Unlike the other children, who are thin, Piggy is described as a fat boy, even occasionally being called "fatty" (27, 32, 62). Besides, he has asthma, which becomes a considerable hindrance for him during their challenging life on the island, and he is extremely short-sighted. Because

of his appearance, weak health, his constant attempts to make friends or have his comments heard, and evident under-privileged background, he is represented as a needy type, a typical target for bullying. The boys, including Ralph and Jack, do not always want him to join them, particularly when physical performance is required, such as hunting, exploring the island, or climbing. Nevertheless, they cannot exclude Piggy either because “for all his ludicrous body, Piggy had brains” (110). His distinct intelligence and scientific knowledge are what the others lack. Although he experiences great difficulty catching up with the other boys, Piggy uses his knowledge and reason to play a critical role in the survival of all. Yet above all, in order to make a fire to be rescued by a ship, they need “Piggy’s specs” (94).

Different than the other boys, Piggy has glasses, which may represent or be emblematic of his position as the clever one. Nevertheless, it is not his schoolroom cleverness that helps them; rather, the boys devise using the spectacles to focus the sunlight so that they can light the signaling fire. Moreover, the glasses may also be seen as separating Piggy from the experiential reality of the island. In this sense, they are metaphorical -and ironically transparent- walls that stand between Piggy’s empirical scientific world and the corporeal island life. Although they are transparent, they hinder Piggy from seeing the reality of savagery around him. In one scene, when Jack and his tribe steal Piggy’s specs and leave him without proper sight, Piggy states that he “can’t see no more and [he] got to get [his] glasses back” (244). After that, he accepts that “awful things has been done on the island” (ibid.).

Nevertheless, Piggy becomes able to face this reality only after he loses his glasses. In a metaphorical sense, the specs, in fact, blind his comprehension to the extent that he cannot grasp reality through the filters of the glasses. The world he prefers to see and believe is constituted of ideas and reasonable explanations. As he simply puts it, “life is scientific, that’s what it is” (118). However, the ideal life he assumes does not overlap with the things he experiences. He assumes that everyone on the island would regard the rules, while quite the opposite happens when Jack does not regard the conch (129). According to Piggy, Jack’s attitude and deeds are not human but can only be savagery and animality (129). In this sense, from the very beginning, when they first meet each other, Piggy regards Jack as an “intimidating” (26) other because he savagely transgresses the rules of Piggy’s ideal world. The

discrepancy between Piggy's ideals and reality is another significant distinction in the novel that otherizes Piggy upon arriving at the island in different ways.

Considering the positions of the characters, "savage" becomes an expression used by the narrator with reference to the characters that are thus otherized with respect to civilization. The text tells us that the savages "vanish" (202), the savages "murmur" (231), the savages "snigger" (252), "the savage, whoever he is, ululates" (272) while another unidentified "wounded savage" moans (279). These expressions show that the particular identity of a savage can be ignored. Savages are the "others," and this is what matters in the end.

While a more symbolic distinction is established during the boys' social formation, the novel also illustrates physical distinctions found in the natural landscape. However, one should note that the novel employs these physical distinctions as metaphors to echo the nature/culture distinction, which is the main thematic dichotomy. In several descriptions, the land or the water is represented by two sides that feature different characteristics. These descriptions of the landscape and nature are also metaphorical references to alienation. Therefore, paying attention to the representations of any dichotomic formations is necessary to reveal the divergences and otherizations in the novel.

During their exploration of the island, the boys encounter a coral reef. The text describes that "inside was peacock water, rocks and weed showing as in an aquarium; outside was the dark blue of the sea" (38). Here, the ocean itself is divided into the closer, shallower waters, and the distant depths. The inner part is likened to the domestic and artificial realm of an "aquarium" (38). It is beautiful and decorative with "peacock water, rocks and weed," and it has two clearly defined borders, one being the shore, the other the reef that looks like a "flowing chalk line" (38). As with aquariums, this relative precision and closeness present the boys and the readers with a familiar glimpse of an underwater world. On the other side, however, lies the infinity of the vast, untamed, and "dark blue sea" (38), which bears a sense of Romantic sublimity. The domestic construction of the inner part is contradicted by the wilderness that lies beyond it and, indeed, surrounds the entire island. Considering its function as a separator between the domestic context and the outer world, the aquarium of the waters on the island side of the reef is artificial and symbolic. It implies a sheltered (and restricted) part of the otherwise limitless natural context, while this particular unit

of structure is in fact, a part of, open to, and made by the greater whole. This distinction between the inner and the outer context can be regarded as a metaphoric echo of the nature/culture dichotomy in the novel.

The aquarium metaphor is only one of several examples of contrasts in nature. When the boys light a fire, it burns fiercely, with the flames and heat directed to one side by the breeze, so that “[on one side, the air was cool, but on the other, the fire thrust out a savage arm of heat that crinkled hair on the instant,” resulting in leeward and windward sides of the fire that are “clearly differentiated” (54). Here again, the distinction is one of calmness on one side, and fierce or savageness on the other. A similar comparison is indicated from the very first part, when Ralph and Piggy move away from the crashed aircraft and attempt to discover if the place is an island. Stumbling over a broken trunk and emerging from a jungle, the narrator observes that “the ground beneath [a line of palm trees] was a bank covered with coarse grass, torn everywhere by the upheavals of fallen trees, scattered with decaying coconuts and palm saplings. Behind this was the darkness of the forest proper and the open space of the scar” (14). The description illustrates an ununiformed and disordered nature. Under the “green roof” of the palms above a natural and square “platform of pink granite” Ralph notes “coolness and shade” (17) and from there looking at the lagoon, he can see, “clear to the bottom and bright with the efflorescence of tropical weed and coral” (17). The juxtaposition of heat and shade, coarse land and calm water adds to the divergences in the novel. In fact, the text constantly presents comparisons that lead to otherization. An ecological reading of the text would appreciate these contrasts as characteristics of the natural environment. However, the previously established social otherization and hierarchical structure of the children’s community installs a metaphorical -but not natural- layer of meaning. To put it more precisely, the textual pattern shows that both the characters and the natural landscape are constituted of several oppositions. Considering the given illustration, if the one side bears favorable features such as reliance (Ralph as later a leader), the text juxtaposes a less favorable side as an “other,” the inner side of the lagoon and coral reef, the coolness of the leeward side of the fire. In this pattern, one side is more otherized than the other by the narrative.

Interestingly enough, all of these exemplified binary oppositions are echoed by the island itself on a much broader scope. A dark, unknown ocean covers the isolated



island from every side. While the natural formations (such as corals, reefs, cliffs, rock cabins, peacock waters) create an island context, the exterior is constituted of “vast stretches of water” full of “infinite possibilities” (124). The text illustrates a metaphorical barrier stand between the island and the ocean, safety and danger, civilization and nature:

Wave after wave, Ralph followed the rise and fall until something of the remoteness of the sea numbed his brain. Then gradually the almost infinite size of this water forced itself on his attention. This was the divider, the barrier. On the other side of the island, swathed at midday with mirage, defended by the shield of the quiet lagoon, one might dream of rescue; but here, faced by the brute obtuseness of the ocean, the miles of division, one was clamped down, one was helpless, one was condemned, one was— (158)

This description implies that the island is itself a part of another distinction as a whole. What relates this interpretation to ecocriticism is that the novel bases these dichotomies upon culture/nature distinction. With this distinction, the orderly, safe, and reliable side refers to the civilized manners of culture, which have a good-humored and friendly appearance (139). The other side bears a rather messy and savage nature, sometimes being unidentifiable and always threatening orderliness (Jack when he becomes the primary savage, the scattered land the destructing fierce heat of fire, the endless ocean beyond the reef.). Through these associations, the novel treats nature as an entity of savagery and disorder, which means the “other side” of civilization. Accordingly, in Eugene Hollahan’s explanations, we see that culture and civilization occupy the center (Hollahan 22-30). Nature is sketched at the periphery in this portrait, and the novel presents savagery and disorder as the fundamental features leading to distinction.

### **3. 2. The Palimpsest Concept of Nature According to Leading Characters**

Having determined how *LOTF* locates nature within the text, the second step of the exploration is to discuss the different approaches to nature. The novel provides these various treatments through different characters. In this regard, how the prominent characters conceive nature in the beginning and how these approaches change in the end would help track the concept of nature in the novel. There are a few side characters that serve this purpose occasionally. However, Ralph, Jack, Piggy, and Simon are the

prominent ones who distinctly stand for particular approaches. Therefore, the analyses will focus on these four characters' conceptions of nature.

### **3.2.1. Between the Civilized and the Savage: Ralph**

To begin with, Ralph's concept of nature is different in the beginning from how he regards the land at the end of his unfortunate experiences. This alteration is both represented by Ralph's physical appearance and opinions about the island; beginning from appreciation to colonization.

Initially, an exotic pleasure is implied in his first reactions toward the island, as he says "This is our island. It's a good island. Until the grownups come to fetch us we'll have fun" (47). Expecting to "have a good time on this island" (47), Ralph assumes a utopia based on the Lockean state of nature. The isolated and uninhabited land resonates with the imaginary and fictional islands that Ralph has previously dreamed of and read about in children's books as he says, "it's like in a book"; like in "Treasure Island," or "Coral Island" (47). Here, it is worth noting that Ralph's ideal island derives from a fictional world rather than his free imagination. The island is not likened to an arbitrary connotation, but a human-made fictional context, and more importantly, this fictional context precedes the actual island. It has been installed before Ralph experiences/encounters the non-fictional island. Accordingly, Ralph's first attempt is to determine the similarities on the land with his fictional concept of an island and make associations between them to familiarize himself with his new context.

Ralph is the first to jauntily enjoy the warm water in the beach pool, seeming not to problematize their situation on the island. The novel states that "he hauled himself onto this platform, noted the coolness and shade, shut one eye, and decided that the shadows on his body were really green" (13). Thus, Ralph adapts himself physically to nature, as if camouflaging his body. Captured by the "enchantments" (14) on the island, he speaks "to himself, sounding the bass strings of delight" (ibid.). However, there is always a sense of hesitation accompanying his thoughts and actions when it comes to entirely submitting himself to the island life. After swimming in the beach pool, for example, the novel states that he "trotted through the sand, enduring the sun's enmity, crossed the platform and found his scattered clothes. To put on a

grey shirt once more was strangely pleasing” (18). Considering the civilization/nature distinction the novel draws, the grey shirt here can be taken as the outlook of a civilized human. When Ralph puts off his clothes and dives into the water, he immerses himself within a context where he is literally and metaphorically naked, free of his civilized identity.

Jerome Martin<sup>10</sup> interprets Ralph’s immersion into water as mimicry of “baptism” (412). Nevertheless, an ecocritical approach would consider the act as emancipation from the symbolic identities installed by civilization. In this sense, by putting off his clothes until he is entirely naked, Ralph leaves aside the installments of civilization, such as morality and the proprieties of societal life. Much as freedom is delightful, however, there is a strange pleasure in returning to the civilized outlook. This feeling supports that Ralph cannot entirely renounce his previous identity and still finds a sense of ease -perhaps safety- in civilized life. Thus, the novel implies a psychological in-betweenness deriving from the culture/nature dichotomy.

One critical example of how Ralph conceives nature is when he encounters the conch shell. This particular object is not any seashell but a conch, which is a significant motif in Indian culture and epic literature (Rajavel 2013). “The conch-shell when unwound on an axis can be seen as a French horn. [...] The conch-shell is generally used at the beginning of the worship. Given the tonal quality of its sound, it captures the attention of the devotees and helps in focusing the mind to the worship” (137). For this historical significance, the conch in the novel connotes a context of a battlefield, where the island ultimately turns into.

While lingering at the beach, Ralph and Piggy notice a shell buried in the sand, which Piggy calls conch, as explained. The boys immediately get interested in the conch and try to unearth the object. “The shell was interesting and pretty and a worthy plaything. [...] Ralph used one hand as a fulcrum and pressed down with the other till the shell rose, dripping [...] Now the shell was no longer a thing seen but not to be touched, Ralph too became excited” (*LOTF* 19). For Ralph, as an “interesting, pretty,

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<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that Jerome Martin is not the only critic to make associations between the act of swimming and baptism in *LOTF*. Ian Gregor (“The Later Golding”), Rebecca Coppinger (“Analogous Journeys”), Andrew Sinclair (“William Goldin’s Sea, Sea”) are also among the several other scholars who take a similar approach. However, as it particularly focuses on the motif of water and its signification, Martin’s article (“Symbol Hunting”) has been referred in the thesis.

and a worthy plaything,” the conch shell is something to be explored and enjoyed. Initially, it is buried under the sand; therefore, it is literally untouchable. After Ralph digs it out, the conch becomes something to be touched besides being merely observable. In another sense, it becomes subject to penetration, “glistening in Ralph’s hands” (20). Thus, the conch gains another signification, a metaphorical meaning: it becomes a property. Once it is unveiled, it can be owned by human beings. The shell remains a mysterious unlabeled thing until Piggy names it the conch, and Ralph grabs it. It is then familiarized and owned by them, making Ralph even “more excited” (22). It appears to be an object of interest, a worthy thing giving a sense of pleasure and confidence. Considering Ralph’s reaction, it would not be wrong to regard his approach towards the conch as an implication of subjugation.

### **3. 2. 1. 1. Echoes of Colonization in the “Sound of the Conch”**

The drives for subjugation have roots in the power struggle between the colonizer and the colonized (Bookchin 2006). According to Diane Lewis, subjugation is the basic process underlying the colonial philosophy (Lewis 1973). Unavoidably, it establishes a superior-inferior hierarchy, which Plumwood explains in detail. According to her, the superior power forces the other to a hierarchical relationship based on “radical exclusion” (45-58). In that, the inferior is situated in a part of a lower order. The side of the inferior is represented with savagery in *LOTF*. However, Plumwood asserts that the existence of the inferior is still a necessity for the superior’s domination (45-50). The master nurtures its autonomy by the continuous presence of an inferior “other” (45-50). Therefore, the superior, the humans, enslave or subjugate the other. In his 1950 lecture “Language,” Heidegger suggests that “language speaks,” having a voice of itself. According to him, “man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man” (“Martin Heidegger Quotes” 2021). On symbolic grounds, this trend results in the colonial discourse. Turning back to the novel, Ralph’s mimicry of a master “like at school” (*LOTF* 43) and his attempts to maintain the ordered structure of civilized life through the rules show the dominating influence of the symbolic register upon his identity.

Concerning the colonial discourse the boys adopt, the text suggests a pattern of colonization revealed by the characters' reaction towards the natural context. One of the significant examples of this again features the conch motif. Being exposed to metaphorical and literal capturing, the conch undertakes the symbolic value of a property. After unearthing the shell from the water, Ralph learns that it is called "conch" (18). When he blows the conch, the thing immediately sounds (19). "A deep, harsh note boomed under the palms, spread through the intricacies of the forest and echoed back from the pink granite of the mountain" (ibid.). Seeing the other boys who began to gather on the beach, Ralph says that they "can use the conch to call the others" and "have a meeting" (20). Thus, he appoints its first regulatory function to the conch.

As many other boys arrive at the beach, a clamor bursts when they all want to comment on their situation. To suggest a solution, Ralph says that they "can't have everybody talking at once. [They'll] have to have 'Hands up' like at school" (43). Then, holding the conch before his face, he introduces it to the others: "Conch. That's what the shell is called" (ibid.). He announces that whoever holds the conch has the right to speak until it is passed to another person (ibid.). Once the boys agree upon Ralph's suggestion, they regard it as a rule that no one can break (45). Thus, the conch gains a second signification, which has a political value. The rule Ralph conceives bears the implications of a basic normative political formation, and the conch becomes a symbol that lays out the limitations and rights of this formation.

Herein, the scene illustrates the three steps of the pattern of colonization mentioned above: (i) naming/familiarizing with the object, (ii) possessing, (iii) appointing a function and valorizing the object accordingly. Before Ralph learns that the shell is called a conch (18), the object does not have a register in Ralph's discourse. Once Ralph gets familiarized with the conch, however, he possesses the concept of the object in addition to literally having it in his hands. Lastly, he seeks a way to use the conch (20), and thus, the conch gains an agency. The conch's function serves a political purpose by attributing to it a symbolic value. At this point, the conch is no longer simply a sea shell laying in the water, but it is a particular conch that indicates the right to speak. Thus, the symbolic value subjugates the autonomous object and makes it mean something within the symbolic discourse.

Interestingly enough, Ralph's statement also reveals that this rule is not an originally conceived regulation. In fact, it is a mimicry of the "'Hands up'" rule "like

at school” (43). Here, the text points out a continuation of the boys’ previous lives with their rules and authoritative frames. That is, Ralph’s example from the school context in order to concretize the conch’s function implies that he is talking from the discourse of that distanced context, which belongs to the world of “grownups.” In doing so, Ralph retains the symbolic regulations of the grownups. The conch’s signification, thus, refers to the Lacanian Father that implies an authoritative structure that underlies the boys’ social relations. Within the absence of grownups, Ralph still wants to create their own controlling authority, namely the significant Other, in Lacan’s terms, which would regulate them. By holding the conch, the boys would know that they “won’t be interrupted” (44). One can infer from Ralph’s tendency to appoint rules that the boys need the protection and regulation of the symbolic order so that they establish a sense of safety. With this motivation underlying the rules, it becomes apparent that the conch stands as the metaphor for the symbolic order, the significant Other in Lacan’s terms.

Eagleton explains identity construction through Lacanian desire that is a necessary production of an “Other’s” existence. He asserts that “we desire what others –our parents, for instance- unconsciously desire for us; and desire can only happen because we are caught up in linguistic, sexual and social relations –the whole field of Other which generate it” (Eagleton 151). The imagined civilization in the novel stands as the Other in this sense. Despite its invisibility, it regulates social relations. In the novel, children’s desire for this imagined civilization is reflected in their discourses, particularly when they mention the grownups and their “understandable lawful life” (*LOTF* 113) on several occasions. In this manner, the Other’s voice becomes the voice of the boys’ unconscious. Eagleton states that “the unconscious is, so to speak, ‘outside’ rather than ‘within’ us or rather it exists ‘between’ us, as our relationships do” (Eagleton 150). When we develop our identity according to the outside, we necessarily condition ourselves through language. However, “language is never something entirely within our individual control. On the contrary, as we have seen, language is what internally divides us, rather than an instrument we are confidently able to manipulate” (Eagleton 150). Eagleton’s argument explains that the children in the novel otherize nature because the Other (of civilized order) imposes the ideal<sup>11</sup> through language. In his ecocritical discussion on *LOTF*, Iman Hanafy finds that

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<sup>11</sup> Here, with ideal I mean the Other’s definition of the norms and the “normal” as the ideal being.

Golding seems to hold strong reservations about the possibility of meaningfully maintaining awareness of the self within nature. While humans originated in the natural world, their attention continues to focus on culturally created and culturally mediated conceptions of themselves and their relationships. ( 9)

Supporting Hanafy's point about the human origin in the natural world, the freedom and mess the boys find in bare nature is appealing at first. They "hunt and feast and have fun" (201) in the absence of the grownups, along with their moral dictations about human temperaments, telling them "not to" (9) do certain things. However, much as they enjoy this freedom, the boys go so far as to "murder" (224) Simon and Piggy with similar drives. For Ralph, this means transgressing human identity, which he never wants to lose. Above all, Ralph's primary motivation is to return to their civilized lives, and for him, this is only possible by maintaining the existence of the significant Other's authority, namely the rules. He is convinced that when his dad "gets the leave, he'll come and rescue" (15) them. In several scenes, he recalls his "Daddy," by the things he has taught to him before (15), by his ship that might rescue them (51), or the days he came home (160). His father, in this sense, invisibly accompanies him, although not existing on the island at all. Ralph's insistence in relying on his father shows that he implicitly rejects the savage life on the island. As given before in this chapter, although he also wants to "put on war-paints and be a savage" (204), he keeps himself from exceeding beyond the perceived limits of civilization. Therefore, his attempts to maintain the norms of civilization by setting rules and trying to be rescued imply that he separates nature from civilization.

According to Ralph, the best way to maintain their civilized identity is to "have more rules (54). When the boys set up a fire that would signal their existence and let a ship "take them off" (ibid.) from the island, Ralph gives a speech about the importance of being rescued and says that they "ought to have more rules. Where the conch is, that's a meeting. The same up here as down there" (ibid.). After this speech, the other boys regard Ralph as the representative of the rules. Ralph is well aware of this position as he states on another scene about keeping the fire alive that "Now I say this and make it a rule, because I'm chief. [...] You voted me for chief. Now you do what I say" (101). With each expression, Ralph's authority becomes more visible. He gives utmost importance to obeying rules and respecting their authority if the boys "want[...] to be rescued" (127).

Ralph's authoritative position reveals a similar possessive approach to nature, more specifically to the island. Above all, however, the island and the conch shell bear physical correspondence as well. In that, the conch resembles the island's intact and "enclosed" (38) state as it features a cavity inside. While this hollow is surrounded by the shell, the ocean encloses the island. Like the conch, the island is covered inside with "the hints of pink" (38). Furthermore, its round shape with "gentle curves" (128) is echoed by the "spiral twist" (18) of the conch. Although it would rather be a generalization to assert a direct relation between the conch/island association and the boys' attitude towards them, the text draws a parallel approach by illustrating the same pattern of colonialism.

After electing the chief, a group among the children, including Ralph, Piggy, Jack, and Simon, begin to walk around the untouched land to confirm that it is actually an island. Once they reach the top of a high rock, the whole island lies beneath their feet. Ralph skims through the scene and remarks: "This belongs to us!" (38) On the one hand, the demonstrative pronoun "this" creates a semantic distance from "us" stated at the end of the sentence implying a division between the human and nonhuman domain. By referring to the former as "us," Ralph makes the distinction even more apparent: he concretizes nature/civilization distinction through language. Between the two pronouns, "this" –the island- is subjugated by the latter, us. Thus, the island metaphorically enters into the domain of human authority and possession.

In "The Savages in the Forest: Decolonizing William Golding" (1995), Stefan Hawlin explores the implications of decolonization in the novel. He finds that "the boys should have created white civilization and constitutionalism," but instead, "they have fallen back down the hierarchies, regressed to Africanness, and become 'half devil, half child'" (133). With this argument, Hawlin seems to approach the novel from a biased stand that presupposes the existence of hierarchies. Besides, he regards Africanness as a state of regression, mentioned as savagery in the novel. However, this approach would reject an ecocritical perspective that aims to achieve homogeneity since it already acknowledges nativity as an indication of inferiority.

With a further interpretation, Hawlin asserts that "Lord of the Flies is a seriously imperialist text" (ibid.), and this is evident from the text itself, for example, in the scene where the boys explore the island: "[e]yes shining, mouths open, triumphant, they [the excursion group] savor the right of domination" (39). While "the



right of domination” makes the imperialist discourse obvious. However, opposing to Hawlin, it is arguable that the novel is not in favor of human domination over nature, but on the contrary, ridicules the situation with this particular word choice: “Right of domination” (ibid.) is an ideologically and politically loaded human approach, which does not exist in the homogenous natural environment. In the natural context where everything equally shares the habitat, there is no right nor domination in ideological and political terms. Such a right implies a hierarchy between an inferior and superior entity, therefore, rejects homogeneity. Therefore, the right of domination can only be recognized in the context of colonialism.

Furthermore, in the scene, Ralph “spreads his arms” and repeats, “All ours!” (39) In other words, the island belongs to them. Here, Ralph divides the natural context and humankind, claiming domination over the “all” –the environmental totality. This instance corresponds with the previous scene when Ralph grabs and possesses the conch. By this particular act, Ralph literally owns the conch, and this possession is acknowledged by the others when they mention the conch as “[Ralph’s] shell.” (30) Likewise, in the latter scene, Ralph linguistically enslaves the land while, in material terms, benefits from its resources to meet their basic needs.

Going over the process, it is notable that the same pattern of colonialism applies to the island. As the first step, Ralph and the excursion group discover the land to validate that it is actually an island. Hence, the initially unknown land gains a name (island) and gets familiarized through the excursion. Secondly, Ralph announces that the island belongs to them, accompanied by the sense that they have the right to domination. Then, Ralph gathers that “[t]his is a good island. [...] There’s food and drink” (47) to utilize. Once the boys begin to build huts on the beach, pick some fruits from the trees, and “hunt pigs to get meat” (50), the island becomes a source of nourishment and shelter. In a word, what Ralph leads the boys derives from the basis of colonial philosophy in metaphoric and literal terms.

In addition to a colonial perspective, Ralph finds nature unreliable, insecure, and “dirty” (113). For him, the boys should be wary of the dangers lurking on the island. The “beastie” being in the first place, hunting alone (271), the mountains (167), the strides hitting on the rocks (174), “the world outside the shelters” are “impossibly dangerous” (144). At some points, “filthy things” (246, 266) occupy the island. But way before, Ralph realizes and accepts that “this place (the island) is getting dirty.”

(113) The intensifying savage events, such as the brutal killing of the pig (96), the “long” and “bloody” chases (194), Simon’s murderous death (220-221), Roger’s atrocious attack on Piggy (273), apparently justify Ralph’s deduction. In his sentence, Ralph uses the island (the geographical environment) as a metaphor for human nature. Later in Simon’s words, the dirt Ralph states is the “mankind’s essential illness” (126). However, attributing this metaphorical “dirtiness” to nature indicates that the environmental context is used as a representative of mankind’s essence. Nature is not a particular subject to discuss, but rather, its function for the text is significant. In this regard, the text covertly centralizes the human characters by constructing metaphors from the natural context that stands for their essence, in Simon’s terms.

Adding to nature’s representative function, the island displays increasing darkness hinting at the aggression among the boys. A sense of evil emerges through “cynical” (266) motifs such as the inexplicable “pig’s skull” (266), which is another significant symbol, the Lord of the Flies. While the conch and the island unravel the colonial implications in the novel, the Lord of the Flies appears as an anthropomorphic image that reflects the boys’ inner world.<sup>12</sup> The skull regards “Ralph like one who knows all the answers and won’t tell” (266). It seems lifeless except for an “inquisitive ant busy in one of the eye sockets. Or is it?” (266) The novel presents here an ambiguous image, which is neither lifeless nor alive. It is nothing but a white face of a pig bone; however, it grins at Ralph, “the empty sockets seems to hold his gaze masterfully and without effort” (ibid.). Besides, it gleams “as white as ever the conch had done” and seems “to jeer at [Ralph] cynically” (ibid.). Every additional description makes the image even more complicated and ambiguous. Does it really grin at Ralph? Is it alive or dead indeed? Is it as filthy and dark as Ralph sees? While these are the questions to which Ralph seeks answers (ibid.), the novel brings about perhaps a more essential one that implicitly addresses the concept of nature: “What was it?” (ibid.)

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<sup>12</sup> The image of the Lord of the Flies will be discussed in detail in part 3.3.4.

