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ECOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE AND THE ECOLOGY OF SUBJECTIVIZATION IN
SIXTEENTH CENTURY NONFICTION TRAVEL NARRATIVE TO THE
CARIBBEAN

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This study seeks to identify and analyze the representation of Amerindian ecology or relationship to nature found in sixteenth century nonfiction travel narratives to the Caribbean. The purpose of the study is first, to explore the textual representation of Amerindian ecology as a type of cultural difference, and second, to uncover the link between said representation and the textual construction of the European traveler writer as a modern subject. The main argument is that the colonial discourse of the sixteenth century travel narrative to the Caribbean features an *ecological difference* that is constitutive of European *modern subjectivity* within the text. *Ecological difference* is seen as the textual representation and production of cultural difference articulated in ecological terms or those that refer to the human/nature relation. Following Jean Joseph Goux's critique of the Freudian-Lacanian model for the process of the construction of modern subjectivity, *subjectivization* is shown to occur textually and to imply a specific ecology befitting the colonial and capitalist context of the 1500's. The term *ecology of subjectivization* emerges as a useful term pointing to the significance of the human to

nature relation in the process of the textual construction of the subject.

Methodologically, the study hinges on the identification and analysis of the travel narrative's colonial discourse relating to ecology and the imperial subject. The texts studied are various nonfiction travel narratives from the 1500's, but discussion centers on Cabeza de Vaca's Naufragios (1542), Walter Raleigh's Discoverie (1596), Jean de Léry's Histoire (1578), and Ramón Pané's Relación (1498). Chapters offer close readings of the depictions of indigenous ecological philosophies and practices, images of nakedness and cannibalism, and instances of conscious manipulations of the representation of the self. Throughout the discussion of these images, the textual construction of the traveler as *subject* and the other and his environment as *object* is fleshed out. Moreover, since these travel narratives were written with the express purpose of attaining improved legal or political status within the colonial system, the technology of writing is revealed as the best means to control not only the nature but also the body of the Caribbean other.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation as well as its immediate and direct result, my doctorate degree, to my parents Luis Manuel Ferrer Dávila and Gina Medina Murphy in whose tender care and sacrifice I was brought up to be all that I could be.

I also wish to dedicate it to my husband and life partner, Harry Franqui Rivera, without whose patience and devotion I may never have survived this gargantuan task, and with whom I share the delicious responsibility of raising Alejandro Gaius and Olivia.

In addition, to my sisters Viviana and Gina Ferrer Medina, as well as to my brother Luis Manuel Ferrer Medina, I owe time, energy and support.

It was almost fifteen years ago that Professor Maria Teresa Bertelloni introduced me to Comparative Literature and the pleasures of reading comparatively, in the original, and within context. She inspired and nurtured the reader in me and though she passed before I could complete my degree, I feel I owe a significant part of it to her. Thank you, Maresa.

This project was written in loving memory of my grandparents Tomás Medina Bennet, Georgina Murphy Rodríguez, and Josefina Medina Bennet. I thank you for spending time with me, and will always miss you.

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Lastly, a project that purports to draw attention to the significance of the human relation to nature to our self-constructing process would be remiss if it made no mention of the physical and geographical context in which I originally fashioned myself. On this note, I wish to acknowledge the beaches of the south western coast of Puerto Rico in whose warm blue green waters and coarse golden sand I learned to live and love.

It should be noted that a good part of the main argument of this project as discussed in pages 98-105 was previously published in my article “Ecology, Difference and Utopia in the Portrayal of the Gypsy in Cervantes’ *La gitana*” in Cervantes and/on/in the New World. (See Bibliography for details.)

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INTRODUCTION: NARRATIVIZING DIFFERENCE

To be sure, under the equator and as far on both sides of the line as the sun moves, there lie vast empty deserts, scorched with perpetual heat. The whole region is desolate and squalid, grim and uncultivated, inhabited by wild beasts, serpents, and also by men no less wild and dangerous than the beasts themselves. But as they went on, conditions gradually grew milder. The heat was less fierce, the earth greener, men and even beasts less savage. At last they reached people, cities, and towns which not only traded among themselves and with their neighbors, but even carried on commerce by sea and land with remote countries.

Raphael Hythloday in Thomas More's Utopia (published in 1516)

Published in 1578, Jean de Léry's Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil, is the narrative of the French Calvinist's 1556 travel to Rio de Janeiro to establish the first Protestant mission in the Americas and his subsequent twelve month sojourn with the Tupinamba (Tupi) people. Chapter XIII of the narrative presents the reader with a dialogue between Léry and a Tupi elder concerning the collecting of brazilwood¹, the tree that propelled Portuguese as well as French colonialism in the region. The dialogue goes as follows: The Tupi elder asks the reason why the French and Portuguese have come from so far away for wood. Is it to warm themselves? He wonders. Is there no wood

¹ Also called Brasil Tree, Pau-Brasil, and Pernambuco (*Caesalpinia echinata*). It is the source of the South American country Brazil's name.

where they come from? Léry answers that there is indeed great quantity of wood but not of the same kind. He also explains that the brazilwood is not used for heat but for the red dye that it gives. The elder then asks the reason why they needed so much of it. Léry answers that there is a very rich merchant back in his country that will buy the wood from several ships. The Tupi expresses incredulity (“tu me contes merveilles”²) and then asks whether the merchant in question will ever die and if he does what would happen to all his goods. Léry answers that the merchant will indeed die someday and leave all his goods to his children or nearest kinsmen.

‘Vrayment, dit lors mon vieillard (lequel comme vous jugerez n’estoit nullement lourdaud) à ceste heure cognois-je, que vous autres *Mairs*, c’est à dire François, estes de grand fols: car vous faut-il tant travailler à passer la mer, sur laquelle (comme vous nous dites estant arrivez par-deçà) vous endurez tant de maux, pour amasser des richesses ou à vos enfans ou ceux qui survivent apres vous? la terre qui vous a nourris n’est-elle pas aussi suffisante pour les nourrir? Nous avons (adjousta-il) des parens et des enfans, lesquels comme tu vois, nous aimons et cherissons: mais parce que nous nous asseurons qu’apres nostre mort la terre qui nous a nourri les nourrira, sans nous en soucier plus avant nous nous reposons sur cela. (312)

This is a fascinating passage in which the Tupi elder questions the French and Portuguese transactions of cutting and loading wood in the coasts of Tupi land in order to sell it in Europe. By doing so, he indicts the capitalist machine that was already in full force and that would result in the almost extinction of the tree species. The Tupi, who gather and process raw materials that they can consume within their lifetime, do not understand the market driven transactions of buying and selling with the purpose of accumulating capital. This indigenous people works in service of their life, while the European works in the function of the acquisitive value of wealth and the symbolic social power assigned to it.

² (311). “you are telling me of wonders” (Léry, Whatley 102). All translations of Léry are by Janet Whatley. See Bibliography for details.

By his questioning the Tupi elder allows a peek inside his people's philosophy of nature and the ecological practices it supports. "Nous nous asseurons qu'après nostre mort la terre qui nous a nourri les nourrira," he claims. The verb form *asseurons*, is an archaic form in the first person plural present from the infinitive *assurer*. The use of this verb meaning, *to insure, assure, or secure*, conveys a more active part than the English translation which renders the phrase as "we are certain". The Tupi then are aware of their impact of their surroundings and they work to make sure that the environment that sustained them will be able to sustain their descendants. The Tupi seem to be aware of the possibility of environmental abuse or misuse as the Elder expresses a preoccupation of environmental degradation by asking Léry, "la terre qui vous a nourris n'est-elle pas aussi suffisante pour les nourrir?" "Will not the earth that nourishes you suffice to nourish them?". On the other hand, the French and the Portuguese seem to have little or no trust in their environment, and for this they are foolish.

What we have here is the clash of two different patterns of consumption of raw materials: the European capitalist and the Amerindian sustainable. These two systems point to different *ecologies* or to different human to nature relationships. As can be seen from the citation above, the Tupi held a conception of nature and carried out environmental practices conscious of their impact in a way that was radically different from early modern European conceptions of nature and environmental practices.

The fact of this difference in the human to nature relation, this *ecological difference*, was identified and noted by early modern travelers. But instead of being thought of as a kind of difference in its own right, it was assimilated into the wealth of medieval and early modern conventions and expectations and thus interpreted within a

priori parameters. In fact, L  ry is openly and unabashedly impressed with the Tupi Elder's comments and, seizing an opportunity to evangelize, he offers his readers his own interpretation of the exchange,

Voil   sommairement et au vray le discours que j'ay ouy de la propre bouche d'un pauvre sauvage Amerinquain. Partant outre que ceste nation, que nous estimons tant barbare, se moque de bonne grace de ceux qui au danger de leur vie passent la mer pour aller querir du bois de Bresil    fin de s'enrichir, encor y a-il que *quelque aveugle qu'elle soit, attribuant plus    nature et    la fertilit   de la terre que nous ne faisons    la puissance et providence de Dieu*, elle se levera en jugement contre *les rapineurs*, portant le titre de Chrestiens, desquels la terre de par-de      aussi remplie, que leur pays en est vuide, quant    ses naturels habitants. (My emphasis. 312)

The Elder, L  ry explains, derides the lengths to which Europeans go to become wealthy: Why risk your life to be rich? he asks. Then, he offers his own critique of the issue: there are some among the Christians who are as covetous as to act as pillagers and robbers (*rapineurs*), these people being abundant in France (*par-de  *) while scarce in the New World. As can be seen, for L  ry it is a question of morality and assigning too much value to earthly things as opposed to spiritual ones. He admires the Tupi lack of covetousness, but he does so within a specific context: they are blind in that they attribute to nature and the fertility of the earth what belongs to God's divine power and providence. In this way, L  ry denounces the Tupi animistic view of the world while applauding the virtues of selflessness betraying a conception of the Amerindian as closer to the original human condition before the Fall and positive law. This conception went hand in hand with the medieval and early modern concept of the Wildman which is the basis for the figure of the Noble Savage that would develop later in European literature. Influential French thinkers such as Michel de Montaigne and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (and centuries later Michel de Certeau and Claude Levi-Strauss) would make use of L  ry's portrayal of the

Tupi's relation to nature, in other words, Tupi ecology, in order to feed the image of a inherently sincere, and instinctually wise Amerindian living in harmony with his surroundings and unconcerned with money and other trappings of civilization.

Amerindian ecological difference was in this way emptied out of its meaningful content, oversimplified and idealized, and used rhetorically as a counter point to criticize western society.

The occlusion, oversimplification, or idealization of ecological difference between the Amerindian and the European still resonates today. For centuries, European-led disciplines such as Anthropology and History, have assumed that the natives of the Americas had little or no impact on their environment because they lacked the technology and knowledge, or were not numerous enough to do so. Amerindians are still perceived as living closer to nature, their faces used in posters to promote environmental awareness.³ However, there is fact ample evidence that the Amerindians used and abused their environment, sometimes even to the point of species extinction.

The Argument and Terms of this Study

It follows then, that this project centers on the study of *ecology*, *difference* and *subjectivity*. Though these terms will be defined and delimited carefully in Chapter One and Two, the reader should note as soon as possible that the specific use of the word *ecology* in the following pages designates the way in which humans relate to nature, as it does within the scientific area of study bearing the same name. Moreover, these three elements just mentioned, *ecology*, *difference* and *subjectivity*, will be followed in the *colonial discourse* (discourse of hierarchy and dominion of one element of the other) particular to the imperial expansion and subsequent colonization of the American

³ This is a reference to The Ecological Indian by Shepard Krech III. See Bibliography for details.

Continent by Europe beginning in the early modern period in 1492, the year of the encounter. Though this colonial discourse is found in many texts, it is especially palpable in written non-fiction travel narratives that recount the first instances of this encounter. These travel narratives that deal with the Caribbean, first site of contact, are the objects of analysis.

The main argument of this study is that the colonial discourse of the sixteenth century travel narrative to the Caribbean features an *ecological difference*. This ecological difference refers to the articulation of cultural difference in *ecological terms*, or those having to do with the human to nature relationship. More often than not, early moderns chose to articulate cultural difference with the binomial *culture/nature*. The first half of the pair, *culture*, stood for Christianity, writing, and a specific relation to the environment that included not only a perspective or philosophy (animistic Vs. nature in need of human intervention) but also, detailed practices of what to cultivate, how to do it, and what animals to eat among others. On the other hand, the second half of the binomial, *nature*, stood for the conception of a dangerous if unfinished environment that must be controlled; a wilderness.

As mentioned above, when confronted with the other, early modern Europeans expressed cultural difference in terms of *ecology*, and later used this *ecological difference* as foil in the textual construction of a European *modern subjectivity* that denies its dialectical origin. It is in this way that the experience of New World nature not only informed but radically altered the traveler, allowing him to become a subject. The process of the construction of a modern subjectivity or *subjectivization* occurs textually and implies a specific ecology befitting the colonial and capitalist context of the 1500's.

This colonial and capitalist ecology is pernicious in that it privileges man above woman and above all else, and seems indifferent to any and all signs of environmental degradation. The term *ecology of subjectivization* refers to the significance and relevance of ecology to the process of the textual construction of the subject. On the other end of the relationship remains the Amerindian who is *objectivized*, or textually constructed as object and thus subsumed to the Caribbean environment that must be tamed. Thus, as this study will argue, the modern subject defines himself ecologically.

The argument speaks of the construction of a *modern* and not *early modern subject* because it follows the arguments of Enrique Dussel, Stephen Greenblatt and others who place the beginnings of conception of the self that is typical to Modernity within the early modern period. As will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two, these critics wish to emphasize the continuity of certain modes of signification up to recent times. Moreover, consonant to Enrique Dussel's critique of the theory that situates the emergence of modern subjectivity during the Enlightenment, this study uses the term modern subjectivity in an attempt to underscore the fundamentality of the experience of the discovery, conquest, colonization, and integration of Amerindia in the development of this concept.

Narrativizing Difference? The Method of Analysis

The study of the representation of ecological difference and its manipulation in the construction of the subject is possible if the reader considers the travel narrative as a process, here called, *narrativizing*. This term refers to the process by which the traveler writer works out contradictions and conflicts borne out of the *distancing* from his point of origin and his *experiencing* the other and his nature which results in the shifting of

meanings and the ensuing multi-level crisis (physical, epistemological, religious, political). The experience of the new space which challenges the symbolic itself forces the traveler into an extralinguistic experience, which cannot be repressed. During the process of *narrativizing* the traveler writer seeks to overcome these crises and re-assign value, in an effort to organize his experiences into a coherent narrative. Hierarchy is reestablished as binary opposites are reconfigured and order returns.

Though the texts chosen feature an early modern imperial discourse upon which the colonial project would be based it is possible, by reading against the grain to get an idea of Amerindian philosophies of nature and their ecological practices. This is done by treating the texts as an on-going active, heteroglossic *narrativizing* process of the production of conceptions of nature and other. Taken this way, it is possible to identify points of contention in the narrative where the experience of the other is not obliterated, but present and even retrievable. This project seeks out these narrative points of contention and suture in an attempt to reconstruct a native ecology, as well as the discursive practices which threaten it. In order to accomplish this, the study's main focus will be the examination of the *narrativizing* process within the travel narrative. By looking at the process by which the text produces meaning, I expect to look not only at the aforementioned meanings of nature, the indigene and the narrator, but also, and perhaps more importantly, at how those meanings are textually generated. Bearing in mind the colonial context of these texts, I am not interested in the identification and denouncing of colonial discourse, since such a project would be tautological in essence. Rather I wish to recognize the heterogeneous intricacies of the text identifying and analyzing colonial as well as other discourses.

With this in mind, specific techniques of textual study which will be used are literary analysis and explication. Following the conventions of both literary analysis and close reading, the text will undergo a scrutiny of its points of ambivalence, contradictions, excess, repetition, omissions, imagery, textual references, toponyms, affirmations, use of indigenous vocabulary, indirect and direct speech, binary opposites, illustrations, literary tropes (commonly, hyperboles, metaphors, analogies, onomatopoeia, synecdoches), and sub-genres interwoven in the text (anecdotes, catalogs, epistles, prayers, dialogues, songs, descriptions). Moreover, throughout the study special attention will be paid first to the assignment of value in the form of binomials and the negotiation of authority and power within and around them. In order to tease out the difference in ecologies, manipulations of the representation of nature will be focused upon, as well as the awareness of the fashioning of the self in the text.

Notes on the Texts Used

As discussed above, the aim of this study is to hash out the discourse of ecological difference and study in its relation to the textual construction of the subject, as presented in sixteenth century travel narrative to the Caribbean. Though various texts will be studied the discursive analysis of difference will be followed closely in Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's Relación, (1542) and Sir Walter Raleigh's The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana (1596).⁴ Other texts such as, Ramón Pané's Relación de las antigüedades de los indios, (1498), and Jean de Léry's Histoire d'un voyage en terre de Brésil, (1578) will also be discussed in significant detail while a few others by Christopher Columbus, Peter Martyr, Michele de Cuneo, Amerigo Vespucci, Arthur Barlow, and Thomas Hariot will be mentioned.

⁴ I follow Stephen Greenblatt in omitting the *i* in Raleigh's name.

Cabeza de Vaca's Relación, as well as Jean de Léry's Histoire, and Walter Raleigh's Discoverie, are all travel narratives in *stricto sensu* (following the specific criteria cited in Chapter Two), while Ramón Pané's Relación is a travel narrative implicitly. Moreover, these texts are among the first within their linguistic and cultural traditions to be written about the Caribbean. The significance of this fact becomes more evident when one considers the fact that the Caribbean region remains to this day fragmented along the same linguistic and cultural lines that these texts suggest. For example, Pané's text is considered the first ethnography of the Amerindians and Léry's is the testimony of the first Protestant settlement in the New World. Allowing for a scope wide in time and geography, together, these texts account for the first hundred years of European dealings in the Americas, within the main region of contact: the extended Caribbean.

I have followed authority and convention in the choice of editions and translations of texts. For Cabeza de Vaca, I chose Rolena Adorno's and Charles Pautz's excellent 1999 edition based on the 1542 original edition in its original language, as well as their translation into modern idiomatic English of the same year. For the study of Jean de Léry's text I chose Frank Lestringant's 1994 edition of the 1580 edition (the second edition by the author) of the text in the original sixteenth century French. For its translations into modern English, I have made use of Janet Whatley's edition published in 1990. For my work on Sir Walter Raleigh I chose Neil L. Whitehead's 1997 edition in the original sixteenth century English. Ramón Pané's text was read following the edition made by José Juan Arrom (1974), while its translation to modern English was made by Susan Griswold and published in 1999.

The Extended Caribbean

As mentioned above, this study takes as its object of analysis texts that deal with the first encounters between the Old and the New World in what has been termed, the *extended Caribbean*. The *extended Caribbean* follows the scholarship of critics such as Peter Hulme, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Sydney Mintz, who developed the notion of a “coastal and insular region that stretched from what is now southern Virginia in the USA to the most eastern part of Brazil” (Wallerstein as cited in Hulme 4). Historically, politically, and economically, the area shares a colonial past, the slave trade, and the cultivation and production of tobacco, sugar, and cotton. Culturally, the region features a *mélange*, albeit in different degrees and expressions, of European, Amerindian and African cultures. Meteorologically, the area shares a propensity for hurricanes and tropical storms. Hulme adds,

The area should also be viewed as a discursive entity, given the resemblances amongst the narrative and rhetorical strategies found within the relevant Spanish, Portuguese and English texts- resemblances that outweigh, or at least weigh equally with, those found between texts in the same language dealing with areas in the same sphere of interest, say Virginia and New England or Hispaniola or Mexico. (5)

From his part, Sydney Mintz focused on the notion of the Caribbean as a socio-cultural area sharing an economic, social and political history⁵. In the Introduction to Caribbean Transformations, (1974), Mintz discusses the ways in which the Caribbean has been made relevant by then new anthropological interests:

Recent research has been concerned with the history of the individual, as well as with the emergence of concepts of self and person. Because of the lengthy connection between Caribbean societies and the West, and the immigration (much of it forced) of people from other world areas into the Caribbean, this is a region in which older social forms broke down at an early time, and important

⁵See Mintz, Sidney W. “The Caribbean as a Socio-Cultural Area,” Cahiers d’Histoire Mondiale IX (1966): 916-41.

redefinitions of the self, of the bonds of kinship, and of the many-stranded relationships of the individual to the group were established. Studies of the changing definition of individuality and selfhood have found fertile ground in the Caribbean region. (xvi)⁶

In this sense, the study of early modern European subjectivity within the Caribbean makes sense. Mintz's work emphasizes the Caribbean's important role in the conquest and colonization of the Americas as the point of entry into the New World. His later work would deal with the region's use as an ecological model, though this is never fully articulated as such. The notion also echoes Antonio Benítez Rojo's argument for a singular Caribbean identity notwithstanding the linguistic and cultural fragmentation of the area.⁷

For the purpose of this study we will be interested in the coasts of Florida, the Antilles, and the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean coasts of the South American continent. The southernmost geographical point of our inquiry is the modern Rio de Janeiro area which belongs to the tropical and not subtropical region. The inclusion of this point is easily justified if one considers the fact that the area was occupied in the sixteenth century by the Tupi people (mentioned in the beginning of this Introduction) who lived in the coasts of South America from modern Uruguay all the way to the north of Brazil. The Tupi, as well as the Amerindians of the Antilles (the Taíno and the Caribs) and the Amerindians of the northeastern coasts of the South American continent (the Caribs and varied Guianan peoples) all lived on coastal plains and as such had to contend with a similar ecosystem, sharing a climate, flora and fauna. Thus, it can be argued that they developed comparable ways of adapting to their natural environment, such as a kind of agriculture.

⁶ Mintz, Sidney W. Caribbean Transformations (1974). New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.

⁷ See his La isla que se repite, (1989).