### 3. 2. 2. “Not to be seen”: Simon

Although the novel never gives a clear answer to the question stated above, another significant character, Simon, simply makes a suggestion way before, “Maybe it is only us” (111). Then, he asks the other boys, referring to his previous suggestion: “What’s the dirtiest thing there is?” (126) Directly addressing to human nature, Simon holds a mirror towards the boys that reflects and questions their morality.

So far, several analyses<sup>13</sup> of the characters have agreed on that Simon represents a “saintly” (Fitzgerald 1992) figure in the novel. This interpretation has justifiable evidence as Simon is the character who knows that the beast -or the evil, the boys are afraid of is “a part of them” (206). Adding to this assertion, Iman Hanafy gathers that Simon “has the strength of mind, but is physically frail, combining perception with human vulnerability” (8). Nevertheless, in an ecocritical reading, Simon’s significance for the novel becomes visible particularly by the communication he establishes with the Lord of the Flies.

Although relatively younger than Ralph, Jack, and Piggy, Simon presents a solemn stance and prefers to walk alone in the forest. During these private excursions, he observes a vibrant and vivid land, different than Ralph’s ambivalent nature:

Now the sunlight had lifted clear of the open space and withdrawn from the sky. Darkness poured out, submerging the ways between the trees till they were dim and strange as the bottom of the sea. The candlebuds opened their wide white flowers glimmering under the light that pricked down from the first stars. Their scent spilled out into the air and took possession of the island. (80)

While Ralph daringly claims that all (land) belongs to them, it occurs to Simon that the natural phenomena covertly take their possession, namely the island, back. It should be noted that the novel does not present an explicit struggle between nature and humankind. However, as given in the example, Simon is able to recognize the sense of an uneasy nature against human affairs:

Holding his breath he cocked a critical ear at the sounds of the island. Evening was advancing toward the island; the sounds of the bright fantastic birds, the bee-sounds, even the crying of the gulls that were returning to their roosts

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<sup>13</sup> See also below references:

Rosenberg, Bruce. “Lord of the Flies.” *The Centennial Review*. Michigan State University Press: USA. 1992, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 128- 139

Spitz, David. “Power and Authority: An Interpretation of Golding’s Lord of the Flies.” *The Antioch Review*. Antioch Review Inc.: USA. 1970, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 21-34.

among the square rocks, were fainter. The deep sea breaking miles away on the reef made an undertone less perceptible than the susurrations of the blood. (79)

It is worth noting that in Simon's observations, nature and the natural elements stand alone without being exposed to the pattern of colonialism exemplified before. This is one indication of Simon's empathetic attitude towards nature. Rather than trying to claim his presence in nature while he is roaming, Simon tends to submit himself to "silence" (47, 73, 77-79, 93). In fact, he feels "a perilous necessity to speak; but to speak in assembly" is "a terrible thing to him" (125). Instead, many times he "backs to his seat" (121) and lets the "bee-sounds," "the crying of the gulls," or "the undertone of the deep sea" (79) be heard. Interestingly enough, in these scenes that relatively focus on Simon, the text invisibilizes the character by vividly voicing the context of nature. In doing so, the text applies Simon's presence between visibility and invisibility to the natural context. At times, it is stated that Simon is even "not to be seen" (76) by the other boys. Although this particular absence is a physical one, Simon's, so to speak, invisible character enables a symbolic absence: he is not involved in the social hierarchy the boys have formed.

Nevertheless, another notable absence in these scenes is sharp personifications that draw direct linkages between the natural context and humans or human affairs. Another depiction of the natural context adds to this argument:

The slope of the bars of honey-colored sunlight decreased; they slid up the bushes, passed over the green candle-like buds, moved up toward the canopy, and darkness thickened under the trees. With the fading of the light the riotous colors died and the heat and urgency cooled away. The candlebuds stirred. Their green sepals drew back a little and the white tips of the flowers rose delicately to meet the open air. (79)

Here, the natural context is not only voiced but is also kept away from human presence in literary terms. The movements of the animals, plants, and natural formations do not attempt to mimic human affairs. In other words, their acts are not specific to humankind. As an alternative to personification, the text presents what I shall term "characterization of nature"; that is, to characterize something by not necessarily representing it with a human connotation or attempting to make it seen as a (human) person. Thus, the natural context does not have to undertake a symbolic meaning, nor

is it enslaved by a human context. On the contrary, it is appreciated and recognized for its physically natural and existential features.

However, it is crucial to point out that the novel also frequently employs personifications such as the “menacing darkness” (82), “restless shelters” (82), the water that “forces itself on Ralph’s attention” (158), “intimidating grunts” (162). In one scene, the natural environment almost acts in an intentional manner: “With that word the heat seemed to increase till it became a threatening weight and the lagoon attacked them with a blinding effulgence” (17). The significance of these several examples of personifications is that they emphasize the feeling/impression they convey rather than the natural being that carries them. In other words, considering the meaning, the emphasis is not on the darkness, the shelters, the water, or the grunts, which are the characteristics of the natural environment, but the menace, restlessness, force, and intimidation, in fact.

Featuring both figures of speech, the novel enables the reader to compare ecological and anthropocentric writings. The first example (from page 79) illustrates an ecological text in which the credit is directly given to the natural context. The examples of personifications, on the other hand, require a human context since they address human feelings. Characterization of nature, however, establishes an autonomous context that does not have to convey a particular meaning or human emotion. Using characterization of nature in this manner, the novel exemplifies how human influence and impression can be decentralized in literary terms. Accordingly, it can be argued that characterization of nature in this sense might provide an ecological text, whereby anthropocentrism can be avoided. Thus, the text does not treat nature as an other by rejecting a nature/human hierarchy. Moreover, it gives particular credit to nature as an autonomous being rather than recognizing it according to its relation to human affairs.

### **3.2.3. Piggy as the Representative Character of the Empirical Approach to Nature**

The other distinct character with a different approach to nature is Piggy. As the narrator in the novel puts, “what intelligence had been shown was traceable to Piggy”

(28). Besides, it is stated that “Piggy was an outsider, not only by accent, which did not matter, but by fat, and ass-mar, and specs, and a certain disinclination for manual labor.” (91) While Ralph adopts the authoritative character of the grownups, Piggy’s “words and actions reflect man’s intellect and reasoning powers” (Martin 409). More than reflecting, however, the novel indicates that Piggy, in their hopeless situation on the island, imitates the world of “grownups”: “I dunno, Ralph. We just got to go on, that’s all. That’s what grown-ups would do” (*LOTF* 200). His content of the sentences and frequent reference to his aunt as if voicing her shows that he maintains the adults’ language and rules: “My auntie told me not to run, on account of my asthma” (9). Although Ralph and Piggy confirm that there are “no grownups” (8) on the island, Piggy still acts as if they are under surveillance of the adults, the authoritative figures who regulate the boys’ lives. He usually does not even tell his own ideas or expectations but expresses what his aunt would expect, think, or allow: “I didn’t expect nothing. My auntie—” Likewise, in another scene, he rejects joining Ralph in the water, stating that “I can’t swim. I wasn’t allowed. My asthma—” (15) Piggy continuously feels an obligation to do (or not to do) certain regulatory things as he repeats himself, “We got to find the others. We got to do something” (17). While Ralph’s first reaction is to enjoy the absence of grownups, Piggy tends to bring an order, with a concern about the other boys: “We’ll want to know all their names, and make a list. We ought to have a meeting” (12). The expressions such as “got to” (17), or “ought to” (12) in Piggy’s sentences imply a sense of necessity and obligation although their independent state on the island does not require to obey any rules initially. However, Piggy chooses to maintain the previous rules that regulate his life.

Besides, as discussed before in this chapter, Piggy’s specs become a symbol of the regulations, rules, and an empirical perspective that the grownup’s authority has implanted. When he first meets with Ralph, he says, “I’ve been wearing specs since I was three” (9). This particular age is significant in human language development. Psychologist Nila Banton Smith finds that during the first three years, the child focuses on acquiring vocabulary “and has well-established language at four years” (400). After then, the child develops his linguistic skills upon this established basis. In Piggy’s case, the specs symbolically represent the frames of the empirical approach he has acquired by language. In other words, the glasses literally frame Piggy’s vision and affect his eye-sight since without them, he “can’t see proper” (145). In metaphorical terms,

however, the glasses restrict Piggy's conception and understanding of his environment to a limited vision, and terminology of the scientific discourse. Piggy asserts that "life is scientific" (118), and should be regulated by "rules to obey them" (58). It is evident from his attempt to count the boys and make a list of them that Piggy tends to evaluate his environment in scientific terms, namely in quantities. While the specs symbolize Piggy's restricted perception of his environment, how Piggy receives the conch reveals another approach toward nature.

When they find the conch shell and pull it out from the water, Piggy says "It's a shell! I seen one like that before. On someone's back wall. A conch he called it. He used to blow it and then his mum would come. It's ever so valuable –" (21). This comment on the conch shell especially bears the same pattern of colonialism that is explained through Ralph's approach to nature. As the first step, Piggy specifies the shell by its particular name, saying that it is called a conch. Secondly, he describes the conch's function, stating how and why it is used. Lastly, he talks about the value of the object, with its economic value, in particular, saying that "A conch is ever so expensive. If you wanted to buy one, you'd have to pay pounds and pounds and pounds" (22). Here, Piggy's expression reduces the "pretty plaything"s (19) invaluable natural presence to monetary terms. Regarding the conch as a source of money and an indication of wealth, Piggy valorizes the object. According to this perception, a conch is more an object that can be evaluated by its exchange value than a natural being. It can be sold in "pounds" (22), consumed, and it brings monetary profit. Therefore, its value is identified by capital, not by its mere existence.

Taking this particular example onto a broader stage, Talwar states that "nature is the consumer's right –[Golding] appropriates the island, and instead of inserting his narrative in it, he deflates it, reducing it to a functional diminutive to lace his narrative with" (205). Although Talwar's assertion cannot be attributed to Golding himself, so far, the examples have shown that particular characters in the novel have a reductionist approach towards nature. Piggy's valorization of the natural beings unfolds that nature, as a colonized, is "economically fruitful" (Memmi 123). Johan Galtung, on the other hand, offers a term to define the process of colonization executed through a scientific perspective, which he calls "*scientific colonialism*, a process whereby the center of gravity for the acquisition of knowledge about the nation is located outside the nation itself" (Galtung qtd in Lewis 1969:584). Parallel to this definition, Piggy's insistent

rational approach becomes insufficient to help him live amid the reality -and savagery- of nature. This is due to the discrepancy between his scientifically idealized world and his experiences in reality. At times, considering situations within the frames of his rationale puts Piggy into a ridiculous position. In a scene, for example, when Ralph tells Piggy to “write a letter to [his] auntie,” Piggy considers this “solemnly” and says that “I don’t know where she is now. And I haven’t got an envelope and a stamp. An’ there isn’t a mailbox. Or a postman.” (*LOTF* 238) Here, Piggy cannot distinguish reality from Ralph’s “tiny joke” (238). In another scene, Ralph makes fun of him while Piggy takes every word serious:

“I’ve been thinking,” [Piggy] said, “about a clock. We could make a sundial. We could put a stick in the sand, and then—” The effort to express the mathematical processes involved was too great. He made a few passes instead. “And an air-plane, and a TV set,” said Ralph sourly, “and a steam engine.” Piggy shook his head. “You have to have a lot of metal things for that,” he said, “and we haven’t got no metal. But we got a stick. (90)

Ralph turns and smiles “involuntarily” (91). Although Piggy sees this smile, he “misinterprets it as friendliness” (*ibid.*). Behind his glasses, which stand for a deceptive filter that hinders him from seeing/gathering realities, Piggy cannot fully comprehend his situation. His ideal world features “envelops and stamps,” “mailboxes, and postmans” (238), all of which belong to civilization, whereas the island lacks.

To refer to Lewis’ argument, Piggy stands outside the island and the natural environment. His environmental context is divided into strict categories, which should be regarded separately. In a significant discussion, he directs questions to Ralph and the others: “What are we? Humans? Or animals? Or savages? What’s grown-ups going to think? Going off—hunting pigs—letting fires out—and now!” (129) The characters’ ordering of these questions is notable since they might reveal how the characters establish a hierarchical perspective. According to Piggy, while humanness comes before animalism, savagery comes as the lowest state. Piggy’s juxtaposition, therefore, implies the priority of the human category over animals and savages. While Ralph and Jack occasionally eliminate this hierarchy by taking up animalistic appearance, behavior, or simply a savage identity (89), Piggy maintains the distinction of the categories for he cares about “what grown-ups going to say” (129).



Considering nature-culture dichotomy in the novel, Mick Smith states that “‘nature’ simply becomes culture’s antithesis, its antonym. Nature represents to culture everything that culture is not, it is something less and ‘other’ than humans” (60). In the example of Piggy’s question, this dichotomy becomes clear: Humans constitute the one end, and savages are positioned at the “other” end. While humans restructure a social identity in the natural world, their attention is still centered on “culturally created and culturally mediated conceptions of themselves and their relationships” (Hanafy 9). It should be noted that the novel does not indicate that Ralph, Simon, Piggy, or Jack present “self-obsession” in Hanafy’s words (9). Nevertheless, Ralph and Piggy adopt a discourse that prioritizes human civilization.

As mentioned before, Piggy’s glasses are one of the critical symbols that stand for rational and logical thinking. At the same time, however, they become the reason why Piggy cannot see the reality on the island -that the island is different from his idealized “scientific life” (*LOTF* 125). When his glasses are “broken” (218), Piggy linguistically recognizes the “awful things” (244) that happened on the island by stating the group’s worsening situation. Much as Piggy asserts that “he is blinded” (*ibid.*) upon losing his glasses, he happens to see (realize) the scandalous events, which are not mentioned out loud before: “There’s them on this island as would laugh at anything. And what happened? What’s grown-ups goin’ to think? Young Simon was murdered. And there was that other kid what had a mark on his face. Who’s seen him since we first come here?” (246) Thus, Piggy illuminates the things that happened before at midnight, “darkly, uncertainly” (118). This illumination and realization imply that he was, in fact, metaphorically blinded by the specs because they allow a partial sight (showing Piggy only what his aunt has told, or what he has learned from the school), excluding the fact that the social orders and rules that they “ought to obey” are human productions. Nature does not demand such symbolism, for it is direct. Therefore, trying to establish and maintain these orders and rules would be imposing an artificial system upon nature in the novel.

Considering his blinded perspective and mimicking the adult language, Piggy regards nature as an object of economy and production. Besides, his scientific characteristic, discourse, and approach to the events show that Piggy’s ideal world is an outcome of the an authoritative controlling power’s discourse found in civilization.

In other words, Piggy is a production of civilization, voicing what he has been previously taught.

### **3.2.4. Becoming An “Other” Thing: Jack’s Alienation through Naturamorphism**

As the opposing power against Ralph, Jack is the other character whose transformation is crucial to the novel. Therefore, a comparison between Jack’s initial and last appearances provides a better understanding of how the text presents savagery. In the beginning, Jack comes out in a uniform-like “black cloak” (25) along with a group of a choir. He looks “angry” (ibid.) and “intimidating” (26). Arriving at the beach, Jack asks if there is a “man with trumpet,” and then asks for any other man (25). He learns that there are no grown-ups to be found and then orders the “scattered” (ibid.) choir to align: “Choir! Stand Still!” (ibid.) “Wearily obedient, the choir huddles into line” and stands “there swaying in the sun” (26). This introduction tells that Jack has the characteristics of a strict leader that demands order, looking for authority to conduct the others. Regulations and rules matter for Jack, as he is willing to “have rules, lots of rules” (45). Contradicting with his later actions and thoughts, he also regards this as a necessity because of their distinction from the savages: “We’ve got to have rules and obey them. After all, we’re not savages. We’re English, and the English are best at everything. So we’ve got to do the right things” (58). Here, Englishness refers to civilization that opposes savagery throughout the novel. But more than the indication of the boys’ nationality, here it defines what is to be a “human being,” with a particular emphasis on its distinction from savagery. Jack’s assertion indicates that English -the civilized- are considerably a different entity from the savages, and they are superior, being “best at everything” (ibid.). Therefore, they claim to be the ones to define what is “right” (ibid.) and proper.

From an anthropological perspective, Lewis discusses the power struggles between the dominant and dominated entities and finds that the former group tries to establish standardized norms in favor of its interests. According to her, “once differences between the dominated and dominant groups are defined and the differences exploited for the benefit of the dominant group, they are then characterized as ‘standards of absolute fact’ or as determinative” (Lewis 584). Regarding this

explanation, the novel initially presents civilization as the dominant power.<sup>14</sup> Right after appointing the chief, Ralph announces the first rule: “Where the conch is, that’s a meeting. The same up here as down there” (*LOTF* 58). In his statement, Ralph not only assigns the conch a symbolic signification but also emphasizes that the rule shall be valid everywhere on the island like an absolute fact. Lewis’s argument explains Jack’s concept of “right” (*ibid.*) that sets the standards of the boys’ social formation on the island. Accordingly, defining what is considered right adds to the perceived nature/civilization distinctions in the novel.

As an authoritative character, Jack demands chiefdom due to his superiority over the others in the choir. “I ought to be chief,” he says” with simple arrogance, ““because I’m chapter chorister and head boy. I can sing C sharp” (28). However, “while the most obvious leader [is] Jack” (*ibid.*), the other boys vote for Ralph because they find “stillness” (*ibid.*) about him. Moreover, concerning Ralph, the narrative states that “there was his size, and attractive appearance; and most obscurely, yet most powerfully, there was the conch” (*ibid.*). This means that despite his authoritative position, Jack is defeated by the conch’s authority in the first place. This appointment (of the chief) means that Jack shall obey “what [the chief] says” (115) and naturally, the rules would become a restriction upon the group.

As a way of keeping his authority nevertheless, Jack demands to be “in charge of the choir” (29), which he regards as his “army” and later, his “hunters” (29). By these specific titles, Jack and his group are distinguished from the other boys. Their classification as hunters can be considered as the first step of otherization. However, much as the other boys accept Jack as a hunter, other, or an unrecognizable thing (256), he prefers and enjoys being so. Cradling the conch, and turning to “his hunters with their dirty black caps” Jack asks, “Am I a hunter or am I not?” (117) “No one doubts” (117) that Jack is a hunter and different from the rest, who struggle to maintain their civilized identities. In taking up a “stranger’s” (89) identity, Jack “liberates” (89) himself from the expectations of civilization.

Should we regard Jack’s voluntary attempt to become a stranger within the group as an identity transformation, Lewis’s anthropologic approach again provides a

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<sup>14</sup> Although it is not presented as clear as the dominant, the nonhuman entity (or savagery, which is the opposition of civilization according to the novel) can be considered the dominated.

broader understanding of the reasons underlying his trend. Initially, the dominant group in the novel is the representatives of civilization, including Jack. However, upon taking the title of “hunters” (29), Jack and the choir diverge from Ralph and his followers, constituting the savages. Thus, the power relations change. In parallel to this alteration, the attitude towards the rules once considered absolute and valid in every place on the island begins to change as well. The most apparent and notable demonstration of this is when Jack denounces the authority and significance of the conch (114, 126). As a reason for this alteration, Lewis suggests that “[a]n important methodological assumption will be a multidimensional view of reality” (584). When the boys split up into different groups, they realize other perspectives toward their environmental context and situation on the island. More importantly, they announce that the rules can count differently depending on the occasion.

After establishing their own ways of hunting and sheltering, Jack and his hunters “don’t need the conch anymore. [They] know who ought to say things” (126). Jack denies the validity of the conch as a symbol of the speaker, stating that “the conch doesn’t count at this end of the island” (186). Earlier in the novel, Piggy’s speech had been interrupted while he was holding the conch, and Ralph had reacted by reminding Jack that he is “breaking the rules” (114): “I’m the chief. I give the rules” (ibid.). In return, Ralph received a response from Jack that not only addressed their present situation but also questioned the authority of any linear signification: “Why should choosing make any difference? Just giving orders that don’t make any sense—[...] Who cares (about the rules)?” (ibid.) Although Ralph opposes by declaring that “the rules are the only things [they’ve] got” (115), Jack remains strict: “Bollocks to the rules! We’re strong—we hunt! If there’s a beast, we’ll hunt it down! We’ll close in and beat and beat and beat—!” (115) As Lewis argues, the novel shows that “the notion of a single valid, objective knowledge [is] replaced with that of a ‘perspectivistic knowledge,’ a knowledge which is partial and which views reality from the particular existential position occupied by the observer” (584). In the novel, when it becomes evident that the rules can be broken, Jack’s perspective and knowledge occupy the central position, and he acts freely. By breaking the rules, he goes beyond the limitations of civilization in symbolic terms -out of which resides the realm of savagery. This is one representation in *LOTF* of how anthropocentrism is shattered as the rules and symbolism are associated with the civilized human life, in which

everything is “humane,” not savage. Therefore, opposing these rules would simultaneously be an opposition to an insistently human-centered view of the universe.

Nevertheless, Albert Memmi finds that revolution is not sufficient enough for the dominated to be entirely independent. As Memmi suggests, “for the oppressed to be finally free, he must go beyond revolt, by another path, he must begin in other ways, conceive of himself and reconstruct himself independently of the master.” (Memmi qtd in Lewis 1969:181) Reconstructing himself is also Jack’s alternative way to declare his independence. With this objection, he takes “another path” (Lewis 181), physically and psychologically transforming<sup>15</sup> into an “other,” nonhuman yet natural being, namely a savage. This is illustrated in a considerably critical scene in the novel:

Jack planned his new face. He made one cheek and one eye-socket white, then he rubbed red over the other half of his face and slashed a black bar of charcoal across from right ear to left jaw. [...] He looked (into water) in astonishment, no longer at himself but at an awesome stranger. He spilt the water and leapt to his feet, laughing excitedly. Beside the pool his sinewy body held up a mask that drew their eyes and appalled them. He began to dance and his laughter became a bloodthirsty snarling. He capered toward Bill, and the mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness. The face of red and white and black swung through the air and jiggled toward Bill. (*LOTF* 89)

This particular scene not only illustrates Jack’s transformation but also shows how the novel defines the concept of savage. Firstly, Jack adopts a “new face” (*ibid.*) that metaphorically indicates a new identity. This face, along with a mask, hides Jack’s “shame” and “self-consciousness.” On the other hand, Bill and Roger are “appalled” by Jack’s new face, which implies how Jack is physically estranged by the others’ gaze. The “awesome stranger” (*ibid.*) he becomes is no longer Jack himself but a “face of red and white and black” (*ibid.*). Metaphorically, the mask becomes a “thing on its own” (*ibid.*) and wipes out Jack’s name, mentioning him as a thing.

The context where Jack enters upon his transformation corresponds to Plumwood’s concept of nature because “[it], as the excluded and devalued contrast of reason, includes the emotions, the body, the passions, animality, the primitive or uncivilized, the nonhuman world, matter, physicality, and sense experience, as well as the sphere of irrationality, of faith and of madness” (19). Jack’s dance and bloodthirsty snarling are implications of this madness and irrationality. A “chant” of “wordless

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<sup>15</sup> Jack’s transformation will be discussed in relation to naturamorphism in part 3.4.

rhythm” (*LOTF* 131) later becomes savages’ means of expression. Without any word, they communicate through “ululation” (275). In another scene the savages lost their self-consciousness like Jack behind his mask; “there were no words, and no movements but the tearing of teeth and claws” (219). Emotions, passions, and instincts lead to animality until the savages “were all running, all crying out madly” (287). Coming to a climax with his inexpressible emotional state, Jack does not feel himself “liberated” enough from the symbolic register of the human language along with its norms, dictations, stable definitions. Once adapting himself to the nature’s ever-changing language, he gets unable to express his feeling in words, and the “cause of his pleasure is not obvious” (25). He “had too many things to tell Ralph at once. Instead, he danced a step or two [...]” (97). Kristeva explains these obscure and, so to speak, meaningless expressions as an effect of the abject. As she puts, “the abject draws toward the place where meaning collapses” (2). Instead, it is “affected by what does not appear to him as a thing” until then because the “laws, connections, and even structures of meaning govern and condition him” (10). Although regarding the rules (which are the laws, connections, and structures of meaning in Kristeva’s terms) strictly at the beginning, Jack later considers them only “orders that don’t make any sense” (*LOTF* 129). He rather prefers claiming his own end on the island (254) where the conch, which represents the fixed rules and authority of the an external, controlling power, “doesn’t count” (58). Hence, he also attacks essentialism in a sense that he rejects absolute authority and power of a symbolic signification such as the conch. In this regard, one would recognize the echoes of Nietzsche’s nihilism in Jack’s words when he says, “The conch is gone—” (261). Thus, entering into this context of Plumwood’s nature, where linearity and rationality do not reside, Jack dissolves his human identity. In one scene, he even became indistinguishable in the natural context as “a stain in the darkness, a stain that was Jack, detached itself and began to draw away” (149) from the civilized humans. That is to say, Jack submits himself to the territories of the savagery. Meanwhile, the text points out a shift between the sides of the other and the otherized; dominant and the dominated. When “Samneric protested out of the heart of civilization,” Jack and “the painted group felt the otherness of Samneric, felt the power in their own hands” (220). Thus now, standing at the side of the “other,” the savages become the “otherizer” against civilization and humanity.

Thus, the novel nativizes and primitivizes Jack implying that his alienation is assimilated in its new identity.

Kristeva contends that this alienation, exclusion, or the abject, is “‘something’ that I do not recognize as a thing. A weight of meaningless, about which there is nothing insignificant, and which crushes me. On the edge of non-existence and hallucination, of a reality that, if I acknowledge it, annihilates me” (2). In this sense, nature annihilates Jack’s human identity, devours it, exhausts his civilization, and reconstructs a new self. Ironically, being the hunters’ chief, Jack is hunted by nature: “‘If you’re hunting sometimes you catch yourself feeling as if–’ He flushed suddenly. ‘There’s nothing in it of course. Just a feeling. But you can feel as if you’re not hunting, but—being hunted, as if something’s behind you all the time in the jungle’” (*LOTF* 73). Thus, feeling that he is hunted by nature, Jack no longer regards savagery as otherness. On the contrary, by reconstructing his identity as a savage, he identifies himself with what Kristeva calls “the abject,” or “nature” in Plumwood’s terms. In the end, Jack favors savagery and abjection while renouncing his initial civilized identity.

### **3. 3. “The most important thing on the island”: The Issue of Being Rescued**

By definition, being rescued from something primarily requires to be in a restricted situation/position. Therefore, it connotes an enclosure, chase, or captivity either in literal or metaphorical terms. Interestingly enough, the first thing the boys decide on -even before they understand that they are on an island- is to be rescued while they are left in absolute freedom. “[T]here aren’t any grownups anywhere” (7); “no houses, no smoke, no footprints, no boats, no people. We’re on an uninhabited island with no other people on it” (44). This context means that there is no other authority, but themselves to decide on things or set particular rules. In this regard, what the boys want to be rescued from remains a question throughout the novel. Meanwhile, the answer changes according to different characters and their approaches towards nature.