In addition, it has been argued that the Amerindian peoples mentioned are of the same Amazonian stock. Indeed, archeologist Irving Rouse argues that these groups share the same cultural ancestry. It is widely held by scholars that before peopling the Antilles, the Taínos lived in the delta of the Orinoco and before that, they lived inland through the Orinoco's course in the north of the South American continent. However, whence they came before that is of some debate since there are two archeological models of migration. The Circum-Caribbean theory contends that the absolute origin of this cultural ancestry is the Andes in the south western end of the continent. The Amazonian theory maintains that the people's origins can be found deep in Amazonia (Rouse 26-48). In this model, the Island-Caribs represent a more recent and second wave of migration from the Orinoco basin into the Antilles. Rouse is partial to the Amazonian theory which is based on a linguistic ancestry model. The Taíno and Island-Carib language both belong to the Arawakan family. So does the Arawak language itself, now called *Lokono*.⁸ Linguists argue that the three of them derive from an ancient Arawak family which can be traced from a Proto-Arawakan root that arose in the middle of the Amazon Basin, and consequently moved up the Rio Negro and down the Orinoco River producing a new language called Proto-Maipuran. In the Orinoco Valley, this Proto-Maipuran gave rise to the Maipuran language family that evolved into the Proto-Northerners who settled the Guianas later developing the Arawak or Lokono language. Those who migrated to the Lesser-Antilles developed the Igneri and later Island-Carib language and those that went on to the Greater Antilles developed the Taíno language.⁹

⁸ Though only a couple of hundred words in *Taíno* survive, there is a dictionary of the Island-Carib language recompiled in 1892 by Father R. P. Raymond Breton, a French missionary.

⁹ *Lokono* is only one of the languages of one of the Guianan peoples. The *Warao* people share a macro-Chibcha language family with Central America and Colombia.

For all these reasons plus the fact that these Amerindians, especially the Caribs and Tupi, also share the fate of having been grafted upon the early modern depiction of cannibalism as defining of their identity, they are treated in this study as peoples of the *extended Caribbean*.

Situating the Study

Informed by varied theoretical currents this study hopes to contribute first to the recent ecological trend in Literary Studies, however it may be termed: Ecological Criticism, Ecocriticism, Ecofeminism or Ecological Feminism. It should be clear that this study does not wish to characterize, implicitly or otherwise, the human to nature relationship within a text in positive or negative terms. In fact, this study has nothing to do with designating certain texts as “nature-friendly” literature, or ecological, as sometimes the word is used to refer to a positive relationship to nature however that may be defined. In this sense, the project stands apart from recent ecological criticism in North America which seems bent on identifying ecologically benign or dangerous literature. In this way, this work sets itself against a body of ecological criticism that is mainly anglocentric in its objects of study and prescriptive in its agenda. The point here is not to identify a representation of nature in order to denounce or applaud it, but rather to analyze the human to environment relationship often hidden yet found in texts in order to disclose it as an *ecological ideology*. In turn, the project argues for a new way of reading by including ecological difference as another category of textual analysis alongside race, class, and gender.

Moreover, within Postcolonial and Cultural Studies in general, and Hispanic Colonial Studies in particular, the project calls for a revision of scholarship that has so far

neglected the colonial Caribbean in favor of the study of models of the Spanish colonial venture situated on the American Continent. The emphasis on the continent discounts the fact that during the early modern period the Caribbean was treated like a laboratory where economic, social, cultural and ecological projects were first tested out in the Caribbean before being translated to the American Continent. The study seeks out to make a special contribution to Caribbean Studies, fragmented as it is within Hispanic, Francophone, and Anglophone academies, to denounce the pernicious character of the colonial projects embarked upon by early modern Europeans in the area towards the Caribbean environment and its people. Thus, the study explores the colonial roots of the current ecological crises in the Caribbean. Centering the discussion of ecological difference within the textual construction of the early modern subject, this project also hopes to contribute to Early Modern and Transatlantic Studies.

Finally, while making use of theorists like Enrique Dussel, Walter Mignolo, Immanuel Wallerstein, Val Plumwood and Carolyn Merchant, among others, this study hopes to contribute to a critique of modernity, of reason, and of capitalism. It also wishes to articulate a critique of conventional literary criticism which fails to recognize ecological difference.

Outline of the Study

Chapter One, “Ecological Criticism, Nature, and the Early Modern World,” maps out the panorama of ecological criticism while answering basic questions like, what is nature? As a point of reference, I discuss the early modern environmental context both in Europe and in the Caribbean. Then, the chapter presents an overview of philosophies of nature and ecological practices in early modern Europe followed by a discussion of the

early modern economic system as capitalist in essence and thus producing a specific definition of ecology. Finally, a generalized idea of philosophies of nature and ecological practices in the extended Caribbean region is discussed.

Chapter Two, “The Ecology of Subjectivization and Ecological Difference,” first explains what *modern subjectivity* is, the reasons for its emergence during the early modern period, and its relation to the text. The concept of the *ecology of subjectivization* refers to the particular human-nature relationship that is implicit within modern subjectivity, and is discussed as a principal category of analysis in this study. Then, the chapter explores *difference* as a critical concept in relation to the other as subject and object and the *binary pair* is presented as the articulation of the smallest irreducible difference. Ecology, or the human to nature relationship, is discussed as a *marker of difference* between the European and the Amerindian. It also is uncovered as the discursive strategy of choice in the articulation of cultural difference in the early modern colonial context.

Chapter Three, “Sixteenth Century Travel Narrative: Colonialism, Imperialism, and Modern Subjectivity” explores the sixteenth century travel narrative as the model narrative structure that underlies early modern European colonial discourse. I describe the characteristic elements of the travel narrative as a narrative structure and its links to the novel, hagiography and the picaresque. Then, the specific colonial context of the travel narrative is revealed through a discussion of modern subjectivity embodied in the travel narrative as imperial subjectivity and containing within it the logic of the I-traveler. Lastly, the chapter presents to the reader strategies for reading ecological difference and the ecology of both subjectivization and objectivization.

Chapter Four, “The Naked Hero in Painful Pilgrimage: The Ecology of Subjectivization,” centers on the way in which the text constructs the subject *vis-à-vis* an Amerindian object through a focus on *ecological difference*. The chapter traces the way in which both Cabeza de Vaca and Raleigh construct themselves as subject writers in the text, how this textual construction of the subject betrays their own ecology and their representation of cultural difference in ecological terms. Cabeza de Vaca sets himself up as a hero, while Raleigh presents himself as pilgrim. The hero and the pilgrim go to great pains to prove to their readers that their relationship to nature is not only different but antithetical to the Amerindian’s relationship to nature. Both define themselves as modern subjects by the undervaluing or denial of indigenous ecological practices and the overvaluing of imperialistic and capitalistic ones.

Chapter Five, “The Cultural Other: The Ecology of Objectivization,” focuses on the way in which the text constructs Amerindians and their nature as objects through the use of *ecological difference* as well as how the text judges, identifies, and perceives Amerindian ecology. Using Pané and Léry, writing itself is discussed as a technology that seeks out to colonize nature. Finally, gender difference will be discussed as a type of ecological difference. More specifically, the chapter will explore woman’s conflation with the land and the violence against her in the forms of rape, and natural resource extraction will be explored. What emerges is a discussion of the other side of the dialectics of the textual construction of the subject: the process of objectivization.

The Conclusion will attempt to restate the project’s main claim and summarize its secondary arguments. It will also address the significance of this study for Caribbean nature and narrative.

CHAPTER ONE

ECOLOGICAL CRITICISM, NATURE, AND THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

Men did not greet with empty minds the age of discovery and the questions it raised regarding the relationships of man and nature. (Glacken 357).

As mentioned in the Introduction, the principal aim of this project is to study how the relationship between the human being to the environment intersects with the process by which that human being becomes a subject in early modern texts, specifically travel narratives to the Caribbean. In order to do this, it is necessary to take into account a long discussion and exchange of ideas that make possible this argument serving as its foundation. To this end, this chapter will present an overview of various groups of theories under the term ecological criticisms. Moreover, because an ecological criticism of a text, like the kind this investigation aspires to, mandates taking into account not only theories and practices of nature but also, environmental circumstances themselves, this chapter will also discuss early modern European philosophies of nature, as well as the environmental and ecological early modern context in western Europe and the Caribbean.

What is Nature? A Primer on Ecological Criticisms

Ecocriticisms¹⁰, or ecological criticisms, refer to a broad theoretical corpus where ecologists, anthropologists, sociologists, economists, historians and literary critics, among others, expound their thoughts on the causes, consequences, and other specifics of current ecological crises. It is above all a critical reflection deeply concerned with the

¹⁰ The term ‘ecocriticism’ was first used by William Ruechert in his article “Literature and Ecology: an Experiment in Ecocriticism” (1978). I use it here in plural in an attempt to convey the diversity of thought and methods within this theoretical corpus. I make no distinction between the terms *ecocriticism* and *ecological criticism* as well as between *ecocritics* and *ecological critics*.

ethical dimension of the ecological question. Political in essence, ecocriticisms seek to denounce some practices and suggest others in the hopes of altering what seems to be the ever-present doom of self-annihilating ecocide. As a political, ethical, philosophical, moral and popular movement concerned primarily with the ecosystem, ecocriticism has many sister movements. Ecofeminism, ecosocialism, ecomarxism, deep and shallow ecology are some of them. Of these, ecofeminism has perhaps garnered the most attention.

It is widely held that 'ecofeminism' is a term first coined by French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974 (Warren 21, Mellor 44) though others offer a later date for an American feminist by the name of Chiah Heller.¹¹ Far from being a unified front, ecofeminism is an umbrella label under which widely varied theories pertaining to the fields of ethics, philosophy, politics, religion, aesthetics, sociology, anthropology and economics, just to name some, combine problematics of gender with ecological concerns. Though subscribing to different methods and bodies of knowledge ecofeminists are, above all, feminists. In fact, all kinds of ecofeminists advance the idea that as all of nature (both the human and the non-human realm) is interconnected, so are all modes of oppression. It is therefore vital to those interested in a mutually beneficial exchange between the human and non-human, to also secure an even exchange within the human realm itself. The most obvious issues at stake here are the dangers of racism, classism, hetero normativity and gender bias. As ecofeminists hold fast to the tenet that one form of oppression facilitates another, they establish that human domination over nature will never be remedied in isolation from other kinds of domination. In this sense, as most

¹¹ Mary Mellor states that following Janet Biehl the term was coined by the American Chiah Heller in 1988. See Bibliography for details.

ecofeminists are quick to establish, feminism has much to contribute to ecological thought in general. However, there is great diversity in ecofeminists and ecological feminist thought, as Val Plumwood notes,

ecological feminists differ on how and even whether women are connected to nature, on whether such connection is in principle shareable by men, on how to treat the exclusion of women from culture, and on how the revaluing of the connection with nature connects with the revaluing of traditional feminine characteristics generally, to mention a few areas. (Plumwood 9)

Ecological criticisms also vary greatly because of their descriptive, rather than prescriptive character. Its categories of ecological thought shift and change underlining not only their instability, but also the fact that the intricacies of each of these trends are easily manipulated. Furthermore, its subdivisions are far from monolithic and to try to delineate the platform of any one of them would result in shameless reductionism and oversimplification. An attempt to characterize all or even most of the trends in ecological criticism is then rendered futile. However, some general tendencies of ecological thought can be identified.

The first of these is the acceptance and affirmation of the ‘ecological principle’ (Meyers 44) which maintains that all life is intimately, deeply and irreversibly interconnected and thus interdependent. Some theorists (Meyers 44, Plumwood 4) bemoan the fact that this truism must be repeated constantly as if lacking in evidence or credibility. But it is apparent that it must be repeated since human practices still to this day do not reflect such reality.

Secondly, as mentioned above, all ecological thinkers are ultimately concerned with the practical consequences of our thoughts, philosophies, religions, perspectives, and the rest. Though deeply critical of specific ways of thinking, ecocritics are first and

foremost troubled by the human practices and trends that ultimately worsen the current ecological crisis. In this sense all ecological criticism is political as it seeks to assure a benevolent human ethics towards the ecosystem.

In third place is the matter of social justice. Ecological thinkers in general are very much preoccupied with the pragmatics of everyday behavior or the ethics of our relationship to the environment. Some of the questions asked are the following.

Domestically: should the government regulate ecological practices and up to what point? How can the government follow up on those regulations? What is the basis of such regulations? In addition to regulating the practice of companies, how can we regulate the practice of the private citizen? Does every county, community and citizen have the resources to follow regulations? Socially: who decides what an environmentally sound practice is and what is not? What needs to be sacrificed, if anything, in order to achieve a more advantageous ecological behavior? Who needs to sacrifice? Do all citizens have access to the same quality of environmental education? Do environmentalists in New York City have a right to lobby against the natural gas pipeline in Alaska? Or, is this more a question of local politics? Where do we draw the line? The same goes for the international community: do developed nations have the right to pressure developing nations to abandon certain practices they themselves used or are still using to a degree? Who can mandate international regulations? Who can oversee these? On what and whose research would these be based on? And a most important question: if we are to believe in that we will all benefit in the long run from sounder ecological practices, who benefits in the short run? Why not me?

It is generally held by ecological critics interested in issues of social justice that the impoverished and political disenfranchised, be it women, people of color, the developing nations, and especially children everywhere, bear the brunt of environmental harm and lack the resources to do anything about it. In fact, in her book Having Faith: An Ecologist's Journey to Motherhood, Sandra Steingraber argues that because of ubiquitous pollution, a mother's womb, even in developed nations, is a toxic environment and that breast milk is one of the most contaminated substances in our world.

Most ecological thinkers hold that the cause of current ecological crises is an erroneous conceptualization of nature. So-called social theorists have denounced binary opposites as the underlying structure of current conceptualizations of nature, which they see as justifying, sanctioning, or worse, urging, harmful human practices. For these critics, the identification, discussion, and deconstruction of such binaries acquires great significance in ecological thought. An overview of different ecological explanations of the origins of current ecological crises will serve as point of departure for an assessment, or a sample of the diversity of ecological thought.

Many hold that the human/nature or culture/nature binary opposite, mutually exclusive and hierarchically arranged, is what leads us to conceive of the human and the natural as separate realms. Ecofeminists, feminists, deconstructivists, and poststructuralists in general have denounced the problematics inherent in dualisms: the violence and hierarchy within them. The violence needed in order to maintain the hierarchies, have been well articulated by Jacques Derrida, Hélène Cixous, and Val Plumwood among others. As ecological thinkers, both Cixous and Plumwood associate culture/nature with the master/slave binary. As ecofeminist thinkers both relate these dualisms to the

man/woman dualism. Holding that all oppression, discrimination, and abuse are directly related, the deconstruction of dualisms is central to ecological feminist thought.

Undoubtedly inspired by Cixous, Plumwood goes further as she theorizes the logic of colonization which seeks to pass as derived by nature itself in order to assure the binary's stability while denying the dialectical relationship on which it is dependent.

However, a well-known ecofeminist, Karen Warren, has argued against the inherent conflict of hierarchy. She claims that hierarchical thinking, including as she does value-hierarchical thinking, value dualisms, as well as conceptions and relations of power and privilege, is useful to the classification and assessment of elements, as well as to maintaining a certain order. She complicates the issue further when she makes a distinction between justified domination (useful hierarchy) and unjustified domination (oppressive hierarchy).

If one describes healthy, morally permissible relationships (say between parents and infants) as relationships of domination, then unjustified domination occurs only where the logic of domination is in place. (48)

The problem here is that, confusing domination with power, she rationalizes the existence of a positive and a negative one. If anything, the parent-child relationship would be characterized as one of power, not of domination. To stipulate the possibility of a "justified" domination is terribly dangerous and logically faulty since it opens the issue of what would be an adequate justification for domination. Moreover, Warren is unable to recognize that hierarchies denote not only domination but also value. This value or worth is assigned by a third party to the first term of the binary. In this context culture/nature, man/woman, and so many others are not simply binary pairs, they are binary opposites, or dualisms which proclaim the preference of one term over another.

Most ecocritics agree with the idea that the dualism culture/nature is responsible for a rift in consciousness and the articulation of similar false binaries such as human/animal, human/nature. However, the circumstances which brought the onset of the rift within the dualisms are a source of heated debate. Lead by ecofeminists and other feminist ecological thinkers, a particular ecocritical strand identifies patriarchy in general and patriarchal institutions in specific as responsible for the formation of false binaries.

Within this group one can find Anne Baring's and Jules Cashford's book The Myth of the Goddess: Evolution of an Image, which discusses the emergence of the binary opposites of life/death, culture/nature, and man/woman. They argue that it was the advent of patriarchy, which they ascribe to the Hittite and Semite tribes that invaded Sumeria in the Neolithic (beginning around 9500 BCE), that brought about the displacement of the Goddess and the unity she represented. Whereas before, agricultural communities adored the Great Goddess not only because of her significance as a fertility deity, but also because of her ties to both life and death as abstracted from the phases of the moon, then after the invasion a new social organization which valued the male over the female and thus relegated prior ways of thinking to a lower plane was put into place. For Baring and Cashford, patriarchy brings about a difference in consciousness from the collective to the individual, and thus the individual's conception of death as an end. A new conception of death as an opposite of life, a linear mode of experiencing life is established against the old cyclical mode inspired by the Goddess. The life/death binary is the first one to be instituted quickly followed by the man/woman and culture/nature.

On the other hand, as she blames not patriarchy but the masculine, Janis Bierkeland is an example of the merging between radical American feminism and deep

ecology. She follows a trend that holds what she calls the “masculine archetype” responsible for the attribution of the masculine qualities of aggressiveness, competitiveness, psychological as well as physical coercion and hierarchical structures to humankind in general. For her and many other American ecofeminists, the current ecological crisis stems from the masculine structures of power that exploit nature, women, people of color, and people of lower classes. In her analysis it is maleness itself that establishes a hierarchy between man and women (see also Griffin).

For others, Western philosophy is to blame for the human/nature rift that allows the human realm to be perceived as independent from the natural. Ecofeminist philosopher Val Plumwood explores the inherent hierarchy within binaries in her book Feminism and the Mastery of Nature, now an ecofeminist staple. For her, the human/nature dualism is subtext to the ecological mistreatment of non-human nature and “especially the western construction of human identity ‘outside’ nature” (2). On the basis of the devaluing of the body (matter) and overvaluing of the mind (form) Plumwood launches an attack on rationalism (Platonic as well as Cartesian) not as a masculine logic, but as the logic of the master. She argues that colonized, non-western, non-white peoples and women have been likened to nature and thus have been stripped of their agency using a derivative argument. While she acknowledges the female-nature conflation, she warns feminists not reduce all domination to gender domination. This would result in the same mistaken reductionist strategy followed by Marxism as it reduces all domination to class domination. But, rather, it is necessary to look for the identity of a “more complex dominator”: the master. Thus she uncovers the “logic of

colonization” within dualism. Plumwood’s work is very influential to this study and as such will be discussed in more detail in this chapter as well as Chapter Two.

Another perspective is exemplified by Carolyn Merchant who, in her often cited book, The Death of Nature argues that the early modern Scientific Revolution led to the conception of nature as a chaotic space that must be ordered by the use of reason displacing an organic conception of nature as a nurturing mother. Here the culture/nature dualism is palpable in all its force as a hierarchical order which assures man’s privileged position of steward over nature and thus over woman. In the name of science, the domination of nature is sought through the systemic “disclosure of nature’s secrets” (188). A mechanistic conception of nature results from this line of thinking, where nature is inert and malleable. Also highly influential to this study, Merchant’s argument will be discussed in detail later on this chapter.

Many more have assigned the blame to Christian philosophy and practices. Lynn White seeks to expose the dangers of religious thought as he claims that “human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny- that is, by religion” (68). Christianity, as the dominant religion in the west, reinforces what is believed to be an inherently human right to control nature. Similarly to Baring and Cashford, White holds that concepts of time (of origin and destiny), embedded within a religious view also affect human relationship with the environment. He argues that Christianity’s linear time inherited from Judaism sharply contrasted the cyclical Greco-Roman notion of time. Christianity is then radically different from other religions in that it “not only established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper ends” (69).

Christianity is such a favorite culprit of ecofeminists that a popular trend in West Coast American ecofeminism claims the ecofeminist movement is in effect a spiritual movement presenting itself as an alternative to Christianity. In the hopes of distancing themselves from the patriarchal hierarchy, and doctrinal rejection of the body, so much a part of Christian thought, spiritual ecofeminists call for a return to paganism and the establishment of the cult of nature and of the Goddess. Some ecocritics would agree as they claim that aboriginal religions such as animism, present a friendlier conception of nature and thus foster a better human to nature relation (see Christopher Manes' "Nature and Silence"). They maintain that it is the passage to the rational, so closely tied to Christian thought, which silences nature and results in the modern environmental crisis.

As it commodifies nature, capitalism is another favorite culprit of ecological thinkers. As well as introducing binaries, capitalism depends on practices that are directly linked to ecological damage. Ecofeminists underline that such a mode of production reinforces patriarchy, as well as it creates issues of waste and disposal and relies unfairly on a workforce that is mainly third world and feminine (see Bierkeland, Mellor, Warren, Shiva).

The critique of capitalism from the ecological perspective is undertaken by so many that it is possible to identify trends within this subdivision of ecological thought. The main difference strives on what is seen as remedy to the situation. Ecoanarchists stand for the abolition of the current government and economic system altogether. From their part, liberal feminists demand a fair share and equal opportunity within the system, as do light greens or shallow ecocritics who argue for the governmental and legislative institution of ecological savvy practices within the present system. However, a serious

branch of ecological feminism follows one of the movement's founders, Ynestra King when she claims, "What is the point of partaking equally in a system that is killing us all?" (as cited by Mellor 6).

Another point of contention within the critique of patriarchy, capitalism and dualisms originates in the peripheral ecofeminism that is, those ecological feminist thinkers that being non-western or of color do not belong to mainstream American society. In general they argue that so much attention paid to western patriarchy "deflects attention from racism, imperialism and capitalism as agents in gender oppression and ecological destruction" (Mellor 6). Some even argue that ecofeminism "has encouraged a benign attitude toward non-western patriarchy" (see Agarwal as cited by Mellor 6). A good example of this line of critique is Huey-li Li's article "A cross-cultural Critique of Ecofeminism," where she develops arguments against western-led ecofeminist critique which assumes that the identification of woman and nature is at the root of the environmental crisis and women's oppression. She notes that since in other cultures nature is not conceptualized as female, ecofeminist should downplay the conceptual linking of the culture/nature dualism to the male/female one, and focus instead of the parallelisms between exploitative practices misguided by an attention to gender, sexual orientation, class, or ethnicity. She also cautions ecofeminists against the dangers of reductionism and essentialism as they make a distinction between masculine traits (aggression, competitiveness, militarism) and female ones (nurturing, caring, compassion), since they reinforce the dualistic thinking against which ecofeminist fight.

Other ecological theorists blame the conceptual problem of nature on the subject/object dualism. For example, anthropologist Kay Milton seeks to understand

human attitudes towards nature on the basis of the personhood/non-personhood duality. Similarly, Christopher Manes argues that nature is not valued as a subject because it is seldom allowed a voice: “nature is silent in our culture in the sense that the status of being a speaking subject is jealously guarded as an exclusively human prerogative” (15).