Overall, Ralph appears to be the one who is most interested in being rescued. From the beginning, his frequent emphasis on the issue gives a sense that he takes it to the extent of obsession. In their first encounter with Piggy, Ralph says that his father

is a commander in the Navy, and “when he gets leave, he will come and rescue” them (15), “soon as he can” (16). According to Ralph, therefore, their situation in this new place is tentative until his father arrives. Before everything, the reason to locate the land is even connected to being rescued, and Ralph wants the others also to realize this connection: “Listen, everybody. I’ve got to have time to think things out. I can’t decide what to do straight off. If this isn’t an island, we might be rescued straight away. So we’ve got to decide if this is an island” (30). Ralph gives utmost importance to the issue and clearly states this: “Now we come to the most important thing. I’ve been thinking. [...] We want to be rescued; and of course, we shall be rescued” (49-50). He talks on behalf of the others confidently. Even when Roger, a boy from the group, thinks that “perhaps [they’ll] never be rescued” (59), Ralph insistently objects: “I said before we’ll be rescued sometime. We’ve just got to wait, that’s all” (59-60). For him, “acting proper” and “putting first things first” (62) are the fundamental preconditions of being rescued. Therefore, the issue requires a set of proprieties and to act according to them.

Seeking a solution in maintaining the orderly civilized life reveals that Ralph does not want to be rescued from the island itself but instead, from savagery it leads. In one scene where he discusses the issue with Piggy, he makes his feeling explicit:

Ralph answered in the cautious voice of one who rehearses a theorem.  
“If I blow the conch and they don’t come back; then we’ve had it. We shan’t keep the fire going. We’ll be like animals. We’ll never be rescued.”  
(Piggy)“If you don’t blow, we’ll soon be animals anyway. I can’t see what they’re doing but I can hear.” (130)

According to Ralph, being like animals means that they will absolutely and irreversibly lose their opportunity to be rescued. Opposing these two conditions, the novel indicates that being rescued is not literally being taken away from the island in physical terms. More than this, it means maintaining the civilized identity and conserving it against animality. This perspective bears that the animal entity is the opposition of humankind; therefore, it is considered an other in the human’s perception. According to Ralph and Piggy’s statements, recognizing and obeying a set of rules are the indications of civilization and synchronically define what animalism lacks.

Looking at Ralph’s daydreams and inner questionings, one can gather that his insistence on keeping civilization alive is partly because civilization provides a relatively safe context for Ralph. In a dreaming scene, for example, Ralph “had fallen



asleep after what seemed hours of tossing and turning noisily among the dry leaves. Even the sounds of nightmare from the other shelters no longer reached him, for he was back to where he came from, feeding the ponies with sugar over the garden wall” (140). The metaphorical “garden walls” of civilization, in a way, protects Ralph from the “nightmares from the other shelters” (140) where savages, beasts, ghosts, and unknown creatures reside. In another scene, Ralph dreams about his hometown:

Supposing they could be transported home by jet, then before morning they would land at that big airfield in Wiltshire. They would go by car; no, for things to be perfect they would go by train; all the way down to Devon and take that cottage again. Then at the foot of the garden the wild ponies would come and look over the wall. [. . .] Ralph turned restlessly in the leaves. Dartmoor was wild and so were the ponies. But the attraction of wildness had gone. His mind skated to a consideration of a tamed town where savagery could not set foot. What could be safer than the bus center with its lamps and wheels? (202)

In this hopeful supposition, Ralph yearns for a technologically advanced and enlightened life, where everything should be “perfect” (202). Within this context, wilderness, again stands out of the walls. Significantly, “wilderness” (202) does not appear as an attraction because in his new life, Ralph experiences being directly exposed to wilderness per se. In other words, while behind the protecting walls, he had an idealized, distanced concept of wilderness. Yet on the island, he faces the difference between the ideal and the actual. Kept behind the walls, wilderness is physically separated from civilization. Thus, it can be observed from a distance and examined as an other with a scientific approach. However, although some parts are divided by coral reefs, as mentioned before, there are no protective walls to separate the land on the island. Except for those parts, everything constitutes a single unit, which is quite the opposite picture of twentieth-century modern life. In this regard, Ralph’s “restlessness” (202) can be attributed to realizing the ideal/actual discrepancy in his conception. This assertion would mean that likewise Piggy, Ralph has acquired a misled understanding of nature, which changes when they begin to live in wildlife. By insistently believing that his father would come and rescue them, Ralph psychologically tries to distance the reality of the island -the fact that they have to experience the wilderness.

On the other hand, enlightened civilization provides a safe realm for children. The illustration of the bus center in Ralph’s dream makes an irony of the situation: the

lamps refer to the remote “enlightenment” of modern life. However, its lights are insufficient to illuminate reality. The “wheels,” on the other hand, stand for the safety and stability of the “centric” understanding of Western philosophy and science: both logocentric and anthropocentric. When everything (with cars, trains, jets, walls) is under the control of human affairs and addresses human comprehension, “what could be safer than” (202) this structured and well-defined context? According to this understanding, Ralph feels the necessity of an external authority’s existence with its regulatory rules and significations (117) to feel secure, civilized, and human:

“We’re all drifting and things are going rotten. At home there was always a grownup. Please, sir, please, miss; and then you got an answer. How I wish!”

“I wish my auntie was here.”

“I wish my father. . . Oh, what’s the use?”

“If only they could get a message to us,” cried Ralph desperately. “If only they could send us something grownup [...] a sign or something.” (117)

Ironically, while Ralph wants to get out from the enclosure of the wilderness, he seeks rescue in obeying the the grownups’ invisible authority. Nevertheless, rather than accepting this authority’s restrictions, Jack chooses to adapt himself to their new conditions. In a way, he eliminates the fundamental reason for the need to be rescued: the distinction between civilization and savagery. Ralph regards “the rules as the only thing” they have got against the disordered and unknown wilderness, whereas Jack establishes his own power: “We’re strong—we hunt! If there’s a beast, we’ll hunt it down! We’ll close in and beat and beat and beat—!” (130) Hence, Jack does not need the sense of protection the civilized life suggests because he provides his own safety by mimicking the threats: If there is a beast to hunt them, he goes for it to catch and “beat” it (*ibid.*).

Thus, the novel questions the necessity of being rescued by bringing two different approaches to safety. However, this comparison is not objectively presented, for the text appears to favor the side of civilization and that being rescued is necessary. When Ralph asked Jack and the others “don’t any of them want to be rescued” (146), before any of the boys, the narrator of the novel gave the answer on behalf of them: “Yes, they wanted to be rescued, there was no doubt about that” (*ibid.*). However, in a previous scene the text reveals such a doubt, in fact. When Ralph said that being rescued is “the best thing they can do” (73), Jack had to think for a moment before he could remember what rescue was” (*ibid.*). “Rescue? Yes, of course! All the same, I’d

like to catch a pig first—” (ibid.) Jack’s hesitation here shows that he is already distanced from the concept (of being rescued). In addition to the new identity that liberates him from shame and self-consciousness (83), he is contented with the freedom the environmental context of the island provides in the lack of grownups.

From an ecocritical perspective, on the other hand, the novel draws two oppositions: According to Ralph, the island is the context where savagery emerges. It is wild, yet it also invites the boys to act wildly and go mad by presenting delusions such as the pig skull (265-266). Nature’s direct reality is dangerous for Ralph; therefore, the ideal and artificial nature is much more favorable than the actual natural context. Accordingly, rather than the unidentifiable animals on the island, he prefers the “tied-down terror” (161) of the “awful picture of the spiders” (ibid.) in the books he reads. In his ideal world, everything is “all right, good-humored and friendly” (ibid.). These are the features of a context that is constructed and organized according to a particular authority/power, whereas in the natural context, there are “no houses, no smoke, no footprints, no boats, no people” (44) to set a civilization until a human influence comes. In this sense, the natural context is somewhere to be rescued from, namely the other’s side.

From Jack’s perspective, on the other hand, there is no necessity for being rescued from the island once the boys come to terms with the natural conditions. The hunters know how to get meat (45), defend themselves from the snakes or beasties on the island (50), make spears to protect them (143), hide behind the trees (192), take shelter in the rocks (228), all of which suffice for their survival on the land. Therefore, Jack later renounces the necessity of another authority to regulate their lives. While he is the one who demands “lots of rules” (45) at the beginning, ironically, he is also the first to “break the rules” (129) by disregarding the conch. Likewise, although he states the importance of “Englishness” and “not being a savage” (58), he relishes his new identity once turning into an “awesome stranger” (89). Hence, at last, he does not seem to problematize their situation on the island as Ralph. Therefore, the novel shows that being rescued lost its initial meaning in Jack’s discourse until he no longer “could remember what rescue was” (73). Rather than appearing as a strange place, the natural context is his new “castle” (242).

### 3.4. The Need to “Look Like Something Else”: Naturamorphisms in the Novel

Jack’s approach to being rescued and relatively closer relation with nature brings about a critical concept that gives the novel an ecological value: *naturamorphism*, explained in Chapter II. The most distinct and prominent naturamorphism in *LOTF* is Jack’s transformation from a civilized human being into a savage hunter. A few other characters, such as Roger, Maurice, and Percival, experience a similar transformation (83-106). However, the novel presents Jack’s naturamorphism with particular relation to Kristeva’s concept of the abject.

As discussed in the previous sections, Jack voluntarily changes his appearance by taking off his clothes, smearing natural paint on his face, such as charcoal, and putting on a mask (89). Under these covers, his thin body resides, yet the mask hides his vulnerability (*ibid.*). Jack explains that the paints are “[f]or hunting. Like in the war. You know—dazzle paint. Like things trying to look like something else—’ He twisted in the urgency of telling. ‘—like moths on a tree trunk’” (88). Significantly, the “concealing paint” (248) brings to Jack “liberation into savagery” (248). In this new appearance, he no longer looks like a human being but rather an “ape-like, furtive thing” (67). With paint on his face, Jack assumes that the others “wouldn’t see them.” (75) Supporting this assumption, behind Jack’s “green and black mask” (256), Ralph even cannot remember “what he looked like” (*ibid.*) before. He regards Jack and his tribe simply as a “painted anonymity” (*ibid.*). On the other hand, Jack’s assumption brings out the civilized man’s anxiety of invisibility, which he favors on the contrary. Ralph is directly opposed to this invisibility as he says, “We won’t be painted. Because we aren’t savages” (212). However, his statement is not simply about the material paint made of charcoal. Deeper than that, Ralph is concerned that the manners of savagery would erase their civilized identity. Hence, he wants this identity to be visible and distinct. While visibility is essential for the civilized man’s recognition by the Other in the novel, invisibility is advantageous in survival within the wilderness. Thus, a separation occurs between the savage group and the relatively civilized ones. Ralph and his followers light a fire as they want to be seen and recognized by a ship. Jack and the hunters, on the other hand, tend to hide in the forest until becoming a savage “whose image refused to blend with that ancient picture of a boy in shorts and shirt” (263). Later, when the savages leave the beach and instead, settle on the Castle Rock,

this separation, which can be measured by physical distance, turns into a social exclusion.

In her critical work *Powers of Horror* (1993), Kristeva names the excluded as the abject. According to her, the abject is not something to be avoided, or low, but on the contrary, it is saved from these attributions (8):

[The abject is a] deviser of territories, languages, works, the deject never stops demarcating his universe whose fluid confines—for they are constituted of a non-object, the abject—constantly question his solidity and impel him to start afresh. A tireless builder, the deject is in short a stray. He is on a journey, during the night, the end of which keeps receding. He has a sense of the danger, of the loss that the pseudo-object, attracting him represents for him, but he cannot help taking the risk at the very moment he sets himself apart. And the more he strays, the more he is saved. (8)

Jack's transformation from a solid identity (the English boy Jack Merridew) to a fluid, unrecognizable thing illustrates the journey of Kristeva's abject. According to Jack, more than having only a survival basis, "looking like something else" (88) other than human is a reaction against the symbolic identities, such as names and titles, defined in civilization. For Jack, therefore, naturamorphism is a way for "liberation into savagery" (248). Contrary to him, Piggy holds a humiliating tone that conceives nonhumanness as abject when he asks Jack: "Which is better -to have rules and agree, or to hunt and kill? [...] Which is better, law and rescue, or hunting and breaking things up?" (222) As a feature of his characteristic, Piggy favors the former.

Political relations (chiefdom and leadership), moral conceptions and sanctions (what Piggy's aunt had said, allowed, or prohibited), governmental and religious institutions (the school [44] and the church [97]), in a word, critical ideological state apparatuses in Althusser's terms are the authorities in the boys' lives. Moreover, frequent reminding of "what grownups gonna say or think" (246) underlines that language's effect on the boys' symbolic constitution is influential since it directly shapes their identity and perception. As a reaction to these center-based understandings, naturamorphism provides a free ground for the boys, where they can feel "safe from shame" (186), which is created by the other's gaze. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in his naturamorphism, becoming a part of nature is not Jack's primary objection. Rather, Jack wants to claim another power against Ralph's authority by undertaking hunters' chiefdom (30) and then later becoming a savage.

Therefore, although naturamorphism in *LOTF* does not necessarily centralize human beings it still implies a distinction based on power.

Considerably, the novel uses the power of the naturamorphic figure also to attack the symbolic world. After Jack and the savages' assault on Simon, Piggy, and the conch -which represent the moral norms, scientific approach, and the laws, respectively- they shatter their authority until destroying them all. They first kill Simon (220), then Piggy (260) while Jack smashes the conch into powder (268) during a fight.

Ralph put his head down on his forearms and accepted this new fact like a wound. Samneric were part of the tribe now. They were guarding the Castle Rock against him. There was no chance of rescuing them and building up an outlaw tribe at the other end of the island. Samneric were savages like the rest; Piggy was dead, and the conch smashed to powder. (268)

The critical motifs related to civilization and its proprieties are thus destroyed along with the "chance of rescuing" the boys "at the other end of the island" (268). Hence, the other's side declares that the rules of civilization cannot survive in the natural context.

As for the anthropomorphic representations, the novel introduces another fundamentally significant motif along with the previously mentioned examples, "The Lord of the Flies" (171). This motif is presented as a construction of different natural elements: "a white face" (266) out of bone, which belongs to a "grinning" "pig's head, hung on his stick" (188). By this appearance, it belongs to the natural context. However, when Simon first encounters it, he recognizes an "ancient, inescapable recognition" (198) in the image's gaze. Lord of the Flies begins to directly talk with him, asking questions that buries Simon into silence. With the fear of a beast on the island, Simon shakes in terror. Then, Lord of the Flies says, "There isn't anyone to help you. Only me. And I'm the Beast" (196). Since the early pages of the novel the boys have voiced fears of "beasties" (e.g. on pages 48, 72, 115) and of a "beast" (50, 116, 119) that various boys claim to have seen although they have not. This image was the imaginary focus of all the fears of all the boys from the start, and a frequent topic of their discussions. That is why Simon's mind so readily gives the disturbing totem he encounters the name of the Beast. As Lord of the Flies explicitly declares per se, this manifestation seems to stand as the basic reason for every corruption on the island, also asserting that it derives from the humans: "You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they

are?” (196) In these words, nature, and humanity construct a single unit that provides a definition of dangerous nature: It is the humans.

With this profound image, the novel compares the literary use of anthropomorphism and naturamorphism. According to the examples, the function of anthropomorphic images/representations is to reflect the mental and emotional states of the human psyche in the novel. Nature is used as a context to echo the human world rather than an autonomous entity an ecological text would regard.<sup>16</sup> As the Lord of the Flies also declares, the impressions of the natural phenomena are “part of” humans, “why things are what they are” (196). This particular statement bears a reference to Gadamer’s phenomenological hermeneutics explained in Chapter II. Although Lord of the Flies is a “lifeless thing” (266) as a whole, how Simon and Ralph see and interpret it assigns a meaning to the image. Within such a representation, the human perspective is centralized while the natural phenomena are described according to the relation to humans.

As an alternative to anthropomorphism for an ecological text, naturamorphism in *LOTF* tries to provide a relatively permeable boundary Oppermann states against an essentialist nature/human distinction. However, I shall acknowledge that the colonialist aspect of the novel cannot overcome a hierarchical structure even after naturamorphic transformations: While the savage is considered as the naturalized, therefore assumed to acquire an eco-consciousness upon a homogenous perspective, it still claims superiority over the civilized. Nevertheless, naturamorphism enables the human characters to feel what is not to be a human at least. In doing so, it offers a direct understanding of the natural context, in which humans are decentralized. This agency indicates that an eco-conscious conception of nature may be brought closer to a colonialist discourse through naturamorphic representations. In other words, by taking up a (non-artificial and) nonhuman identity in the natural context, human beings may set their perspective within nature, not against or towards it. Thus, the conceived nature (by human beings) gets rescued from being an other.

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<sup>16</sup> For example, in one scene, “the sky, as if in sympathy with the great changes among them, was different today and so misty that in some places the hot air seemed white.” (189)

## CHAPTER IV

### ON THE 'TRACKS' OF NATURE: THE CONCEPT OF NATURE IN LOUISE ERDRICH'S *TRACKS*

From Golding's time to the late 1990's, literary representations of the destruction of the natural context continue, as can be seen in Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* (1998). The marginalization of femininity is the quintessential theme of this novel, and it is this that enables a feminist ecocritical reading of the text. Nevertheless, the novel aims to reveal more than how a patriarchal perspective demeans the positions of women and nature. Considering the representation of the women-nature relationship, an ecofeminist reading of the novel would still suggest an anthropocentric approach because ecofeminism presupposes a concept of mother nature. In other words, establishing parallelism between women and nature, ecofeminist thought associates nature with a feminine identity. Examples from the novel, which will be discussed in this chapter, show that women are defined by an intrinsic motherhood that also defines their womanhood and even, at times, their human identity. This association lies behind the conventional idea of mother nature, while, as Plumwood argues, "women are the environment" (22) in traditional conceptions of gender. In order to challenge these patriarchal concepts, Erdrich's text deconstructs the idea of mother nature. With the challenging attitudes of the radical characters, namely Fleur, Pauline, and Margaret, the concept of a nurturing nature is shown to signify a threat to women. At this point, the novel shatters its own construction by presenting a transgressive, autonomous nature for women instead. For this, it follows Kristeva's conception of abjection<sup>17</sup> as a default characteristic of womanhood. The marginally abject women in *Tracks* reject the yoke of gender roles, gender attributions, and the idea of a conceptualized nature.

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<sup>17</sup> Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia UP, 1982.



With regard to these arguments, this chapter aims to provide an ecofeminist reading of the novel by arguing that women and nature are separate entities and should be therefore treated separately.

This distinction is shown through representations of self-conscious women and of nature. In the first place, both entities in *Tracks* are well aware of their potential. Animals understand what is going to happen to the land (*Tracks* 140); they rage in madness (140), gather in “unusual numbers” (206) to protect the land, and fight over their territories (206). Similarly, women fight over their lives when they are attacked by men (113), they “go wild” (45) when their domestic environment is in danger (60). They reject being named by another authority and react against such attempts. Thus, *Tracks* shows us that women and nature possess a conscious identity, which precedes symbolic representation and is the principal determinant of the subject’s title or name.

*Tracks* has two intradiagetic narrators, a tribal elder named Nanapush, and a mixed heritage girl, Pauline. Nanapush’s narrative recites the story of the Chippewa tribe and the estranged girl Fleur Pillager, the protagonist of the novel. Fleur is significant in the novel for her position as a “translator” (209-210), in Nanapush’s words, between the natives and the natural environment. Relating the events that led to Fleur’s radicalism, Nanapush’s narrative focuses on how she was received by the tribe and her denouncement of patriarchal social norms. As a female character, Fleur is extremely radical, so much so as to appear as a bear at times, having fangs, claws, and a tail. Besides, she reacts aggressively towards people, which results in her exclusion from society. In this manner, the novel uses Fleur to challenge social norms.

The other narrator, Pauline, becomes the voice of her own unconscious through fantasies regarding her feminine identity. Pauline was sent to a convent by her family to serve the Church. Although she states that she is nothing but a name “in men’s lips” (62) within this patriarchal frame, her narrative tells the story of how she emancipates herself from this dictated womanhood by becoming a nameless, genderless thing. She literally renounces her name, isolates herself from society and, in a way, she experiences a re-creation by turning into “nothing human, nothing victorious, nothing like herself” (204).

Before the analysis of the novel, it is worth noting that both Fleur and Pauline’s identities shift from patriarchal femininity to nonhuman entity. These extraordinary transformations are directly linked to the theme of nature in the novel, bringing out

two critical issues: (i) claiming one's autonomy within a set social structure demands abandoning the attributions of that society's discourse, leading to estrangement; and (ii) the way such a denouncement is represented in *Tracks* indicates that it is also considered as an exclusion from the human realm. In showing this, the novel draws parallels between nature and women, both being estranged from (and by) the male-dominated society. The majority of the women in the novel are abused, raped, humiliated, and demeaned. They are valued with respect to how they contribute to the tribe's economy. More importantly, the novel shows that women characters find emancipation from the patriarchal frames by undertaking an identity which can partly be associated with Kristeva's concept of abject. To put it more precisely, emancipation comes when women appear as another power against men, thereby linking feminine identity to nonhuman or supernatural power.

Among literary scholars, *Tracks* has been approached for its historicity and for bearing many traces of Erdrich's native homeland Anishinaabe. In her review of the novel, Nancy Peterson underlines the fundamental relationship between Erdrich's narrative and her historical roots. She discusses the impossibility of objectivity of historical writings and finds that "*Tracks* enables readers to think through the issues and the stakes involved in the crisis of history surrounding Native Americans," and she therefore finds in Erdrich's postmodern approach an attempt to find a new way of representing history (Peterson 984). Significantly, she points out that writers like Erdrich "face a vexing set of issues: unrepresented or misrepresented in traditional historical narratives," they are forced to find an outlet from the frames of the story told by and about men, which she expresses by using the well-known term *his-story* (984). However, reading the term merely from a gender-based perspective also endorses its anthropocentric and anti-ecologic sense. Because "human-story," rather than "his-story," centralizes humans in its construction, and human's ecological environment serves as no more than a context (Brown 2003). Although *Tracks*' ecological standpoint has been less covered by literary scholarship than its historicity, the novel proves to be critical of human-story against a collective environmental story.

That Erdrich consistently explores this criticism has already been the subject of several studies. Similar to Peterson, Shelly Reid approaches Erdrich's historicity from a narrative perspective. She explores how Erdrich creates a mosaic fiction decorated with diverse characters from different identities and nationalities; she also

discusses “American individualism” and its particular language, which, according to Reid, restricts the way people think (65). Catherine Rainwater, on the other hand, focuses on the “ambivalence and tension” that marks the lives of people in Erdrich’s “narrativity” (405). Adding to Reid’s argument, Rainwater brings to the text a more sociological approach that focuses upon the national values of identities in several of Erdrich’s novels.

However, while the other books in Erdrich’s tetralogy insist on giving credit to the environment, nature’s voice -as a concept and a context- is again disregarded in the scholarship. Both Reid and Rainwater question human agency and supremacy over nature in different ways, yet in the novel nature remains a material, almost an object which can easily be sold or destroyed. Therefore, in the first place, *Tracks* attempts to question nature’s and women’s autonomy. In order to do this, the novel creates a common ground where the human inhabitants bear physical similarity with the natural environment. In this analysis, the thesis will discuss the parallelisms with nature and the transformations of the human characters while exploring the meaning of nature and how humans relate themselves to it. In an attempt to substitute the concept of nature-as-subject for nature-as-object, I will seek the language of individualism that is used to describe and voice nature in the novel.

#### **4.1. A “Limitless Earth” within a Limited Text: Creating a Fluid Text in *Tracks***

It is a common trend in ecological texts to provide a theory or story of the origins of the natural context they employ as a setting. This is because, in these texts, the natural context appears not merely as a functional setting but instead becomes a direct addressee. In other words, more than using the natural context to establish the plot, the ecological text deals with nature itself and its unique elements. Therefore, the creation story of the natural context should be another significant subject of discussion of ecological texts. Noting the differences between the initial state of the natural context in *Tracks*, and the ultimately destroyed (and distorted) land, it can be argued that the novel establishes a creation story for the imaginary Matchimanito, which echoes the history of the native Chippewa tribe.

Interestingly enough, the novel shows another parallelism with its representation of nature in terms of textual structure. The two narrators begin with past events, occasionally blurring the time: “(Nanapush) We started dying before the snow, and like the snow, we continued to fall” (1). Initially, the text introduces a fluid, instable realm where meaning rests upon experience rather than being gathered from a set of symbols. Each narrator explicitly asserts that what s/he recites is a unique experience, specific to a period, and therefore subjective. There are delusions, misinterpretations, and misunderstandings in their narratives. Besides, the narrators know each other and question the other’s reliability. To Nanapush’s observations, for example, “Pauline schemed to gain attention by telling odd tales that created damage [...] That is all to say that the only people who believed in Pauline’s stories were the ones who loved the dirt” (39). The reliability of Pauline’s narrative is constantly in question, as Nanapush claims that “she was a liar, and sure to die one. The practice of deception was so constant with her that it got to be a kind of truth” (53). With this acclamation, the text controverts the reality it creates. Likewise, in terms of reliability, Pauline thinks that Nanapush is “informed by Satan” (150), and that the stories he tells are just part of Satan’s plan (*ibid.*). Having two unreliable narrators who mistrust each other provides the novel with different perspectives on the events it relates and multiplies the plot. As the rootless and nameless tribes add to the history of the land, and then silently vanish in the snow, the Matchimanito history enlarges and “dwindles” (139) like the nonhuman beings living on the land. Such representation reflects the unstable, fluctuating, and fluid characteristics of the natural context. In this sense, the novel adopts the structure of the setting to its language in the beginning. Nothing bears factual reliability and stability; nothing is presented through objective textuality. That is to say, everything in this fluctuating narrative is both a historical citation and a personal delusion, a “planned story” (150) in Pauline’s words. According to Rainwater, this fluid narrative “reveals Erdrich’s preoccupation with marginality beyond the thematic level. Such argument also discloses various structural features of Erdrich’s texts that frustrate narrativity” (406). Nevertheless, the story also accommodates the symbolic realm with the entrance of the white man, which stands for civilization in opposition to, or encroaching upon, the native American identity. This transition is illustrated in the novel through a slight shift of the narrator’s viewpoints between these oppositions.

Similar to the opening of *LOTF*, *Tracks* begins by setting a context that is a Lockean state of nature, where no hierarchies exist. Thus, the novel first defines the state of the natural context before introducing unusual events and the marginal characters. The first narrator, Nanapush, cites that “the earth is limitless and so is luck and so were our people once” (1). By briefly describing the initial context that the earth, luck, and people share equally, Nanapush draws a portrait of an infinite and autonomous natural context (the Earth). “So is luck,” and “so were the people” (ibid.), indicating that every element in this context also bears a part of infinity and contingency. Luck is not an irrelevant word choice here because, driven by “luck” (ibid.), the text promotes arbitrariness by denouncing centrality and linearity in the beginning. Hence, it creates its own cosmology, which does not promise chronological advancement. Supporting this argument, the text weaves its narrative with two subjective and unreliable narrators who recite different perspectives of the events. Thus, each narration reconstructs the whole story of the land throughout the novel. Nanapush witnesses this dynamic history, seeing “more change [in his fifty-years life] than in a hundred upon a hundred year before” (2). In such a dynamic narration, the land’s (hi)story resists precision and a logocentric understanding.