Another well-discussed binary is the nature/wilderness one as exposed by William Cronon, who following mainstream ecological thinking believes that the problem is the conceptualization of the terms. In his article he challenges the traditional concept of wilderness, as untouched nature, as he denounces it as a “product of civilization” (69). He claims that “there is nothing natural about the concept of the wilderness” (79), since it expresses a false duality that does little to help the current crisis. Candance Slater also discusses the problems of conceptualization in the notions of ‘wilderness,’ ‘jungle,’ and ‘rainforest.’ She points out that, representations of nature are usually mediated by the mythic subtext of the Garden of Eden. Her analysis of terms, including the term ‘rain forest,’ which coincides with the emergence of environmentalism as a social and political movement, calls for increased attention to the handling of words in environmental discourses.

Other theorists of ecology steer away from critiques of conceptualization, to the examination of other aspects of the ecological question (what are the roots of the current crisis?). Yi-Fu Tuan, for example, argues that the root of the ecological crisis is not so much the conceptualization of nature, but more so the split between theory and practice: “a wide gap may exist between a culture’s ideals and their expression in the real world” (73). Others like anthropologist Sherri Ortner, do not address the question of conceptualization at all. Ortner’s work on the relation between the culture/nature binary

to the man/woman one has wide implications and repercussions. Like most ecofeminists, she does not question the link between woman and the material but takes it as a given. Her analysis seems to imply that the culture/nature binary is universal and “natural” that is, it is instinctively produced by humans in order to assure group cohesion and thus survival. In other words, it is in the best interest of humans to construct culture and to value it over the material world.

In contrast to these ecofeminists and many other environmental thinkers that blame western dualism as the basis for the devaluation of nature, John M. Meyer argues in his book Political Nature: Environmentalism and the Interpretation of Western Thought (2001) that neither *dualistic* nor *derivative arguments*¹² can account for such devaluation. These arguments, favorites of many ecological critics, fail in that “they are convinced that a conception of nature can and does serve as a directive principle for human moral, social and political organization and action” (47). In an effort to carry out a more nuanced analysis he invites ecological critics to acknowledge the complexity and variety of western philosophy and consider the “dialectical relationship between conception of nature and politics,” since it is in service of the question of power and political theory and judgment that nature is dominated (131).

Underlying the search for the roots of the current ecological crisis is the question of what nature is in the first place and how we get to know it. This is also a conflicted and energetically debated area with diametrically opposed claims. On the one hand, some theorists referred to as constructivists, postmoderns, or poststructuralists claim that

¹² As discussed earlier the *dualistic argument* proposes that the denial of the ecological principle is based on the dualism inherent in western philosophy. The *derivative argument* proposes that mistaken conceptions of nature which serve as basis for social and political practice are to blame for the denial of the ecological principle. For Meyer both these arguments are diametrically opposed and mutually exclusive yet they both fail in undervaluing the role of politics and power in the ecological problem.

nature is socially, culturally, linguistically constructed, contingent upon its historicity, and impossible to really know outside of said construction. On the other hand, other theorists (most coming from a scientific background, called realists), ignore the historicity of nature as if “the natural sciences [were] ahistorical and non-ideological” (Escobar 8). Against both of these extremes other theorists have risen in search for a middle ground. For example, Arturo Escobar openly searches for what he refers to as an “antiessentialist political ecology” that would examine the biophysical and the historical as implicated together (4). Mary Mellor also dismisses constructivists positions whether from a phenomenological, socialist/Marxist or postmodern perspective, while at the same time rejecting ecological or biological determinism. She underlines that, “what is both politically and theoretically vital to understand is the relationship between socially constructed relationships and physical realities, whether of embodiment or embeddedness” (7).

From her part, Kay Milton also sternly criticizes the ‘constructionist model of culture’ which claims that our conceptualization of nature is rooted in social practices and the social production of knowledge. Experience, understood as “the impact of the environment in the individual,” corresponds to the ways the non-social environment aids in the production of knowledge. The anthropologist puts forth an “ecological understanding of knowledge” as she maintains that diverse experiences aid in the construction of concepts of what is human, natural and their respective representations.

Also an anti-constructivist, Lawrence Buell develops the concept of the “environmental unconscious,” a term akin to Frederic Jameson’s “political unconscious,” which refers to the embeddedness of individual identity within time and place. Buell

makes use of Jameson's idea of the ideological structures which mediate social experience that can be found in texts, so that a text can "be seen as the rewriting or restructuration of a prior historical or ideological subtext" (as cited by Buell 24). But, believing place to be more influential than ideological structures he explains: "To my mind, however, embeddedness in spatio-physical context is even more intractably constitutive of personal and social identity, and of the way texts get constructed, than ideology is, and very likely as primordial as unconscious psychic activity itself" (24). It follows then that for Buell the environmental unconscious is an "environmental sensitivity [that] is basic to human psychophysiological makeup" and which is best expressed by the imagination as seen in literary texts (25). This "environmental sensitivity" is also associated to Buell's concept of an individual's "place connectedness" which for him points to the importance of place "to the literary and cultural imagination and the cultural work that place-responsive imaginative acts can perform" (64). An idea of reciprocity can be seen as Buell describes place not as a mere background, but as an active factor in the construction of self, a "space to which meaning has been ascribed" (59). Place corresponds then to the physical environment that, experienced indirectly that is, mediated by language, is defined by a dialectical relationship to the individual: the individual constitutes and is constituted by the cultural mediated experience of place.

Buell's concept of the "environmental unconscious" within a text brings us to the point of connection between ecological or environmental theories and literary theory. The idea of applying ecological theories to the task of reading and interpreting texts emerged in U.S. academia in the sixties and seventies as the discipline of Ecology itself began to germinate. The first book that explicitly sought to apply ecological theory to the reading

and interpreting of texts was Joseph W. Meeker's The Comedy of Survival: In Search of an Environmental Ethic, which first appeared in 1972. The book argued that since literature is often used as an educational instrument we should, as readers, be more inclined to study how has literary art aided or hurt the survival of the human species. His idea was to study "biological themes and relationships" as they appear in literary works in order to disclose literature's "influence upon human behavior and the natural environment" (25). For him, comedy, as opposed to tragedy, better exemplifies how the human to environment relation ought to be since it relies on acceptance and adaptation rather than confrontation and victory over circumstances. His book is considered one of if not the foundational book on ecological criticism as it seeks to establish a new area of inquiry within literary studies taking advantage of the new advances of both Ecology and Comparative Literature which were then both in their ascending phase as new more inclusive and interdisciplinary fields.

Another book which attempts to use the ecological sciences to shed light on the interpretation of texts is Karl Kroeber's Ecological Literary Criticism: Romantic Imagining and the Biology of the Mind, (1994). Kroeber book calls for literary studies to make use of recent biological research in order to "make humanistic studies more socially responsible" (1). In fact, he attempts to read Romantic poetry first as an ecosystem and later through the lens of chaos theory. He uses the term "proto-ecological" to refer to literature that overlies "an intellectual position that accepts as entirely real a natural environment existent outside of one's personal psyche" (19). His interest in romantic poetry stems from his consideration of the genre as anticipatory of "attitudes and conceptions that only in our century have been given either a solid scientific basis, or

whose psychic grounding has only recently been persuasively analyzed” (19). For him, Ecology requires the concept of ecosystem and of evolution just as ecological literature requires a view of the interconnectedness of nature.

More recently, Glenn A. Love sought to denounce the rift between the humanities and the sciences and urge scholars of the humanities in general and of literary studies in particular to learn more about the sciences in his book Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology, and the Environment, (2003). The book is a critique of postmodernism’s social constructivists that hold that human thought and behavior is formed by culture independent of biology (163). Thus, he argues for an ecological criticism based on the biological and evolutionary sciences and modeled on ecology as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry. For him, it is a question of the practicality of literary studies and the relevance to the material world of teaching and researching in the profession.

The picture of ecological criticism that emerges from this overview is fragmentary and varied. To follow merely the labels within the vast arena of ecological thought gives the reader an idea of the diversity of opinions: those that rely heavily on the biological sciences are accused of biocentrism, those that center on the human implications of the crisis are called anthropocentric, and those who for ecological feminists are part of the problem are dubbed androcentric.

As the principal subdivision of ecocriticism, ecofeminism has attracted plenty of criticism. Informed as it is by multiple disciplines, performed by peoples of all genders, classes, color, preferences, and backgrounds, and lacking a prescriptive theoretical frame, ecofeminist thought is in many instances persuasive and interdisciplinary, as well as

vague and contradictory. Moreover, as popular strands of American ecofeminism hold maleness itself as the cause of the ecological crisis and all forms of oppression (see Bierkeland), a particularly strong and damaging critique against ecofeminist thought has mounted over the last two decades. This critique argues against essentialisms that fall on biological determinism (ex. women are by definition closer to nature than men, as well as cooperative, and nurturing; whereas men are by definition aggressive, domineering, individualistic); mysticisms (ex. nature is the sacred that must be revered; God must be substituted for the Goddess); and other accusations of anti-rationalism, totalization, and reductive reasoning. Though these critics have failed in generalizing and drawing conclusions from the few to the many, they have nonetheless succeeded in loading the term ecofeminist (at least at a popular level) with undesirable connotations. As a result, leading theorist Val Plumwood critiques ecofeminism opting for the more general, less debated term “ecological feminism” in an effort to escape negative connotations.

This study follows Plumwood’s preference for the term ecological feminism in order to describe its theoretical framework. It also departs from many (but not all) ecological literary critics in using the term *ecology* in its scientific connotation referring to the *study of the relationship of an organism (in this case human) to its living and non-living environment*. In other words, as it is used here, *ecology* does not refer to a healthy relationship between the human and non-human realm, but simply to the study of said relationship, be it healthy or toxic. Thus, departing from most ecological literary criticism, the reader will find nowhere in this study the terms *ecological writing*, or *ecological text*, or *nature writing*, for example, to mean writing that portrays a healthy or benevolent relationship with the non-human *environment*.

Moreover, it is important to distinguish between the terms *environment*, *natural environment*, and *nature*, as used here. The first refers to the physical as well as biological and chemical factors that affect an organism. The second refers to those factors, living or not, which affect an organism and occur spontaneously in the world. This term may be better understood as the opposite of *social environment* which refers to those factors that do not occur spontaneously but are brought about human artifice and interaction. The last term, *nature*, is perhaps the most challenging to define. As it belongs to the field of literary studies and centers on the study of texts, this investigation follows a cultural constructivist notion of nature, but one which nonetheless does not intend to deny neither the materiality of the non-human living or non-living realm nor the physicality of the experience of said realm. In other words, the descriptions and depictions of the non-human realm found in the texts featured here will be seen as culturally mediated and thoroughly historicized representations of a material reality that now escapes the reader. So, whenever the reader encounters the word *nature* in this study he or she should take it to refer to the non-human animal, vegetal, mineral realm, living or non-living, which occurs spontaneously in this world. This, of course, is an artificial and heuristic tool since the human cannot in truth be separated from the natural.

As stated in the Introduction, this study will center on western European early modern, specifically sixteenth century travel narrative to the Caribbean islands and the Caribbean coast of the South American continent. The sixteenth century, for our purposes roughly from 1492 to 1600, comprehends the first hundred and eight years of the exploration and conquest of the new lands. As it is to be expected, these travel narratives, some written five hundred eighteen years ago are the only type of record

available. There are of course, no blogs, no videos, no pictures and most importantly, no Amerindian accounts of the first encounters between these two peoples in the Caribbean. So, though undoubtedly these texts represented special personal as well as national interests and ambitions and though they were written in order to persuade the crown to invest more moneys and resources in these travels, these texts are the only window we have into sixteenth century Caribbean nature and ecology. What this means to us is that though the accounts may be factual, (or better yet, non –fictional), they are to be handled cautiously yet without discounting the information they offer us.

As discussed in the Introduction this study is not interested in judging the accuracy, fairness or even the form of representations of nature. To do this is to assume that nature is a reality independent from the human and thus cultural realm. In effect, what makes this an ecologically sound project is that it maintains as a basic tenet the fact that nature is not an original, primeval and basic entity which is fundamentally different than what is human. On the contrary, both the human and the non-human realms are intimately, deeply and irreversibly interconnected and thus interdependent. Regularly referred to as the ‘ecological principle,’ this precept rejects the culture/nature oppositional pair as a false binary since the terms are not inherently antagonistic but they are in fact dialectically and mutually constituted. So, instead of interpreting *representations* of nature, the project aims to analyze the *textual construction* of a new world nature and a new world ecology but again, not to dismiss it as merely colonial but in order to understand this construction as a process and evaluate how such process of construction still informs ideas of Caribbean nature.

Hence, we will not use these texts to talk about how Caribbean nature was in actuality but rather how it was seen. In other words, how, discursively it was constructed to an old world. Still, the text expresses the traveler's experience of a natural environment he saw, touched, breathed, and was marveled by, simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar. Thus the experience of nature in order to expedite this construction is of paramount significance. Though the text will claim to reproduce a real nature outside the text and culture, in truth it produces it, albeit not *ex nihilo* but *ex experientia*. In fact, the experiential basis of the narrative is of great importance since it is the material reality of the displacement of the subject what serves as the *raison d'être* of the text.

In essence, nature in the early modern travel narrative to the Caribbean is a social construct but one that comes about dialectically as the subject-traveler experiences space. In these texts, Caribbean nature is the abstracted result of the experience of space, created in the process of *narrativization*, or the organizing of the subject's experience in symbolic narrative form, mediated by the writer's language and culture and thus thoroughly historicized. It follows then that Caribbean nature is in fact produced by the travel narrative though the travel narrative will claim to be produced by it. The Caribbean native, at once the same and radically different, is more often than not conflated with the landscape, and thus feminized and eroticized, as his social practices are considered "natural" and "instinctive" not a function of agency grounded on highly complex patterns of behavior. Thus, the dialectical character of the conception of the Caribbean nature and native that the text brings forth can most efficiently be studied by focusing on difference.

Early Modern Philosophies of Nature

As the epigraph to this first chapter reads, “men did not greet with empty minds the age of discovery and the questions it raised regarding the relationships of man and nature” (Glacken 357). Therefore, the sixteenth century descriptions of Caribbean nature deconstructed in the subsequent chapters are bound to reflect late medieval as well as early modern western European conceptions of the natural world. The following paragraphs will discuss some general trends and prevalent conceptions in philosophies of nature that may have informed the way sixteenth and seventeenth centuries travelers interpreted their experience of Caribbean nature.

During the late medieval period (the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) nature was seen as the divinely planned habitat for humankind regulated by *natural law* as dictated by God. The study of these was seen as a way of contemplating God and pursuing virtue. Thus, a theocentric science developed directed by human reason. Scientific discoveries allowed humans to envision creation’s blueprint. It was therefore important to explore and discover as much as possible of the world so as to better understand the mind of God. Human kinship to the rest of the natural world (especially animals) was considered in terms of their origin as God’s co-creations.

Notwithstanding this relation, the human being had not been accorded the same status as any other of God’s creatures. He had in fact a place of certain importance above the rest of the natural world. By the end of the middle ages and the beginning of the early modern period, this view had ripened in the image of the human being as demiurge between the animal-vegetal-mineral world and the divine. Perhaps no other text expresses this humanist neo-platonic ideal more clearly or directly than Giovanni Pico della Mirandola’s Oration on the Dignity of Man (1486). Written in Latin, this

Renaissance Manifesto sought to explain why the human being was considered the apex of God's creation, or the reason why,

Man is the intermediary between creatures, close to the gods, master of all the lower creatures, with the sharpness of his senses, the acuity of his reason, and the brilliance of his intelligence the interpreter of nature....¹³

His answer lay in the place of the human being within the *scala naturae* or the great chain of being. Human beings held a privileged position at the very top of the chain between the angels and the rest of creation, and as such they had been charged by God with the task of steering nature through intervention and guidance. As he shaped nature in order to make it purposeful, the human being was to also shape himself using both his intellect or reason and his free will. Pico della Mirandola speaks as God would to man,

We have placed you at the world's center so that you may survey everything else in the world. We have made you neither of heavenly nor of earthly stuff, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with free choice and dignity, you may fashion yourself into whatever you choose. To you is granted the power of degrading yourself into the lower forms of life, the beasts, and to you is granted the power, contained in your intellect and judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, the divine.

The medieval notion of nature as *fallen*, often symbolized by a valley of tears, had been inherited from the biblical tradition and confirmed the suspicion that nature was not a benevolent force but, rather that it was the background to the human plight. Because of human disobedience and the consequent fall from grace, the human lot was to work the land for sustenance and safety. Another common medieval and early modernist metaphor for the relationship between the human being to the natural world was that of a book written by God through which study we could come to a greater understanding of Him. This view was pursued by the scholastics, and especially Thomas Aquinas, who sought to interpret nature as God's *secretum* in order to uncover its hidden meanings and

¹³ Translated from the Latin by Richard Hooker. See Bibliography for details.

thus grow closer to the divine. Aquinas *natural theology* emphasized the attainment of knowledge of God through reason (the study of God's creation as well as his revelations in scriptures) and experience (of God in the world often through his creation). By the seventeenth century this idea culminates in a human-centered science that emerges with the aim to unveil nature's secrets by empirically acquired knowledge.

Through most of the early modern period the human being's relationship to the rest of the natural world was considered one of divinely ordained domination. In effect, the extensive human environmental changes of the medieval and early modern period such as deforestation, land and swamp drainage, and the decoursing of rivers, were conceived improvements on God's creation, since the increasing sense of human control over the environment was conceived in God's plan. Indeed, often the Church contributed to such ideas, sponsoring deforestation and drainage for the establishments of towns and monasteries, as well as commissioning extensive quarrying for cathedral building.

Clarence J. Glacken explains in his encyclopedic Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century, that within the Church,

An ascetic ideal was the original stimulus in evolving a philosophy of man as creator of new environments. The early saints purposefully retired from the world, and they fancied that by their clearings they were re-creating the early paradise, reasserting the complete dominion over all life that existed before the Fall. (349)¹⁴

More specifically, it was believed that everything in nature had a purpose but it was human responsibility to find that purpose out and achieve it, following the steps of the creator. In essence, during the sixteenth century nature was often seen as creation in

¹⁴ Glacken adds: "Men of Church saw themselves as spiritual leaders in the creation of a new environment; these attitudes appear early in the activities of the fathers of the West, in the shift from the love of solitude and prayer and the desire for release from the cares of the world to a missionary zeal which included everyday tasks of clearing, building, draining". (349)

need of *perfection*, from the Latin *perficio*, meaning to bring to an end, to finish, “for without a sentient being growing more knowledgeable with time there is little purpose in the creation” (Glacken 427-8). For example, Sebastian Münster’s 1550 Cosmographie (first published in Germany in 1544) put forth a world that had to be acted upon in order to improve it. Glacken explains that for Münster,

As civilization advances, clearing and draining go on, towns are born, castles rise on the hills. Earthworks and dams control the water. Man finishes creation. Gradually by cultivation, with settlements, castles, villages, fields, meadows, vineyards, and the like, the earth had been so changed from its original state that it can now be called another earth. (365)

In yet another example, the earth was designed for its usefulness to humankind. For

Giovanni Botero, in Greatness of Cities (1588) and Reason of State (1589) raw materials are to be transformed into resources fit for human consumption:

Nature gives a form to the raw materials and human industry imposes upon this natural composition an infinite variety of artificial forms; thus nature is to the craftsman what raw material is to the natural agent. (As cited by Glacken 371)

The fertility of the soil is directly related to the strength of human industry as human interaction with the natural world completes it.

If Spain is a barren land, its condition is owing to the sparseness of its inhabitants; neither the nature and quality of the soil nor the air itself has changed; it is the decrease in the number of inhabitants and the decline in the cultivation of the land.... in Reason of State (1589) (as paraphrased by Glacken 370).

Also in Botero’s texts is the idea of interrelatedness between the human and the natural realm since the environment affects peoples just as people affect the environment. For example, climate determines the temperament of people:

In mountains (they [people] are wild and proud), in valleys (they are soft and effeminate), in barren lands (they are industrious and diligent), in fertile lands (they are idle and refined), in maritime lands (they are alert, sagacious, prosperous in business), in the interior lands (they are sincere, loyal, easily connected)” in Reason of State (1589) (as paraphrased by Glacken 370).

This was already an old idea with a long tradition that can be traced back to antiquity. Environmental theories, as well as astrological ones, had accounted for racial and cultural differences for most of the classical period and the middle ages (a point that will be brought to bear on Chapter Two). And since “law must conform to the nature of the people, and their nature is often determined by their environment” environmental theories also had great importance to political theorists from Plato and Aristotle to Machiavelli (Glacken 256).

As it is to be expected, notions of the relation between the human and natural realms were profoundly affected by the sustained encounter between the old and the new world that came about the sixteenth century. Glacken explains that this encounter had a great yet slow impact on early modern philosophies of nature:

New chapters in the population of the history of mankind since the days of Noah and his sons had to be written to bring the customs and the characteristics of the newly found peoples within the protective cover of the divine design; to account for the differences (perhaps through climactic explanations) between these people and the more familiar types of Europe, western Asia and North Africa; to explain how, through the manipulation of their environment, they were able to live and clothe themselves. Inquiries would have been made regarding their innate inventiveness. Was it the product of human intelligence and local circumstances (what was later known as the psychic unity of mankind) that enabled men everywhere independently to put nature to their own uses? (359)

Following Glacken, during the seventeenth century perspectives on the natural world had for the most part coalesced in two identifiable trends which were to develop independently reaching their height in the eighteenth century, when great awareness of man’s power over creation arrives. Though distinguishable from each other, nonetheless, both perspectives or approaches, advocated for the application of knowledge to human control of nature. The first, the *physico-theological approach*, concerned itself solely with final causes and accordingly used theology to support its ideas of divine design that

nonetheless required human intervention to bring out the earth's creation to full fruition. This approach recorded the interrelatedness of organisms and environments and paved the way for what later would be the discipline of ecology. The second, the *mechanistic approach*, concerned itself with the pursuit of secondary causes in nature. This was the dominant school of thought, which later adapted the Cartesian scientific method, leading to "an ideal of a purposive control over nature through applied science, the kind of control which in our own day has been in such large and triumphant measure achieved" (427).