Nanapush then begins telling the story of the Chippewa tribe to his granddaughter Lulu by stating that she is “the child of the invisible, the one who disappeared when, along with the first bitter punishments of early winter, a new sickness swept down” (ibid.). Again, the novel continues to maintain the ambiguous origin/history of people. In addition, Nanapush states that during that harsh winter “the old and new” (ibid.) among the tribe was taken (due to the severe natural conditions), referring to the “devastation” (ibid.) of the past and the future of the Chippewan people. Thus, nature presented here delivers its future into death. Besides, Nanapush adds that he “saw the passing of times [Lulu] will never know” (ibid.). As indicated by these examples, Nanapush’s story takes place in a particular yet also -paradoxically- indefinite period, which the future generation will never know. This presentation

enables a fluid text<sup>18</sup> that conforms with the fluid characteristic<sup>19</sup> of the women in the novel and the representation of nature.

From the beginning to the end, a sense of ambiguity accompanies the text (in terms of reliability of the narrator) and the representation of the characters. As Kristeva suggests, “abjection is above all, ambiguity” (9), the particular things/characters that are represented by their ambiguity in the novel, therefore, will lead the reader to *Track*’s particular definition of the abject. The plot, on the other hand, features an increasing depression, which will be examined in this chapter. This depression also leads to another parallelism between women and nature’s condition in the novel. This close relationship between Nanapush’s ever-depressing narrative and nature’s worsening condition enables us to identify one with the other. Accordingly, an interpretation would suggest that a part of Nanapush’s narrative can be read as if the land is telling its own story through a human voice. In this sense, what Nanapush regards as strange would be an “other” according to the natural context.

After introducing the fluid time and physical conditions of the land, Nanapush points out the unusual, strange, or unexpected changes in this context, which began “along with the bitter punishment of the early winter” (1-2) in 1912, “bringing exile in a storm of government papers” (1). In that year, the tribe signed a treaty after a “long fight with west” (ibid.), which forced them to renounce their native lands. With the word *west*, the novel refers to the white Americans who visit the land for economic reasons. Nanapush says, “every year there are more who come looking for profit, who draw lines across the land with their strings and yellow flags” (9). These visitors regard the land as an object of trade with an economic income instead of a living thing. While this gives quite unusual understanding of the natural context for the natives, the novel sets its two opposing poles: the natives and the “white man” (217).

Thus, the text constructs its plot upon this binary opposition, similar to *LOTF*’s nature/civilization distinction. However, unlike Golding’s novel, *Tracks* favors the former side and promotes nativity over the so-to-speak bright future that the “world

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<sup>18</sup> Here, the “fluid text” is used to define a text that is constituted of multiple genres and/or narrators, or presenting plots that take place in indefinite context of time and/or setting.

<sup>19</sup> By “fluid characteristic” the thesis refers to a dynamic, unidentifiable, or ever-changing disposition, which women and nature share in the novel in terms of their representation. These representations will be explored and discussed further in the chapter.

outside of (them)” promises (14). Still, it should be noted that the novel does not regard nativity as a power in itself, unless it features marginal characteristics, which are interestingly represented through woman characters. This structure leads the reader to underline associations between women and nature, hence to a feminist ecocritical reading. While natives constituted the one side of the “long fight” (1) that Nanapush mentions, they were continuously weakened by deprivation of physical needs, primarily for food and shelter. Along with the “bitter punishment of the early winter, a new sickness swept down. The consumption, it was called” (2), says Nanapush. “This disease was different from the pox and fever, for it came on slow. The outcome, however, was just as certain. Whole families of (Lulu’s) relatives lay ill and helpless” (ibid.). Deprived of food and protection from the harsh weather conditions, the tribe is later forced to accept even worse provisions dictated by the white man:

(Pauline) I saw the same, I saw the people I had wrapped, the influenza and consumption dead whose hands I had folded. They traveled, lame and bent, [...] hoping to get the best place when the great shining doors, beaten of air and gold, swung open on soundless oiled fretwork to admit them all. (*Tracks* 140)

Notably, the native people constitute the relatively dark side of the illustration. They are “lame,” handicapped by influenza and consumption, and they ultimately bent before the “soundless oiled fretwork” (140). The “southern” (14) side of the illustration, on the other hand, features an illuminated context with the “shining doors,” and “beaten air and gold.” The “soundless oiled fretwork” metaphorically implies the economic power of the white Americans, who, in literal terms, have the power to purchase oil sources worldwide. As a common representation of the Western Enlightenment, this illustration evokes Golding’s description of the bus stop (*LOTF* 237) discussed in Chapter III. In that, while Ralph was recalling a domestic scene with nostalgia, in Erdich’s novel, the native people have to bend before the Western power to “admit them all” (*Tracks* 140). Likewise, in a previous scene, the second narrator Pauline expresses her yearning for a “white” (14) identity. When she “bothers (her) father into sending [her] south, to the white town” (ibid.), her father warns her that she will “fade out there,” and “won’t be an Indian once [she] returns” (ibid.). However, Pauline seems willing to leave her Indian identity behind and to take up an entirely new identity:

Then maybe I won't come back. [...] I wanted to be like my mother, who showed her half-white. [*sic.*] I wanted to be like my grandfather, pure Canadian. [...] I saw through the eyes of the world outside of us. I would not speak our language. In English, I told my father, we should build an outhouse with a door that swung open and shut. (*Tracks* 14)

Here, it becomes apparent that Pauline wants to be recognized as a white American, for she thinks she “was made for better” (14), implying that nativity is inferior to being “half-white” (*ibid.*). In this sense, Pauline’s yearning for a Western identity and civilization can be linked to Ralph’s nostalgic attitude towards his civilized life in Golding’s novel.

*LOTF* and *Tracks* thus present the Western/white civilization as an ideal for survival reasons. In both novels, idealizing civilization leads to diverse perceptions towards the native Americans -by the civilized’s side- as an inferior state. On the other hand, different from *LOTF*, most of the characters in *Tracks* want to conserve their native American identity and in fact, resist accepting the claims to superiority of the whites, along with their economic claims. The tax collectors and construction men regularly visit the place, Matchimanito, and force the natives to sell their lands in order to “build a fishing lodge” (175). Nanapush briefly recites the story of the land to Lulu:

In the past, some had sold their allotment land for one-hundred-pound weight of flour. Others, who were desperate to hold on, now urged that we get together and buy back our land, or at least pay a tax and refuse the lumbering money that would wipe the marks of our boundaries off the map like a pattern of straws. Many were determined not to allow the hired surveyors, or even our own people, to enter the deepest bush. (*Tracks* 8)

In the first place, Nanapush himself “(refuses) to sign the settlement papers that would take away (the natives’) woods and lake” (2). Standing against the capitalist attempts to own the land, Nanapush presents a considerably emphatical approach towards native American identity and nature. He explicitly declares that he does not want to be a part of the destruction of the land (8), even stating in one scene that “better if they cut [his] throat.” (127) Yet, Nanapush’s loyalty to the land is based on more than historical reasons. Since they have been burying their deceased ancestors in the woods of Matchimanito, the native people fear the rage of the “dissatisfied spirits” (4) of the dead. Furthermore, not only the “impossible taxes” (173) but also emerging illness and other disasters (2) such as starvation, extreme weather conditions, along with the bitter winter make it even more impossible to survive for the native people. They know that



“the land will be sold and measured” (8). The people have to decide between the land and their own survival; ultimately, they accept the white people’s offers and sell their homelands, which leads to the natives’ destruction again. This situation places the natives on the passive, inferior side of a native/white man opposition. The white man’s dominance in this way opens up the Matchimanito lands to capitalist and colonial intrusions.

As the Native American characters of the novel increasingly integrate their lives into Western capitalist ways, they shift to the symbolic realm. Nanapush assumes that people think this change from the semiotic to the symbolic is due to the “dissatisfied spirits” (4); however, “[he also knows] what’s fact”, which is that, as he puts it, “Our trouble came from living, from liquor and the dollar bill. We stumbled toward the government bait, never looking down, never noticing how the land was snatched from under us at every step” (4). The liquor and the dollar bill had been unknown to people before Fleur introduced them when she came into the tribe. As Nanapush remarks, after this, “it was the money itself, the coins and bills, that made more talk. Before this, the Pillagers had always traded with fur, meat, hides or berries” (36). The introduction of money brought a capitalist discourse and perspective into the natives’ everyday experience. Having previously been an “otherly” material, money now becomes crucial to their survival on the land. However, money is as destructive to the preservation of native identity as are the whites’ ideological state apparatuses, such as, primarily, the schools that are mentioned in the novel (225-226). Both threats cause the loss of the new generation and threaten the future of the land. In one scene, Nanapush laments this loss:

We lose our children in different ways. They turn their faces to the white towns, like Nector as he grew, or they become so full of what they see in the mirror there is no reasoning with them anymore, like you (Lulu). Worst of all is the true loss, unbearable, and yet it must be borne. Fleur heard her vanished child in every breath of wind, every tick of dried leaves, every scratch of blowing snow. (170)

The “white towns” and “mirrors” (170) in this statement are significant metaphors standing for the symbolic register and its distancing effect.<sup>20</sup> Nanapush finds that

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<sup>20</sup> The thesis employs the term in reference to Derrida’s *différance*. The additional symbolic attributions (such as social roles, political/authoritative titles, or gender roles) establish an abstract identity, which are recognized in their symbolic context, and shaped by the exterior

Western education estranges the young from their native culture and identity, as in the example of Nector, who is sent to school abroad. In a comparison between Nector and his brother Eli (who did not have a formal education), Nanapush shows the distancing effect of the symbolic world of numbers and letters (38): “This Eli was not much like his father, or even his younger brother Nector, in that he never cared to figure out business, politics, or church. He never applied for a chunk of land and registered himself, while Nector did both. [...] Eli hid from the authorities, never saw the inside of a classroom” (39). As Nanapush describes it, Eli had no recognition of what Althusser terms “ideological state apparatuses” (Althusser 1970), such as “business, politics, or church” (*Tracks* 38), or of any regulatory authority. He, therefore, does not possess a symbolic title in the discourse of these units. He is only described by his profession or kinship relation to the other members of the tribe. Nector, on the other hand, knows how to deal with figures and numbers. He claims an allotment from the divided land, and accepts the Church’s authority as he “serves for Father Damien” (40). This comparison indicates the independence which the life in the natural environment provides and the dependency created by social roles.

In addition, turning back to Nanapush’s first statement about the ways in which the diminishing tribe loses its children, the image of the mirror plays a significant role in the distancing effect of symbolic representation. When the children experience life in the white towns and acquire symbolic identities in “business” or “politics” (39), they establish a life constituted of re-presentations, as if living in a mirror’s reflection. To put it more explicitly, the white towns’ discourse is based upon a symbolic language full of “figures and numbers” (173) instead of on nature’s language as it is found in the Native American’s natural context. Therefore, the description of the natural context in the whites’ discourse is a rewriting of nature by abstraction, presenting it in a symbolic language. This means a new presentation of nature previously illustrated by the narrators in the novel, namely a re-presentation, leading to the creation of a distance between the presented and the presentation. As Pauline explicitly states (14), after thus facing their native identity from a distanced

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factors/influences rather than the individual itself. Therefore, although these titles constitute a notable part of one’s identity, they are contextual and tentative (can be discarded from the individual’s essence). In this sense, they establish an additional, distant identity as a “name that loses power every time that is written and stored in a government file” (32).

perspective, the children no longer consider turning back to their historical roots. Instead of experiencing nativity, they perceive it from the reflection of a metaphorical mirror and “[they don’t want to] be an Indian once they return” (ibid.). The “world outside of [them]” (ibid.) becomes their new homeland while their native lands now appear strange. Besides, the children get so “full of what they see in the mirror” (ibid.) that their new “reasoning” (ibid.) is shaped by this mere reflection of reality. As a result, they become incommunicable to their native families, who find that there is “no reasoning with them anymore” (ibid.).

Interestingly enough, Nanapush unwillingly accepts the necessity to seek a safe future in the white towns along with the influence of their ideological state apparatuses. He justifies his change of mind to Lulu with the following words: “For I did stand for tribal chairman, as you know, defeating Pukwan in the last year. To becoming a bureaucrat myself was the only way that I could wade through the letters, the reports, the only place where I could find a ledge to kennel on [...]” (225). Although not fully supporting the sale of the land from the beginning, he finds it to be the “only way” (225) to ensure a safe future for the next generation. When Fleur wants to send her daughter to the government school, however, Lulu “turns her face” (218) and does not want to listen to her mother (218). Nevertheless, Nanapush explains that the reason Fleur had to send Lulu to the government school was that “there would be no place for [her], no safety on this reservation, no hiding from government papers [...]” (219). This is primarily because the lands under the lumber work and construction are physically destroyed. Similar to the island’s ultimate destruction in *LOTF*, Matchimanito forests and lake in *Tracks* are consumed by human affairs. The woods where the spirits of the Chippewan ancestors once wandered are flattened, thus, uprooting the native Indian culture and values from the land. In Nanapush’s words, the picture of the land turns out to be a strange place after the touch of “crosscut saws and sharp axes” (217): “At any rate, there was a long period of unusual calm in the August weather, days in which no air stirred, no breeze foamed the lake. [...] The sky hung daily overhead, a painted picture, motionless” (219). The initially vibrant and dynamic portrait of the natural context becomes lifeless with the fall of each “sawed tree” (223). The physical deformation of the land resonates in the degenerate manners of the new generation. After a formal education in the white towns, for example, Nector acquires a capitalist perspective, demands a “chunk of land” (38) and promotes the

constructions that destroy the natural context. “[Receiving] for their pay both money and food” (217), many people work as a lumber crew “laboring with careless persistent” (ibid.). Thus, Matchimanito no longer gives a sense of safety to the natives, but on the contrary, it threatens their lives.

Through its representations, the land as a threatening element, in this sense, becomes a common motif for both *LOTF* and *Tracks*. In addition, similar to Ralph’s search for safety in civilization and insistence on being rescued in the former novel, Nanapush seeks shelter for Lulu (standing for the future of the tribe) in the government school. He accepts the inevitability of “turning their face to the white towns” (170) in order to avoid (the land’s) consumption even at the cost of relinquishing their native identity on the limitless earth, and having to fit into “too small, tight [school] dresses.” (226) Then Nanapush realizes that, once bearing an important name, the Chippewa tribe have “become” (225) strangers to their native identity and land. Towards the end of the novel, he confesses their estrangement:

That’s when I began to see what we were becoming, and the years have borne me out: a tribe of file cabinets and triplicates, a tribe of single-space documents, directives, policy. A tribe of pressed trees. A tribe that chicken-scratch that can be scattered by a wind, diminished to ashes by one struck match. (225)

Once they start recognizing and talking about nature in symbolic terms (recorded in “file cabinets and triplicates” [225], indicated on “single-space documents” [ibid.]), they lose track of what nature essentially is and instead focus on what it means, or more precisely, what it should mean according to their interest.

Shifting from nature’s language to the white man’s discourse, the novel illustrates the textual transition from the semiotic fluidity to the fixed symbolism; in other words, from an ever-changing and fluctuating text (between fiction and reality) to a rather historical citation. Nanapush’s narrative provides specific dates (“The year was 1924” [225]), and partly employs a terminology related to “bureaucracy” (ibid.). He “wrote letters, learned to send them” to authorities in order to prevent them from taking Lulu for formal education. But he says that “once the bureaucrats sink their barbed pens into the lives of Indians, the paper starts flying, a blizzard of legal forms, a waste of ink by the gallon, a correspondence to which there is no end or reason” (ibid.). Each of his expressions includes a word from the white man’s civilization, which is not common to Native American everyday life, namely “the bureaucrats,”

“paper,” “legal forms,” “ink,” “reason” (ibid.). Then, he continues with the same discourse: “That’s when I began to see what we were becoming, and the years have borne me out: a tribe of file cabinets and triplicates, a tribe of single-space documents, directives, policy. A tribe of pressed trees. A tribe of chicken-scratch that can be scattered by a wind, diminished to ashes by one struck match” (ibid.). Following the same trend, now he broadens the scope of the white man’s language by describing what the Chippewa people have become. That is to say, Nanapush shows that the tribe has already employed the white man’s language, which has become a part of their native identity. Once communicating with their past (ancestors) through nature’s language, meaning the natural phenomena such as the “woods” (59), the “deceptive water” (49), “groan and crack of the trees” (9), now they exist in the “file cabinets,” speak through “single-spaced documents, directives, policy” (225). As Nanapush states, they “diminish” in a way like the “dwindling” (139) animals and the divided land. Thus, the novel begins with a “limitless” earth, which becomes more concrete and limited by the lines “drawn across the land with strings and yellow flags” (9), until remaining merely “circles” (173) and colors, “a small blue triangle” even one would cover with hand (ibid.). From fluidity to the symbolic representation, the concept of nature is reduced, becoming merely a contextual term in the white man’s discourse.

#### **4.2. The “Strangers” of the Land: Otherization in *Tracks***

Estrangement from an earlier Native American life is *Track*’s central theme. Yet, it should also be noted that estrangement requires two endpoints along a continuum from the familiar to the strange, at least one of which cannot comprehend or be acquainted with the other. In a sense, it occurs when there is a lack of communication and/or comprehension, creating a conceptual distance between the two. The novel presents estrangement by establishing two separate languages. One is stated in the novel as “nature’s language” (210). This language is not expressed in symbolic representations with a particular set of symbols, but rather, it is deductive and rhythmic. It makes sense in its unique ways through the “cold language of leaves” (42) that “overfills [ones] brain” (42), or by the “silent language of leaves” (128), “chilling and cold as the dead, restless and sharp as the wind of the month when the

trees crack” (171). In one scene, for example, Nanapush illustrates how nature responds to the lumber construction:

It began as a far-off murmur, a disturbance in the wind. We noticed an unusual number of birds and other animals that nested or burrowed in trees. Thrashers and grouse settled in the wild grass around Fleur’s cabin. Kokoko silently appeared in broad daylight and walked the roof at dusk, uttering one note. Rabbits came to the edge of the clearing, squirrels bounded through the leave, fighting pitched battles over territory. The murmur grew more distinct. (206)

The sense of disturbance and the unusual number of the animals behaving strangely imply the existence of a generalized/usual frame of nature’s language, which is occasionally transgressed. In other words, detecting changes in the behavior of the natural phenomena in the novel can only happen if there has been a sense of usual and commonly recognized patterns in the natural context. These patterns support the concept of nature’s language. As Nanapush states, in order to understand nature’s patterns, people have to “translate nature’s language” (210). Since this language is based on physical experience in nature, it addresses more Kristevan fluidity than the Lacanian symbolic register.

In *Desire in Language* (1969), Kristeva investigates the semiotic of arts and literature, and she underlines the victimized poet who “wants to turn rhythm into a dominant element; because he wants to make language perceive what it doesn’t want to say, provide it with its matter independently of the sign, and free it from denotation” (31). Although it would be wrong to assert that nature in *Tracks* bears the poetic intentions of Kristeva’s victimized poet, the outcome is a perceived language, “independently of the sign, and free from denotation” (ibid.). In nature’s language, the meaning can be gathered “through the walls, through the air and snow, down into the earth” (*Tracks* 210), from the “groan and cracks” of the trees (9), and the Manitous spirits living on the land “speak through woods” (59). While the white man’s verbal symbolic discourse cannot comprehend this semiotic realm, recognition is the way to understand nature’s language:

[The workers] were waiting for the signal, for the word, to take down the last of the trees. I stepped as fast as I could go, and kept an eye out for Eli. I was sure he did not understand what was in store, not that I was any wiser, but the silence of the leaves and the long oppression of the weather frightened me. No bird clicked or whistled now. No animal rustled. No voices muttered in the shadows. (221)

Here, the workers cannot “understand” (ibid.) that the unusual silence is nature’s last expression before it is destroyed by the lumber work. Although there are no “rustles” or “voices” (ibid.), Nanapush feels “the wind building on the earth,” and he “knows that the shifting of the breeze, the turn of the weather, was at hand” (222). This is the moment when the lumbermen come and begin cutting down the trees. Interestingly enough, Nanapush “then [understands]” with the falling of the first tree, that “all substance was illusion. Nothing was solid. Each green crown was held in the air by no more than splinters of bark” (223). Nanapush’s sophisticated deduction proves that nature’s language does not require verbal information to convey metaphorical meanings. However, these meanings can still be gathered from nature itself. As Nanapush states, this becomes possible by recognition: “I recognized them. Turtle’s quavering scratch, the Eagle’s high shriek, Loon’s crazy bitterness, Otter, the howl of Wolf, Bear’s low rasp” (59). Therefore, although translation may be needed to put nature’s language in human words, if one is to share experience in nature, meaning-making is “independent of the sign” (Kristeva 31).

Nevertheless, *Track*’s nature is still not a passive agency in this meaning-making process. In other words, it is not merely a context whereby human characters make inferences. On the contrary, the novel insists that nature observes, understands, speaks, and feels in its particular manner. In one of the most explicit scenes, Nanapush tells what he had witnessed as a young man when guiding a buffalo expedition for whites. Later, Pauline recites the story in her narration:

[Nanapush] said the animals understood what was happening, how they were dwindling. He said that when the smoke cleated and hulks lay scattered everywhere, a day’s worth of shooting for only the tongues and hides, the beasts that survived grew strange and unusual. They lost their minds. They bucked, screamed and stamped, tossed the carcasses and grazed on flesh. They tried their best to cripple one another to fall or die. [...] He said while the whites all slept throughout the terrible night he kept watch, that the groaning never stopped, that the plains below him was alive, a sea turned against itself, and when the thunder came, then and only then, did the madness cease. (140)

The land and its inhabitants not only understand what is happening, but they respond to human affairs that threaten their lives. Moreover, the “plains below (Nanapush)” appear like a living entity, echoing a continuous groan along with “screams and stamps” (140). “Throughout the terrible night” (ibid.), however, the whites all sleep,

unaware and perhaps ignorant of this painful reaction of the natural context. This situation implies that “the whites,” meaning the residents of civilized life, do not recognize nature’s language as they “sleep” (ibid.). In this regard, this language is an *other* for their discourse; it can be heard but not fully recognized.

In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva explores a fearsome sense in other’s discourse, which she considers to be employed by the abject. According to her, the abject

causes the sad, analytic silence to hover above a strange, foreign discourse, which, strictly speaking, shatters verbal communication (made up of a knowledge and a truth that are nevertheless heard) by means of a device that mimics terror, enthusiasm, or org, and is more closely related to rhythm and song than it is to the World. (30)

The previously quoted expression of madness as the animals’ reaction (*Tracks* 140) illustrates Kristeva’s “foreign discourse”. Screams and stamping, tossing of carcasses, and grazing of flesh physically shatter verbal communication and literally mimic a scene of terror, mentioned as the “terrible night” (ibid.) in the novel. Besides, what “animals understood” (ibid.) in that scene is their abjection in the white’s eyes. In Nanapush’s words, they understood “what was happening, how they were dwindling.” (139) Significantly, while they dwindle in numbers as they are sold one by one, their value as living creatures also dwindles within this trade. Therefore, the act of dwindling may be taken as a metaphorical devaluation, to which the abject, according to the whites, is entitled.

While nature’s language is stated as one of the two separate languages in the novel, the other one is the white man’s language. Here, it should be noted that this language does not refer to human characters’ general manners and means of communication through a systematic language. It is particular to white Americans’ colonialist and capitalist discourse. Interestingly, it bears similar features to the colonialist discourse mentioned in *LOTF*. Before presenting this language, *Tracks* provides the historical, cultural, and national importance of the physical land (Matchimanito) for the natives, in order to make a clear distinction between these two languages’ approach to nature.

Rainwater finds that in *Tracks*, “the spiritual and material realms are not separate at all.” (417) On the contrary, they are particularly integrated. At the beginning of the novel, Nanapush tells how he and the tribe “felt the spirits of the dead so near” (*Tracks* 2):



Their names grew within us, swelled to the brink of our lips, forced our eyes open in the middle of the night. We were filled with the water of the drowned, cold and black, airless water that lapped against the seal of our tongues or leaked slowly from the corners of our eyes. Within us, like ice shards, their names bobbed and shifted. (ibid.)

Nanapush implies an invisible relation between the dead and the living, filling each other through natural elements. In this sense, from the beginning to the end, the novel maintains a cause-effect relationship between catastrophic events and the spirits of the dead residing on the land. As Nanapush reports, “[people] say the unrest and curse of trouble that struck [the] people in years that followed was the doing of dissatisfied spirits” (4). According to the natives’ belief, the land is also aware of these dead people, and natural phenomena act in favor of their spirits. The natives “speak carefully of them” without letting “their names loose in the wind that would reach their ears” (5). “Things hidden were free to walk” on the land, for example, in the appearance of a “black dog,” which turns out to be “*odjib*, a thing of smoke” (35). On the other hand, there is the “lake man” that resides beneath the woods, “a lonely place full of the ghosts of the drowned” (35). In her analysis of the novel in terms of human’s relationship with nature, Rose Hsiu-li Juan emphasizes the spiritual value of the land:

Setting her story in the fictional Matchimanito Lake, North Dakota, Erdrich creates a mythical space where shamans, elders, Indian spiritual animals are vital parts of everyday living experience. It is a time when the miraculous and the mundane walk hand in hand, and the practical and the fantastical are not quite differentiated. (3-4)

Accordingly, the natives regard the natural context as a means of the ghosts’ communication with them. “The water could be deceptive” (*Tracks* 49), while the “woods spoke” (59) through the characters, all conveying the warnings of the spirits. “Land is the only thing that lasts life to life. Money burns like tinder, flows off like water. And as for government promises, the wind is steadier” (33). As seen by the examples, the natives regard the land as the “only thing” (ibid.) that would conserve their past and future. It shelters the spirits as well as the living people, animals, and plants. Therefore, it constitutes a unified context for the dead and the living, past and the future, beliefs, and culture, all of which are interwoven.