It is this *mechanistic approach* which still prevails in western philosophy and practice that Carolyn Merchant energetically denounces in her environmental history, now an ecological feminist classic, The Death of Nature, (1980). Merchant begins her argument explaining that of the multiple and varied images of nature that abounded during the medieval and early modern period two gendered images are more easily recognizable: that of nature as a nurturing mother, from which an *organic* view of nature can be surmised, and that of nature as disorder, from which the *mechanistic* view gained impetus. Merchant explains,

An organically oriented mentality in which female principles played an important role was undermined and replaced by a mechanically oriented mentality that either eliminated or used female principles in an exploitative manner. As Western culture became increasingly mechanized in the 1600's the female earth and virgin earth spirit were subdued by the machine. (2)

The organic view contained within it a number of variants all of them feminized¹⁵ whose social implications Merchant is careful to discuss, such as the idea of a hierarchically designed cosmos corresponding to the female human body, that of the unity of two

¹⁵ Merchant states that, "popular Renaissance literature was filled with hundreds of images associating nature, matter and the earth with the female sex. The earth was alive and considered to be a beneficent, receptive, nurturing female" (28).

dialectical opposite forces (one female and one male), and lastly the pastoral idea of nature as benevolent, peaceful and rustic. By no means did this view preclude the uses and abuses of the environment. In fact, though the metaphor of nature as female sometimes served as a constraint to human manipulation of natural resources, by the seventeenth century the idea of nature as female underlined its passivity and role as receptor which “could easily become sanctions for exploitation as the organic context was transformed by the rise of commercial capitalism” (16). For example, making use of the image of the land as nurturing and fertile female Georg Agricola explains one of the main arguments against mining in order to refute it in his De Re Metallica, (1556):

The earth does not conceal and remove from our eyes those things which are useful and necessary to mankind, but, on the contrary, like a beneficent and kindly mother she yields in large abundance from her bounty and brings into the light of day the herbs, vegetables, grains, and fruits, and trees. The minerals, on the other hand, she buries far beneath in the depth of the ground, therefore they should not be sought. (as cited by Merchant 34)

To refute this argument, Agricola likens the minerals that lie inside the earth to the fish that lie in the depths of water yet they are still caught and eaten. He concludes that “Nature has given the earth ...to man that he might cultivate it and draw out of its caverns metals and other mineral products” (as cited in Merchant 37). What this view did accomplish was to foster an idea of the earth as alive with inherent power and agency. There existed certain notions of exchange and dialogue between human beings and nature, as exemplified by ceremonies, rituals and sacrifices performed by miners, smiths, cultivators. These resulted in a certain concept of the interconnectedness of the human being and the natural realm.

On the other hand, the mechanistic approach to nature sought to replace the organic and communal medieval view of the world and the human’s place in it with a

view that emphasized the hierarchical order of a lifeless machine. Merchant explains that coupled with the nascent new economic capitalism order the

process of mechanizing the world picture removed the controls over the environmental exploitation that were and inherent part of the organic view that nature was alive, sensitive, responsive to human action. (Merchant 11)

Furthermore, the notion of nature as disordered and chaotic survived well into the mechanistic age now put to use as an image that not only invited by required human intervention. The notion combined with the medieval idea of *fallen nature* described above. Merchant discusses the seventeen century figures of the lusty animistic witch sentenced to execution, and the midwife discredited and displaced by the male doctor and his forceps as practical examples of the use of these views in order to control both women and nature (see her chapters five and six).

The connection between the period's anti-feminism and anti-nature practices is rationalized by Francis Bacon (1561-1626) who as attorney and counselor to James I was personally involved in the persecution of witches. He "developed the power of language as a political instrument in reducing female nature to a resource for economic production" (Merchant 165). Considered the "father of modern science," Bacon put forth in his Novum Organum (1620) his method of attaining knowledge through reduction and inductive reasoning. Beginning thus, "Man, being the servant and interpreter of Nature," his text goes on to explain the importance of "instruments of the hand and of the mind".¹⁶ In it artifice is exalted as an exclusively and characteristically human (not animal) quality which likens human being with God, the great Artisan himself. Through the use of tools and knowledge human beings would gain power over nature and coerce her into order so as to improve nature and himself. But, the violence

¹⁶Book One. No page. Online source. See Bibliography for details.

inherent within this perspective and its tie to violence against women cannot be ignored since,

much of the imagery he used in delineating his new scientific objectives and methods derives from the courtroom, and, because it treats nature as a female to be tortured through mechanical inventions, strongly suggests the interrogations of the witch trials and the mechanical devices used to torture witches. (Merchant 168)

In fact, Merchant goes on to claim,

The interrogation of witches as symbols for the interrogation of nature, the courtroom as model for its inquisition, and torture through mechanical devices as a tool for the subjugation of disorder were fundamental to the scientific method as power. (172)

So, it is during the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century when theories of the natural world, the human essence, and epistemology coalesce into the scientific method and “rational control over nature, society, and the self was achieved by redefining reality itself through the new machine metaphor” (Merchant 193).

In addition to Francis Bacon, René Descartes was a key player in the Scientific Revolution who also emphasized the mechanistic element of nature and thus its lack of agency. In his Discourse on Method (1637), Descartes expounds what would later become the foundation for modern western philosophy: *Je pense, donc je suis*, abbreviated as *cogito*. With it he put forth the basis of western identity as a subjectivity¹⁷ vis a vis nature as object. Though the Cartesian cogito has been critiqued by many environmental philosophers, historians of science, and critics of modernity and capitalism, among others, it is an underlying assumption of western culture at all socio-economic levels. Val Plumwood explains that its danger lay in that

Cartesian thought has striped nature of the intentional and mindlike qualities which make an ethical response to it possible. Once nature is reconceived as

¹⁷ This claim will be discussed in full in Chapter Two.

capable of agency and intentionality, and human identity is reconceived in less polarized and disembodied ways, the great gulf which Cartesian thought established between the conscious, mindful human sphere and the mindless, clockwork natural one disappears. (5)

Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651) also served the mechanistic view of the Scientific Revolution as he created a mechanical model of state that would install order to an otherwise chaotic human essence and natural world. Together, these philosophers among others consolidated the death of nature:

The removal of animistic, organic assumptions about the cosmos constituted the death of nature – the most far-reaching effect of the Scientific Revolution. Because nature was now viewed as a system of dead, inert particles moved by external, rather than inherent forces, the mechanical framework itself could legitimate the manipulation of nature. Moreover, as a conceptual framework, the mechanical order had associated with it a framework of values based on power, fully compatible with the directions taken by commercial capitalism. (Merchant 193)

The Early Modern World-System and Nature

Early Modern philosophies of nature changed more slowly than early modern European ecological practices and its environment. In effect, since large scale economic and environmental change mark the period, an ecological critique of sixteenth century texts ought not to ignore the environmental historical nor economic context. To this end, this section hopes to outline in broad strokes the ecological circumstances of the period, the developing awareness of the need to manage and conserve natural resources, and the advent of a new economic world-system that is capitalist in essence and pre-requires a specific human to nature relationship.

John F. Richards' The Unending Frontier: An Environmental History of the Early Modern World, describes European ecological circumstances that gave rise to “the expansive dynamism of European early modern capitalist societies” which concretized in

the colonization and conquest of what became to be known as the New World (17).

Richards underlines the planet-wide repercussion of this event.

What is manifest, however, is that the western European presence around the world and western Europe's demands at home caused important environmental effects in many world areas during the sixteenth century through the mid-nineteenth century. (Richards 17)

The environmental historian invites us to take climate as a variable not a constant in human history when he introduces the Little Ice Age as a factor in European economic, political, cultural, and social history during the early modern period. He explains that what has been termed the *Little Ice Age* struck the northern hemisphere during a period roughly from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century in which mean temperatures were colder than would be expected and precipitation increased in many areas.¹⁸ An especially cold period began in the mid sixteenth century and lasted to the eighteenth century that had a tremendous effect on European society since "religious and cultural rituals, cultivation, trade, industrial production, and movement of people and goods all relied on the predictability of climate and the local and regional scale" (64). Low temperatures brought on floods, droughts, and affected the freezing and thawing of bodies of water, the migration patterns of birds and other animals, the flowering of trees and shrubs, and the timing of harvests.¹⁹ The repercussions of this phenomenon are still being understood but some have become increasingly clear: the mortality rate rose while periods of famine struck as a result of reduced output of wine and grains, the two most important food crops

¹⁸ "Altogether, an increased decline of the temperature conditions is evident in central Europe during the second half of the century. In the course of the sixteenth century all seasons showed a significant cooling trend which was more and more accentuated." Rudiger Glasser, et al. "Seasonal Temperature and Precipitation Fluctuations in Selected Parts of Europe during the Sixteenth Century" in *Climactic Change* 43, no. 1 (1999): 196. As cited by John F. Richards in *Unending Frontier*, p. 70. See Bibliography for details.

¹⁹ Paleoclimatologists are unsure as to the causes of the Little Ice Age. A low incidence in sunspots, major volcanic eruptions, and even El Niño-Southern Oscillation, have all been cited as possible causes.

of central Europe, as Richards reminds us. There was also a general increase in prices especially in the last third of the sixteenth century.²⁰ This increase in prices made it difficult for many to be able to consume sufficient calories. As it is to be expected, food shortages and subsequent inflated food prices resulted in many deaths and malnutrition which the bubonic plague was quick to exploit during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries reducing populations in Europe by as much as sixty percent in certain areas (Merchant 48). However, countries that had a connection to the new lands or to other areas of trade fared better. Richards explains that,

Countries like the Netherlands, England, Spain, and Portugal – whose foreign trade and colonial tribute surpluses enabled their populations to purchase new World codfish, West Indian sugar, or Baltic grain – were partially buffered against the effects of adverse climate. (76)

So, it follows that the encounter between the old and the new world was from the first moment propitious to Europeans. After all, their environmental conditions had persuaded them to search for alternatives to their foods and their spaces. European imperialist expansion and subsequent colonization of Caribbean natural resources was in this way driven by the early modern ecological context. Furthermore, how would have scarcity and disease shaped their expectations and later on their experience, of the Caribbean landscape? How would these factors affect their interpretation of the indigenous ecology?

Notwithstanding Europe's precarious position during the early modern period, European society, both northwestern and Mediterranean alike, still managed to deeply

²⁰ One study postulates that such climactic chaos could have caused the dramatic increase in the burning of witches after 1560 since they were often seen as capable of controlling the weather. See Wolfgang Behringer, "Climactic Change and Witch-Hunting: The Impact of the Little Ice Age on Mentalities," *Climactic Change* 43, no. 1 (September 1999): 335-51. As cited by John F. Richards in *Unending Frontier*, p. 72. See Bibliography for details.

change their environment. Indeed, there was increased development of technologies, and proliferation of policies and regulations having to do with the environment that had already begun during the medieval period. These technologies were put to use in order to mine for copper, iron, gold, and silver; to build and maintain water mills and canals; to drain and maintain marshes and fens; to change the course of rivers; to fertilize the soil; and to manage forests, among other activities. Though all of these practices would reflect early modern ecology, the cursory study of early modern forestry is more likely to yield in the mind of the reader an idea of European attitudes towards natural resources. More importantly, a brief analysis of early modern forestry would aid in unveiling a nascent crisis awareness and preoccupation with the need to conserve and manage wisely.

The significance of forests to European life cannot be overstated: they were essential to both urban and rural life. Primarily, they served as repositories of wood which was in turn used for heating, cooking, charcoal making, and mining. It was also used for building the beams and rafters of houses and other buildings as well as for the construction of ships. Forests were also used for grazing and for hunting, in addition to the long and deep cultural traditional value they had as places of mystery, of the divine, or of magic, for example. They served as refuge for English peasant squatters that became landless because of the practice of land enclosure or their inability to cover a landlord's rent (63).

Though legally the term *forest* referred to lands that served as game reserves for the nobility, the use of their oak for shipbuilding was widely sanctioned by the upper classes. In effect, during the fifteenth century the shipbuilding industry, critical to commercial expansion and national supremacy, reached the limits of its supply when oak

reserves outside of Venice were depleted (65). By 1470 Venice enacted policies that regulated the cutting of oaks. Nonetheless, consumption of oak continued and by the end of the sixteenth century, Mediterranean forests had been mostly divested of oak with few exceptions. In England, during Queen Elizabeth's reign laws were written with the intention of preventing the cutting of oaks that would be suitable for naval timber because of their size and proximity to the coast. Coal mining increased exponentially as supplies of wood dwindled. Not only did the requirements of shipbuilding affect the forests but also the emerging economic capitalist world-system:

While population pressure had taken its toll on the forest ecosystem before the demographic collapse of the fourteenth century, after ecosystem recovery mercantile capitalism hastened the dramatic decline of timber resources in the sixteenth century. (Merchant 62)

Royal game reserves decreased in size and number as more royal timber was released in order to be used for shipbuilding. In France, there is evidence that since the fourteenth century there was fear that the country would die for lack of woods felled for marine timber. In the seventeenth century this idea led to the *French Forest Ordinance of 1669*, which sought to conserve royal and private woods with some effect on public ones. The ordinance aimed to place restrictions on the cutting of wood, protect seeds and acorns, prohibit the pasturing and grazing of animals in the forest and prevent uprooting of young trees (Glacken 491-2).

From this history of increasing demand and diminishing supply emerges a growing consciousness of the need for resource management not for the sake of the forests itself, but for the future of the state and its peoples. In this case, the practice of conservation is born not out of a philosophy of nature that promoted its organicity or agency, but of a logical account and pragmatic need. Consequently, European shortage

of wood incited French as well as Portuguese incursion into Brazil as can be seen in Jean de Léry's (1578) text cited in the Introduction.²¹

With its rise in specialized trade and industry, the emergence of the mercantile economy is an economic change relevant to the study of the early modern ecological context. As discussed in the preceding section, the fifteenth and sixteenth century saw a shift from the traditional common field agricultural system to that of enclosures that were owned by a landlord (usually belonging to the noble class). These were initially rented out to farmers in order for them to live and cultivate. But as trade rapidly developed as the principal way to achieve and accumulate wealth, the wool industry became a cash crop and enclosures were reserved for the pasturing of sheep rather than cultivating. As the price of grain rose and inflation hit, rents also increased and many tenants being unable to pay became destitute.

Thomas More's Utopia, published in 1516, provides a great example of the social and economic changes that would affect early modern ecology in England. As Book I opens the reader finds herself in the midst of a discussion between a layman and Raphael Hythloday, the text's protagonist, moderated by John Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury. The argument hinges on whether or not death is adequate punishment for stealing. The layman proposes that it is, since thievery is a question of choice. For him, people are free to learn a trade or to farm the land thus if they steal it is because they have chosen "deliberately to be rogues" (More 10).²² Hythloday interjects in order to explain

²¹ Moreover, there is at this time already a growing tiredness of the urban space and what are considered debilitating aspects of civilization that is evident in writers like Montaigne as well as others, but does not reach its most eloquent expression until Jean Jacques Rousseau's Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men (1754).

²² Translated from the Latin by Robert M. Adams. See Bibliography for details.

the reasons why people turn to thievery. First, he refers to veterans who have been rendered disabled by war who are unable to work or to learn a new trade. Then, he cites the fact that many noblemen do not work preferring to live “off the labor of others, their tenants” (10). To compound this was the issue that each nobleman had with him a retinue of servants (vestiges of private feudal armies) which would be compelled to turn to the streets as soon as their lord died since they were not trained in any trade, or in farming. As a third and final reason for why people turn to stealing, Hythloday explains England’s sheep problem: sheep “are becoming so greedy and wild that they devour men themselves” (12). Of course, this is a sarcastic way of denouncing the great landlord enclosures. Hythloday explains,

For they leave no land free for the plow: they enclose every acre for pasture; they destroy houses and abolish towns, keeping only the churches, and those for sheep-barns. And as if enough of your land were not already wasted on woods and game-preserves, these worthy men turn all human habitations and cultivated fields back to wilderness. (12)

The problem was that the enclosures were reserved for pasturing that made common field agriculture impossible and resulted in high rent and the subsequent eviction of families whose members are unable to find work and thus have no other choice but to turn to stealing. Hythloday goes on,

There is no need for farm labor, in which they have been trained, when there is not land left to be plowed. One herdsman or shepherd can look after a flock of beasts large enough to stock an area that would require many hands if it were plowed and harvested. (12-3)

The wool industry is the culprit since it enabled the accumulation of wealth of a few.

The reason is that the wool trade, though it can’t be called a monopoly because it isn’t in the hands of one single person, is concentrated in few hands (an oligopoly, you might say) and these so rich, that the owners are never pressed to sell until they have a mind to, and that is only when they can get their price. (13)

In fact, Carolyn Merchant argues that,

As trade quickened throughout western Europe, stimulated by the European discovery and exploitation of the Americas, production for subsistence began to be replaced by more specialized production for the market. The spreading use of money provided not only a uniform medium of exchange but also a reliable store of value, facilitating open-ended accumulation. (Merchant 51)

The accumulation of wealth in the hands of the already privileged few brought by the expansion and specialization of trade and industrialization, was nothing short of a new world economy. Hythloday's answer, let agriculture be restored, would never come to pass.

An undeniable fact is that after 1500 "western Europe unquestionably played a disproportionately larger role in shaping the early modern world and what may well be termed a world system" (Richards 17). Following world-systems analysis, Richard explains how the early modern European world wound up hegemonic,

Western Europe became primary beneficiary of the capitalist world economy mainly by controlling interregional maritime trade. Markets centered in that region directed the exploitation of natural resources on a world scale. (Richards 18)

World-Systems analysis is a so called "knowledge movement" that emerged in the 1970's as an alternative to the then current approach of social analysis of historical realities which had been developed during the nineteenth century in the social sciences and which centered on the nation-state the unit of study.²³ Its first aim was to move away from the nation-state instead taking world-systems, as the basic unit of analysis.²⁴ Immanuel

²³ The following is a synthesis of the concept's main argument taken from Immanuel Wallerstein, (2004), "World-Systems Analysis," in World System History, [Ed. George Modelski], in *Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS)*, Developed under the Auspices of the UNESCO, Eolss Publishers, Oxford, UK, <http://www.eolss.net/ebooks/Sample%20Chapters/C04/E6-94-01.pdf> July 16, 2009.

²⁴ The concept of the world system has its roots in Fernand Braudel's The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II (1949), where he argued that the sixteenth century Mediterranean arose as a historical system of interdependent economies, political organizations and

Wallerstein is considered to be the leading advocate of the world-systems approach as expounded in his book *The Modern World-System I. Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, (1974) among others. For Wallerstein, an accurate description of social change is best achieved via the study of the interrelatedness of political, social, cultural structures, historically within a pre-determined time frame of *long durée*. The concepts of *core*, *semi-periphery*, and *periphery* are central to the understanding of world-systems analysis standing in opposition to development theories such as modernization, and dependency theory.²⁵

The *core* refers to the developed and industrialized part of the system that accumulates the wealth generated by the market. The *semi-periphery* refers to a component of the system that plays some part in the production of commodities but does not benefit fully from the market's wealth. The *periphery* refers to the underdeveloped component of the system from whence raw materials and other resources are extracted and which does not benefit from the market's wealth but in turn is subject to its comings and goings.

Following Wallerstein, the modern world-system is a type of world-economy system that emerged around 1450-1550 and that is capitalist in essence as it is based on domination of one structure of the system over another through the sale and purchase of commodities produced by the manipulation of raw materials by labor. As a historical social system, capitalism comprehends a variety of types of labor, free wage labor,

civilizations, that should be studied in terms of geological time (the *long durée*), the social and cultural, and people and events.

²⁵ The term "development theories" refer to a group of theories that explain national economic change in terms of a pattern of evolution. "Modernization theory" refers to the idea that in order to achieve economic stability and capital success underdeveloped countries have but to imitate the economic development of wealthy countries. "Dependency theory" is a relational theory of economic development that states that wealthy countries foster a state of economic dependency and underdevelopment in other countries that ultimately secures their wealth.

sharecropping, and coercive wage labor, each corresponding in general to the three components to the system: the core, the semi-periphery and the periphery.

The first world-system had its beginnings in 1492 when Spain, attempting to reach the center of the last interregional system (which had India at its center and western Europe as its periphery) took course due West and inadvertently reached the Americas thus inaugurating the first world hegemony (“Beyond Eurocentrism” 10). Following Spain, Flanders and then England and France would constitute themselves as the center to the Amerindian periphery. The center would control the production of commodities through the extraction of raw materials by coercive labor (first the Amerindians, then the African slaves) in the periphery. The world-system economy is summarized in the following,

Before 1492, most of the preconditions that would be critical for the eventual rise of industrial capitalism were present not merely in parts of Europe but also in parts of Asia and Africa. After 1492, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Europe acquired three additional preconditions. One was the very considerable accumulation of wealth from the mines and plantations of America and from trade in Asia and Africa. The second, closely related to the first, was the huge enlargement of markets outside of western Europe for products either produced in western Europe or imported and then reexported; that is, a very great and almost constantly growing demand. Third, and most important of all, the social sectors involved with capitalism took political power on a wide scale in western Europe, something that had not happened elsewhere except of very small terrains. This, the bourgeois revolution, allowed the emerging capitalist class-community to mobilize state power toward its further rise.²⁶

Numerous advances allowed for the private accumulation and employment of liquid wealth for the production of further financial profit, that is, for the transition from a mainly subsistence and barter to a mainly capitalist economy. The change to a money economy, aided by new technologies in mining and the recently discovered American

²⁶ James M. Blaut, *The Colonizer’s Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History*. New York: Guilford Press, 1993. P. 201. As cited by John F. Richards in *The Unending Frontier*, p. 18. See Bibliography for details.

stores of gold and silver allowed for more minting and circulation of coins. Also, varied techniques of investment such sea loans, underwriting, and insurance allowed for entrepreneurs to advance money to traders or ship captains. In addition, different types of commercial partnerships were developed or continued to be developed successfully during the sixteenth century such as the *commenda*, regulated companies, and in the early seventeenth century, the joint-stock company. Other banking advances like bills of exchange, drafts and promissory notes in addition to the development of double-entry bookkeeping allowed for further flexibility and accountability in money lending as well as the receipt of payment (Jensen 91).