The customs of the Chippewa tribe have their roots in this natural context, which leads to a unique discourse that is particular to the land and their culture. The ghost dog *odjib*, the lake man Misshepesu, or their shamanistic rituals represented a

significant hunting scene (98-105), for example, belong to this specific discourse. While the significance of these motifs and rituals is known to the native people, it is not recognized in white man's discourse. To Fleur's frustration, though, this situation is evident as the white man is "reckless enough to try collecting for land where Pillagers were buried" (174). In a critical scene, the novel overtly presents how the natural context is rewritten in the white man's discourse. When the tax collector comes to announce the annual fee list, he pulls out a piece of paper, to peoples' astonishment. Each tribe's name is indicated on the list, showing that "most families, at the end of the long winter, were behind in what they owed, how some had lost their allotments." (172) Significantly, these indications are the losses of people in symbolic and abstract representation, namely in numbers. The numbers do not consider the psychological, sociological, and emotional outcomes of the loss, but they only present the situation reducing it to a symbolic set of representation. Nanapush is disappointed by this reduction: "We traced the list until we found the names we sought -Pillager, Kashpaw, Nanapush. All were there, figures and numbers, and all impossible. We stared without feeling at the amounts due before summer" (172-173). Here, the gathered people view their native lands in symbolic representation, namely in "figures and numbers," of which they are estranged. There are no "feelings" (173) in this representation of the "amounts" (ibid.). The cost of living on the land is constituted of "impossible figures and numbers" (ibid.). Moreover, the unique features of the land with its dark green forests and the deep blue of the ancient Matchimanito Lake are lost in the symbolic representation on the painted paper:

We examined the lines and circles of the homesteads paid up -Morrisey, Pukwan, Hat, Lazarres everywhere. They were colored green. The lands that were gone out of the tribe -to deaths with no heirs, to sales, to lumber company- were painted a pale and rotten pink. Those in question, a paper yellow. At the center of a bright square was Matchimanito, a small blue triangle I could cover with my hand. (ibid.)

Upon the map, all the aesthetic curves, hollows, clearings of the "limitless" (1) land are reduced to ordinary "lines and circles" (173). The "paid up" lands are indicated in green, the color of "dollar bills" (174). The "pale and rotten pink" (173), on the other hand, reflects the tribes' lament over their lands "gone out to sales, to lumber company" (ibid.). At the center of the map, the legendary Matchimanito Lake lies in the shape of such a "small blue triangle" (ibid.) that Nanapush can cover it with his

hand. Here, the novel illustrates how the symbolic register substitutes for the semiotic realm, which used to be “independent of sign” (Kristeva 31), or “limitless” (*Tracks* 1) in Nanapush’s words, until it is reduced to symbolic numbers and lackluster colors. Hence, just as the animals understood previously, the land metaphorically dwindles to symbolic representations. Margaret, an elderly native from the Kashpaws, “with her fingernail, traced the print she could not read, polished first the small yellow Kashpaw square” (173) to realize that “they’re taking [the land] over” (ibid.). Here, Margaret’s illiteracy shows that the white man’s language is an other to her, and she is estranged from her own lands when she encounters Matchimanito’s representation on the map. Offended by how the whites treated her, “Fleur laid her hand on [Nanapush’s] shoulder and let the silence gather around her before she spoke with contempt for the map, for those who drew it, for the money required, even for the priest. She said the paper had no bearing or sense” (174). This is because the spiritual values of the natives’ culture are based on experience and, therefore cannot be represented on paper (ibid.). Much as the white man’s discourse does not include or recognize these values, the figures and numbers have “no bearing or sense” (ibid.) for the natives.

Although the natives react against the situation they are put into by the whites, some of them perceive the unavoidable nature of their situation, stating that “If we don’t pay, they’ll auction us off!” (175), for either they have to pay taxes in “impossible” (173) amounts, or they will be sold for the lumber construction. Father Damien, the local priest and as such an agent of the white people’s ideology and practices, seems to have acknowledged and adopted white man’s language: “Edgar Pukwan Jr and the Agent control the choosing of the board who will decide who may bid on what foreclosed parcels, and where” (175). Like the land’s representation on the map, Father Damien’s statement is about the Matchimanito Lake itself. However, it does not mention the lake by its physical and material features that address one’s perceptual experience, such as the color and the texture of the water, the size of the lake, the sound of the waves, all of which are unique to the lake. Instead, the statement conveys the implication of the lake in symbolic terms, if not directly describing the lake itself. That is to say, the lake is indicated by its place on the map and the parcels of land that give its numerical size. It is reduced to a subject of a “trade for an allotment” (175), in which people are more interested.

When it comes to the symbolic representation of the natural context and its inhabitants, it is worth noting that the novel pays particular attention to the significance of the names indicated “on the government papers” (174). Although the names bear historical value in the natives’ culture, once they are symbolically represented on the papers, they lose their power (32). Nanapush says that

an old man had some relatives, got a chance to pass his name on, especially if the name was an important one like Nanapush. [...] Nanapush is a name that loses power every time that is written and stored in a government file. [...] *No Name*, I told Father Damien when he came to take the church census. *No Name*, I told the Agent when he made up the tribal roll. ‘I have the use of a white man’s name,’ I told the Captain who delivered the ration payout for our first treaty, ‘but I won’t sign your paper with that name either! (32-33)

For Nanapush, names bear the promise of the future, passing their native identity to the further generations. Thus, they enable the immortality of the culture as well as the power of the tribe. However, much as they are powerful in the everyday experience and for the tribal history, they are also condemned to lose this power on the “government files” (32). On these papers, names are merely symbolic representations of an identity, like a reflection in the mirror. “Written and stored” (ibid.), they are not dynamic, alive, or communicable. Besides, they can be erased or removed by an exterior authority/power, and, therefore, remain passive on the papers. Even “an important one like Nanapush” may “bear no sense” (174), for it loses its uniqueness and particularity among the other letters indicated in a unified size on a single row. Therefore, by simply declaring his name as *No Name*, Nanapush refuses to allow his important name to be reduced to a symbolic representation.

Nevertheless, ultimately Nanapush also accepts that “dollar bills cause the memory to vanish, and even fear can be cushioned by the application of government cash.” (174) As stated before, “land is the only thing that lasts life to life” (33); therefore, it creates the collective memory of the natives. Once this memory is erased by dollar bills and government cash, the Chippewan people will lose their tribal history and identity, and they “won’t be an Indian” (14) anymore. Besides, the tax collectors demand extremely high amounts that the native people cannot afford. If the natives refuse to pay the taxes, the collectors deprive them of food. Thus, weakened by starvation, the natives ultimately come to terms with the whites’ demands. First, Nanapush and the starving people from the other families are provided with bread and meat when they accept considering a deal. When the bread is passed around, all of the

people try “hard not to lose control” (173). Then, they “spread the lard on each piece, everyone concentrated on each slow bite, and there was no sound but chewing” (ibid.). An interpretation of this other critical scene would suggest that eating the bread corresponds to the consumption mentioned at the very beginning of the novel. Father Damien calls the new sickness spreading over the land “consumption” (2); it causes the death of many people in the tribe. On the surface, it seems that the sickness and the severe conditions of the land consume the people. However, when the land is sold to lumber construction, it turns out to be the people who consume the natural context. In this particular eating scene, therefore, the pieces of the bread stand for the parcels of the divided land. Initially, the natives try hard to control themselves not to sell the land to the whites. However, as the provisions become impossible for them to fulfill (173), accompanied by the ever-worsening natural conditions, beginning with “Morriseys, Pukwans, Hats, Lazarres” (ibid.) in the first place, they sell their allotments piece by piece. Like morsels bitten from bread, the natives consume the land. In the end, they forget about their past since “dollar bills cause the memory to vanish” (174). Neither the whispers through the woods nor the cracks of the trees, but only the sound of the natives’ chewing remains.

After the people agreed to sell the land, they opened it to other types of consumption as well. When the tonic dealer came, the natives filled empty cranberry bark “although it meant [they] stripped every bush around Matchimanito” (176), even going “farther into the outskirts of the woods” (ibid.) where the spirits of their ancestors resided. In other words, the Chippewa people start to commodify their identity along with the land. By the end of the week, Nanapush confesses with shame that,

[t]he thin pungent odor stuck to us, lodged in our clothes, and would be with us forever as the odor of both salvation and betrayal, for I was never able to walk in the woods again, to break a stick of cranberry without remembering the outcome of the toil that split the skin on our fingers. [...] so that from then on that winter there was never silence, but a constant shuffling and scratching, a money sound that dragged around us, an irritation. (ibid.)

Nanapush’s very last sentence shows that the political and economic language has been substituted for nature’s language. It is no longer the shuffling of the “leaves” that fill the air but that of the “green notes” (206). The “irritation” felt by the people indicates the natives’ estrangement, how they are “otherized” in their new relation to

their homelands. “Then one day we could hear them clearly” (ibid.), says Nanapush, “Ringing over the water and to our shore came the shouts of men, faint thump of steel axes. Their saws were rasping whispers, the turn of wooden wheels on ungreased axles was shrill as a far-off flock of gulls” (ibid.). “The shouts of men,” “ringing over the water” (ibid.) again illustrates the domination of white man’s discourse over nature’s language. Therefore, it can be inferred that the nature/civilization struggle in the novel results in granting the ultimate right of the land to the latter. The Native American identity can no longer endure the white man’s sanctions and provisions concerning the sale of the land. Compulsorily, natives are left to adapt themselves to the new discourse in which the natural context is measured by numbers and parcels, indifferent to its historical, cultural, and natural significance. Thus, they grow estranged from their lands, and are now speaking in other’s words.

#### **4.3. “The Child of the Invisible”: Characters’ Reception of Invisibility in Nature and Nature’s Visibility in *Tracks***

The marginalization of femininity is a quintessential theme in *Tracks*, and it is this that invites an ecofeminist reading of the text because the novel illustrates a parallel story of women and nature, who are both subjects to patriarchal destruction. The novel reveals more than the inferiorized positions of women and nature and achieves this by endowing a second power to both, which is to be emancipated from the names and attributions imposed by patriarchal society.

Like the discussion of being rescued in *LOTF*, *Tracks* questions women’s emancipation from patriarchal norms. Discussion of the characters would show that women are defined by an intrinsic motherhood that also defines their womanhood and even humanity at times. This association and parallel reading of women and nature in the novel leads to the idea of mother nature, an association common in traditional conceptions, as Plumwood notes, arguing that “women are the environment” (*Feminism* 22) in such viewpoints. In order to challenge this patriarchal discourse, a close reading provides the deconstruction of the idea of mother nature.

In addition, the issue of the visibility of nature and female characters will be discussed here. Hereby, Chapter III have shown that Golding’s novel exposes how

nature is invisibilized by anthropomorphic representations. However, different from *LOTF*'s treatment of visibility, *Tracks* makes the so-called "invisible" (1) woman characters visible, along with the natural context itself by presenting radical woman characters, using the characterization of nature as a technique, and illustrating naturamorphisms. The novel begins by introducing these radical women, notably Fleur, Pauline, and Margaret, and explaining why they are counted as invisible by the patriarchal society. At this point, the novel shatters its own construction by presenting a transgressive, autonomous nature instead. For this, it follows Kristeva's conception of abjection<sup>21</sup> as a default characteristic of womanhood. However, the abject women in *Tracks* reject the yoke of gender roles, gender attributions, and the idea of a conceptualized nature. Analyzing the construction of the radical female characters and how Nanapush, as a male narrator, perceives them, this section will explore the 'tracks' in the novel that lead the reader to the concepts of emancipated nature and women through literary representation.

#### **4.3.1. "The Funnel of History": Fleur**

Marginality is promoted in the novel by showing characters employing the concept as a means of transgression and emancipation. The marginal characters save themselves while they are excluded by their society, and to begin with, Fleur is the central marginal woman character in the novel. Fleur and her brother Moses are the only ones who survive the freezing winter in 1912. They lose their whole tribe, the Pillagers, and begin to live with the Chippewa tribe after Nanapush saves Fleur from freezing. However, Fleur, a young girl around seventeen, stands out for her particularly unusual behavior and appearance. As Nanapush describes them, in the first place, Fleur was "wild as a filthy wolf, a big bony girl whose sudden bursts of strength and snarling cries terrified the listening Pukwan" (3). On several other occasions also, there is a particular emphasis on her threatening, filthy appearance and rootlessness, which fall

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<sup>21</sup> Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia UP, 1982.

in line with Kristeva's concept of the abject. As Kristeva puts it, "once upon blotted-out time, the abject must have been magnetized pole of covetousness. [...] The clean and proper (in the sense of incorporated and incorporable) becomes filthy, the sought-after turns into the banished [...]" (*Powers* 8). Fleur's "stubbornly" (6) "feverish" (3) manners, which go so far as to reject Nanapush's help in the beginning and instead to prefer "[huddling against] the cold wood range" (*ibid.*) are the first indications of her incomprehensible nature. Later, to Nanapush's frustration, she rejects incorporation into society. For the long time she spent in Nanapush's cabin, Fleur has "never moved to build up the fire, never asked where [Nanapush] had been" (6), and finally stopped talking (*ibid.*). Thus, Fleur excludes herself from society and interaction with other people. One may detect an affinity between Fleur's manners and Kristeva's excluded abject. In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva notes several anthropologists who find that "filth" functions as a "dividing line" between "society and a certain nature" (8), which so far has been defined as otherization. As an exemplification of this, Fleur alienates herself by rejecting incorporation with the others and insisting on continuing her particular ways of living. Besides, she is "strong and daring" (11), unlike many of the other girls in the society. In Nanapush's observances, "all she had was raw power, and the names of the dead that filled her." (*Tracks* 7) Her "raw power" (7) provides her with a natural strength to survive, which Nanapush lacks. She drowns three times in the novel, but each time finds a way to be rescued. In a notable scene, Fleur struggles with a bear in the birth-house while delivering Lulu. Although Nanapush assumes that Fleur should have died in this incident, she miraculously opens her eyes and breaths (60). Here, the scene emphasizes Fleur's ability to survive the sickness of the past and give birth to the possibility of the next generation. Therefore, Nanapush considers Fleur a "funnel of history" (178) that links the past with the present and ties them to the future, just like the land that witnesses a people's history. Likewise, in one scene, Pauline depicts Fleur as "the one who closed the door or swung it open. Between the people and the gold-eyed creature in the lake, the spirit which they said was neither good nor bad but simply had an appetite, Fleur was the hinge" (139). Supporting this attribution in her argument, Juan finds that "Fleur exemplifies the power of full immersion in nature" (4). While becoming nature's representative in her half-wild human appearance, she stands for a different power, a stranger to the Chippewa people. Besides, the natural context also shares in a filthy appearance and raw power, as



reflected in Nanapush's observances of his natural context: "I passed through the ugliness, the scraped and raw places, the scattered bits of wood and dust and then the square mile of towering oaks, a circle around Fleur's cabin" (*Tracks* 220). Here, Nanapush abjects the land by calling the "scraped and raw place" "ugliness" (*ibid.*), which are centralized around Fleur's cabin. Concerning these parallels, abjection is a critical characteristic of Fleur, for it enables the reader to establish a direct relation between her nature and the natural context in the novel. By positioning nature's ugliness around Fleur's cabin, the novel physically brings the abject entities together in the same context while simultaneously indicating a distinction between the white towns and the ugly, scattered natural context.

Moreover, metaphysical affairs add to the similarities between two: Fleur is "filled with the names of the dead" (6), while their spirits inhabit the Mathcimanito forests (59). Depending on this relation, much as "[the Chippewans] fear that the spirits would hear [them]" (5) and therefore approach nature "carefully" (5), they fear Fleur for her spiritual powers so far as to consider her a witch. Her ancestors, the Pillagers, "knew the secret ways to cure or kill" (2). As their descendant, Fleur "messed with the evil, laughed at the old women's advice and dressed like a man. She got herself into some half-forgotten medicine, studied ways the [Chippewans] shouldn't talk about" (12). Treated as an outsider, "Fleur enjoys a freedom not available to an ordinary woman, and escapes even the Chippewa community's attempts to define her. [She] disturbs the community by her refusal to conform to its unspoken codes" (Juan 9). Confirming this argument, Fleur continually attempts to become something else, something other than what is expected from her. While this preference causes her exclusion from the Chippewan society, the people also do not accept the transgressive woman in their tribe, taking her as a threat that "almost destroyed the town" (*Tracks* 12). Pauline states that "finally when people were just about to get together and throw her out, she left on her own and didn't come back all summer" (*ibid.*). This attitude shows that Fleur is also well aware of her exclusion and appreciates the power she gains by this abjected identity. Besides, as Pauline reports, "she knew the effect she had on men, even the very youngest of them. She swayed them, sotted them, made them curious about her habits, drew them close with careless ease and cast them off with the same indifference" (16-17). It is significant that Fleur always keeps a safe distance between herself and the others, by which she claims autonomy and

independence, a power under her own control. Her departure from the town, therefore, symbolizes that she also leaves the tribe's expectations and the norms they would impose upon her, such as the way she should behave towards others or dress in a womanly fashion. In a way, she refuses the incorporation that would hinder her development of an independent identity, and just like the limitless earth, she avoids the limits of her society.

Whether Fleur thus marginalizes herself and becomes more visible to the others or whether her nonhuman appearance invisibilizes her in the natural context remains a critical question in the novel. In one description, Pauline provides a strange description of Fleur:

Her cheeks were wide and flat, her hands large, chapped, muscular. Fleur's shoulders were broad and curved as a yoke, her hips fishlike, slippery, narrow. An old green dress clung to her waist, worn thin where she sat. Her glossy braids were like the tails of animals, and swung against her when she moved, deliberately, slowly in her work, held in half-tamed. But only half. I could tell, but the others never noticed. They never looked into her sly brown eyes or noticed her teeth, strong and sharp and white. [...] they never saw that her fifth toes were missing. They never knew she'd drowned. They were blinded, they were stupid, they only saw her in the flesh. (18)

Here, Pauline draws an unusual physical shape with nonhuman features, closer to an animal. In this description, Fleur's masculinity is emphasized by "large hands" and "broad shoulders" that give her an exceptional strength the men are looking for (18). Her half-wild appearance is even more marginalized with "strong and sharp and white teeth" (18) the others never notice. It is stated that people are blinded to see and comprehend Fleur's strange nature, but they only recognize her limited corporeal features. In other words, her animality and deadly spiritual powers, which are essential to her, are invisible to others, while she is radically distinct.

Interestingly, the novel shows a similar ignorance and blindness in the way people recognize their natural context. The white men sleep while the animals dwindle (139); again, "they sleep beneath the wagons" (217) while nature's language warns them through deadly natural phenomena about not continuing with the lumber work. "One [man] was killed that way when two oxen lurched eagerly in their traces, and the wood fell from the unsecured hatch. A white man lost an eye when a splinter of wood spun off his axe" (217). The implication of a punishing nature was stated earlier in the novel when the "bitter punishment of early winter" (2) took many natives in the

beginning. This vengeful manner is also common with Fleur as she discretely and inexplicably does away with men (10-11), which is why “men stayed clear of Fleur.” (11) To the shock and ignorance of the men (223), Fleur rages through the natural phenomena as if metaphysically controlling the land. As her “hair ruffles” large trees “pitch loud and long” (222- 223). “The earth jumps and the shudder plucks the nerves in the bodies of the men who milled about” (223). When one man tries to walk toward the east, “a small tree goes down and bars his path” (ibid.).

Fleur’s exclusive strength shows that *Tracks* gives considerable credit to female powers of endurance, survival instincts, and sustenance, which challenges masculine stability. However, from a radical perspective, “Fromm contends that human potentiality depends upon the integration of feminine qualities (such as care and nurturing) into the masculine realm of reason and reflexivity.” (Fromm qtd. in Elliott 45) His assertion prioritizes masculine potential and regards feminine qualities as a complementary human feature. While Plumwood brings a hierarchy in her master-other analogy that femininity is an indication of inferiority, Fromm seems to support this inferior position. Because for him, “feminine qualities are dangerous in modern culture since they threaten incorporation back into a ‘state of nature’ in Locke’s terms (ibid.). In the dominant tradition, men have the faculty of reason and women of nature, while the more recent conflicting norm regards the former as forceful and the latter as domestic, confirming the masculine power. The same argument applies to *Tracks* “[since] the whole tribe had got to thinking that [Fleur] couldn’t be left alone out there, a woman gone wild, striking down whatever got into her path. People said that she had to be *harnessed* [indicated]” (*Tracks* 45). This patriarchal approach shows that Fleur’s unusual femininity is dangerous for men’s authority in a masculine society. By this estranged identity, Fleur claims the power to challenge what people “usually think or do” (18-21). She “dresses like a man” (12), plays cards (18) (which “was a shock of surprise” [18]) while “women didn’t usually play with men” (18), leaves the town whenever she wants (12). In doing so, Fleur declares that she will not be incorporated into social norms or build her life upon “what people say” (45). On the contrary, she ventures into the periphery of the tribe as an otherized figure. Thus, developing a radical character and appearance whereby it could thrive freely, the potential of Fleur’s marginalized feminine identity becomes an autonomous and radical power against white man’s modern world as well as the patriarchal society in the novel.

#### 4.3.2. The “Unnoticeable” Voice: Pauline’s Exclusion and Alienation

Pauline has two critical significance for the novel: Her narrative is much more dependent on her personal visions than the first narrator’s, and she, therefore, has a direct effect on the reliability of the narrators in the novel. Secondly, as another radical woman character, she illustrates a transformation by which she declares her autonomy. Much as Fleur is made visible by her marginality, Pauline is initially an “unnoticeable” (39) character who prefers to stay somewhat submissive to what she is told by particularly religious doctrines. However, her dreams reveal her unconscious desire to transform into another being that would free her from the yoke of being a human, according to her (192-205).

Pauline is half-Canadian and half-Puyats. They constitute “the clan for which the name was lost” (14). However, Pauline wants to be “like [her] mother, who showed her half-white” (ibid.) and yearns for a “pure Canadian” (ibid.) identity like her grandfather. She demands from her father to send her “to south, to the white town” (ibid.), for she thinks that she “was made for better” (ibid.) than her position among the Indians. This yearning for the white towns is partly because she “saw through the eyes of the world outside” (ibid.) of the tribe, where names and symbolic titles matter. On the other hand, it is also partly due to the maltreatment she receives from her native relatives, as well as the humiliation the men in the town subject her to. Considering these reasons, the novel questions the issues of visibility and invisibility through Pauline as a character and a narrator.

Nanapush introduces Pauline to the readers as an “unnoticeable, homely” (39) girl, “scheming to gain attention by telling odd tales that created damage” (ibid.). Here, Nanapush refers to Pauline’s function in the novel as a narrator, a title by which she finds a way to gain attention and power. Although she is unnoticeable in the others’ eyes, her narrative makes her visible to the reader. Nevertheless, Nanapush undermines and abjects Pauline’s storytelling. Addressing readers, he states that “the only people who believed Pauline’s stories were the ones who loved dirt” (ibid.). Thus, he attempts to block Pauline’s opportunity to become a visible and powerful narrator. While working in a butcher shop, Pauline also notices and internalizes her invisibility: “I was fifteen, alone, and so poor-looking I was invisible to most customers and to the men in the shop. Until they needed me, I blended into the stained brown walls, a skinny

big-nosed girl with staring eyes” (15-16). Pauline is apparently not attractive in terms of her feminine features. She is utilized by society, particularly by the male authority. Aware of this fact, she does not attempt to use her female identity to gain a name in society. Besides, as a woman character, she is physically and psychologically suppressed by “Napoleon’s thighs, Russel Kashpaw’s hot and futile wonder, Nanapush’s manufactured humiliations” (196) which she wants to be “free of” (196). In one scene, she confesses to Bernadette, the owner of the farm where she works, that she was “beaten by Regina. Cursed by Dutch. Mocked by [her] small cousin Russel [...] She scrubbed the rough boards and clabbered milk, boiled salves and washed bandages” (64). She was not respected at all, and constantly blamed by men, as she complains: “I left Argus because I couldn’t get rid of the men. They walked nightlong through my dreams, looking for whom to blame. Pauline! My name was a growl on their lips. A suspicion, a certainty, an iron hook on a rail” (62). With an ecofeminist perspective, one can detect that, men mistrust both Pauline and the natural landscape. Much as Nanapush warns the reader about Pauline’s “dirty” and “schemed” (39) stories, native people tend to approach nature warily, noticing the “deceptive waters” (49), the legendary lake monster who might appear in disguise (11), the delusions of so-to-speak ghosts (35), the winds that carry their whispers to the “spirits’ ears” (5). In this sense, the novel gives an ambiguous, uncertain character to the land. The effect of these ambiguities is invisible, though, people still believe in the existence of the deceptive spiritual powers and avoid making direct contact with them, talking and acting carefully within the bare land (5), for example, just as they do while Pauline is around (15-16).

Exclusion of the Native Americans is another common treatment the natural context and Pauline receive from the other people, which invites the reader to make an ecofeminist reading of the novel. Therefore, paying attention to the indications of otherization in relation to Plumwood’s master-other hierarchy can elucidate the parallels drawn by *Tracks* between women and nature. To begin with, Pauline’s life in Argus, among the Kashpaw family, is a social and familial burden that attributes to her a name she does not want to undertake. In other words, her native name, which represents her native identity, is an indication of her inferior position in the tribe. When she leaves Argus for the convent, therefore, Pauline feels “both heavier and lighter” (65); “lighter because [she] had unburdened [her] shoulders, and heavier because [she]

knew the dreams would fall” (65). Her burden is imposed on her by the patriarchal social point of view, which Nanapush names as her “homely” (39) attributions. Therefore, Pauline “bothers [her] father to send [her] to the white towns in the south” (14), hoping to emancipate herself from being an “other” in the society. Bearing this intention, she aspires to people from white society. One of the influential characters that shape Pauline’s character is Bernadette Morrissey, an educated woman who teaches Pauline “how to read and write the nun’s script that she’s learned, French education in Quebec. [Bernadette] had a whole trunk of full of pamphlets and books and knew numbers, kept the accounts for the farm, always look of figures along when she went to visit the sick and dying” (64-65). In this sense, Bernadette becomes an idol for Pauline with her autonomous, knowledgeable identity as a strong woman. Pauline first hated the “assured French ways” (64) of her friends from the nun’s school. However, she “counseled [herself] to ask after them, to yearn after them, to lower her eyes” (ibid.). Thus, she recognizes the superiority of the enlightened life of the white towns while receding her native identity. Yearning for a new identity through cultivation, she supposes to gain power against the patriarchal society. Nevertheless, the white man’s cultivation requires the destruction of the native identity as well as the native land. The power and importance of a native name is not recognized in white man’s papers, that recognize only monetary value. The same approach applies to the value of the native land, which is divided into parcels, numbers and figures (173). Besides, white man’s discourse has its particular restrictions. This is symbolically indicated in the scene where Lulu is sent to a government school and appears in the new “tight dress, too small, straining across her shoulders,” that is “visible for miles, that any child who tried to run away from the boarding school was forced to wear” (226). While Pauline idealizes education in the white towns as a means to “get rid of” (14) the patriarchal society, Lulu’s description reveals how visibility after cultivation restricts and forces people to fit into its proprieties, which are determined by the white man. Much as “the earth is limitless” (1) in its intact position, cultivation (by the hands of human civilization) diminishes and destroys the unity of the natural context. Nevertheless, Pauline comes to understand the white man’s effects both on nature and the people. In her vision, she sees that “the land will be sold and divided. Fleur’s cabin will tumble into the ground and be covered by leaves. [...] the young like Lulu and Nector, will return from the government schools blinded and deafened” (205),

estranged from their homeland. While Pauline once saw “through the eyes of the world outside” (14), in the end, she realizes how restricted this vision is, blinding natives to their own identity. She herself goes to Argus to “teach arithmetic at St. Catherine’s school” (205), leaving her name, Pauline, behind (ibid.) to become “*Leopolda*” (ibid.), which is constituted of “unfamiliar syllables” (ibid.). In this manner, Pauline literally and symbolically distances herself from her nature, meaning her native identity and the natural context of Matchimanito.