As the basic capitalist institutions of banking, credit, and market facilities flourished during the sixteenth and especially the seventeenth centuries, it is worth noting that these facilities were founded and maintained by the emergent merchant middle class. Indeed, economic historians emphasize that even the encounter and subsequent colonization of the new lands was carried out in its majority by the private investment of a growing middle class. “The financing, organizing, equipping, and directing of these expeditions were done privately rather than by the government,” explains De Lamar Jensen (351). The Crown’s role was limited to granting royal charters, such as the Spanish *capitulación*, supervising legal matters and exacting a tax on all economic success (351). This was not only the case of the Spanish but also of the Portuguese, English, French and Dutch all of which relied more on private enterprise than state investment. In fact, the most successful type of private entrepreneurship was the joint-stock company, which was basically a conglomeration of capital by its members. This investment model came to the fore during the seventeenth century and is the ancestor of

modern day corporations. The most famous joint-stock companies were the English East India Company (formed in 1600) and the Dutch East India Company (formed in 1602), the last one referred to as the first multinational corporation (Scoville 6). Together, these factors account for a new mainly capitalist economic system that would become a world-system with the inclusion of the Americas albeit as peripheral purveyors of raw materials.

This world-system had numerous and profound implications on early modern European ecology, some of which are with us to this day. The extraction of raw materials emphasized first, the divorce of any notion of nature as an organic agent, then, the use of technology (some that was already in use, and some that had to be invented), and finally, the use of coercive labor. For this reason Amerindians and African slaves were taken and relocated as the need arose following the market's mandate. Great effort was placed in acquiring and recording facts that would facilitate the manipulation of the environment and of the labor in order to assure the exploitation of the new lands in the periphery and the accumulation of wealth in the center. Richards adds,

Knowledge of the natural world conferred power over previously unused natural resources across the globe. Rising human productivity in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries relied on improved access to abundant, low-cost natural resources. Resource extraction driven by the consolidating early modern world economy required intensified human management and control of the world's lands and, increasingly, its oceans. Human intervention caused dramatic changes in the landscapes, ecosystems, and habitats around the world between 1500 and 1800. With demonstrated effectiveness came rising pride in human capabilities and a new, confident attitude toward the manipulation of nature. (22)

It follows that the capitalist world-system and modernity as its consequence implies a specific ecology that is unilateral since it subjectivizes²⁷ the human element dialectally to the objectification of nature. The dialectics of this operation rest denied

²⁷ The *subjectivization* implied in modernity will be explained in detail in Chapter Two.

since the modern subject will emerge ideologically from its own inherent qualities.²⁸

Dussel adds that “from its very moment of inception, modernity has constituted nature as an ‘exploitable’ object, with the increase in the rate of profit capital as its goal”

(“Beyond” 19). Nature is denuded of its agency and objectified. Thus, like in the case of the mechanical philosophy of nature, capitalism’s tie to what Merchant calls the *death of nature* is undeniable, since,

Built into the emerging capitalist market economy was an inexorably accelerating force of expansion and accumulation, achieved, over the long term, at the expense of the environment and the village community- the natural and human resource bases. (Merchant 51)

The fatality of the system lies in that within the modern capitalist system nature and life become antithetical:

Given that nature is for modernity only a medium of production, it runs out its fate of being consumed, destroyed, and, in addition, accumulating geometrically upon the earth its debris, until it jeopardizes the reproduction or survival of life itself. (Dussel “Beyond” 19)

In this way, during a period of climactic change that challenged Europe’s ability to produce enough foodstuffs for its own consumption, and in a place where there was a growing consciousness of the need for resource management and conservation, the first world-system emerged with a proto-capitalist (or mercantile) mode of production. Intent on the manipulation of natural resources and the production of commodities that could then be sold to a profit which would be accumulated with the sole intention of re-investing it in order to produce more wealth, this capitalist system requires an objectification of nature dialectically opposed to a subjectivity characteristic of

²⁸ Dussel reacts to what he calls the Eurocentric paradigm (opposed to world paradigm) which claims that “Europe had exceptional internal characteristics that allowed it to supersede, through its rationality, all other cultures” (“Beyond Eurocentrism” 3).

modernity. These are the general economic and material circumstances that would shape the depiction of Caribbean Nature in early modern travel narratives.

Colonial Caribbean Nature

Environmental histories and geographic studies are our best bet for obtaining some idea of what the Caribbean natural environment and the Amerindian ecology was like at the time of the encounter. The challenge is compounded by the fact that the civilizations that inhabited the extended Caribbean, what I call the coastal Amerindians, have been unable to attract the attention of researchers as much as those civilizations of Mexico, Central America and the Andes, namely the Aztecs, Mayas and Incas. Nonetheless, there are a few sources that prove useful in putting together an image of what the Caribbean natural environment looked like and how the Amerindians related to it. Of these sources, Shawn Miller's An Environmental History of Latin America (2007); David Watt's The West Indies: Patterns of Development, Culture and Environmental Change since 1492 (1987); and James Miller's An Environmental History of Northeast Florida (1998) have proved most useful.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the Amerindians that occupied the extended Caribbean shared a similar ecosystem (coastal tropical or subtropical lowlands) with a similar flora and fauna. In fact, the oceanic biodiversity of the region is described as *cosmopolitan* with *global teleconnections*, meaning that the ecosystems within the region did not develop an isolative endemism but rather, species, as well as humans, migrated northwards and southwards from South America to the islands and up to the peninsula of

Florida (Watlington 58).²⁹ In addition, the Amerindians shared a variety of food sources as well as agricultural, fishing and hunting technology. On the basis of these similarities I put forth here a notion of Amerindian ecology to use as a point of reference in future discussions.

First, it is important to address the myth of the *Ecological Indian*³⁰ and its inaccuracy and uselessness as an Amerindian descriptor. The myth commonly holds that indigenous peoples of the Americas had a benevolent relationship to their natural environment which led them to live in harmony with nature. Destruction of the American landscape, it is believed, came to happen only when the European set foot on the continent. At the heart of this myth is the assumption that indigenous people lacked the technology or the socio-political structure necessary in order to affect their environment. It is worth mentioning that this stereotype of the innocuous and innocent Amerindian does not derive from sixteenth or even seventeenth century sources but rather from nineteenth century sources making reference to the North American continent during the push to the west. Via the media, however, this image has penetrated not only current North American popular imagery, but also the imagery of current urban South America. The purpose of the image seems to be to justify the colonization of the western

²⁹ There is strong evidence that the *Little Ice Age* (13th -19th centuries) discussed above also affected the north and northeast of North America. What is now Florida and the southern states would have been unaffected except for the migration of birds and other animals escaping the low temperatures.

³⁰ This term is borrowed from Shepard Krech III's book titled: The Ecological Indian: Myth and History, in which he debunks the image of the noble North American Indian living in harmony with the earth demonstrating instead the Indian's complex interaction and manipulation of his natural environment. See Bibliography for details.

landscape by the young United States nation since it is less morally reprehensible to colonize an empty landscape rather than a peopled one.³¹

The truth is that in the descriptions of nature in early modern travel narratives to the Caribbean images of a bountiful and fertile nature abound. But these images are linked to the myth of the Garden of Eden which, as Miller reminds us, is still a garden (not a wilderness) and therefore carries within it the idea of human intervention. Beyond doubt, Europeans were aware of the fact that Amerindians cultivated the land and made use of gold, as it is evidenced by early modern travelers and chroniclers. Still, they judged this use inappropriate.

In reality, Amerindians had a sizeable impact on their natural environment. “Indians,” explains Miller, “many of whom had sharply less inimical attitudes toward nature than Europeans, still deforested, hunted beasts to extinction, and carved the face of the landscape to meet their material and cosmological needs” (4). By their extensive farming they selected plants that were beneficial to them and hindered those that were not; they fertilized and changed the composition of soils; they carved plots on the sides of mountains; they cleared forests; they eradicated animal habitats; and they caused and managed field erosion. By their hunting and fishing they drove species to extinction³² and by their husbanding they forced hybridization and adaptability on others. They intervened with their natural environment so much so that among ecological historians the debate is one of *sustainability*: whether or not this pattern of consumption of nature

³¹ In opposition, as Miller argues, Iberians “had no qualms and made no excuses for subjugating two densely peopled continents. Conquest justified itself, and the more people conquered, converted, and taxed, the better” (9).

³² In the Caribbean islands, for example, animal extinctions through hunting and habitat eradication include that of rice rats, a species of parrots, the Audubon’s shearwater and a type of flamingo (Watts 77), among other animals, like the crocodile (Watlington 52).

would be viable throughout time. In fact, Miller argues in the case of some indigenous groups that “there is more than ample evidence that indigenous cultures avidly consumed timber, fuel, water, and soil nutrients, and sometimes faster than nature could replace them” (46).

It is easier to imagine the Amerindian ecological impact if one considers the numbers of their population prior to the encounter. Though a long debate has ensued among archeologists, anthropologists, and historians, concerning the population of the Americas prior to 1492 there has been recent agreement in the estimate figure of forty to seventy million of Amerindians. The Caribbean islands alone had from three to seven million (Miller 10). Indeed, as Miller argues thinking of the urban concentrations in the continent, “in Spain and Portugal, there were no cities comparable in size to those of America, and during the three succeeding centuries of colonial era, the Iberians built no enduring colonial city that could match them for size” (10). Also, following anthropologist Neil Whitehead, the Orinoco River basin that Raleigh visits

was heavily settled by native people and their own active management of landscape which [...] would have been reflected in the practices of maintaining coppices, burning off savanna grasses and a husbandry of fauna, especially deer.
(5)

If the Caribbean natural resources seemed mismanaged to the European, it was because of several reasons including ignorance of native farming techniques, and disagreement over preferred crops, in addition to the general European philosophy of nature current at the time and the capitalist drive as described above. For example, the Tupi practice of agroforestry (explained below) was unknown to Europeans and would remain so for many long years:

To European eyes, the forests appeared virgin, and although for the most part intact, most coastal forests had been felled, burned and abandoned many times over the millennium of Tupi presence. The forest was certainly less complex and less diverse as a result: its mix and distribution of species had been altogether altered. (15)

Another factor that may have influenced early modern European's view of Amerindian ecology is the demographic collapse of gargantuan proportions that occurred during the sixteenth century. In effect, a century after the first encounter in 1492, more than fifty million Amerindians, more than ninety percent of the pre-Columbian population, had died (Miller 50). In the Caribbean islands ninety-nine percent of Amerindians died or fled while in the Tupi forests 95 percent of the population had vanished a hundred years after the first encounter (Miller 50-1). As a consequence of the decline in population the natural environment rebounded: "soils, forests, waters, and wildlife that had been mined, logged, dammed, and hunted for millennia, under constant indigenous pressures, got a sudden reprieve" (56). So, "for those immigrants who came a century after the conquest, the New World was a greener, wilder place than it had been" (57).

At the time of the encounter, settled agriculture was the rule in the American the continent with the exception of North America (11). The Amerindians of the Antilles, as well as those of the coast of Florida and north eastern coast of South America, shared similar agricultural technology. For example, food crops (such as manioc and maize) were intermixed with spontaneously growing trees. Using the technique of *swidden* (slash and burn) they would clear forest by cutting and burning. Then, they would cultivate manioc, maize, beans, squash and cotton alongside spontaneously occurring trees and shrubs. After a period of about five years, when the crop yield would start to diminish,

they would move to another forest spot and repeat the process. Amerindians would in this way rotate fields using a fallowing system in essence not unlike the European except done in a larger and longer scale (15). This was a very effective technique: by the time of the encounter Tupi agriculture sustained around 150,000 Amerindians in the eastern Brazilian coast (14).

The Tupi and other Amerindian groups made extensive use of the technique of agroforestry referring to the manipulation of forests for food and other resources. In this way, Amazonian forests, an estimated twelve percent, are partly manmade (18). The technique would have been unrecognizable to Europeans. Miller explains:

In the Amazon, farmers might plant their corn and manioc among native brazilnut trees, rubber trees, medicinal plants, and a large variety of palms that provided fruit, oil, alcohol, fiber, timber, and roofing material. When they abandoned a field, they continued to encourage the growth of these trees, and palms thrived in the disturbed plots of ground. They also scattered new seeds about, including cashews. The result was an intentional forest. By careful management, forests became less wild and more capable of producing commodities that humans prized. (18)

In the Caribbean islands themselves, the preferred technique was *conuco* agriculture which also intermingled food crops in a sophisticated mounded field and made use of *swidden* and fallowing. They also benefited from forest management with regards to timber and fibers for construction in addition to fish stupefiers and medicinal plants (Watts 75). In general the Amerindians of the coasts and islands were hunter-fishers-gatherers. In land they hunted small rodents and birds, in the sea they hunted seals and turtles. They were experienced fishermen in sea as well as in rivers and estuaries. They successfully husbanded some fishes and turtles as well as small rodents, and domestic food animals such as a small variety of dogs and the turkey. In contrast to

Europeans who had horses, cattle, pigs, sheep, and goats, these coastal Amerindians had no beasts of burden (J. Miller 97).

A striking difference between European and Amerindian farming is the fact that neither the peoples of southeastern North America, nor the islands, or the northeastern coasts of South America all the way to the south, had privately owned agricultural fields. On the contrary, their farming was done in common fields, a practice that western Europe had generally left behind by the sixteenth century. This is an important issue which the Europeans would observe immediately during the first encounters between the cultures and exploit to their benefit.

Iberians and Englishmen, who judged the Indians no better than animals running about, or worse, as idlers unwilling to work and improve the land resorted to the Roman precedent of *res nullius* which granted legal rights to those who used and improved the land. From the European perspective, neither the Tupi nor the Massachusett had established land ownership with the appropriate signs of permanence. (Miller 69)

Moreover, as was explained in the preceding sections, Europeans had an economy of accumulation of capital which relied on the market. On the other hand, coastal Amerindians maintained an economy of subsistence which was dictated by the demand to satisfy the basic concrete necessities of food, clothing, and shelter. There were also symbolic necessities that relied on production and labor and which appealed to the aesthetic and religious sensibilities of the Amerindian. Examples of these are the farming and consumption of tobacco and other hallucinogens as well as the use of gold as a status symbol of social distinction.

It is important to note that patterns of consumption were very different for coastal Amerindians than for other Amerindians. For example, the Aztec and Inca cultures adorned their cities and temples with gold and silver; accumulated food, tools and

weapons, clothing, bird feathers, bones of sacrificed animals in huge granaries.³³ In addition, their elites consumed in excess, while producing nothing (Miller 32). However,

The Tupi, like many indigenous groups that relied heavily in hunting and gathering, did live near the subsistence level, that is, almost the entire economy consisted of providing the basics of food and shelter with almost no luxuries. They did engage in some trade, but this had a political and military role rather than economic, and they made relatively few demands on nature. (30)

Still, Miller reminds us that the Tupi, like other Amerindians or any other human being, for that matter, was far from being free of greed.

It was brazilwood itself that would betray the Tupi's own acquisitiveness, small as it was, for they freely did the staggering labor of brazilwood's extraction, its cutting and lading into waiting ships. (31)

In exchange for the wood, Europeans would give the Tupi axes, knives, scissors, fishhooks, mirrors, among others. The image of the saintly and innocent Indian, who must be imitated, so widely spread in early modern thought, is thus debunked.

As research bears, there were close to seventy million Amerindians in the continent. In the Caribbean Antilles and the coasts of Florida and the north, northeaster part of South America, the existence of seven million coastal Amerindians can be speculated. These Amerindians did rely on ecological practices that allowed them to reap benefit from the soil and the surrounding flora and fauna. Miller adds: "like Europeans, Indians perceived nature primarily as provisions to be extracted and consumed. Animals were meat, hide, fur, sinew, tooth and bone; trees were lumber, firewood, fruit, and nuts" (26). Some of these practices ended up in irreversible ecological damage like species extinction, for example. Some ended up in temporary damage such as the selection of

³³ The purpose of this accumulation of goods in the Aztec and Inca culture seems to differ greatly from the purpose of accumulation in western European society. Miller explains that "storage facilities, in addition to war material, also stored heaps of status goods, which were used to cement social relations, usually between the central state and local elites" (33).

certain plants, deforestation, erosion, and soil exhaustion. Still, they used the land as they saw fit and as they needed to in order to live and satisfy certain symbolic needs. In opposition to a trend in European thought which viewed Amerindians as closer to nature and thus possessors of an intuitive virtuousness unspoiled by civilization,³⁴ the brazilwood example shows that the Amerindians were not devoid of greed or superfluous want. European descriptions, as will be discussed at length in Chapters Four and Five, did observe and interpret a difference in the way the Amerindian related to the natural environment. The difference may rely on their philosophies of nature. Miller explains that,

While Europeans exploited nature's resources with a clear conscience, for their Christian god had given them unchallenged dominion over plants, animals and "all creeping things," Indians faced nature with trepidation. Indians did not paint the same stark line that Europeans did between themselves and nature. Indians generally placed plants, animals and even inanimate objects on a more equal footing with members of the human world. But if Indian culture did not perceive itself as standing above nature, it did not see itself in brotherly harmony either, in an alliance of ungrudging mutual assistance. Nature, for Indians, was a power to be reckoned with, equal to or greater than human powers, and their respect for nature was driven not by friendship but by fear. (26-7)

It follows that concepts of nature, culture, and ecology, are anachronistic and nonsensical when applied to Amerindian philosophy and practice. After all, Amerindians drew little distinction between themselves and animals but rather emphasized kinship in traits, strategies of adaptation and the valuation of life. In this way, there existed for Amerindians certain reciprocity in nature within which the human being had his feet firmly planted. Miller articulates the difference between early modern European and Amerindian philosophies of nature the following way:

Perhaps the greatest distinction between European and Indian beliefs about nature was in their perceptions of nature's future. The Indians prayed and sacrificed to

³⁴ This trend to which this chapter has alluded twice already will be discussed in Chapter Five.

avoid natural catastrophe, to save their terrestrial home in perpetuity. The Europeans prayed for millennial cataclysm, for the ends of their mortal existence redeemed by their ascension to heaven and for the destruction of nature itself which could not, in their eyes, merit salvation. (44)

Conclusion

Though already during the late medieval period the idea that human effect on the environment could be undesirable and even toxic had already begun to creep up, it is much later, in the eighteenth century, when the idea that human induced environmental changes could be permanently damaging was widely recognized. In fact, the Caribbean served as a laboratory where Europeans could effect and measure change in what they considered to be underused soil (Glacken 358).

Unencumbered as the reader is by now of simplistic notions of European or Amerindian ecology let us revisit the purpose of this project. As stated in the Introduction, the purpose is not to denounce the colonialism and imperialism towards nature or towards the Amerindian inherent in early modern western European discourse, since such a project would be tautological in essence. Nor is the project's aim to applaud Amerindian's ecology judging it benevolent or preferable. But rather, the purpose of the project is to trace how this difference in approaches, in philosophies and practices of nature, in relationships, in ecologies, is inscribed into the text and how it feeds a notion of the modern subject vis à vis its object. The following chapter will provide the theoretical context within which the reader is to understand this modern subjectivity and the place of ecology within it.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ECOLOGY OF SUBJECTIVIZATION AND ECOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE

But the reason why this message of [ecological] continuity and dependency is so revolutionary in the context of the modern world is that the dominant strands of western culture have for so long denied it, and have given us a model of human identity as only minimally and accidentally connected to the earth. (Plumwood 6)

Chapter One put forth the theories of ecological criticisms as well as the environmental, ecological, and economic context of early modern Europe and the Caribbean that inform this project. In this chapter, we will introduce the original concepts of the *ecology of subjectivization* and *ecological difference* both of which are central to the kind of ecological feminist textual analysis to which this project aspires.

In order to do this, the chapter will first discuss what *modern subjectivity* is, the reasons for its emergence during the early modern period, and its relation to the text. So that our discussion is firmly grounded within the specific historical period to which we are referring, Stephen Greenblatt's theory of self-fashioning in the sixteenth century will be presented, followed by an in-depth discussion of subjectivity in the text, specifically the travel narrative, the genre of choice of this project. Then, the relationship between ecology and the process of subjectivization will be expounded through a brief account of the Lacanian paradigm of subjectivization, which is not taken as universal or necessarily descriptive of reality, but rather as a very influential model in the west. With the help of Jean Joseph Goux, the ecology within the Lacanian model of subjectivization is revealed as the reigning ecology of the western modern subject. In this way, the concept of the

ecology of subjectivization, referring to the particular human-nature relationship that is implicit within modern subjectivity, emerges as a principal category of analysis in this study.

Then, we will turn to the Argentinean philosopher Enrique Dussel's critique of modern subjectivity as a seventeenth century European phenomenon that emerges dialectically in Spain as the center vis-à-vis the peripheral Mexico. But rather than follow Dussel's theory to the letter, the chapter will argue that modern subjectivity does not emerge with Hernán Cortés in Mexico, but with earlier travelers to the Caribbean. The importance of the textuality of the construction of the subject, for Greenblatt as well as for Dussel, will be highlighted throughout this discussion.

The second half of this chapter is devoted to exploring *difference* as a critical concept in relation to the other as subject and object. Though its structuralist and poststructuralist usage will be visited, the term will be developed fully within the context of cultural and ethnic studies. Furthermore, the *binary pair* is presented as the articulation of the smallest irreducible difference, the study of which has gained importance in deconstructivist, feminist and cultural studies as well as ecocritical.

In following, *ecology*, or the human to nature relationship, will be discussed as both a *marker of difference* between the European and the Amerindian, and the preferred discursive strategy in the articulation of cultural difference in the early modern colonial context. Finally, the neologism *ecological difference*- referring to the difference in European and Amerindian ecology- will be presented to the reader as a second analytical category in this study.

The Emergence of Modern Subjectivity

As explained in the preceding chapter, during the sixteenth century the current market driven economic system was constituted and thus modernity was born. This new world-system presupposes a modern subject. But, who is the *subject*? What is *subjectivity*? What is the difference between *subjectivity* and *identity* and what is their relation to *agency*? What is meant by *subjectivization*? This section will attempt to answer all of these questions.

The *subject* is an entity to him or herself. Best illustrated by the personal pronoun “I”, the *subject* is conscious of his being in the world. It is the “I” that constitutes a self, which experiences him or herself as distinct and separate from the environment and others. This “I” is the center of his/her experience. As I hope will be appreciated by the following discussion, various schools of thought or philosophical traditions define *subject* in different ways. *Subjectivity* refers to the defining quality of the *subject*; that which the subject possesses which allows him or her to experience and to know him/herself as one. The difference between *subjectivity* and *identity* lays in the fact that the second refers to an aspect of the first. In other words, one subject may have varied identities though it may prioritize one among the rest.

Identity can be thought of as that particular set of traits, beliefs, and allegiances that, in short-or long-term ways, gives one a consistent personality and mode of social being, while subjectivity implies always a degree of thought and self-consciousness about identity... it invites us to consider the question of how and from where identity arises, to what extent it is understandable, and to what degree it is something over which we have any measure of influence or control. (Hall 4)

Subjectivization refers to the process by which *subjectivity* develops; in other words, the process by which the subject becomes a subject. It is linked to the notion of *agency* which refers to the ability to determine one’s own identities for oneself. It is said that “I” have agency if I have the freedom and the resources to construct my self through a series

of decision making processes as “I” see fit. This notion of *agency* becomes very important in discussions of subjectivity within a feminist or subaltern studies framework.

Throughout the history of western thought *subject* and *subjectivity* have been defined and redefined as categories of analysis. Current postmodern definitions of these concepts criticize the idea of the subject as an already-made, self contained entity. Nick Mansfield emphasizes,

The subject is always linked to something outside of it – an idea or principle or the society of other subjects. It is this linkage that the word ‘subject’ insists upon. Etymologically, to be subject means to be ‘placed (or even thrown) under’. One is always subject to or of something. The word subject, therefore, proposes that the self is not a separate and isolated entity, but one that operates at the intersection of general truths and shared principles. (3)

These recent theories emphasize the construction and fluidity of the subject and the negotiation and endless process that is subjectivization. Furthermore, they point out the importance of language for said construction claiming that subjectivization occurs textually, albeit in oral or written form. Some of these theories also denounce the fact that the subjectivity of the ethnic or cultural other has been co-opted by the master or dominant subject who has sought to define, delimit and discipline said subjectivity turning the other into an object. These recent theories of subjectivity will be discussed here and in the following section of this chapter, as they bear some influence on our analysis. But, before we delve into postmodern theories of textual construction of the subject let us turn to the following question: What is the link between the early modern period and subjectivity? In other words, what is *modern subjectivity*?

As suggested above, the idea of the subject as a site of negotiation is a relatively new concept that would have been incomprehensible during the premodern era. In fact, during the Middle Ages human’s vision of himself did not include the possibility of

change, that is social, or economical mobility, but rather emphasized the individual's static role within first, the Church; second, the State; and finally, the family. There was very little concept of individuality, personal choice, and social freedom as would be the case later. Thus, Donald Hall argues that during the period,

While we can see therein the very beginnings of modern subjectivity, at the same time, *our current notion of self-consciousness, of being self-made or self-actualized, of assuming a responsibility for creating oneself out of the raw materials and opportunities provided, and of interrogating and rejecting some roles while trying on and individualizing others*, was quite foreign, even if dramatic changes were in the wind. (My emphasis. 13)

These notions of *self-consciousness*, *self-making*, and *self-actualization*, will come about a bit later, during the early modern period, when religious, economic, political, and social changes gave rise to what is commonly called the modern subject. In fact, literary critic Stephen Greenblatt makes use of the term *self-fashioning* referring to the process by which an individual puts together, creates, organizes, perceives, and expresses his own persona consciously. It “suggests representation of one’s nature or intention in speech or actions” (3). The period itself allows the emergence of this notion of crafting oneself: “there is in the early modern period a change in the intellectual, social, psychological, and aesthetic structures that govern the generation of identities.” Moreover, “in the sixteenth century there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process” (1-2). This “increased self-consciousness” is evidenced in texts as varied as Pico della Mirandola’s Oration (1498) where the philosopher argues for free will and the human ability to change; Baldassare Castiglione’s The Book of the Courtier (1528) which emphasizes the individual’s power of social representation and self control by defining the do’s and don’ts of the gentle class; and Machiavelli’s The Prince (1532) which insists in the princely projection of

power in order to acquire and maintain reign. Greenblatt identifies ten elements characteristic of the process of self-fashioning while emphasizing the importance of mobility for he who fashions himself. Here, I summarize and paraphrase his elements organizing them in three main areas and followed by a brief discussion. In the following section you will see how these elements correspond to the figures of Cabeza de Vaca and Raleigh.

1. The individual:
 - a. Belongs to the middle class since there is no rooting of personal identity in an ancient family tradition or status.
 - b. Submits himself to an absolute power outside the self such as God, a sacred book, an institution such as church, court, colonial or military administration.
 - c. Self-fashions himself dialectically in relation to an alien. This is the other which “must be discovered or invented in order to be attacked and destroyed.”
2. The alien:
 - a. Is seen as foil to the authority to which the individual subscribes.
 - b. Both alien and authority are signifiers which signifieds can change, and be substituted. There is always more than one signified for each signifier.
 - c. When both the authority and the alien are outside the self they are still experienced inwardly “so that both submission and destruction are always already internalized.”
3. The process of self-fashioning:
 - a. “Is always, though not exclusively, in language.”
 - b. “Involves the experience of threat, some effacement or undermining, some loss of self.” (Greenblatt 9)

Greenblatt’s elements illustrate the dialectics of subjectivization between the subject and the other who he calls alien. Furthermore, he emphasizes that the conflict between subject and alien is assimilated within the individual so that there is an internal conflict that mirrors and external one. Lastly, but perhaps more importantly, the process of subjectivization takes place through the manipulation of language. This linguistic construction of the subject, already palpable in the early modern period as Greenblatt

testifies, points to a perhaps intuitive understanding of language not merely as a communication tool but as having a hand in the how the world and the human being is shaped. Modern and postmodern theories of subjectivity will later on underline this conception of language as responsible in great part for the ideology underlying the structures in which our lives are played. Moreover, it is the role of language in subjectivization which allows us to study sixteenth century documents for the textual construction of the early modern subject.

Greenblatt's emphasis on the early modern period and in specific the sixteenth century as the moment in which the modern subject is readily palpable in texts lead us to inquire what circumstances of the period propitiated such a phenomenon. Theorists of the period have identified the following five contributing factors. One: the breakdown of the traditional sway of the Church and the debate over the concept of human will tied to textual interpretation that were the buttress of the Reformation; Two: the invention of the printing press and moveable type that served to consolidate the text's preeminent role within the secular sphere; Three: the slow dissolution of the aristocracy and the rise of a middle class thanks to a growing capitalist economy with its specialized industrialization and urbanism; Four: the emergence of the nation state which fueled cultural and linguistic differences that lead to national rivalries; Five: increased technological efficiency and the ideas advanced by the Scientific Revolution which focused on the role of experience in the acquiring of knowledge.

As an early modern factor that contributed to the emergence of the modern subject, the Scientific Revolution merits more discussion. Copernicus' (1473-1543) and Galileo's (1564-1642) findings are said to have officially begun the shift to a modern

perspective as they argued for a heliocentric universe and a science centered on the human acquisition of knowledge as a way to know the universe. Descartes (1596-1650) further consolidated the preponderance of the “I” as the basis of all experience and knowledge. Mansfield summarizes Descartes thought in two principles: “the image of the self as the ground of all knowledge and experience of the world (*before I am anything, I am*) and secondly, the self as defined by the rational faculties it can use to order the world (*I make sense*)” (15). Accordingly, the general conception of the modern subject that is put forth by the philosophies of the Enlightenment is not dialectical but rather a conception of the subject as “a completely self-contained being that develops in the world as an expression of its own unique essence” (Mansfield 13). This flies in the face of postmodern and ecological theories of subjectivity as will be discussed presently.

Feminist theory has gone a long way in refuting the traditional idea of the subject and highlighting the role of culture and society in the construction of an individual’s subject. It has also served to point out the relative lack of agency that a particular individual may or may not possess in account of his or her sex. In effect, Chris Weedon argues in Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory that,

The political significance of decentring the subject and abandoning the belief in essential subjectivity is that it opens up subjectivity to change. In making our subjectivity the product of the society and culture in which we live, feminist poststructuralism insists that forms of subjectivity are produced historically and change with shifts in the wide range of discursive fields which constitute them. However, feminist poststructuralism goes further than this to insist that the individual is always the site of conflicting forms of subjectivity. (As cited by Hall 101)

Weedon’s insistence on the historicizing and particularization of the subject allows for a multiplicity and diversity not only of subject but also of subjectivizations. It discloses the process of becoming a subject not as a discreet progression towards an end but as a site of

the negotiation of differences and agencies. Cultural studies, with its insistence on the role of ethnicity, race and culture vis à vis the individual, also cultivates a notion of the subject as incomplete, always in the making and, above all, dialectical.

Ecological feminists such as Carolyn Merchant and Val Plumwood also react to the western concept of the subject as was inherited from the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment. They articulate an ecocritical argument that denounces the Cartesian subject as the embodiment the anti-ecological “I” separated from the natural realm; the “I” who is *subject* before a nature that is *object*. In effect, this is the founding binary of the Mechanistic model of nature that is so attacked by ecocritics and it is found at the heart of modern subjectivity.

Postmodern psychoanalytical theory also argues against the subject as a closed system. Developed by Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) among others, Lacanian psychoanalysis proves especially helpful in this inquiry into modern subjectivity since it emphasizes the role of language in an individual’s subjectivization. Lacan draws his conception of language from Ferdinand de Saussure’s The Course in General Linguistics (1916). In this seminal book, Saussure explains that language is a system of signs in which one *signifier* (i.e. a sound or word) is linked to a *signified* (i.e. a concept). He stresses the lack of materiality of the system: there is nothing concrete linking the *signifier* to the *signified*, nor the *signified* to reality or the actual thing. Instead, the *signified* refers to a culturally defined idea in our minds. So, how is meaning achieved in such an arbitrary and self-referential system? Meaning is achieved by a complex arrangement of differences and polyvalences. This view is referred to as the structural view of language which Lacan takes up during the sixties in the development of his

theory of subjectivization. Indeed, Lacan found this conception of language valuable in that it discloses language as a system producer of meaning, in which we as humans are embedded, instead of seeing it as a mere communication tool we employ.

Lacan's theory of subjectivization, which can be seen as a revision of Freud's, (hence termed Freudian-Lacanian) is explained here very briefly because it provides a link not only between the process of subjectivization and language but between subjectivization and nature. Following his model of subjectivization, a baby is born into an already made world of language. At first, the baby, (I'll use the pronoun *he* since the Freudian-Lacanian theory of subjectivization centers on the male child), he notes no difference between his own body and his mother's or the environment. In the mirror-stage the infant stares at the coherent image of his self that the mirror or the other reflects. Through it he gets a taste of what the wholeness, unity and totality of subjectivity should be. This image of the self (hence Lacan's term the *imaginary*) comes from the outside and is contrary to the fragmented self he experiences of himself. Mansfield expands on this idea,

This image may provide it with a sense of its own unity, but the image has an external source: it comes from, and remains part of, otherness itself. The complication here is of huge significance in Lacanian theory. The subject, at its very birth, only gets a sense of its own definition from the outside, specifically from an image of itself returned to it from the world. The subject does not define itself. Instead, it is defined by something other than itself. Put in Lacanian terms, the subject is the discourse of the other. (43)

That is, as the child enters into language he realizes that his sense of self does not come from within but from the world outside, in other words, that which gives him wholeness and totality also undermines it. The inability to achieve the wholeness of self the other reflects engenders in the child desire, and he finds himself with a system over which he

has no control: the *symbolic order*. This symbolic order, represented by the phallus, is a self-contained system as self-referential and arbitrary as Saussure pronounced language to be. Except here, the child can anchor his meaning to the father's phallus as the transcendental signifier. Thus subjectivity is achieved only within language and characterized by desire. Lacan claims, "the form in which language is expressed itself defines subjectivity [...] I identify myself in language, but only by losing myself in it like an object" (1977:85-86, as cited by Hall 80).

In the context of this project, the Freudian-Lacanian model of subjectivization just described is neither considered foundational nor universal, but rather highly influential and specifically modern and western. Moreover, as it describes the mother-child relationship it also betrays a particular human to nature relation. In effect, ecological feminist Val Plumwood says the following in reference to the model,

Just as human identity in the west is defined in opposition to and through the denial of nature, so the mother's product – paradigmatically the male child – defines his masculine identity in opposition to the mother's being, and especially her nurturance, expelling it from his own makeup and substituting domination and the reduction of others to instrumental status. (Plumwood 22)

Jean Joseph Goux articulates further the link between Lacan's theory of subjectivization and nature. As will be seen shortly, he first begins with a critique of idealism and goes on to compare Friedrich Engel's view of History as the narrative of class struggle through the man-nature relation, with the Freudian-Lacanian model already described in a persuasive critique of capitalism. Goux's critique of idealism and take on binaries are congruent to Val Plumwood's as both stand in opposition to the Cartesian mechanistic view of nature. The literary critic takes apart western philosophy as he deconstructs the ideal/material, form/matter, and man/woman dualisms through what he

calls a “sexual archeology of idealism.” In doing this, he seeks to establish the historical conceptual link between woman and nature, and the one between human rupture with nature and man’s severance from the mother’s body. He traces how classical theories of conception really sought out to efface the mother’s body. Aristotle’s insistence on form versus matter, the immaculate conception of the virgin (which presents “that procreation is spiritual par excellence,” 225) and Jesus’ conception by the Holy Spirit in the virgin, all conspire to a devaluing of the feminine. From this conceptualization, man emerges as “the one who brings *form, type, notion, idea, or pattern*, whereas the female furnishes the materials” (220). The classical characterization of form as constant, and matter as changeable, combined with the philosophy of idealism, results in the concept of a disordered nature full of potential but in need of man to shape her: “matter is then no more than an amorphous negativity devoid of its own laws, a lesser being associated with pain, corruption, contingency and death” (230).

Based on this conflated idea of the mother and nature, Goux puts together a paradigm of subjectivity that melds Friedrich Engel’s view of History as the narrative of class struggle through the man-nature relation, with the Freudian-Lacanian model for the overcoming of oedipal desire and the identification with the symbolic. The critic turns the ontogenetic phylogenetic as he presents the itinerary of male desire coinciding with man’s separation from nature, the production of a new nature, and the establishing of Capital as a new transcendental. As described by Goux, Engel’s is a tripartite structure that traces human economic development as man’s separation from, re-conceptualization of, and finally re-meeting with nature. The three stages, an initial interposition brought on by the need to work, followed by an opposition between man and nature, and ending

in an interaction between man and a new nature, correspond to the process by which an individual becomes gendered as exposed by Freud and reworked by Lacan: the boy is separated from the mother's body by the threat of castration represented by the father, the fear and insecurity that ensues leads him to represses his desire for the mother. He identifies with the father, and finally redirects his desire towards woman. In Goux's paradigm, the Freudian-Lacanian Phallus corresponds to Capital, or money in the current capitalist economic system, as the "abstract general equivalent" or the transcendental signified that assigns value.

Goux's analysis bears relevance to this project as it discloses a specific ecology inherent within modern subjectivization. This is what I refer to as the *ecology of subjectivization*. In order to identify with the Phallus, with Capital, the child must reject nature. Thus, his relationship to it will be characterized by rupture and interposition. In this way, we can conceive the modern subject's ecology as one of discontinuity ruled by the Cartesian ego and a capitalist conception of the world. Capitalist ecology is understood as undesirable since it emphasizes practices of consumption, accumulation, and waste centered on an individual and not a collective. Environmental historian Shaw Miller explains the problem inherent in unchecked consumption, "humans, like all species, must consume nature to survive, but only the human species has demonstrated the capacity to consume exponentially more than its basic biological needs" (4). This notion of the ecology implied within modern subjectivity will be taken up later on in this chapter.

Modern Subjectivity and the Text: The Sixteenth Century Travel Narrative

As will be argued in detail in Chapter Three, because of its complicity with the colonial project, the travel narrative presents the reader with the process by which the traveler becomes subject and the observed becomes object. That is, as the narrator *narrativizes* his experience of otherness, he is *subjectivized*, or made subject. Following Stephen Greenblatt and others, it is the claim of this project that said process of subjectivity as can be seen in the early modern travel narrative is none other than the emergence of modern subjectivity. The importance of the text in this process cannot be overstated as said process of construction requires language and narrative as mediators.

Critics of travel narrative argue for a change in the structure and a link between the narrative form and emerging ideas of the self, and its identity during the early modern period. For example, Elsner and Rubiés claim that the literature of travel is “one of the principal cultural mechanisms, even a key cause, for the development of modern identity since the Renaissance” (4). Moreover, recent literary studies as well as other disciplines which rely on the interpretation of texts have drawn attention to the ways in which subjectivity is constructed, expressed, and interpreted in a variety of cultural, social, economic and other kinds of contexts. The interest in subjectivity is further emphasized when its textuality is uncovered.

What we have in the early modern travel narrative is in fact the *self-fashioning*, to borrow Greenblatt’s term, of the traveler-subject in a dialectical relation to the other who is inscribed in his tale. Based on Greenblatt’s characteristics of self-fashioning as explained in the preceding section, it is not too difficult to see the subject-traveler and his *narrativizing* process as self-fashioning. First, the subject-traveler of the travel narratives featured here are either middle class or low nobility (Raleigh, Léry, Cabeza de Vaca, for

example) seeking to enfranchise themselves through their texts to a power outside of themselves (in the case of Raleigh and Cabeza de Vaca it is the crown, in the case of Léry it is God) to whom they owe their allegiance and from where they extract the ideology that will be palpable in their texts.

Second, they identify alterity in the form of the Caribbean native and his relation to his environment. Rhetorically the other serves to emphasize and magnify the subject-traveler's achievements as they weigh their struggles and achievements in opposition to this native other and his environment. In addition, within the narrative, the category of the other is fluid as some natives go from strange to familiar or the subject-traveler discovers the other of the other. There are characteristics of the other that are recognizable within the traveler-subject (such as nakedness, certain manner of dress or certain way of speech that the traveler adopts and thus separates him from the rest of his kind that remained in Europe).

Third, their texts are written with the express purpose of achieving recognition, admiration and/or monetary gain. For example, Walter Raleigh wanted to prove his loyalty to the crown and gain its favor. Cabeza de Vaca sought to attain a new post in the new world and the financial security that his lineage was lacking. Jean de Léry sought to be a true disciple of God disseminating His Word. It is important to remark that though presumably all three of them had their personal and intimate reasons for writing, their texts were conceived since the beginning as legal documents addressed to specific people in court and as such they belonged to the public domain.

As can be appreciated Greenblatt's elements of self-fashioning are useful as they help us understand the subject-traveler as individuals seeking to self-fashion themselves

anew for a specific audience by narrating the ordeal of their distancing themselves from that which is familiar, enduring the ordeal of the other and his nature and finally the challenge of returning home. Placing further importance on what we have termed the experience of the other, the critic adds,

we may say that self-fashioning occurs at the point of encounter between an authority and an alien, that what is produced in this encounter partakes of both the authority and the alien that is marked for attack, and hence that any achieved identity always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss. (9)

As will be developed in the following section, Enrique Dussel also puts forth a theory of modern subjectivity dialectically self defined before alterity that depends on the text. As modern subjectivity, best represented by I-Conqueror, is construed textually it does so first discursively and legally, and secondly in practice as lord-of-the-world and will-to-power. As he encounters the other, be it nature or the Amerindian, the I-Conqueror corresponds to the subject-traveler of the first person narratives that make up most of the textual production of the colonial period. The importance of writing as decisive European technology during the conquest and colonization of the Americas, already stated by Tzvetan Todorov,³⁵ gains new meaning, not only as a tool of empire but also, as constitutive of modern subjectivity and its objects.

As an example to of the textual construction of the subject following Greenblatt's elements and Dussel's conception of the I-Conqueror let us turn to Jean de Léry's Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil (History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil) first published in 1578, eighteen years after the young Calvinist's travels to the Amazon basin. Compared to other accounts, Walter Raleigh's for example, Léry's account seems a more personal one; neither bent on dreams of glory for France, nor

³⁵ See his The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other. See Bibliography for more details.

enmeshed in nation rivalry. He positions himself within the textual conventions of non-fiction early modern travel narrative, arguing against lies, misrepresentations, and lack of loyalty, as he presents his preface as a refute of André Thevet's claims found in M. de la Porte's Of the Singularities of America (published in 1558) and Thevet's own La Cosmographie Universelle (1575). But for all the ink spilled against the Catholic Thevet, Léry's narrative is driven not only by a desire to rectify the Franciscan's account, but also to bring Calvinism, the Reformed faith, to the Amerindians. In his dedication, Léry makes this intention explicit:

Comme doncques mon intention est de perpetuer icy la souvenance d'un voyage fait expressément en l'Amerique pour establir le pur service de Dieu, tant entre les François qui s'y estoyent retirez que parmi les Sauvages habitants en ce pays-la, aussi ay-je estimé estre mon devoir de faire entendre à la posterité combien la louange de celuy qui en fut la course et le motif doit estre à jamais recommandable. Et de fait, osant assurer, que par toute l'antiquité il ne se trouvera, qu'il ya ait jamais eu capitaine François et Chrestien, qui tout à une fois ait estendu le regne de Jesus Christ, Roy des Roys et Seigneur des Seigneurs, et les limites de son Prince Souverain en pays si lointain, le tout considéré comme il appartient, qui pourra assez exalter une si sainte et vrayement heroïque entreprise? (47-8)

The line "celuy qui en fut la course et le motif doit estre" refers to Gaspard de Coligny, Admiral of France, who had made Villegagnon's mission to Brazil possible where Léry sought to establish himself as soon as he arrived and father to François, Comte de Coligny, express addressee of the text. Notwithstanding the appellative 'French' Léry's vision of expansionism is not essentially French, but Christian- that is the power outside himself to which he subscribes and the ideology behind his I-Conqueror. The "imperial ambition betrayed" here (to use Helgerson's phrasing) is not a national but a moral one; the dream is for the Gospel to reach all distant lands and peoples. There is therefore in this text an explicit imperial desire of conquest (be it religious) and an express positioning of the narrator as subordinate to the Comte de Coligny and to God. As he

says so himself, L  ry seeks to inscribe forever “the memory of a voyage to America,” “written with brazilwood ink, and in America itself” (xlv).

In addition, L  ry’s account would feature “strange things” indeed, such as the description of inconveniences such as tempests, famines, and the threats of shipwreck; the careful depiction of animals previously unknown to Europeans, such as lizards, snakes and “other monstrous beasts of America”; as well as the detailed description of the natives, naked, strong and beautiful, and their lifestyle. His portrayal of the native peoples and their mores is ambiguous in that he seems to judge them harshly when speaking of their wars, and sexual habits, while simultaneously admiring them for example, because of the little attention they pay to material possessions. On the other hand, he speaks of fellow Frenchman Villegagnon deplorably and even calls him “the Cain of America” (218). In short, L  ry’s texts presents the reader with a narrative that firmly allies itself within a Christian and European ideology of colonialism and expansion in the context of the sixteenth century religious wars, while constructing a pious and obedient servant of God in opposition to an ambiguous native other.