#### **4.3.3. The Mother of the Land: Margaret**

The third character *Tracks* presents as a transgressive woman character is the strong Chippewan lady Margaret. Unlike Fleur and Pauline, Margaret displays dominant womanhood along with a motherly nature. The novel notably uses these particular features to challenge masculine power. Overall, Margaret is a “bold, inventive” woman, “delighting in her experience” (183). During the harsh winter, she looks after Nanapush, Pauline, and Lulu, taking care of them as a mother (127). Nanapush describes her as a woman who is “headlong, bossy, scared of nobody and full of vinegar” (47). While her merits as a healer save Nanapush’s life, she represents the maintenance of life in the novel. “Without her presence,” says Nanapush, “there was little to remind me what life was good for. I got too lazy to feed myself. [...] It took Margaret one hour to revive me when the snow ceased, and her anger had turned to worry. She forced into my mouth a spoon of last summer’s berries, and with that taste, the sweetness of those days came back” (127). This is one example of Margaret undertaking the role of a nurturer with motherly care while Nanapush stands for the “helpless” (ibid.) and needy recipient.

In his narrative, Nanapush explicitly respects Margaret for her endurance and survival skills. In one scene, the two young capitalist men, Clarence and Lazarre, assault Margaret and Nanapush at their cabin. They tie up the old couple and torture them, cutting off Margaret’s braids, which had historical and individual value for Margaret. Here, Nanapush confesses his inferiority compared to Margaret: “I could not even speak to curse [Clarence and Lazarre]. For pressing my jaw down, thick above my tongue, [Margaret’s] braids, never cut in this life before, were tied to silence me.

Powerless, I tasted their flat, animal perfume” (115). Knocked down by Clarence and tied to a chair, Nanapush cannot do anything to save himself and Margaret. While he accepts the disparity of his “powerless” (115) state before the other men, he is silenced in literal and metaphorical terms by Margaret’s braids. Literally, the braids are used as a gag, tied around his mouth, leaving him unable to speak; metaphorically, the braids stand for Margaret’s feminine power that once more overcomes masculinity. Besides, the braids’ “animal perfume” (115) are an example of the associations made between women (Margaret here, elsewhere Fleur and Pauline) with animals. Margaret’s triumph over masculinity would suggest that power is neither gender-based nor particular to human beings, in the end. Contrarily, the characters gain power as they diverge from the norms of society. Thus, the novel promotes marginality while undermining absolute hierarchies, which are not recognized in the natural context.

The braids are characteristic motifs that define Margaret (47); therefore, Clarence and Lazarre’s implicit assault on Margaret’s femininity by cutting her braids means that they intend to leave Margaret bereft of her potential power of womanhood. However, they are unaware that this attempt only rescues her from the male gaze and makes her even stronger as an abnormal or abjected “other.” Nanapush names this as “strangeness” (118):

Maybe it was the strangeness that attracted me. She looked forbidding, but the absence of hair also set off her eyes, so black and full of lights. She did not in the least look pitiful. She looked like that queen of England, like a watersnake or shrewd young bird. And I still tasted the braids in my mouth, smoky and smooth, cool and harsh. (ibid.)

Here it becomes clear that distortion of her feminine appearance grants Margaret an essential nobility, “like that queen of England” (ibid.). Her “strangeness” (ibid.), or in other words, otherness to the male world, is what makes her an ambiguous being of wonder: “smoky, smooth, cool, and harsh” (ibid.), although Pauline seems to think that Margaret’s naturally powerful character is inborn, one of her essential qualities: “power travels in the bloodlines, handed out before birth (31). –which, incidentally, places the mixed-heritage Pauline in an ambiguous position. Regardless of Pauline’s somewhat defeatist utterance, the novel shows that otherness empowers the marginal female characters, while the remaining characters ultimately weaken. When Nanapush happens to scold her for being a “prickly-head woman” (126), Margaret calls up Lazarre and Clarence’s assault: “Then she reminded me of who was tied beside her,



helplessly, who watched as Lazarre stropped his razor. She reminded me of how I lost the respect of others, lost my manhood, of how fortunate I was to have a woman who would overlook such shame” (127). Here, it becomes clear that the novel acknowledges the survival power of the female characters over the impotency of “manhood” (ibid.).

Turning back to the novel’s rendition of womanhood, Nanapush’s comparative narrative, which focuses on “what it is to be a woman”/man (167), is significant. Nanapush mentions the different treatment he and Margaret receive during their fight with Clarence and Lazarre (112). In that episode, while Margaret dares to fight against men actively, Nanapush is weak and passive: “Margaret uttered a war cry that had not been heard for fifty years, and bit Boy Lazarre’s hand viciously, giving a wound which would later prove the death of him. As for Clarence, he had all he could do to wrestle me to the ground and knock me half unconscious” (ibid.). Obviously, Nanapush does not have Margaret’s strong survival instincts Margaret. Margaret is vibrant and even fatally detrimental to their enemies, she is as “dangerous” (170) as Fleur, and as radical as Pauline. Nanapush’s confession about Margaret is a direct expression of this argument: “Without her presence, there was little to remind me what life was good for. I got too lazy to feed myself, let the last potatoes rot, then I became too weak to set new traps in the woods” (127). Nanapush is so weakened that he cannot even provide for his basic needs. Therefore, he entirely resigns himself to Margaret’s care. In this sense, an ecofeminist reading would suggest Margaret as a representative of the concept of mother nature, since Margaret nurtures, gives life to other “materials” from “her own body” (167), shelters, protects, feeds, and more importantly, creates:

Many times in my life, as my children were born, I wondered what it was like to be a woman, able to invent a human from the extra materials of her own body. In the terrible times, the evils I do not speak of, when the earth swallowed back all it had given me to love, I gave birth in loss. I was woman in my suffering, but my children were all delivered into death. It was contrary, backward, but now I had a chance to put things into a proper order. (167)

If we are to seek the meaning of woman nature while avoiding a fixed definition, Nanapush’s statement provides the reader with a comprehensive one, including the basic characteristics of women as represented in the novel. In the first place, “to be a woman” means being able to create a new form of life using one’s own body. While woman fluidity and potency are associated with life in the novel, masculine stability

is considered impotent, only to “give birth in loss” (ibid.). The same association is drawn with Pauline’s agency, where she cites the things she serves for the convent as following: “I scrubbed and waxed far into the night, polished whatever poor nickel plate trimmed their stoves, chopped wood, kneaded, and then baked the bread that the living would put into their mouths” (69). Likewise, Fleur “goes out hunting” (12) and brings fish for the others, taking care of Nanapush and Lulu like Margaret, while her radicality always makes her an other in the society. In these examples, women occupy a nurturing and life-bearing position that men cannot achieve. Irigaray makes a significant explanation concerning this position, stating that “[t]raditionally, women are ‘the environment -they provide the environment and conditions against which male ‘achievement’ takes place, but what they do is not itself accounted as an achievement.” (Irigaray qtd. in Plumwood 22) Although this traditional approach does not promise increased appreciation of women by males, in the end, *Tracks* shows how an ecological text paints a portrait of a self-sufficient woman and environment who dominate because of their necessity for the others’ survival.

#### **4.4. “Not even in her own body”: The Function of Naturamorphism and Shapeshifting in *Tracks***

While naturamorphism may serve as a means of invisibilization in the natural context for the characters in a novel, *Tracks* employs the technique in order to marginalize its otherwise inferiorized characters. In doing so, the novel shatters the social hierarchies of the modern world, particularly as it emerged in the native American lands through the colonial encounter. Kate McCafferty underlines the spiritual connection between the natural context and its human inhabitants in Native American tribal culture, with the interchangeable appearance of these entities. According to her findings,

the generatrix of the Chippewa world presents certain of its sacred faces in animal form and is a divinity that cannot be identified as a stable, static being, but rather through the distinctive interplay of its shapeshifting components. Such a kinetic sacredness -not metaphor but lived experience, not subject but activity- challenges the very basis of Western ontology and epistemology in a valuable and productive manner. (729)

The challenge McCafferty identifies is expressed through the separation of the white man's language and nature's language in the novel. In Western ontology and epistemology, the land has practical and economic value, whereas the same discourse cannot comprehend the ever-changing, non-static, and spiritual texture of the land. The Native American concept of land cannot be represented on "maps" by "colors" (*Tracks* 173) because it is alive and continuously transforms, like its inhabitants. To explain the physical transition from the nonhuman to human, and vice versa, McCafferty introduces shapeshifting (729) and analyses its literary use in Erdrich's several texts. In her article about the shamanism and transformations in *Tracks* and *Love Medicine*, she refers to the Chippewa culture in which

[communication] through a common language and merging with a human body are common ways in which the spirit of an animal guardian can walk and work on the human plane. At the same time, a human can expand his or her abilities into other realms of power, such as aqueous existence, flight, night vision, and superhuman strength. This merging of human and animal forms is known as shapeshifting. Shapeshifting requires, among other things, surrendering one's exclusively human nature, which is characterized by analytic thought. (735)

According to McCafferty's explanation, naturamorphism can be considered as an attempt of the literary application of shapeshifting, also including one's transformation into nonhuman/nonanimal beings. While McCafferty focuses much more on cultural perspectives and values of shapeshifting in the Chippewa tribe, the "requirement" (ibid.) she mentions addresses the culture/nature separation in *Tracks* regarding the text's approach to analytic thought of western civilization. Notably, the novel attributes analytic thought to men while female identity bears survival and metaphysical powers. In several scenes, women are depicted as displaying instinctive, irrational behaviors. Chippewa people, for example, think that Fleur "couldn't be left alone out there, a woman gone wild, striking down whatever got into her path. People said that she had to be harnessed" (*Tracks* 45) by which she is supposed to become more human. Pauline's visions, on the other hand, create a narrative irrationality. Besides, Pauline also explicitly rejects the credibility of the rationale, stating that "words are useless. Thoughts foolish. All of the mind's constructions" (134). For her, "understanding" (ibid.) comes through personal experience, which corresponds to Kristeva's semiotic realm rather than the symbolic register of the rational thought. In Kristevan preoccupation with the subject, the thinking/speaking agent is of the

masculine gender (*Revolution* 1984). Considering this gender-based association, the representation of women and men in *Tracks* complies with the semiotic/symbolic distinction. Women constitute the irrational, wild and mad, unreliable and unidentifiable entity belonging to the semiotic, whereas men are the determinants of the social regulations, often reminded in the novel through “what people say” or “think” (45), the Christian doctrines that conduct to be a “good Catholic” (64), Father Damien’s (2, 175), Christ’s (204) or God’s words (193-194), all of which address form the patriarchal discourse. In an ecofeminist reading of the text, one would note that the attributions that define women are applied to nature as well. Much as women are excluded from rationality by undertaking madness and wildness, the maddening beasts and animals (140, 206), anthropomorphic trees in rage (215, 223), the “devil and deceptive” (39) waters resonate similar irrationality. In this sense, women and nature share the common ground of the semiotic in the novel.

The relationship between nature and humans in *Tracks* indicates the existence of a mediator who would enable the communication between nature’s language and the humans’/white man’s discourse. This is because the natural context in the novel has a particular characteristic that is not anthropomorphic. Therefore, nature’s language cannot be understood through a hermeneutic process in Gadamerian terms since it requires a non-anthropocentric and non-phenomenological perspective, which is not centralized around an individual understanding. It necessitates looking from within the natural context instead of facing its reflection on “papers” (210). To be more precise, the white man’s discourse is limited to general symbolization that addresses public understanding, indicated by “figures and numbers” (173). Therefore, nature’s language necessitates a “translation” (209) in order to be comprehended by humans. However, this language is based on individual experiences such as Pauline’s fight with the lake monster and “dark waters” (200-202), another character, Eli’s hunt, in which he transforms into his prey (140) in order to catch it, or Fleur’s communication with the bears (59). These exemplary experiences cannot be expressed through a symbolic representation since “words are useless” (134) when it comes to conveying a message based on senses. People, on the other hand, approach nature with analytic thought, ending up with the concept of an incomprehensible nature. In one scene, for example, Nanapush questions “why [he] had ever found [the woods] frightful, why [he has] ever wished to translate the language of their leaves” (209-210). He cannot directly

communicate with the whispers carried out by wind (5), nor with the spirits in the woods. This inability to communicate with nature can partly be attributed to his gender since, as a man in the patriarchal society of the modern western world, Nanapush is invited to the discourse of a bureaucrat, referring to the symbolic register. Accordingly, he understands the land “on the government papers” (32) while estranging himself from the “language of the leaves” (42). Although he “recognizes” (59) nature’s language, this recognition cannot proceed to become communication. Interestingly, the same lack of ability to communicate with the natural context applies to all male characters in the novel.

On the other hand, however, *Tracks* mentions women making “pig-calling sounds” (24), “howling like cats” (73), receiving an answer from bears (59), and conversing with lake monsters (201), all of which indicate a relation between female gender and the ability to communicate in nature’s language in the novel. This interpretation would add a gender-based separation to the nature/civilization distinction. That is to say, while the text treats the natural context and civilization of the modern western world as different spheres that “fight over territories” (206), women are positioned on nature’s side. Women’s relation to nature and why they naturamorphize in the novel are deeply connected to its use of marginal female characters who challenge the male authority.

#### **4.4.1. A Matter of “Shape”: The Representation of Shapeshifting**

While the invasion of colonial affairs adds to the estrangement from native heritage and natural context, the novel suggests mediator characters that enable the communication between nature and humans, and that also exemplify shapeshifting and naturamorphisms. One critical character that communicates with nature is Fleur. Unlike Nanapush, Fleur is able to understand nature’s language directly; she listens “through the walls, through the air and snow, down into the earth.” (171) Moreover, she communicates with natural phenomena, “sings words [the others haven’t] heard before, chilling and cold as the dead, restless and sharp as the wind of the month when the trees crack” (171). Being a descendant of Pillagers, who are known by their kinship with a bear clan, her power “comes down through the hands, [...] big, spidery and

rough, [...] It comes through the eyes, too, belligerent, darkest brown, the eyes of those in the bear clan [...]” (31) In Pauline’s descriptions,

[Fleur] laid the heart of an owl on her tongue so she could see at night, and went out, hunting, not even in her own body. We know for sure because the next morning, in the snow or dust, we followed the tracks of her bare feet and saw where they changed, where the claws sprang out, the pad broadened and pressed into dirt. By night, we heard her chuffing cough, the bear cough. By day, her silence and the wide grin she threw to bring down our guard made us frightened. (12)

Interestingly, Fleur stays between a human and nonhuman identity in terms of manner and appearance. Some people believe that she is married to the lake monster, even bearing its child (31) “whose green eyes and skin color of an old penny” (ibid.) causes many speculations. The novel never clarifies her identity but rather adds to the ambiguous descriptions. In one scene, her sexual intercourse with Lily, a man from the tribe, illustrates an animal-like woman; wild, aggressive, harsh, almost identical with men:

She reared, shrieked, and then he squeezed her so hard that they leaned into each other and posed in a standing embrace. They bowed jerkily, as if to begin. Then his arms swung and failed. She sank her black fangs into his shoulder, clasping him, dancing him forward and backward through the pen. Their steps picked up pace, went wild. [...] He grabbed her kinked tail. They went down and came up, the same shape and then the same color until the men couldn’t tell one from the other (...). (25)

Besides Fleur’s exceptional strength, the last sentence of the description indicates that she is equated with the male gender and maybe even stronger and more potent than the men in the tribe. Notably, this strength is what attracts these men, since they take it as a challenge against their masculinity. Therefore, one night, several of them (Lily, Russel, Dutch) attempt to sexually harass Fleur, showing their desire to dominate her. However, they end up slinking away “like a beaten dog” (26), “frozen solid” (31), and almost dead. Fleur’s struggle with them and her rage are echoed in the “strong wind” through which “Argus falls apart and gets turned upside down, smashed, and thoroughly wrecked” (28). Likewise, when the tree felling begins, Fleur’s reaction finds expression in the jumping and shuddering earth (223). The wind builds on the earth (222) to hinder men from their work, much as trees go down, barring the construction workers’ path (223).

With one thunderstroke, the trees surrounding Fleur's cabin cracked off and fell away from us in a circle, pinning beneath their branches the roaring men, the horses. The limbs snapped steel saws and rammed through wagon boxes. Twigs formed webs of wood, canopies laced over groans and struggles. Then the wind settled, curled back into the clouds, moved on [...]. (ibid.)

The text weaves an invisible yet sensible dialogue between Fleur and natural phenomena that enables a parallel reading of both. In a word, Fleur voices nature, and the natural context communicates with human beings through Fleur. In this sense, as I asserted before, Nanapush considers Fleur as the “funnel of history” (178), meaning a mediator and a translator between the “white man or windigos” (31) and the historical Matchimanito lands. Therefore, Fleur's naturamorphism functions in two ways: Considering her gendered identity in society, naturamorphism provides Fleur with an exceptional masculine strength to challenge men and resist their sexual attacks. Taking courage from her nonhuman, marginal appearance, she can sink “her black fangs into” men's bodies, “clasp” (25), “insult,” or “scorn” (109) them. Secondly, her physical affinity to the natural context -including her kinship with bears- gives her the ability to understand the natural reactions, read nature's language, and respond in the same discourse. In terms of historical value, she listens “through the walls, through the air and snow, down into the earth” (171), and she is full of the names of the dead (7). One should note that these two functions cause Fleur's abjection on the social ground, for much as she frightens (12) people, which is a manner of the abject for Kristeva (*Powers* 6); she is a “deviser of territories, languages, works” (8) by which she communicates with the spirits. McCafferty argues that such inclinations towards spiritual affairs lead one's otherization within the society (729). She points out that “the shapeshifting of a human being into the form and consciousness of an animal -a “lower” category of being opposed to human status - has horrified and stymied the Western imagination for hundreds of years.” (ibid.) The abject Fleur, as an effect of shapeshifting, therefore, disturbs white man's and the other male characters' imagination. Thus, the text challenges masculine authority with the focus on an abjected marginal woman character who, in a word, transforms to survive.

Critical of the anthropomorphic approach, Juan argues that such a transformation suggests “a way out of human's centering position in relation to nature, a way of looking at things from nonhuman's viewpoint” (16). This is a crucial argument offering credit to the “other” with an alternative perspective.

‘Becoming’ involves a willingness to imagine one as the other. The imaginary, made up from our imaginative participation in other modes of being, is productive rather than reductive. By imagination, we ‘become’ the ‘other’ and live differently. Such a way of approaching the other avoids taking the other as a piece of possession or knowledge. (17)

Hence becoming an animal, a witch, a bestial creature, a monster, the lake, and the voice of the spirits, Fleur visits the nonhuman entities mentioned in the novel. While each of these is considered “a piece of possession or knowledge” (ibid.) in the white man’s discourse and on the government papers, Fleur directly participates within nature’s language. In each experience, she provides a unique perspective and discourse belonging to what she becomes. In her isolation, she becomes a “bear” (*Tracks* 59); when she goes out hunting, she is “not even in her own body” (12); she gets “herself into some half-forgotten medicine, studies way the [natives] shouldn’t talk about” (ibid.); “some say she is married the waterman, Misshepesu” (31). With each identity she gives life to by representation, the reader is introduced to a new Fleur. Thus, *Tracks* weaves a dynamic narrative that rejects stability, centrality, and fixed identities.

Likewise, Pauline rejects the invisible identity and roles patriarchy dictates. She realizes that leaving her human identity necessitates leaving behind her previous name (204). Thus, she finds a way to claim her independence by becoming invisible in the natural context where she need not bear the yoke of human identity. As the first step, Pauline runs away from the tribe, ending up in a wilderness from where “no one would dare to salvage [her] now” (200). Then, she strips off her “raiment, the veil, the shift and vest. [She removes] the stockings and bandage that bound [her] breasts flat. The wind tears these costumes from her hands [...]” (201). She is left “naked in [her] own flesh, and finally with no shield or weapon” (ibid.), “ready, and strong as a young man” (ibid.). With her bare hands, she attacks Napoleon, whom she assumes is the devil, seizes him, and “[forces herself] upon him” (202), growing “around him like the earth around a root” (ibid.) until she kills the man. Supposing that she overwhelmed the devil, she finds relief in the consciousness of a new self:

I realized I was still naked, with no covering. I rolled in slough mud until my arms and breasts, every part of me was coated. I flung the beads high in a tangling arc toward the deepest brush. Then I stood. I was a noble creature now, dressed in earth like Christ. [...] Again, again on the way up the hill, I threw myself into the ditches. I rolled in the dead leaves, in moss, in defecation of animals. I plastered myself with dry leaves and the feathers of a torn bird, saying that I would toil not nor spin for my supper, but live as



sparrows, as mice, as the lowliest of things. [...] I was nothing human, nothing victorious, nothing like myself. I was no more than a piece of the woods. (204)

In this scene, Pauline symbolically transforms into an entirely new identity of a nonwoman and, more importantly, nonhuman existence, which she relates to the “lowliest of things” (ibid.). The first step of Pauline’s transformation is to be literally naked in the natural context. Thus, she symbolically “strips off” the physical indications of her human identity. Secondly, she actualizes her potential power regardless of her gender, claiming equal power to that of a “young man” (201). Lastly, she immerses her body within natural “defilement” (203), “moss,” “defecation of animals,” “dry leaves and feathers” (ibid.) until finally, she becomes “no more than a piece of the woods” (204), “nothing human” (ibid.). Thus, she “leaves Pauline behind” (205), remembering that, “any name, was no more than a crumbling skin” (205). Pauline’s naturamorphism is, in this sense, a molting or a resurrection that emancipates her from an identity to which she does not want to be entitled.

Significantly, the novel relates women to the natural powers and physically strong animals, whereas masculinity is associated with weakening images. After confessing his helpless and already lost manhood, for example, Nanapush identifies himself with a dying tree:

I stood in a birch forest of tall straight trees. I was one among many in a shelter of strength and beauty. Suddenly, a loud report, a thunder, and they toppled down like match-sticks, all flattened around me in an instant. I was the only one left standing. And now, as I weakened, I swayed and bent nearer to earth. (127)

In doing so, Nanapush naturamorphizes, which enables him to realize his worsening situation along with the decaying natural context. This parallel direction towards decadence invites the reader to what this thesis shall term ecological hermeneutics<sup>22</sup> in which the history of the natural context and its inhabitants are read interchangeably.

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<sup>22</sup> So far the term “ecological hermeneutics” has been used to describe a recent technique in interpreting biblical texts ecologically. This technique is a project (Earth Bible Project) conducted by Exeter University, which Kivatsi J. Kavusa asserts. According to Kavusa findings, “ecological hermeneutics attempts to retrieve the ecological wisdom in biblical traditions as a response to the ecological crisis” (231). However, this particular meaning and aim of the concept is irrelevant to its use in this thesis. To make a conceptual clarification, ecological hermeneutics in this thesis suggests an alternative reading technique that renders the natural context along with its inhabitants. In other words, it explores a connected, interwoven history that comprises both nature and its content be it humans or nonhumans.

Here the “many” (127), whom Nanapush was among, stand both as his lost clan and the trees in literal terms. Accordingly, the “loud report, a thunder” (ibid.) is, on the one hand, refers to the “bitter winter” (2) that wipes out the whole clan, in the beginning, metaphorically flattening the people around Nanapush. On the other hand, it is the signal for the start of the lumber work in Matchimanito. In either interpretation, the people or the trees that constitute the “many” (127) are “toppled down” (ibid.). Being the representative of one of these entities, Nanapush illustrates how the natives weaken, sway, and bend nearer to earth through the detrimental effects of consumption. He simultaneously refers to the destruction of the trees, each of which comes down (223) with the lumber workers’ signal.

#### **4.4.2. Tracks of the Male Aggression against Female Marginality**

While the novel employs naturamorphism as a technique to establish nature/human communication, anthropomorphism is used to serve the same function. As a critical example of anthropomorphism, the novel introduces the monstrous or/and spiritual figure Missshepeshu, enabling human-nature communication like Fleur. Missshepeshu is a legendary creature residing in Matchimanito Lake, “hungry with desire and maddened for the touch of young girls” (11). Although he is not visible to people, his tracks are followed from the allegedly “drowned girls” (70), “cracked boats” (ibid.), like an invisible but constant gaze “watching them, eyes hollow and gold” (ibid.). In a word, Missshepeshu is the fearsome nonhuman extension of nature:

His feet are joined as one and his skin, brass scales, rings to touch. You’re fascinated, cannot move. He casts a shell necklace at your feet, weeps gleaming chips that harden into mica on your breasts. He holds you under. Then he takes the body of a lion, a fat brown worm, or a familiar man. He’s made of gold. He’s made of beach moss. He’s a thing of dry foam, a thing of death by drowning, the death a Chippewa cannot survive. (11)

Missshepeshu is apparently a transformed man who is both human and nonhuman. He is driven by human intentions such as lust and desire for woman, but his corporeal material is anything but human. Besides, he is an inescapable power shedding “death” (11) upon the natives. In this sense, he superficially appears as a God-like authority, a regulator of the environmental context influencing the “history of the tribe” (175). By

his particular domination over the Matchimanito Lake, which the white Americans plan to turn into a fishing log, the monster gains a conceptual identity related to the land. More precisely, people do not regard him only as a fearful monster, but also as a punisher, and protector of the land, revealing human intentions (11-12). Acknowledging this identity, the Chippewans regard nature as a living and communicating entity.

Notably, there is an evocation between the Lord of the Flies and Misshepesu concerning their representative functions. Both motifs are constituted of natural elements found in the environmental context: The former is a pig head “hung on his stick” (198), “speaking in the voice of a schoolmaster” (*LOTF* 206); the latter takes at times “a body of a lion, a fat brown worm” (*Tracks* 11). Both are fearful and threaten human lives. They bear human features either by appearance or communicative skills, but they are still alienated “other”s for the people, who fear them and thence respect them. Above all these commonalities, however, humans attribute a spiritual or symbolic significance to each of them. The Lord of the Flies is assumed to be a mysterious beast, who dominates darkness and the whole island. Misshepesu, on the other hand, is an ancient lake monster, an antagonist of an old Chippewan story. Juan relates Misshepesu’s spiritual significance to “cultural imagination” (3). In her analysis of *Tracks* she explores how cultural imagination becomes the people’s reality. As she remarks, “[t]he real of nature is as mysterious and unpredictable as ever; however, nature in this respect is managed to be intelligible, comprehensible, and communicable through cultural imaginaries” (2-3). To make a Lacanian association, the Lord of the Flies in Golding’s novel stands for the law of the Father or the Other that keeps the symbolic order alive, having the voice of a “school master” (*LOTF* 206). Nevertheless, he turns out to be the voice of the boys’ unconscious when he declares that he is the “beast” and “the part of the boys” as well (206). Misshepesu, on the other hand, is the voice of the culture, traditions, and beliefs of Chippewa people as it reveals what they fear, and how they treat a supernatural threat. He is “hungry with desire and maddened for touch of young girls [...] if you fall into his arms, he sprouts horns” (*Tracks* 11). Notably, a similar description renders several male human characters. For example, Lily, a man from the tribe, reveals his violence against Fleur when he tries to rape her (25). He gets maddened, “squeezing her so hard” until they “go wild” (*ibid.*). Likewise, Napoleon, another young farmer in the tribe, “crushes

[Pauline] to a powder and spreads her across the floor” during sexual intercourse with her (73). Another example is Eli, who heads for Sophie, blinded by lust. “He runs his mouth over her face, bites her shoulder through the cloth, holds her pale brown strands, and licks her throat” (84). The male characters in these examples apparently lose control and are blinded by aggression.