If, as it has been argued, language is the locus of modern subjectivization, one could conceivably find within a text the discourse of subjectivization and the ecology, or human to nature relationship, contained within it. Thus, the *ecology of subjectivization* is identified within a text. The following section will further develop this concept of the *ecology of subjectivization* paying particular attention to the roles of capitalism and colonialism.

The Ecology of Subjectivization: The Human-Nature Relationship Implied within Modern Subjectivity

As mentioned before, a specific ecology, or subject to nature relationship, is implied within the capitalist system. In effect, Argentinean philosopher Enrique Dussel provides us with a theory of modern subjectivity achieved textually as a will-to-power, including a conception of the other and nature as object in a proto-capitalist world system. Dussel argues that the accumulation of capital which started with the imperial project of the colonization of the Americas paved the way for capitalism. For him it is the rush for Modernity, so central to capitalism and colonialism, which is most destructive as it brings about the death of the natural world and destroys humanity in poverty as “living labor” and the alterity of the other (“Beyond...”20). His theory will be expounded here presently.

The third contributing factor to the development of modern subjectivity in the early modern period cited above, namely, the growth of the capitalist economy, deserves more attention since it is this economic system which allowed the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the nascent middle class that was, for the first time, mobile, not only physically, but also symbolically through its inversion of capital. Moreover, if we look at the roots of this system (as discussed in the preceding chapter) the capitalist world-economy is simply not possible without western Europe’s encounter with the New World. Point in fact, though theorists like Donald Hall and others mention “overseas travel and colonization” as a contributing factor to modern subjectivity, they fail miserably to grasp the significance of the European-American encounter (17). For this encounter at once provides innumerable natural resources which are appropriated by the mercantilist or proto-capitalists European economies and affords peripheral coerced and lowly waged labor force which will become consumers of European commodities.

Above all, the encounter presents Europe with an ethnic and cultural other against which the European subject might define himself. It is this last factor which is central to our analysis and as such will be discussed soon.

Notwithstanding the attention that critics have paid to the early modern period as the moment for the emergence of modern subjectivity, European and North American philosophical tradition, lead by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), and Jürgen Habermas (b. 1929), has conventionally held that modern subjectivity was achieved during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Northern Europe, the apex of civilization. Enrique Dussel explains how these philosophers see modern subjectivity and denounces their Eurocentrism.

Modern subjectivity develops spatially, according to the Eurocentric paradigm, from the Italy of the Renaissance to the Germany of the Reformation and the Enlightenment, to the France of the French Revolution; throughout, Europe is central. (“Beyond Eurocentrism” 4)

Instead, Dussel proposes, modernity and thus modern subjectivity, comes about dialectically in the sixteenth century as a result of the first world-system with its center in Spain, and colonial Latin America as periphery, as explained in Chapter One. Dussel argues that “European modernity is not an *independent*, autopoietic, self-referential system, but instead is part of a world-system: in fact, its center” (4). Modernity does not arise spontaneously in Europe, but it does so in a dialectical relationship to the Americas. He clarifies,

Modernity, then, in this planetary paradigm is a phenomenon proper to the system “center-periphery.” Modernity is not a phenomenon of Europe as an *independent* system, but of Europe as center. (4)

It follows that Modernity is a consequence of the capitalist world-system that is only possible with the annexation of the Americas and their natural and human resources.

Modern subjectivity is born in the European man, Spanish to be precise, but in the sixteenth century and in the Americas vis-à-vis the Amerindian other. Here Dussel summarizes his argument,

Thus, the first modernity – and with it the first ‘geoculture’ – is the Hispanic Renaissance humanism of the Castilian Grammar of Nebrija (dated 1492), of the Indies Chroniclers, of Don Quijote de la Mancha of Miguel de Cervantes, maimed during the battle of Lepanto, when Spain gets a hold of the Mediterranean over the Turks in 1572. It could not be any other way. Carlos V’s Empire (the first frustrated try of a world-system) is a first stage of modernity already distinguishable from the old system (moslem). Ginés de Sepúlveda is a modern thinker: he justifies the conquest by saying the barbarians had no private property nor did they know about inheritance, nor had they fortified cities or any writing (as was believed at that time). The Inquisition is the first modern intelligence service, which ‘homogenizes’ the participants of the political body (still based on a religious criterion: to be a Catholic). The Archive of the Indies will become the first demonstration of the existence of a modern bureaucracy at the service of a state. Mercantilism is the first stage of capitalism. In addition, colonialism plays its first role, and Latin America is the first periphery of the world-system. Thus, in 1492 four phenomena arise at the same time: 1) World-System; 2) Capitalism (still mercantile); 3) Colonialism; 4) Modernity (as a cultural phenomena of the management of Europe’s ‘centrality’ within the world-system). (“Debate on the Geoculture of the World-System” 240)

Modern Subjectivity is then the internalization of the modern capitalist and colonial ideology within man. It is Hernán Cortés’ I-Conqueror, cousin to Descartes’ Ego-Cogito. Essential to the construction of modern subjectivity is the experience not only of discovery, but especially of conquest. Both discovery and conquest, modes of colonization which Dussel claims as inherent to modern subjectivity, are characterized respectively as person to nature and person to person dynamics. Still, in both of these dynamics the modern subject relates as subject to object or master to slave. Moreover, as both modes are comprised of poetic, technical and pre-modern commercial-mercantilist dimensions, they are inscribed within the proto-capitalist system that constitutes the first

world system (33). Lead by a phallic and colonizing ego, this subjectivity constitutes itself textually and dialectically to the effeminate-colonized-object. Dussel explains,

The ideology of this age already gives its expression to the centrality of the individual; the “I, the King” extends to each conqueror, to each colonist, to each European before the “barbarians”; the self-assessment of European superiority over all other cultures; the invasion and the political dominance carried out by means of the best technology.... (“Debate on the Geoculture of the World-System” 240)

But as persuasive as it is, Dussel’s theory also reflects a kind of centrism, a mexicocentrism, since it ignores the Caribbean as the first site of contact between the European and the Amerindian. In effect, the Caribbean played an important role through the three hundred or so years of colonization first and foremost as it acted as a prism through which Europe saw the rest of the Americas. While it is true that the coastal civilizations of the Caribbean were not as technologically developed or socio-politically organized as those of the Mexican, Central, or South American mainland, nonetheless, they absorbed the impact of the first and therefore most prolonged contact. Coastal Amerindian societies suffered the brunt of being the guinea pigs of the colonial enterprise. Furthermore, many conquistadors like Hernán Cortés, spent a great deal of time in the Caribbean before advancing inland. Cortés’ “I-Conqueror” would not have come about without that first experience of Caribbean nature and its Amerindian other.

It follows then that modern subjectivity mandates a human to nature relationship of master to slave or subject to object. This is the ecology within the process of subjectivization. If, as it has been argued, subjectivization comes about textually, it is possible to study the ecology of the early modern subject through close textual analysis. Moreover, since the distinction between concepts such as subject/object can only come about from a perception of *difference in the other*, it should also be possible to identify

and analyze a difference in ecology between the subject and the other. The following section attempts to introduce *difference* and *ecological difference* as critical concepts.

Difference: The Subject and the Ethnic and Cultural Other Object

Like *subjectivity*, the term *difference* is also an important critical concept in the study and interpretation of texts. In the last thirty years or so, the term has developed from a linguistic concept to a key idea in cultural studies including race and ethnic studies, as well as postcolonial studies. In fact, in his 1952 book Peau Noire, Masques Blancs, Frantz Fanon links the concepts of difference and subjectivity as he argues that within European colonial discourse, color, as a marker of difference, denies the possibility of subjectivization and thus relegates the non-white to occupy the position of the other-object. Fanon claims,

Because it is a systematic negation of the other person and a furious determination to deny the other person all the attributes of humanity, colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: "In reality, who am I?" (Fanon 124)

Fanon denounces the fact that under colonialism the colonized is denied all subjectivity since the economy of colonial relations strips the individual of any possibility of self-actualization and instead turns him into an object. The emphasis falls on the colonial system as the cause for the native lack of subjectivity and inferiority complex instead of these being innate characteristics. Nick Mansfield explains the significance of Fanon's argument,

This dehumanization of the colonized is not merely a fictional trope able to satisfy the prejudices of the colonizing and justify their presence in someone else's country. It remakes the settler and the native in turn as *types subjects*, bearing completely different moral and cultural legacies: *the colonized is unstable, irrational and inarticulate*; the colonizer on the other hand, is seen as a stabilizing force, bearing the transcendent discourses of enlightened humanity that cannot only rationalize the need for colonial domination and subordination, but also

drown out the particularities and specificities of local culture with thunderous and confident universal statements about the progress of humanity. (My emphasis. 125)

Here, Mansfield uncovers the cultural difference underlying the racial difference upon which colonial ideology is based. Colonialism does not allow for the colonized to develop their own subjectivity. They are in turn subjectivized by the system as uncivilized: “*unstable, irrational and inarticulate*”. As I hope will become clear through the following discussion, this expression of cultural and racial difference is, in essence, ecological.

But what is *difference* per se and how did it become a key concept for textual analysis? *Difference* was first discussed as a structuralist linguistic concept based on the Saussurean linguistic model briefly explained in the first section of this chapter. In a system where the only relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, *difference* is the only way of generating meaning. What this means is that a word's meaning is not articulated in absolute or positive terms (to use Saussure's own phrasing) but in terms of the *difference* between them and as such there is more than one meaning or value to each word. In this way, language is a self-referential system which words denote difference and a multiplicity in value. Accordingly, the structuralism or structuralist analysis from the sixties, which stemmed from the Saussurean linguistic model, held that language has a role in the production of structure and the generating of meaning. As such, this school of analysis is centered on the relationship between things, and specifically, the *binary pair* as the smallest unit of articulation of irreducible difference. Poststructuralisms, such as deconstruction, feminist theory, and ecological criticism, have also paid close attention to the binary pair with the political aim of

disclosing the implicit hierarchy within it. Moreover, these theories also demonstrate the existence of an excess that does not allow for a relationship to be reduced to a simple play in opposition. Gilles Deleuze goes as far as to point out that difference does not have to be completely oppositional since there are subtle discrepancies that are not necessarily antinomial per se, but that are so in terms of degree (Currie 60-5). Mark Currie explains the political significance of the analysis of binary pairs for poststructuralisms,

Poststructuralist approaches to the binary opposition produce a kind of critique that unmasks power relations, that seeks to expose hierarchy, that refuses to isolate the sign from the discourse in which it operates, or for that matter that refuses to isolate the opposition from the more general discursive context in which its associative and suggestive potential is formed. (Currie 49)

Deconstruction, for example, seeks to analyze binary pairs to show how the pair itself denies its own logic. “The inversion of the hierarchy is therefore not proposed by Derrida from the outside, but it is located within the argument that exactly seeks to establish that hierarchy,” Currie explains (51). Therefore, difference is not the stable unit of meaning that was expected. Jacques Derrida spent a lot of time on the concept of linguistic difference developing his own notion, *differance*, as a critique of difference.

Following Derrida’s critique of the binary pair, other theorists, like Hélène Cixous and Val Plumwood, define the conflict inherent in binary pairs or ideological binomials as one of the values assigned become part of the identity of each element and require violence to be guaranteed. In “Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays” Cixous discusses the characteristics and the primacy of ideological binomials in Western discourse, already established by Derrida in Of Grammatology.

Thought has always worked through opposition,
Speaking/Writing

Parole/Écriture

High/Low

Through dual, hierarchical oppositions. Superior/Inferior. Myths, legends, books. Philosophical systems. Everywhere (where) ordering intervenes, where a law organizes what is thinkable by oppositions (dual, irreconcilable; or sublatale, dialectical). And all these pairs of oppositions are *couples*. Does that mean something? Is the fact Logocentrism subjects thought – all concepts, codes and values – to a binary system, related to “the” couple, man/woman? [...]

Theory of culture, theory of society, symbolic systems in general – art, religion, family, language – it is all developed while bringing the same schemes to light. And the movement whereby each opposition is set up to make sense is the movement through which the couple is destroyed. A universal battlefield. Each time, a war is let loose. Death is always at work. (63-4)

Referencing Derrida’s critique of western philosophy as one centered on the preeminence of the word and reason, Cixous seeks to deconstruct what she sees as the original dualism: man/woman. For her, the hierarchy within the pair and the violence necessary in order to maintain it are apparent.

Ecological feminist Val Plumwood acknowledges the vast critique that feminists such as Cixous, as well deconstructionists, have made to dualism as a way of construing difference (32). For her, both the man/woman binary and the human/nature binary correspond to the master/slave binary. Consonant to the ecological principle her solution to this hierarchy is to consider both difference and similarity. Moreover, the dissolution to the hierarchy of dualisms resides in the decentring of the subject as the point of reference. She states,

Overcoming the dualistic dynamic requires recognition of both continuity and difference; this means acknowledging the other as neither alien to, and discontinuous from self, nor assimilated to, or an extension of self. (6)

Plumwood’s argument highlights the subject as the one who posits and arranges *difference* in the other. That is, difference is something that comes about in the other vis-à-vis the self. In effect, the difference defines the other. Feminist, postcolonial, and

cultural studies has identified the categories of race, ethnicity, gender, language, religion, culture as categories that act as *markers of difference*. In other words, these particular facets of the individual are taken as expressing the totality of the other's essence. Above all, a marker of difference pinpoints the argument for the subject to be recognized as subject and the object to be recognized as object.

The relational aspect of difference between the subject-self and the other-object cannot be overstated. In fact, Frantz Fanon claims in reference to racial difference, "the black man must not only be black, but must also be black in relation to the white man" (110). Color, culture, and sex as markers of difference have been extensively studied by postcolonial critics like Robert Young. Though Young's study centers on nineteenth century imperialist discourse, his analysis of difference bears great importance on our project. His main argument is that the nineteenth century ideology of culture and civilization underlies the use of race as a marker of difference but expressed in cultural and more specifically gendered terms. Young claims,

Culture has always marked cultural difference by producing the other; it has always been comparative, and racism has always been an integral part of it: the two are inextricably clustered together, feeding off and generating each other. Race has always been culturally constructed. Culture has always been racially constructed. (54)

Here, the critic highlights the dialectical relationship between culture and race uncovering their status as empty signifiers which value is chosen from an array of categories and assigned by the speaker as it is useful and necessary to perpetuate his hegemony. Young summarizes his argument,

In other words, race was defined in terms of cultural, particularly gender, difference – carefully gradated and ranked. A racial hierarchy was established on the basis of a cultural pecking order, with those who has most civilization at the top, and those who were considered to have none- 'primitives' at the bottom.

Civilization and culture were thus the names for the standard measurement in the hierarchy of values through which European culture defined itself by placing itself at the top of the scale against which all other societies, or groups within societies, were judged. The principle opposition, between civilization and barbarism or savagery, was nothing less than the ordering principle of civilization as such. (94-5)

It follows that for Young racial and cultural difference feed each other allowing for the rationalization of European hegemony and imperialism. In other words, white Europeans come into unequal relationships with other peoples because they are far advanced in reason, and achievements. In Young's analysis, gender difference is another way of expressing cultural-racial difference also corresponding to the civilization/barbarism binomial. While Young refers to this binomial in terms of cultural difference I call it ecological difference since both sides of the dualism refer to the human distance from nature, or better yet, to human's relationship to the natural world. The details of this argument will become apparent in the next section.

The term *ecological difference* is developed in this project as a new category of study alongside race, ethnicity, gender, class and others, critical to textual analysis. Moreover, as it will be argued in detail in the following section, ecological difference as a kind of cultural difference constitutes a basic and central difference of early modern colonial discourse.

The idea of understanding cultural or racial differences through environmental or ecological theories has a long tradition traced by Clarence J. Glacken. The climate, soils and topography and their influence on humans were studied in an attempt to explain differences among peoples. In fact, during the Middle Ages even national characteristics were discussed under the guise of weather, diet, and soil composition. In the early modern period, Jesuit Giovanni Botero, for example, argued that the difference in

temperament was due to change in longitude: peoples who live in the east are “easygoing and malleable in character”, in the west “they are proud and reserved” (369). It is therefore, not surprising to find in early modern European discourse of the Caribbean that differences among the coastal Amerindians and the Europeans are explained also in ecological terms, or those relating to the method of cultivation and patterns of consumption as well as to more general philosophies of nature.

Ecological Difference: Ecology as a Marker of Difference

It has already been argued that modern subjectivity and modernity itself were ideologically hinged on hierarchically arranged binary pairs such as subject/object, civilization/barbarism. Early modern European colonial discourse also expressed difference in terms of binary pairs featuring a marker of difference such as color, sex, or religion that was used to signify both the subject and the other. For example, in Peter Hulme’s analysis of Christopher Columbus’ Diary, the reader finds that such colonial discourse depends on a play of opposites between the Arawak Indians as noble savages, and the Carib people as fierce cannibals. As Hulme proves, this dichotomy is textually evidenced not only in Columbus’ text, but also in anthropological accounts all the way to the nineteenth century. A propos of binary pairs underlying western ideology, Robert Young argues that,

Culture must apparently always operate antithetically. Culture never stands alone but always participates in a conflictual economy acting out the tension between sameness and difference, comparison and differentiation, unity and diversity, cohesion and dispersion, containment and subversion. Culture is never liable to fall into fixity, stasis or organic totalization: the constant construction and reconstruction of cultures and cultural differences is fuelled by an unending internal dissension in *the imbalances of the capitalist economies* that produce them. Culture has inscribed within itself the complex and often contradictory differences through which European society has defined itself. (My emphasis. 53-4)

Here, Young explains the duality behind culture's currency which allows it to adopt many positions all in the service of the system that maintains it. Furthermore, his reference to the "imbalances of the capitalist economies" that produce cultural differences, points to the inequalities between the peoples of the center and periphery within the capitalist world system which pass as derived from the natural order and accepted by the system but in reality are created or produced by it.

By the end of the preceding section the argument was made that cultural difference is in essence an ecological difference. There are various secondary arguments that support such a claim and which will be discussed shortly. First, as Young himself claims, cultural difference underlies other kinds of differences and culture is undeniably tied to ecology. Second, the binary pair most often cited as used to express cultural difference is civilization/barbarism which corresponds to culture/nature and thus also makes a clear reference to ecology. Third, because of fluctuating conceptions of what *nature* is and what *natural* means, ecological difference is an easily manipulable tool used to express cultural and gender difference and as such readily identified in a variety of texts.

There is a clear link between the concept of *culture* and that of *ecology*. As defined by anthropological studies, "culture" is all that which the human being does in order to adapt to her environment. On the other hand, "ecology" is commonly defined within ecological studies as the human relationship to the environment. Given both definitions, the terms are closely related. **In other words**, as I have already argued

elsewhere³⁶, the study of the human/environmental relationship, or the ecology, of a community overlaps with the study of their culture.

In effect, as Young reminds us, the word “culture” is derived from the Latin “colere” which means to “inhabit” or “cultivate.” From “colere” also comes “colonization” and in fact, colonization seems to be inherent in culture since the first colonization was the occupation and dominion of the land in order to produce foodstuffs.³⁷ (Ferrer-Medina 40)

Culture is thus irremediably tied to the human relation to the environment. Young explains,

The culture of land has always been in fact, the primary form of colonization; the focus on soil emphasizes the physicality of the territory that is coveted, occupied, cultivated, turned into plantations and made unsuitable for indigenous nomadic tribes. (31).

In addition, Young explains that within European imperialist discourse, cultural difference is more often than not expressed in the binomial civilization/barbarism, where the first term refers to the speaking (or writing) European-subject and the second term refers to the inferior other-object under which differences in color, sex, systems of production, religion and class are subsumed. Young insists in that,

Race was defined through the criterion of civilization, with the cultivated white Western European male at the top, and everyone else in a hierarchal scale either in a chain of being, from mollusk to God, or, in the later model, on an evolutionary scale of development from a feminized state of childhood (savagery) up to full (European) manly adulthood. [...] Civilization and culture were thus the names for the standard of measurement in the hierarchy of values through which European culture defined itself by placing itself at the top of a scale against which all other societies, or groups within society, were judged. The principle of opposition, between civilization and barbarism or savagery, was nothing else than the ordering principle of civilization as such. (94)

³⁶ See my article “Ecology, Difference and Utopia in the Portrayal of the Gypsy in Cervantes’ *La gitanilla*” in *Cervantes and/on/in the New World*. Eds. Julio Vélez-Sainz and Nieves Romero-Díaz. Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 2007.

³⁷ Young 30.

The fact that European ideology was based on the evolutionary spectrum of barbarism to civilization is evidenced by examples in many early modern European travel narratives where Amerindians are simultaneously depicted as effeminate, evil usurers, idolatrous, cannibalistic, and animal-like in need of European intervention to reach their full human potential. This description expresses ethnic difference in cultural terms of gender, systems of production, religion and status in the great chain of being, which can be summarized under the civilization/barbarism binary. The contrast is understood as the evolutionary process of human separation from nature through human artifice and invention culminating in sophisticated social relations and institutions. The binomial corresponds to culture/nature since they both encapsulate the relation between humans and their environment and end up pointing out the social as well as moral inferiority of the Amerindian to the European Christian.

Other critics have already noticed the use of the binomial civilization/barbarism and its derivative culture/nature as the preferred expression of difference. But such expression of difference has not been termed ecological before now simply because theories of difference and ethnicity have barely crossed paths with theories of ecological criticisms. For example, Franz Fanon criticizes the portrayal of the black man within colonial discourse as uncivilized and oversexualized. He explains that “the Negro symbolizes the biological. First of all, he enters puberty at the age of nine and is a father at the age of ten; he is hot-blooded, and his blood is strong; he is tough” (167). Later on he adds that “the Negro is the genital” (180). The black’s confinement to the body, to nature, is similar to the essentializing of woman as provider of matter within the

philosophy of idealism against which Goux debated. Such an insistence on the body surely corresponds to the culture/nature binary.

From an ecological feminist perspective, Val Plumwood explains that culture/nature is the preferred discursive strategy in the articulation of cultural difference precisely because the association of women, people of color and the colonized to nature makes dismissal possible and easy. Plumwood explains that the domination of the other and the domination of nature are linked through their exclusion from “the master category of reason.” She adds,

The category of nature is a field of multiple exclusion and control, not only of non-humans, but of various groups of humans and aspects of human liked *which are cast as nature. Thus, racism, colonialism and sexism have drawn their conceptual strength from casting sexual, racial, ethnic difference as closer to the animal and the body construed as a sphere of inferiority, as a lesser form of humanity lacking the full measure of rationality or culture.* (My emphasis. 4)

What the critic’s analysis denounces is precisely the ecological discourse of the colonial system. This ecological discourse has to be recognized as a deeply rooted Western bias since its beginnings are found in the philosophy of idealism developed in antiquity. The bias translated to inequality and injustice by silencing and backgrounding the other. Since nature is typically seen as an object and thus lacking any will or agency, the classification of the other under the category of nature serves to neutralize the other’s voice and thus reduce him to an object.