Considering its description through similar and common acts of aggression, Misshepesu stands for the tribe’s collective fear of masculine power. Interestingly, the male characters fear Fleur for the same reason, for her exceptional masculine power. Likewise, before attacking the lake monster, Pauline gets herself “ready, and strong as a young man” (201), which again underlines masculine power. Based on this evidence, it is arguable that masculinity in the novel is considered a power to gain recognition and a fear-based authority over others. In order to utilize this power for survival reasons, marginal female characters, such as Fleur and Pauline, naturamorphize and transform into nonhuman, non-feminine beings. Moreover, Fleur even mimics Misshepesu occasionally, leaving an unanswered question in the readers’ minds: Is she the female counterpart of the lake monster? In her narrative, Pauline notes that “Fleur had killed Napoleon by drowning, just another in her line of men. She discarded him, stolen his tongue. Wrapped in a fish skin and worn in her belt, it enabled her to walk not without leaving tracks” (215). Her description interestingly mirrors Misshepesu’s shape, whose “feet are joined as one and his skin, brass scales, rings to touch. You’re fascinated, cannot move” (11). Is Fleur identical to spiritual Misshepesu, or do they merely comprise the collective fear of the natives remains a question, though it is still apparent that both adopt masculine power and are otherized for their abjection. This human-spirit alliance is critical in establishing an ecological text since, according to McCafferty, “it is not hierarchical” (734).

That is, the human is not a hostage to the sacred but rather an affine. This is a sought after, rather than an imposed, relationship; both the human and non-human spirits are mutually seeking an ally with whom to travel. Therefore, the human’s ethos, experience, and purpose also factor into the mutual attraction and ultimately influence the face and focus of the power that presents itself. (ibid.)

The novel shows that such an alliance necessitates a blurring of human/nature boundaries either physically or conceptually, and this application may come to mean a transgression of one’s own limits. More precisely, human characters, such as Fleur,

Pauline, or Nanapush, have to diverge from their human appearance and potential by transforming into entirely different beings. This transformation occasionally requires the female characters to appear or act like men and renounce the gender attributions expected by society: As mentioned above, Fleur presents an unusual example of motherhood (*Tracks* 76); hence Nanapush mentions her to Lulu as “the one you will not call mother” (2). Likewise, Pauline rejects her baby, stating that “the child was already fallen, a dark thing, and I could not bear her thought. I turned away” (136). In contradistinction, the male characters accept inferiorized female characteristics, such as Nanapush’s acknowledgment of his weakness (127), particularly in comparison to women’s survival powers (115), or Eli’s demand to be humiliated by Fleur (108) so that he may be recognized in this way at least. Plumwood explains these reversals in terms of the supposed duality of femininity and masculinity, stating that “[t]he simple reversal model, which affirms women as ‘nurturant’ and celebrates their life-giving powers in a way which confirms their immersion in nature, conceives the alternatives for remaking culture in terms of rival masculinizing and feminizing strategies” (*Feminism* 31). The radical female characters in *Tracks* prove that these masculinizing and feminizing strategies in the novel are used to reverse the gender boundaries and attributions within which women and nature are confined. In this sense, the literally interwoven texture of the women/nature relationship in *Tracks* shows how these separate existences can act together as a single body while respecting their autonomy without the implication of a hierarchy that elevates masculinity. Thanks to this representation, women, and nature are not reduced to one another but regarded as autonomous powers challenging the limits of the patriarchal conception.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The culturally and ideologically loaded quality of the word *nature* makes a safely unbiased use of the word hard to find, even when it is intended to refer to a nonhierarchical and neutral context. The two novels explored in this thesis illustrate different sides of this danger. On the one hand, *LOTF* explicitly presents nature as a context in which humans develop their social formations, and the natural context in the novel reflects the tensions between the characters. Therefore, human relations are at the center of this story while nature remains mere as a setting for the humans' story. In this sense, *LOTF* cannot avoid relating the setting to the human struggle, and the entire novel has an anthropocentric literary texture. On the other hand, the natural context in *Tracks* directs the reader to an ecofeminist reading of the plot, for it is represented in parallel with (rather than as a background for) the woman characters' condition within patriarchal Western modernity. However, the marginality of these characters (and marginalization of nature) within the patriarchal discourse and their denial of male superiority indicates that attributing to nature a female identity is a result of the patriarchal discourse, and even women can, or should, reject such an imposed, gendered identity. This argument could also, therefore, alert us to the contradictions of weak interpretations of the ecofeminist trend, which tend to be predicated upon a women/nature relationship. Hence, the novel transcends ecofeminism's essentialism and resonates with a feminist ecocritical approach.

The analyses further revealed that *LOTF* represents a conceptual link between nature and human savagery. The boys in the novel stand at the edge of a nature/culture distinction. Their ever-changing discourse, shifting from a refined, civilized language to wordless expressions that apparently emerge from savagery, finds its reflection in constant alterations in their natural environment. The boys' demand to be rescued is, hence, a demand to overcome this disturbing and destabilizing ambivalent in-

betweenness. Obviously, the boys enjoy a sense of freedom in “state of nature” (in Lockean terms), yet their so-called civilized identities cannot survive unmoderated natural conditions because their social formation has been based on hierarchies with an emphasis on human distinctness, whereas nature denies most social hierarchies, promoting instead a physical and tactical hierarchy based on survival of the fittest. It becomes evident from Ralph and Piggy’s nostalgic visions of their past that civilization provides an artificial life, which is safer and much more favorable to humans - according to them. This perceived sense of safety derives from internalized rules and laws (such as those coming from the armed forces, school, and Piggy’s aunt’s dictates) that exist only on symbolic grounds. In contrast, there is no symbolic register in coarse nature. Therefore, the boys cannot fit in or empathize with nature until they *look like something else* -meaning a necessary transformation into a nonhuman being. This transformation is not only physical, it also means a change of mindset: thinking and behaving in accordance with nature.

In literary terms, this is provided by a reversed anthropomorphism, which is to undertake -or at least seem to be- the identity and appearance of a nonhuman entity from the natural context. This is what the thesis terms *naturamorphism*, and it is found where humans are likened to natural phenomena and begin to think and act like them. This technique is necessarily different from, and in direct contrast to, *naturalization*, which occurs when a novel presents a natural impression of human influence on the environment. While naturalization would result in the colonial discourse, against which the novels offer homogeneity, naturamorphism, as a more comprehensive technique, centralizes nature to open up an ecocritical reading.

As analyzed in detail in Chapter III, Jack’s transformation into savagery is an essential naturamorphism in *LOTF*. In addition to enabling an empathetic approach towards nature, this critical transformation shows that naturamorphism eliminates the symbolic distances created by metaphors. A naturamorphized being transforms into the nonhuman thing it identifies with, rather than being rhetorically or symbolically associated with it. While Ralph regards Western civilization as their savior, Jack liberates himself from its symbolic restrictions and abstract rules by equating himself with a nonhuman being, because humanity in *LOTF* is defined in the symbolic register by the discourse of the civilized humans, known in the novel, through the children’s viewpoint, as grownups. Its opponent, the nonhuman entity, is an Other in this

discourse. Therefore, Jack's transformation, for himself, removes otherness from the natural context since it merges the human and nonhuman entities, making a single unit of them. It is stated in the novel that Jack, as a fictional character, liberates himself by removing his difference with nature; however, the thesis argues that such a transformation also enables the audience to read nature's words, or the language of nature along with the characters. To put it more precisely, identifying with nature decenters the human's position in the novel, and this is made to work on the readers too, as the novel makes readers become aware of the different states of the ocean, the changes in the animals' chatterings, the shades, and darkness that deepen the scene--that is, the dynamism of nature as it affects the different senses. Thus, while the novel uses the natural context as a setting to reflect different human characteristics, by recognizing various elements in nature, the reader can conceptually liberate nature from serving as a mere material setting. This is one destructive attack on anthropocentrism in the novel.

*Tracks*, illustrates a similar naturamorphism, but nature is much more than a mere context in this novel. The historical significance of the novel's fictional land gives nature the role and value of a nonhuman character. Although the land is still regarded as a material that can bring "dollar bills and coins" (*Tracks* 36) to the white man, *Tracks*' nature is well aware of humans' capitalist intentions and approaches, and the representation of the land as reactive, if not entirely agentive, proves this awareness through the several reactions of nature (to humankind's intrusions) exemplified in the analysis. While in some of these reactions, the text presents an anthropomorphic nature, such as the lake monster Misshepesu, it also adds naturamorphism to build a more empathetic vision.

The question of what is the relation between humankind and nature is the common conceptual ground for the two novels. In his *LOTF*, Golding personifies nature as a context that reveals human characteristics and shows how humans perceive the natural environment while constructing or reconstructing a social formation. Here, nature's voice echoes human intentions, yet it also has a communicating and autonomous essence, which is concretized by the ambiguous figure of the Lord of the Flies. This image directly addresses the human characters, along with the other personifications of the natural phenomena such as the roaring ocean, the darkness of the forests, and noises from unidentified beasts. Interestingly, the examples show that



the novel's representations of the environment go parallel with the illustration of the boys' degenerating behavior, getting darker both literally and metaphorically. In this sense, while nature appears to threaten the boys' survival, reading the natural environment becomes an exploration of the characters' nature. This metaphorical relationship prevents eco-consciousness in the novel as it is weaved around an anthropocentric structure, whereas the nature in *Tracks* is characterized and has a voice on behalf of itself to stand against adverse human intervention to the land. In this sense, the latter novel enables a feminist ecocritical reading.

Erdrich does not tend to use personification and characterization of some natural elements in Golding's manner in *Tracks*. Instead, in her descriptions of the natural context, she focuses on the natural phenomena rather than trying to convey a metaphorical meaning that refers to the characters' mental and psychological states. In other words, the natural context itself can be considered a persona or a critical character that receives responses and destructive attempts from representatives of Western modernity just as other human characters do. In this sense, nature is not a mere functional setting that serves the story of the people, but it has its own story and history, which the text provides by establishing a cosmogony from the beginning.

Much as *LOTF* uses narrated incidents of physical destruction and annihilation to deconstruct the anthropocentric and logocentric understanding, *Tracks* uses transgressions to illustrate the same. It begins by introducing a timeless history, which "continues to fall" (*Tracks* 1) into a loss, to a lack of future. However, it is not only history that proceeds beyond the given limits. As the plot advances, the events and main characters also resist social customs and norms. These paradigms are implied in the novel by laying out "what people say" (45) in different contexts, such as the Church, the village, the white man's world. Then, as an attack on social proprieties, the radical protagonist characters transgress their gender, social status, and even human appearance and behavior, echoing *LOTF* from another angle. While *LOTF* shows humans in need of rescuing by the agents of civilization from the deadly consequences of integration with nature, *Tracks* promotes the transgressing the artificial and abstract paradigms, going beyond the natural limits, disregarding nature's autonomy is punished later in the novel.

Plumwood's master-other relation becomes a theoretical basis for the hierarchical relations presented in both novels. On a metaphorical seesaw, the inferior

takes up the relatively disadvantaged positions in this relation. Piggy's asthma and Simon's murder, diverging from civilization in *LOFT*, and Nanapush's increasing weakening in *Tracks* are among several examples of inferiorization. On the other hand, the master in Plumwood's relation becomes increasingly sublimated, advanced, and elevated, which adds to the difference between the two members of the diad. This difference articulates the other's (or the inferior's) position and definition through attributions denoting inferiority. Since the ideological attributions and hierarchies derive from Plumwood's radical exclusion occurring within an interwoven relation, social identifiers (meaning the gender roles, feminine attributions, otherizing expressions in the novels) become the definitive norms of the inferiors. That is to say, they begin to denote the "other" rather than being merely associated with it. This may have a relatively local and limited effect on particular cases concerning individuals; however, on social grounds, it feeds, nourishes, and forms the society's cultural codes, which is shown in the particular cases of the children in *LOTF* and the young generation in *Tracks*. Thus, the effect gains a historical significance and is respected, also shaping the future generations' conceptions in the texts. However, both novels overcome this potential future heritage by themselves, marginalizing human characters that become integrated into nature.

One significant force of and response to marginalization is an outcome of naturamorphism: abjection. As Kristeva comprehensively explains (1993), the abject is the "deviser of the territories, languages, works" (8), it is also a divider of the same subjects, for the abject creates its particular discourse in the semiotic realm. As we see in the example of protagonists Jack in *LOTF* and Fleur in *Tracks*, "the more [the abject] strays, the more he is saved" (ibid.) from the society's reductions. From their appearance and otherized situations in their society, these characters bear the fundamental features of the abject. Befitting Kristeva's explanation, they are excluded: "essentially divisible, foldable, and catastrophic" (ibid.). They reject being enslaved by the orders and rules of the symbolic register and adopt an abject identity to concretize their rejection. Thus, much as they become the same as their natural contexts, both of which are illustrated as harsh, relentless, severe lands, they are otherized within the human context. This relation indicates that naturamorphism may lead to abjection and, indispensably, otherization. However, the two novels show that only the abjected human characters can realize a literal integration with nature, and

they can only do this once they have undertaken a nonhuman identity. In the abject character's perception, there is no otherness in nature and no hierarchical distinction between its constituents. As illustrated by the colorful maps in *Tracks* (173), otherness is only defined in the symbolic realm, whereas "the earth is limitless" (1), meaning that nature's semiotic fluidity rejects such divisions and fixed significations. The outcomes of this rejection are shown in the novels with the radical characters' liberation. "Leaving the names behind" (205) by turning into "nothing human" (204) is climactic for Jack and Pauline, and the means through which they become abject and claim their autonomy independent of a controlling external power's (Other's) proprieties. Naturamorphism, in this manner, enables neutral and natural representations without symbolic reductions.

One critical problematization that *Tracks* voices, and that Golding's novel does not, is the concept of Mother Nature.<sup>23</sup> The novel draws a woman-nature parallelism in terms of the treatment they receive from men. Nevertheless, this parallelism reduces the possibility of nature's autonomy. While giving nature a feminine identity, it attributes to nature the inferiority imposed upon women. We may thus ask whether ecofeminist criticism truly gives credit to nature, or whether it actually acknowledges and promotes nature's inferior position in the patriarchal discourse; does it, by attributing femininity to nature, add to its otherization?

While this is the quintessential question of this thesis, one answer might be sought in considering the forces of radicalism that can be released by naturamorphism and abjection. Both attempts promote the recognition of the "otherized" subject by the otherizing power as an autonomous entity. As a method, they marginalize the abject or the excluded characters/motifs in the novels. However, this marginalization takes place on the extremes: in *Tracks*, the human characters, such as Fleur, Pauline, Margaret, and Nanapush, put a distance from their human features, turning into spiritual beings, animals, trees, or angelic figures. More interestingly, particularly the woman characters in *Tracks* renounce the symbolic meanings of womanhood if not necessarily rejecting its biological features. They are still fertile and even have children; however, they are not anybody's wife, and go so far as to mate with

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<sup>23</sup> One should note that in *LOTF*, Golding does not introduce a female character except for Piggy's aunt, who though, can be more associated with a patriarchal authority that frames the laws in Piggy's life.

nonhuman figures. This representation shows that biological sex bears no symbolic gender roles; it is based on pure experience, and it can be expressed in the semiotic dimension, whereas “what it’s like to be a woman” (167) is already defined in the novel in a man’s, Nanapush’s, narrative. Hence, ecofeminist criticism may suggest that nature cannot be reduced to a female identity, and just as much as women, it should not be interpreted through a gender-based perspective.

Another way in which nature is presented as a biased concept can be found in theories. Within an anthropocentric interpretation process, the subject texts are fundamentally and necessarily constructed by language’s symbolic structure. They face the risk of manipulation, being obliged to mean something within the limits and impositions of a language and its perceivers. In this sense, they are the products of “phenomenological philosophy” (Brown 6), which remains “close to our original experience, respects that experience, and seeks to find within experience a measure of rationality and truth” (ibid.). However, the thesis argues that the discourse of phenomenological philosophy would severely reduce the semantic horizons of the concept of nature and natural environments. Because the symbolic register, as a means to express the rationality and truth in linguistic representation, is necessarily and essentially a product of and internalized external controlling power, the Law of the Father in Lacanian terms. In *LOTF*, Ralph and Piggy’s implicit attempts to maintain the customs of the European civilization prove that their rationale is preconditioned. In that, the boys are biased about the savage life, regarding it as a danger directed to their human identity, whereas it is “mankind’s essential illness” (*LOTF* 111) that brings the boys’ destruction.

*Tracks*, on the other hand, bases rationality on western education given in the “white towns” (*Tracks* 170). The children they lose (ibid.) by this education “become so full of what they see in the mirror there is no reasoning with them anymore” (ibid.). The same rational discourse introduces nature as a coarse entity, which is to be refined by artificial representations or utilized by human affairs, in both novels. This approach hinders us from reading nature itself but offers merely a “concept of nature” through an anthropocentric interpretation where nature is located and defined according to the humans in the perceived center. In order to avoid such a biased interpretation, the thesis offers an environmental interpretation process, where the natural (con)text is regarded as another text, possessing meaning in the semiotic -pre-linguistic- realm rather than

the symbolic. Here, the thesis shall acknowledge that without putting the environment into verbal expression (inevitably into the symbolic realm), the interpreter cannot attempt a structured and progressive interpretation. The artistic representation, however, functions as a negotiator between the unrepresentable semiotic and the symbolic realm of language. It enables the environmental impressions (which reflect the semiotic) to come to terms with human discourse and conception (which are entirely symbolic). The downside of this negotiation is that the *word* is a contextual representative, and therefore, it always bears the potential of manipulation. In the end, the natural entity's bare existence takes a literally and literarily 'art'ificial shape cited as the "other" through an intentional sculpting process.

Bringing out the particular representations of naturamorphized humans and anthropomorphized natural contexts and elements, the analyses show how human/nonhuman boundaries are permeable and can be disclosed by literary techniques. The absence of the distinction between these realms finds its expression in the semiotic, since the symbolic tends to define and divide. So far, ecocritical and ecofeminist approaches have attempted to re-present nature's condition in the anthropocentric world, yet these approaches also presuppose an otherized or motherized concept of nature. Therefore, reading the natural context in *LOTF* and *Tracks* from ecocritical and ecofeminist perspectives lays out nature's relation to human beings' world. One should accept that inevitability of artificiality in linguistic representation is still a hindrance to the literary construction of "what nature is," in fact. As a possible way out, naturamorphism reveals what "not to be a human being" is like, and thus brings us closer to empathizing with the natural context. By decentralizing human being's from the anthropocentric structure of literary representations through this technique, we can detect the colonialist and destructive attitudes toward our natural environment from a nonhuman being's perspective. Such a perspective also highlights the lack of eco-consciousness in the anthropocentric discourse. Therefore, a feminist ecocritical approach towards nature through exploring the naturamorphisms would suggest first identifying the conceptually constructed human- nonhuman boundaries, then trying to permeate them by disclosing this distinction.

Nonetheless, the unavoidability of a dualistic discourse that pronounces such a distinction points out the weaknesses of naturamorphism in achieving a literary

representation of a nonhierarchical environmental context. Firstly, language, as the essential means of literary representations, becomes a barrier by its nature; because it tries to merge human beings with the nonhuman environment by initially treating them as separate entities. Secondly, human beings' transformation to a nonhuman being is essentially impossible in reality. These deficiencies of the term indicate that elimination of language-based distinctions is an idealized-impossibility. In this sense, naturamorphism can only remain as a hypothetical thought experiment in literature with an alternative attempt to disclose the symbolic boundaries by which human beings are decentralized. However, nature's literary emancipation from anthropocentrism by providing a different perspective whereby we -as human beings- can gain awareness about the symbolism we impose upon nature is still possible. More briefly, eco-conscious literary steps like anthropomorphism and naturamorphism reveal the fact that an anthropocentric representation of the natural and nonhuman environment forces human beings' conceptual impositions -gender roles, colonialist and capitalist intentions. While these impositions claim the human superiority that conceives nature and the nonhuman entity as an inferior *other*, naturamorphism, with an eco-conscious essence, hopefully and optimistically announces that nature is neither a mother, nor an other.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: TURKISH SUMMARY/ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

#### NE BİR ANNE NE DE ÖTEKİ: WILLIAM GOLDING'IN *SİNEKLERİN TANRISI* İLE LOUISE ERDRICH'İN *TRACKS* 'İNDE EDEBİ KURTULUŞ

Doğa kavramının kültürel ve ideolojik atıflarla yüklü oluşu, bu kavramın hiyerarşik olmayan, doğaya ilişkin bağlamlarda dahi objektif ve önyargılardan uzak bir kullanımını bulmayı zorlaştırmaktadır. Nitekim William Golding'ın *Sineklerin Tanrısı* adlı eseri ile Louise Erdrich'in *Tracks* romanı, doğa kavramına yönelik bu tehlikeyi kurgusunda gösteren iki roman olarak tezin inceleme konusu olmuştur. Tezde ekoeleştirel ve ekofeminist okumaların, antroposentrik, yani insan merkezli bir bakış açısından kurtulamadığı, dolayısıyla özerk bir doğa kavramı ortaya koymada eksik kaldığı öne sürülmüştür. Ekoeleştiri ve ekofeminizm üzerine yaptığı çalışmalarda Serpil Oppermann, her iki terimin de özde insanı merkeze aldığını, eleştirilerini de ekolojiyi incelemek yerine insanın doğa içerisindeki konumu üzerinden incelediğini öne sürer. Dolayısıyla ekoeleştiri ve ekofeminizm, tözcülük (“essentialism”) çerçevesine sığdırılmaları yönünden farklı disiplinlerden teorisyenler tarafından eleştirilmiştir. Oppermann, bu eleştirileri bertaraf etmek ve hem ekoeleştiri hem de ekofeminizm terminolojisine daha şeffaf ve kuşatıcı bir ifade getirmek amacıyla “feminist ekoeleştiri” kavramını kullanmıştır. Bahsi geçen diğer iki kavramdan farklı olarak feminist ekoeleştiri, hem insanı merkezden almayı hem de doğa-kadın kavramları arasında doğrudan bir bağ kurulamayacağını, her iki varlığın ayrı incelenmesi gerektiğini savunur. Doğanın edebiyattaki önyargılı yansıtılmasındaki soruna çözüm olarak bu tezde feminist ekoeleştiriye yeni bir terim olarak antropomorfizmin tersi biçiminde tanımlayacağımız, “naturamorphism” tekniği öne sürülmüştür. Buna göre insanların, bir hayvana veya insan dışı bir varlığa benzetilmesi veya onun biçimini almasına dayalı nturamorphsim, insan merkezli bir

bakış açısını kırarak doğayı temel alan bir bağlam oluşturabilmektedir. İki romanda naturamorphism ve diğer dönüşümleri inceleyen bu tezde yöntem olarak Kristeva'nın semiyotik teorisi ve Val Plumwood'un efendi-öteki hiyerarşisi kullanılmıştır. Ötekileştirme (doğanın/insanın ötekileştirilmesi) güdüsüne ilişkin bölümlerin incelenmesinde Lacancı psikanalitik yöntemlere başvurulmuştur. İnceleme sonucunda doğanın insan bağlamından ve dimağından ayrı olarak edebi eserlerde yansıtılıp yansıtılamayacağı tartışılmıştır.

Ele alınan ilk eser, *Sineklerin Tanrısı*, doğayı insanların sosyal yapılanmalarını oluşturdukları bir bağlam olarak tanıtmaktadır. Romandaki doğa bağlamı, karakterler arasındaki gerginlikleri yansıtır. Ancak metnin merkezinde yer alan unsur doğa değil, bütünüyle insan ve insani ilişkilerdir. Doğa ise anlatılan hikâyenin yer aldığı bir bağlam olmaktan ileri gidemez. Bu durum, fiziksel bir arka plan oluşturmanın da ötesinde, dilsel anlamda metaforlara ve benzetmelere bağımlı, kendi başına bir anlam ifade etmeyen bir doğa temsiliyle de sağlanmıştır. Bu nedenle *Sineklerin Tanrısı*, bir bağlam olarak kullandığı ada ortamını insan mücadelesiyle ilişkilendirerek anlatmaktan kaçınmaz. Tüm roman, bu anlamda antroposentrik bir edebiyat metni olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Öte yandan *Tracks* romanındaki doğa bağlamı, kurguda gerçekleşen olaylar nedeniyle okuyucuyu ekofeminist bir okumaya yöneltmektedir. Bunun nedeni, romandaki kadın karakterlerin, ataerkil Batı modernitesi karşısındaki durumlarının, doğaya yapılanlarla paralel bir portre çizmesidir. Ne var ki bu kadın karakterlerin (ve doğanın), yine ataerkil dimağ içindeki marjinalliği ve erkek üstünlüğünü reddetmeleri, doğaya feminen bir kimlik atfedilmesinin, ataerkil söylemin bir sonucu olduğuna işaret eder. Kadınlar bile böylesi cinsiyetçi bir kimliğin hem doğaya hem kendilerine dikte edilesini reddeder ve etmelidir de. Bu tartışma, bizleri kadın cinsiyeti ile doğa arasında doğal bir ilişki olduğu temeline dayanan ekofeminist okumaların getireceği zayıf yorumlardaki çelişki tehlikesine karşı uyarmaktadır.

III. Bölüm'de yer alan *Sineklerin Tanrısı* romanı analizi, romanda doğa ile insan vahşeti arasında bir ilişkinin kurulduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Romandaki oğlan çocukları, doğa/kültür ayrımının kenarında durmaktadır. Daima değişken olan söylemleri, seçkin, medeni bir dilden, vahşilikten ileri geldiği aşikâr olan, kelime yoksunu ifadelerle doğru kayar. Edindikleri bu ikinci iletişim biçimi, yansımasını sürekli değişim hâlindeki doğal ortamlarında bulmaktadır. Oğlanlar kurtarılmak ister,

bu yüzden kendilerini bir belirsizliğe sürükleyen arada kalmışlık hissinden kurtulmayı ve sabit bir yaşam kurmayı talep ederler. Çocukların, Lacancı doğa durumu içerisindeki özgürlükten keyif aldıkları açıktır. Ancak sözde medeni kimlikleri, ılımlı olmayan doğal durumlar karşısında hayatta kalamaz. Çünkü kurdukları sosyal yapılanma, insanın evren içindeki seçkinliğini vurgulayan hiyerarşiler üzerine inşa edilmiştir. Oysa doğa, sosyal hiyerarşileri reddederken güçlü olanın hayatta kalmasına dayanan fiziksel ve yöntemsel hiyerarşiler barındırır. Romanın iki başkahramanı olan Ralph ile Piggy'nin, geçmişlerine ilişkin gözlerinin önüne getirdikleri nostaljik anlar, nitekim medeniyetin yapma bir yaşam sunduğunun kanıtıdır. Bu yaşam da çocuklara göre doğadaki yaşam koşullarıyla kıyaslayınca çok daha güvenli ve tercih edildir. Lacancı bir psikanalizle yaklaşacak olursak bu algılanan güvenlik hissi, sembolik temellerde yer alan ve içselleştirilmiş kurallar ve kanunlardan (silahlı kuvvetler, okul, Piggy'nin teyzesinin dayatmaları gibi) ileri gelir. Ne var ki doğada böyle bir sembolik düzen tanımlanmamıştır. Dolayısıyla oğlanlar, *başka bir şeye dönüşene* kadar kendilerini doğaya uyduramaz veya doğayla empati kuramaz. Bu da böylesi insan dışı bir varlığa dönüşümü zaruri kılmaktadır. Dönüşümden kastedilen, fiziksel temellerden ziyade zihinsel bir değişimdir: doğa ile uyumlu bir şekilde düşünmek ve davranmak.

Edebiyat alanı çerçevesinde bu dönüşüm, antropomorfizmin tersi olan bir değişimle gerçekleştirilebilir. Buna göre değişen kişi, doğa bağlamında yer alan bir insan dışı varlığın görünümünü alır. Tezde insan karakterlerin doğadaki unsurlara benzetildiği, onlar gibi davrandığı veya onların şekline büründüğü bu ters yöndeki dönüşüm, *naturamorphism* olarak adlandırılmıştır. Ancak bu yöntem, daha çok yerleştirme anlamını taşıyan natüralizasyondan (doğallaştırma) farklı ve hatta ona zıttır. Çünkü romanlardaki natüralizasyon örneklerinde doğaya ilişkin izlenimler/unsurlar, insanın doğa üzerindeki etkisiyle mutlak bir ilişki içinde ifade edilir. Dolayısıyla natüralizasyon, romanların eş merkeziliği öne sürerek karşı çıktığı sömürgeci bir söyleme evrilirken *naturamorphism*, doğayı merkezine alarak ekoeleştiriyeye açan, daha kapsamlı bir yöntem olmaktadır.

III. Bölüm'de ayrıntılı açıklandığı üzere *Sineklerin Tanrısı*'ndaki antagonist karakterlerden Jack, vahşi bir varlığa dönüşerek romandaki en öne çıkan *naturamorphism* örneğini sergilemektedir. Doğaya karşı empatik bir yaklaşım sağlamanın yanı sıra bu kritik dönüşüm, *naturamorphism*'in metaforların yarattığı sembolik uzaklıkları ortadan kaldırdığını gösterir. Çünkü *naturamorphism*'e uğramış



bir birey, dönüştüğü insan dışı varlıkla retorik veya sembolik düzeyde ilişkilendirilmektense onunla bir kabul edilir. Eserde Ralph, Batı medeniyetini kurtarıcı ilan ederken Jack, kendini insan dışı bir varlıkla eşdeğer kılarak medeniyetin sembolik kısıtlamalarından ve soyut kurallarından kurtulur. Çünkü Sineklerin Tanrısı'nda insanlık, medeni insanların söylemlerindeki sembolik düzende tanımlıdır. Bu da eserde çocukların gözündeki “yetişkinler” (“grownups”) yoluyla temsil edilmiştir. Yetişkinlerin karşıtı olan insan dışı varlıklar, aynı dimağda Öteki olarak değerlendirilir. Dolayısıyla Jack'in dönüşümü, kendi adına doğal bağlamdan ötekiliği kaldırmak anlamına gelir. Çünkü dönüşüm yoluyla insan ile insan dışı bağlamı bir araya getirebilmiş, yekpare bir bütün oluşturmuştur. Romanda kurgusal bir karakter olarak Jack'in, doğa ile olan farklarını ortadan kaldırarak kendini “özgür kıldığı” (“liberate”) dile getirilmektedir. Ancak teze göre böylesi bir dönüşüm, aynı zamanda okuyucuya, karakterlerle birlikte doğanın kelimelerini veya dilini de okuyabilmesini sağlar. Daha açık bir ifadeyle doğayla özdeşleşmek, romandaki insanın/insanlığın konumunu merkezden alır. Ayrıca okuyucu da söz gelimi okyanusun farklı hâllerinin, hayvanların iletişimlerdeki değişimin, gölgelerin, sahneleri derinleştiren karanlığın farkına vararak doğaya insan merkezli olmayan bir bakış açısı getirebilir. Bu sayede roman, doğa bağlamını farklı insan mizaçlarını yansıtmada kullanmasının yanı sıra doğadaki çeşitli unsurlara da özerk bir temsil sunar. Böylece okuyucu, doğayı salt bir materyal bağlam olmaktan kavramsal anlamda kurtarabilir. Bu eğilim, romandaki antroposentrizmi yıkmak üzere yapılan saldırılardan biridir.

Diğer inceleme romanı olan *Tracks*'te de benzer şekilde naturamorphism örneği görmek mümkündür. Ancak burada doğa, salt bir bağlam olmaktan çok daha farklı kullanılmıştır. Romandaki kurgusal coğrafya, doğaya insan dışı bir karakter rolü ve değeri kazandırır. Arazi, beyaz adamın gözünde “dolarlar ve bozukluklar” (*Tracks* 36) getirebilecek bir materyal olarak görülse de *Tracks* 'teki doğa, insanların kapitalist niyetlerinin ve yaklaşımlarının pekâlâ farkındadır. Tamamen yapıcı olmasa da tepki veren bir unsur olarak doğanın temsili, IV. Bölüm'deki analizlerde örneklendirildiği üzere yine doğanın farkındalık yoluyla verdiği birtakım tepkiler (insan evladının müdahalelerine karşı) üzerinden anlaşılmaktadır. Bu tepkilerin bazılarında metin, göl canavarı Misshepeshe gibi antropomorfik bir doğa örneği sunarken daha empatik bir görüntü inşa edebilmek için naturamorphism örnekleri de eklemektedir.

Her iki romanın kavramsal temelinde ortak olarak insan ile doğa arasındaki ilişki sorgulanmaktadır. *Sineklerin Tanrısı*'nda Golding, doğayı insan mizacını sergileyen bir bağlam olarak kişileştirir. Bu şekilde insanların sosyal oluşumlar yapıp yıkarken diğer yandan doğal çevreyi nasıl algıladıklarını gösterir. Burada doğanın sesi, insani niyetlerin birer yankısıdır aslında. Aynı zamanda Sineklerin Tanrısı karakteri ile somutlaştırıldığı üzere, iletişim hâlinde, bağımsız bir özü de barındırır. Bu imge, doğrudan insan karakterlere hitap etmektedir. Onun yanı sıra kükreyen okyanus, karanlık ormanlar, belirlenemeyen canavarlardan gelen sesler gibi unsurlarla kişileştirmeler yapılmıştır. Karakterlerden biri olan Simon, Sineklerin Tanrısı'nın canlılığıyla ilgili görüngü deneyimleri yaşar; sıkça sorulan sorularsa canavarın gerçekliğiyle ilgili şüphelere neden olur. Bu örnekler karakter psikolojilerinin, dilbilimci ve davranışçı dimağda insan söyleminin yansımaları olduğuna işaret eder. Ancak ne bu psikolojiler ne de roman, özerk bir doğa kavramı ortaya koymaktadır. İlginç bir şekilde metnin analizi, romanın doğayı temsil biçiminin, kurgudaki oğlanların yozlaşan davranışlarıyla paralel bir ilişki içinde olduğunu göstermiştir. Her iki varlık alanı da gerçek anlamda ve mecazi anlamda kararmaktadır. Bu anlamda doğa, oğlanların hayatta kalma çabalarını tehdit ederken doğal çevreyi okumaya odaklanmak, karakterlerin mizacına yönelik bir keşif niteliğindedir.

Yine de Erdrich, *Tracks* romanında birtakım doğal unsurları Golding'in yaptığı biçimde kişileştirerek kullanmamıştır. Bunun yerine doğa bağlamı tasvirlerinde karakterlerin zihinsel ve psikolojik durumlarına işaret eden mecaz anlamlar gütmektense doğal fenomenlere odaklanmıştır. Diğer bir ifadeyle doğal bağlam, bizzat bir kişilik veya önemli bir karakter olarak kabul edilir. Bu karakter, tıpkı diğer insan karakterler gibi Batı modernitesinin temsilcilerinden tepki alır ve onların yıkıcı girişimlerine maruz kalır. Dolayısıyla doğa, insanların hikâyelerine hizmet etmek üzere salt bir işleyen bağlam değil, kendi hikâyesine sahip bir alandır. Metin de bunu en başta kozmogoni (evrendoğum) süreci anlatarak gösterir.

*Sineklerin Tanrısı* antroposentrik ve logosentrik anlayışı yapısöküme uğratmak için nasıl ki fiziksel yıkımları ve yok edişleri kullanıyorsa *Tracks* romanında da aynı durumu temsil etmek için ihlaller kullanılmıştır. Roman, zamansız bir tarih ile başlar; bu tarih, bir kayba, gelecekte yoksunluğa doğru “devamlı düşmektedir” (*Tracks* 1). Ancak belirlenen sınırların ötesine giden sadece tarih değildir. Kurgu ilerledikçe olaylar ve ana karakterler de sosyal geleneklere ve normlara karşı durmaya başlar. Bu

paradigmalar, farklı ortamlarda kilise, köy halkı, beyaz adamın dünyası gibi bağlamlarda dillendirilen, “elalemin söyledikleri” (*Tracks* 45) üzerinden ima edilir. Sosyal uygunluklara bir saldırı olarak radikal protagonist karakterler, kendi cinsiyetlerini, sosyal statülerini ve hatta insan görünümüleriyle insani davranışları ihlal eder. Böylelikle *Sineklerin Tanrısı*’nı bir başka açıdan yansıtır. Sineklerin Tanrısı, insanları doğayla birlikteliğin ölümcül sonuçlarından, medeniyet yoluyla kurtulmaya muhtaç varlıklar olarak tanıtır. *Tracks* ise doğal sınırların ötesine giderek yapay ve soyut paradigmaları ihlal etmeye teşvik eder insanları. Doğanın özerkliğine saygı duymamak ise romanda daha sonra cezalandırılmaktadır.

Plumwood’un efendi-öteki ilişkisi, her iki romanda kurulan hiyerarşik ilişkiler için teorik bir temel oluşturmaktadır. Mecazi bir tahterevalli üzerinde güçsüz taraf, bu ilişkinin nispeten daha dezavantajlı tarafında yer alacaktır. Piggy’nin astımı, Simon’ın öldürülmesi, medeniyetten uzaklaşma gibi olaylar ve durumlar, *Sineklerin Tanrısı*’nda bunun örnekleridir. *Tracks* romanında ise benzer bir zayıflık örneği, Nanapush’un gittikçe artan güçsüzlüğü ile pek çok ayrı sahnede anlatılmıştır. Öte yandan bu ilişkideki efendi, durmadan yüceltilir, gelişir, yükselir; böylelikle ikili arasındaki fark uçurumunu da derinleştirir. Bu fark, güçsüzlüğü temsil eden atıflar yoluyla öteki’nin (ya da güçsüz tarafın) konumunu ve tanımını dile getirmiş olur. İdeolojik atıflar ve hiyerarşiler, Plumwood’un dört basamaklı açıklamasındaki, iç içe geçmiş ilişkilerde ortaya çıkan radikal dışlama basamağından ileri geldiğinden sosyal belirteçler (romanlardaki cinsiyet rolleri, feminen atıflar, ötekileştiren ifadeler) güçsüzleri ifade etmede kullanılan birer sıfat hâline gelir. Yani “öteki” ile ilişkilendirilmekten ziyade “öteki”ni temsil eder. Bu durum, belirli kişiler çapında düşündüğümüzde görece yerel ve sınırlı bir etki olarak görülebilir. Fakat sosyal alana çıktığımızda böylesi bir ayrımın, toplumun kültürel kodlarını beslediği, yetiştirdiği ve oluşturduğu görülür. *Sineklerin Tanrısı*’nda çocukların, içinde bulundukları birtakım özel durumlar ve *Tracks*’te bahsi geçen genç nesil üzerinden bunun örnekleri gösterilmiştir. Bu sayede atıfların etkisi, tarihi bir önem kazanıp kabul görmüş, ayrıca romanlarda geçen gelecek nesillerin bakış açısını şekillendirmiştir. Ne var ki her iki roman da doğayla bütünleşen marjinal insan karakterleri sayesinde geleceğe aktarılması muhtemel bu mirasın ilerlemesini önlemiştir.

Marijanleşmeyi zorunlu kılan ve ona bir karşılık niteliği taşıyan bir önemli unsur da naturamorphism’in sonucu olarak Kristeva’nın “aşağılık” (abject)

kavramıdır. *Powers of Horror* (1993) kitabında aşağılığı kapsamlı bir şekilde açıklayan Kristeva, bunun “bölgeleri, dilleri ve işleri üreten” (*Powers* 8) bir unsur olduğunu söyler. Ancak romanlarda aşağılık niteliği taşıyan karakterler, aşağılığın aynı zamanda bir bölücü unsur olduğunu da gösterir. Çünkü aşağılık, semiyotik alanda kendi özel söylemini yaratmıştır. *Sineklerin Tanrısı*’ndaki antagonist karakter Jack ve *Tracks* romanındaki Fleur örneklerinde görebileceğimiz üzere “aşağılık, yoldan saptıkça [toplumun indirgemelerinden] kurtulur” (*Powers* 8). Görünüşlerine ve toplumdaki ötekileştirilmiş konumlarına bakıldığında bu karakterler, Kristeva’nın tanımladığı aşağılık kavramının tüm başat özelliklerini taşımaktadır. Kristeva’nın açıklamalarına paralel olarak dışlanmışlardır: “özellikle bölünebilir, bükülebilir ve katastrofik” (*Powers* 8). Bu karakterler, diğerleri ve sembolik düzenin kuralları tarafından tutsaklaştırılmayı reddeder. Karşı koyuşlarını somut hale getirmek için de aşağılık olarak nitelendirilen bir kimliği benimserler. Böylelikle tıpkı kendileri gibi haşın, amansız, zorlu alanlar olarak betimlenen doğal bağlamlarıyla özdeş oldukları kadar insan bağlamı içinde ötekileştirilirler. Bu ilişki, naturamorphism’in, dışlanan karakteri aşağılığa ve sonunda kaçınılmaz şekilde ötekileştirilmeye yönelttiğine işaret eder. Ne var ki incelenen iki roman, yalnızca aşağılık bir kimlik edinen insan karakterlerin, doğayla gerçek anlamda bir bütünleşmenin ayırımına vardığını gösterir. Sözü edilen karakterler, bunu insan dışı bir kimlik edindiklerinde gerçekleştirebilirler. Aşağılık hale gelmiş karakterin bakış açısına göre doğada herhangi bir ötekileştirme, onu oluşturan unsurlar arasında da hiyerarşik bir ayırım yoktur. *Tracks* romanındaki renkli haritalar örneğinde (173) gösterildiği üzere ötekilik, yalnızca sembolik alanda tanımlanır. Oysa “dünya sınırsızdır” (1), yani doğanın semiyotik akışkanlığı, sembolik düzendeki bölünmeleri ve mutlak temsilleri reddeder. Bu karşı koymanın sonuçları, her iki romandaki radikal karakterlerin özgürleşmeleriyle gösterilmiştir. “İnsanla alakası kalmayarak” (*Tracks* 204) “isimleri geride bırakmak” (205), *Sineklerin Tanrısı*’ndaki Jack ve *Tracks*’teki Pauline karakterleri için bir zirvedir. Üstelik bu an, onlar için aşağılık olma ve Öteki’nin mülkiyetinden kurtularak özerk bir bağımsızlık iddia etme vesilesidir. Naturamorphism, bu özelliğinden hareketle sembolik indirgemeler olmaksızın, nötr (herhangi bir cinsiyetle tanımlanmamış) ve doğal temsillere olanak sunar.

*Tracks*’in dile getirdiği, ancak Golding’in romanında ele alınmayan bir diğer temel sorunsal da Doğa Ana tabiridir. *Tracks*, erkekler tarafından maruz bırakıldıkları

muamele bağlamında kadın ile doğa arasında paralel bir ilişki kurar. Ne var ki böylesi bir ilişki, özerk bir doğa kavramını yine cinsiyet kalıplarına indirgeyecektir. Burada doğaya feminen bir kimlik verilirken kadınlara dayatılan güçsüzlük sıfatı da doğaya giydirilen bir diğer atıf olacaktır. Dolayısıyla ekofeminist eleştirinin, doğayı gerçek anlamda özerk bir yapı olarak mı saydığı, yoksa ataerkil dimağda doğanın aşağı konumda oluşunu kabul mü ettiği sorgulanmalıdır. Ekofeminist eleştiri, doğaya feminen bir kimlik atfederek daha fazla ötekileştirilmesine mi neden olmaktadır?

Bu soru, tezimizin hareket noktası olurken verilebilecek yanıtlardan biri naturamorphism ile aşağılık sayesinde ortaya çıkabilecek radikal güçlerde aranabilir. Zira her iki girişim de ötekileştiren güç tarafından “ötekileştirilmiş” öznenin özerk bir bünye olarak kabulünü desteklemektedir. İncelenen romanlar, bunu sağlamada bir yöntem olarak aşağılık ya da dışlanmış karakterleri/motifleri marjinalleştirmiştir. Ne ki bu marjinalleştirme, uç noktalarda gerçekleştirilmiştir: *Tracks* romanında Fleur, Pauline, Margaret, Nanapush, beşeri özelliklerinden vazgeçmişler, ruhani varlıklara, hayvanlara, ağaçlara ya da meleksi yaratıklara dönüşmüşlerdir. Daha da ilginç, özellikle romandaki kadın karakterler, biyolojik özelliklerini olmasa bile kadınlığın sembolik anlamlarını reddetmişlerdir. Hâlâ doğurandılar, çocuk sahibi olurlar. Ancak artık herhangi birinin karısı değillerdir, hatta insan dışı varlıklarla cinsel ilişki kurarlar. Bu temsiller, biyolojik anlamdaki cinsiyetin, toplumsal bağlamdaki sembolik cinsiyet rollerinden ari olduğunu gösterir. Nitekim biyolojik cinsiyet, saf deneyim üzerine kuruludur ve semiyotik boyutta ifade edilebilir. Öte yandan “kadın olmanın” tarifi (167), romanda zaten Nanapush karakterinin anlatısı üzerinden erkeklerin dilinde tanımlanmıştır. Dolayısıyla ekofeminist eleştiri, doğanın feminen bir kimliğe indirgenemeyeceğini kabul etmelidir. En az kadınlar kadar doğa da radikal şekilde yapılandırılmış bir “kadınlık” ideasını reddetmelidir.

Doğanın önyargılı bir kavram olarak sunulduğu bir başka alan da teorilerdir. Antroposentrik bir yorumlama sürecinde tezin incelediği metinler, zorunlu ve temel olarak dilin sembolik yapısı tarafından oluşturulmuştur. Dolayısıyla manipüle edilme riskiyle karşı karşıyadırlar. Dilin ve dili algılayıp kullananların sınırları ile dayattıkları çerçevesinde bir anlam taşımaya zorlanırlar. Bu anlamda metinler, “fenomenolojik felsefenin” (Brown 6) birer ürünüdür. Fenomenolojik felsefe, “orijinal deneyimimize yakın durur, ona saygı gösterir ve bu deneyimde bir miktar mantık ve gerçek bulmaya çalışır” (Brown 6). Ancak bu tez, fenomenolojik felsefeye ait söylemin, doğa

kavramına ve doğal çevreye ait semantik hudutları sert bir şekilde kısıtladığını ileri sürer. Çünkü mantığı ve gerçeği dilsel ifadelerle anlatmanın bir yolu olarak sembolik düzen, Lacancı yaklaşımdaki Baba Kanununun bir ürünüdür. Sineklerin Tanrısı'nda Ralph ile Piggy'nin, Avrupa medeniyetinin geleneklerini üstü kapalı sürdürme girişimleri, akıl yürütme biçimlerinin önceden belirlenmiş edinimleri doğrultusunda şekillendiğini gösterir. Yani romandaki oğlanlar, “vahşi hayat” konusunda önyargılıdır; bu hayatı insan kimliklerine doğrultulmuş bir tehdit olarak görürler. Oysa Sineklerin Tanrısı, bunu oğlanların kendi felaketlerini getiren, “insan ırkının temel hastalığı” (111) olarak tanımlamıştır romanda.

Öte yandan *Tracks* romanı, mantıklı olmayı “beyaz kentlerde” (170) verilen Batı eğitime dayandırır. Bu eğitim nedeniyle halkın kaybettiği çocuklar (170) “aynada gördükleriyle öyle dolu hale gelirler ki artık bir mantık aramazlar” (170). Aynı mantık dili, doğayı sanatsal temsiller yoluyla rafine edilmesi ya da insan faaliyetlerinde faydalanılması gereken bayağı, kaba bir bünye olarak tanıtır. Böylesi bir yaklaşım, okuyucu olarak salt doğayı okumaktan bizleri alıkoyarken yalnızca antroposentrik bir yorumlama ile bir “doğa kavramı” ortaya koyabilir. Bu kavramda doğa, algılamının merkezinde yer alan insanlara göre konumlandırılmış ve tanımlanmıştır. Bu tür önyargılı bir yorumlamadan kaçınabilmek için tezde çevreci bir yorumlama süreci önerilmiştir. Buna göre doğal bağlam, roman içinde bir başka metin olarak kabul edilmelidir. Sembolik bir alan yerine dilden önceki semiyotik alanda bir anlam taşınmalıdır. Kabul etmeliyiz ki yorumlayan kişi, doğayı kelime bazlı ifadelerle (ve kaçınılmaz olarak sembolik alanla) kısıtlamaksızın yapılandırılmış, ilerlemeye müsait bir yorumlama girişiminde bulunamaz. Ancak sanatsal ifade, temsil edilemeyen semiyotik alan ile dile ait sembolik alan arasında bir uzlaşmacı görevi görür. Semiyotik alanı yansıtan, doğaya ilişkin çevresel ifadelerin, tamamen sembolik olan insan dili ve algısıyla uyumlu hale gelmesini sağlar. Bu uzlaşımın olumsuz tarafı ise sözcük'ün başlıbaşına bağlamsal bir temsil olmasıdır. Dolayısıyla daima manipüle edilme tehlikesini barındırır. Sonunda sadece kavramsal varlığı olmaksızın doğanın bizzat varlığı, kasıtlı bir şekil verme sürecinin sonunda yapay/sanatsal bir biçim alır. Böylelikle “öteki” olarak nitelendirdiğimiz, gerçek ve edebi anlamdaki sanat eseri ortaya çıkar.

Naturamorphism'e uğramış insanlara ve antropomorfik doğal bağlamlarla unsurlara ilişkin örnek temsilleri bu süreçlerle incelediğimizde insan/insan dışı

sınırlarının, edebi yöntemlerle yıkılabildiğini görüyoruz. Bu alanlar arasında ayrımın olmayışı, semiyotik alanında ifade edilebilmelerini sağlar. Zira sembolik alan, tanımlamaya ve bölmeye meyledir. Şimdiye dek ekoeleştirel ve ekofeminist yaklaşımlar, doğanın insan merkezli dünya içinde bulunduğu durumu yeniden temsil etmeye çalışmışlardır. Ancak ekolojik farkındalık taşımayan kimi metinlerde görülüyor ki bu yaklaşımlar, aynı zamanda ötekileştirilmiş ve analaştırılmış, kadın bir doğa kavramı ihtimalini de taşır. *Sineklerin Tanrısı* ile *Tracks* romanlarını hem ekoeleştirel hem de ekofeminist zeminde okuduğumuzda, bu eleştirel yaklaşımların, tözcü bir doğa kavramı ortaya koyduğu görülmüştür. İnsan karakterlerin doğal ortamda var olan bir başka insan dışı karaktere dönüşmesiyle gerçekleşen naturamorphism ise kadın-doğa özdeşleşmesinin önüne geçmeye çalışır. Çünkü özellikle *Tracks* romanında incelenen kadın örnekleri, dişil kimliğinin dışındaki özelliklerle yeniden şekil almış ve yine bu özelliklerden bağımsız bir varlığa dönüşmüştür. Erkeklerinkiyle mukayese edilebilecek sıra dışı bir güç, insana ait olmayan hayvansı fiziksel özellikler, türü belirlenemeyen ve “canavar” olarak nitelendirilen varlıkların niteliklerini taşımaları, bahsi geçen bu bağın yıkılabileceğini göstermiştir. Öte yandan *Sineklerin Tanrısı*’nda gerçekleşen naturamorphism dönüşümleri, 20. yüzyıl savaş sonrası edebiyatta doğal çevrenin sosyal insan dimağı ve bağlamından kurtulamadığını, böyle bir dilde ekolojik bir duyarlılığa yer olmadığını ortaya koymuştur. Ekoloji, ancak insan faaliyetleri ve sistemlerini yansıtan veya temsil eden bir ortamdan ibaret kalmıştır.

Elbette söz konusu dilsel bir temsil olduğunda özenin yapaylıktan kaçamayacağı, dolayısıyla edebi bir yapı içinde özerk bir doğa kavramının oluşamayacağı kabul edilmelidir. Bu nedenle önerilen naturamorphism terimi de edebiyat bağlamı içerisinde kalan, kuramsal ve deneysel bir kavram olarak kalacaktır. Fakat marjinal ve/veya aşağılık karakterlerin naturamorphism geçirmeleri, böylece romanlardaki sembolik düzen tarafından kurulan önemli motiflerin/atıfların yıkılması bizlere şunu kanıtlar: Doğa ne bir anadır ne de bir öteki.

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### YAZARIN / AUTHOR

**Soyadı** / Surname : Özcan  
**Adı** / Name : Rabia Elif  
**Bölümü** / Department : İngiliz Edebiyatı / English Literature

**TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS** (**İngilizce** / English): Neither a Mother nor an Other: Nature's Literary Emancipation in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and Louise Erdrich's *Tracks*

**TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE:** **Yüksek Lisans** / Master ☒ **Doktora** / PhD ☐

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