To be defined as ‘nature’ in this context is to be defined as passive, as non-agent and non-subject, as the ‘environment’ or invisible background conditions against which the ‘foreground’ achievements of reason or culture (provided typically by the white, western, male expert or entrepreneur) take place. It is to be defined as a terra nullius, a resource empty of its own purposes or meanings, and hence available to be annexed for the purposes of those supposedly identified with reason or intellect, and to be conceived and molded in relation to these purposes. *It means being seen as part of a sharply separate, even alien, lower realm, whose*

domination is simply 'natural', flowing from nature itself and the nature(s) of things. (My emphasis. Plumwood 4)

With this last sentence Plumwood discloses the self-perpetuating political ecology of the colonial system: it naturalizes the domination of the other. In fact, for Plumwood, the “backgrounding of women and nature is deeply embedded in the rationality of the economic system and in the structures of contemporary society” (21). For all effect, the economic system and the structures of contemporary society in the Caribbean are still colonial.

Finally, in returning to Enrique Dussel’s theory of modern subjectivity, we notice that he makes a difference between the I-Conqueror that involves what he calls a person-to-person dynamic and the I-Discoverer that involves a person-to-environment dynamic. For him, modern subjectivity is an exclusive function of the person-to-person dynamic. However, Dussel’s argument does not take into account the fact that both the person-to-person dynamic as well as the person-to-environment dynamic are expressed by an ecological discourse. That is, they are both articulated in terms of the human relationship to nature. That the person-to-environment dynamic would be articulated in ecological terms should be obvious, but the claim that the person-to-person dynamic is articulated in ecological terms is not as intuitive. However, this is exactly the argument that has been made throughout this chapter.

That the expression of cultural difference in ecological terms is a commonplace of early modern texts will hopefully become apparent to the reader during the course of this study. However, the following example should help illustrate the argument. In 1609 in Lisbon, El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1539-1616), published what was meant to be a history of the discovery and colonization of Perú, entitled Comentarios Reales de los

Incas. As his name suggests, El Inca, was an Indian of noble heritage, son of Isabel Chimpú Ocllo, an Incan princess, and Sebastián Garcílaso de la Vega, a Spanish captain. He was born and raised with his mother's family in Cuzco, immersed in Quechuan culture, which was later combined with the traditional Spanish education that all noble mestizos received at the time. He would later move to Spain to live with his paternal uncle from whom, after joining the Spanish army and receiving the rank of captain, he inherited a large amount of money which allowed him to devote his time to writing.

In his Comentarios, El Inca writes as an Indian and as a Christian. He begins his history with an account of how the Incas arrived at the Cuzco valley in the mouth of his maternal uncle. The Inca tells our narrator the story of men who lived in the area without “noticia de la ley natural y de la urbanidad y respetos que los hombres debían tenerse unos a otros” (28). He goes on to say that these men lived like beasts and brutes with no religion or laws or houses or settlements. They did not cultivate the land, but rather ate herbs and roots, fruits and human flesh like beasts do. They lived naked in caves and took women as they saw fit (29). The Inca elder adds that, finding this state pitiful,

Nuestro padre el Sol [...] envió del cielo a la Tierra un hijo y una hija de los suyos para que los doctrinasen [...] y para que les diesen preceptos y leyes en que vivieses como hombres en razón y urbanidad, para que habitasen en casas y pueblos poblados, supiesen labrar las tierras, cultivar las plantas y mieses, criar los ganados y gozar de ellos y de los frutos de la tierra como hombres racionales y no como bestias. (29-30)

So, the Inca elder describes the arrival of his people (seen as descendants of the father Sun) to a land inhabited by uncivilized and uncultured people who lived like animals devoid of reason. Note how these people's delayed development is tied to the fact that they do not know how to cultivate the land or use their environment in general. As Young's argument would suggest and discussed above, the culture's development is

linked to their colonization, or their own dominion over their environment. *Reason*, it turns out, is the trademark of the civilized or, put in another way, reason is the mark of he who manipulates nature. The Elder further characterizes the charge Father Sun gave to his son and daughter in this way:

[para que] cultivasen aquellas fieras y las convirtiesen en hombres, haciéndoles capaces de razón [...] para que [...] ese mismo Dios [...] los hallase no tan salvajes, sino más dóciles para recibir la fe católica y la enseñanza y doctrina de nuestra Santa Madre Iglesia Romana, como después acá lo han recibido. (28)

Here, the purpose of turning these brutes into rational men is revealed: to later be able to educate them in the true Christian faith as were the Incas. Let us remember that from the writer's point of view these uncultured peoples, having been civilized by the Incas who came down from the sky, were the ancestors of the seventeenth century Incas; his own ancestors. With this ontological myth, El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, appropriates early modern European discourse mimicking its rationalization of conquest and colonization. In fact, students of the text who criticize El Inca for painting a too-good-to-be-true picture of the Incas passing over their imperial system and penchant for sacrifice, take this myth as a window into the Inca imperial thirst and colonial rule over other Amerindians of the region. Aware of the articulation of cultural difference as ecological difference within the European discourse El Inca duplicates and projects this difference onto other indigenous groups and with it justifies domination.

The articulation of cultural difference in ecological terms is then revealed as a convenient strategy since notions of nature are easily manipulable and thus fluctuate to designate anything perceived as outside the human realm having been tinged with positive or negative connotations. Consider the portrayal of difference in ecological terms in the following two examples by Italian travelers visiting the Caribbean islands.

The first one, Michele de Cuneo, in his October 1495 letter to Gerolamo Annari describes the cannibals of the Lesser Antilles in the following way,

Viven exactamente como bestias; cuando tienen hambre comen; hacen el coito sin recato cuando les da la gana y fuera de hermanos y hermanas, todos los demás son comunes. (184)³⁸

Here, Cuneo describes the Caribbean Indians as animals since they satisfy their needs with no modesty or restraint or self-control, except for the prohibition of incest. The Amerindian mores are seen as naturally derived and not the product of their culture. On the other hand, in his Itinerarium ad Regiones Subaequinoctiali Plaga Constitutas written in 1521 Alessandro Geraldini presents the Caribbean Indians as against nature for a handful of reasons including cannibalism.

Llegamos finalmente, con viento favorable, a las islas malditas de los antropófagos, que en su lengua se dicen Caribes, es decir hombres fuertes. Estas islas son habitadas por grandes muchedumbres de hombres *absolutamente salvajes*: [...] comen carne humana, habitan en lugares montañosos a donde arrastran sus presas; están continuamente en guerra con las poblaciones cercanas, que no quieren comer carne humana y viven como personas pías y honestas siguiendo *la justa ley de la naturaleza*. [...] Estos caníbales no creen en los dioses, *son enemigos de la naturaleza*, viven desnudos, son de alta talla y tienen cuerpos gigantescos y semblantes espantosos... (My emphasis. 211)³⁹

So, according to Cuneo the Caribbean Indians are too close to nature while according to Geraldini they are its enemies. Why is there such a difference in their conceptions of nature? In fact, from this passage it is clear that Geraldini makes a distinction between being wild and being natural that Cuneo does not make. As will be discussed in Chapter Four *nature* is for him the environment conditioned by civilization so as to be useful to humans, while *wilderness* is the environment outside of all human influence and thus it is a threat to civilization and culture. To say that cannibals are “enemies of nature” is to

³⁸ Translated from the Italian by Luigi Avonto. See Bibliography for details.

³⁹ Translated from the Latin by Luigi Avonto. See Bibliography for details.

emphasize their estrangement from the “law of nature” which refers to the order that can be observed in nature when seen as the fabric of God’s plan for humans.

The discrepancy in these conceptions of nature can be explained by realizing the fact that, as Hayden White explains, the terms nature and wilderness like others do not refer to a particular thing but rather they “dictate a particular attitude governing a relationship between a lived reality and some are of problematic existence” (4). Furthermore, instead of concepts, these terms refer to “complexes of symbols, the referents of which shift and change in response to the changing patterns of human behavior which they are meant to sustain” (5). This flexibility allows for the usefulness of the terms and the relative easiness with which they are deployed.

Conclusion

Written by the I-Conqueror, early modern European colonial discourse presents the reader with the portrayal of a cultural difference that serves as a point of reference for the emerging modern subject. This cultural difference is articulated in terms of an ecological difference, or a difference in the conceptualization and practice of the human to nature relationship. The purpose of such a conceptualization and insistence of difference lies in the process of modern subjectivization which mandates a human to nature relationship of subject to object. This is the ecology of subjectivization. And since the same process also produces an object, this is also the ecology of objectivization.

The result of such an articulation of difference is that the Amerindian is reduced to his/her relationship to his/her environment. Point in fact, the Amerindian ecology that emerges from this colonial discourse is one of low-impact adaptation,⁴⁰ subsistence, and

⁴⁰ As it was already established in Chapter One, contrary to popular belief and imagery, the Amerindians had a significant impact on the environment, facilitating animal extinctions, relocating vegetable and

cooperation with nature as opposed to the European colonial coercion and physical manipulation to great extents of natural resources for the production of excedent commodities. Since such ecology is considered to be unmediated by culture or civilization, it is seen by the European as naturally derived. The Amerindian peoples are thusly conflated with nature and objectivized.

The following chapter, Chapter Three, will discuss the sixteenth century travel narrative as the best example and model of the early modern European colonial discourse concerning the Caribbean. From a literary studies point of view it will discuss the travel narrative not as a genre, but as an underlying narrative structure of the text which features modern subjectivization. The chapter will argue that *ecological difference* and the *ecology of subjectivization* are readily indentified within the text in its imperialist and colonial context. The role of the text in the process of subjectivization will be further emphasized followed by a discussion of the reading of ecological discourse. Later on, Chapter Four and Five, will attempt to flesh out how both *ecological difference* and the *ecology of subjectivization* are present and palpable in two sixteenth century travel narratives Cabeza de Vaca's Relación (1542) and Raleigh's The Discoverie (1596).

animal species, breeding and husbanding animals and plants, as well as slashing and burning with the purpose of cultivating preferred crops.

CHAPTER THREE

SIXTEENTH CENTURY TRAVEL NARRATIVE: COLONIALISM, IMPERIALISM, AND MODERN SUBJECTIVITY

*Travellers ne'er did lie,
Though fools at home condemn 'em.*
William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* 3.3.26

The last chapter discussed the emergence of modern subjectivity, its inherent ecology, and the expression of difference in ecological terms that is typical of early modern European colonial discourse. In this chapter we will explore the sixteenth century travel narrative as the model narrative structure that underlies early modern European colonial discourse. Because of its ties to colonialism and the emergence of the modern subject as an imperial subject, both of which will become explicit through the reading of this chapter, the sixteenth century travel narrative is the ideal object of study of a project that purports to concentrate on the discursive analysis of ecological difference.

It follows that this chapter will first explore the travel narrative in general as an underlying narrative structure to other genres such as the novel, the picaresque, and hagiography, for example. Then, attention will be called to the characteristic elements of the sixteenth century travel narrative within early modern European colonial discourse. This will be done by highlighting the specific colonial context of the travel narratives featured in this study. In following, the chapter will discuss the modern subjectivity embodied in the travel narrative as an imperial subjectivity by describing the imperialism

contained within the logic of the I-traveler. Lastly, the strategies for reading ecological difference and the ecology of both subjectivization and objectivization will be presented to the reader.

The Travel Narrative and its Characteristic Fantastical Element

In the most general of terms a travel narrative is a narrative or story structure, a series of events arranged in a sequential manner, of the displacement of a subject-traveler from one point in space to another. In quality, it is simultaneously narrative and descriptive; a “double account” organized around the experience of the subject-traveler who is in most cases also the writer and narrator and thus written in the first or third person (Zumthor 812). Characteristically, the early modern travel narrative hinges on the textual construction of the ‘I’ vis à vis the other. As it typically becomes explicit by the end of the narrative, this duality is not neutral but hierarchically arranged thus containing within it the logic of colonization.

Though it has been studied by some as a discreet genre, for the purposes of this study the travel narrative will be considered as an ancient narrative structure of oral origins that can be recognized underlying many texts. Sometimes more inclusive terms such as travel literature or travel writing are used to refer to a wide range of genres and forms such as guidebooks, itineraries, chronicles, diaries, and letters, hagiographies or saints’ lives, medieval romances, pilgrimages, utopias, picaresques, shipwreck narratives, ethnographies, historiographies, and autobiographies, as well as novels. In addition, more recent genres like science fiction and fantasy oftentimes feature travel. Therefore, it is helpful to take the travel narrative as the skeleton or underlying organizational principle of many and different types of genres. The ten year long return trip after the Trojan War

as portrayed in the epic poem with oral roots The Odyssey, is often cited as its earliest example in the western tradition, dating back to the 5th century BCE, which is why today we use the word *odyssey* to refer to a troublesome journey. Literary studies have in general ignored non-lyrical travel narratives since they belong to a more popular as opposed to cultured body of writing and therefore are conventionally not seen as literary. As a result, traditional literary histories tend to exclude fictional travel narratives judging them a minor genre compared to the novel, for example, and non-fictional travel narratives thinking them non-literary. However, during the second half of the past century as the concept of *literary study* morphed into *discursive analysis* the notion of what is a proper object of study expanded. The last forty years especially have seen a turn in focus as cultural and postcolonial analysis has centered on (non-fiction) travel narratives in order to study categories and patterns of cultural and political exclusion and inclusion. Among these studies Edward W. Said's Orientalism [1978] and Mary Louise Pratt's Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation [1992] are classic examples.

One constant through the history of literary reception is that the travel narrative, be it fictional or non fictional, written in verse or in prose, has enjoyed immense popularity. The number of extant examples from antiquity to today found within western tradition is proof enough. In effect, as William H. Sherman suggests, during the early modern period, the period of interest to this study, the number of new titles published and of old reprinted suggest there was a significant audience for travel writing despite low literacy rates (17-36). Paul Zumthor adds that in addition to their mass popularity in the west, narratives such as Marco Polo's (~1254-1324), Hans Staden's (1525-1579), and Theodor de Bry's (1528-1598), exerted an enormous influence for the facts they

revealed and “the significance they assumed in the collective mentality” must have “responded to a need of the educated public” (809).

But not every text in which a character journeys is a travel narrative: the journey must be the point of focus of the narrative; the organizing structure. In other words, the displacement of the character(s) must be the centrifugal point around which all other narrative elements are organized. In his chapter on Michel de Montaigne titled “Montaigne’s ‘Of Cannibals’: The Savage ‘I’”, Michel de Certeau describes the early modern travel narrative as comprising three structural stages: an outbound voyage, a depiction of the savage other, and a return voyage. Both the outbound and return voyage, have to do with the geographic (physical), or psychical, displacement of the subject-traveler. The middle stage, where the depiction of the other is found, lends cohesion to the travel narrative and thus is essential to it. Here is where the conventional description of savage society, or what Certeau calls “an ahistorical image, the picture of a new body” is found (68). The exotic other is at once described and created by the “delimitation of cultural fields” of which Certeau considers predominant the opposition “familiar” versus “strange.”⁴¹ This is what has made travel narratives so enticing to readers over the centuries; the description of difference.

There is therefore a double displacement. The first is physical as the subject-traveler distances himself from his place of origin and back. The other is temporal as the text is usually written after the fact. That is, the narrative is written when the subject-traveler finds himself back home again, after the experience of traveling is over. This is an important fact that introduces issues of memory, purpose and intention in the study of

⁴¹ As was argued in Chapter two and will be touched upon again later on in this chapter, the oppositions subject/object and culture/nature are even more characteristic of early modern narrative to the Caribbean than familiar/strange as Certeau proposed.

the travel narratives, putting time and place between the narrator and the journey itself, making the process of *narrativizing* experience not an immediate reaction but a planned-out and thought-through consciousness moment.⁴²

Though today we make a clear distinction between fictional and non-fictional travel narratives this is a relatively recent and problematic distinction. In effect, though verisimilitude has always been a concern of the narrative, a discreet difference between fictional and factual narrative was not made until the Enlightenment when the preoccupations of truth and fact dominated the establishment of History as a discipline. Before that, and especially during the middle ages, it was customary for narratives to have a claim to verisimilitude emphasizing first or third person testimony. Moreover, during the early modern period this medieval convention takes on a new meaning when the *argumentum veritas* is firmly grounded on eyewitness testimony underlining first hand experience (Herrero Massari 23). And though many examples of early modern travel narratives do feature imaginary and fantastic voyages these tend to belong to the utopian or hagiographic traditions.

The early modern travel narratives discussed in this project have traditionally been considered non-fictional since they relate to voyages that took place in actuality, like the ones by Christopher Columbus, Michele de Cuneo, Cabeza de Vaca, or Amerigo Vespucci. Nonetheless, the preoccupation with truth was often acknowledged by the writers of these factual travel accounts. For example, Dr. Dryander, author of the Introduction, and editor to the first edition of Hans Staden's *Warhaftig*⁴³, published in

⁴² This issue of memory will be discussed fully in Chapter Five.

⁴³ The full title in English is The True History and Description of a Country of savages, a Naked and Terrible People, Eaters of Men's Flesh, who Dwell in the New World Called America, Being Wholly

1557, acknowledges that “histories of this kind [travel narratives] receive generally so little credit and applause.” He continues,

In the first place, land travelers with their boundless falsehoods and reports of vain and imagined things have so wrought that honest and worthy people returning from foreign countries now hardly believed. For it is commonly said: he who desires to lie, let him lie concerning far off things and places, since few travel into distant parts, and a man will sooner credit what he hears that undertake the labour of finding out the truth for himself. (23)

However, these narratives still incorporate an element of fiction as they often describe seemingly impossible circumstances or scenery. In fact, following Paul Zumthor the issue of verisimilitude is structurally inherent to the travel narrative which facts can never be verified: “the discourse that contains the travel narrative is never - nor it can be - immediately proven: this is its defining trait, its avoidable kinship with fiction” (813). This fictional element is part and parcel of travel narratives of the early modern period acting as colonial promotional literature.⁴⁴

Early modern writers of factual travel narratives such as adventurers, explorers, sailors, and others featured here, recognized the conventions of the genre as well as the public’s expectations. For example, in the preface to Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil, 1578 (History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil), Jean de Léry explains,

Au reste, n’ignorant pas ce que se dit communément: assavoir que parce que les vieux et ceux qui ont esté loin, ne peuvent estre reprins, ils se licencient et donnent souvent congé de mentir: je diray là dessus en un mot, que tout ainsi que je hay la menterie et les menteurs, aussi s’il se trouve quelqu’un qui ne vueille adjoûter foy à plusieurs choses, voirment estranges, qui se liront en ceste hisotire, qu’il sache quel qu’il soit, que je ne sui spas pour cela delibéré *de le mener sur les lieux pur les luy faire voir*. (My emphasis. 93)

Unknown in Hesse both Before and After Christ’s Birth until Two Years ago, when Hans Staden of Homberg in Hesse took Personal Knowledge of them and Now Presents his Story in Print.

⁴⁴ Stephen Greenblatt has called this the *discourse of wonder* in his book Marvelous Possessions.

Jean de Léry's disclaimer attests not only to the expected mood of reception but also to the fact that his narrative did include descriptions of elements that would challenge credibility. With his last line Léry confronts disbelievers directly and warns that the fact that he is not believed will not persuade him to "take [the incredulous readers] to those places to make them see". His text, or better yet, the reading of his text, will have to stand for the experience of being in those places. If, as the saying goes, *seeing is believing*, in the case of Léry and his text *reading is believing*. Whatever happens if the reader remains incredulous Léry does not specify, but we are left with the impression that not only does he understand the reader's trepidation but he openly wonders how he can expect them to accept,

Mais aussi choses si esmerveillables et non jamais cognues, moins escrites des Anciens, qu'à peine *l'expérience* les peut-elle engraver en l'entendement de ceux qui les ont veuës? (My emphasis. 95)

As will be discussed more fully soon, experience then, takes an important role not only within the travel narrative structurally as a necessity of the element of strangeness depicted but also as a way of knowing and understanding.

A fictional or at least a hyperbolized element can very well be structurally inherent to the travel narrative, as Zumthor argues, if one considers that these elements usually fall in the middle section of the narrative, which, as we have already explained following Certeau, consists in a depiction of otherness. Though evident throughout the development of the travel narrative from ancient through medieval, and even up to early modern examples, the depiction of the other gains new importance and significance in the early modern period when it is put to the service of the colonial project. In fact, writers early modern travel narrative to the Americas often relied on medieval or ancient travel

narratives as literary models. The early modern texts of Christopher Columbus, Jean de Léry, and Sir Walter Raleigh, for example, were openly inscribed within the tradition of wonder and curiosity already established by the exigencies of the structure. Moreover, these writers must have felt the need to address the reader's expectations of sirens, amazons, *acephali*, and cannibals since the form of their narrative almost mandated it.

For example, in The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bewtiful Emphyre of Guiana [1596] Sir Walter Raleigh announces the existence of *acephali*, men without heads, in the basin of the Orinoco River. The *acephali* were already part of an ancient European mythic tradition when featured in The Travels of John Mandeville (~1357) a direct source to Raleigh. Following literary and popular tradition the courtier turned explorer claims that:

on the braunch [of the Orinoco river] which is called 'Caora' are a nation of people, whose heades appeare not above their shoulders, which though it may be thought a meere fable, yet fro mine owne parte *I am resolved it is true*...they are called 'Ewaipanoma': they are reported to have their eyes in their shoulders, and their mouths in the middle of their breasts & that a long train of haire groweth back ward between their shoulders.... Such a nation was written of by 'Maundevile', whose *reportes* were held for fables many yeares. (My emphasis. 178)

Here Raleigh declares his certainty of the existence of the *acephali* even before seeing them, or gathering any other evidence. The question that arises is why would Raleigh so readily accept as truth that which had been up to that point greatly debated and dismissed? Neil L. Whitehead cultural anthropologist and editor of The Discoverie explains that Raleigh's certainty is "derived from observation or interrogation of native people in Orinoco" (91). The anthropologist is referring to the fact that the indigenous populations of the area told analogous tales. For example, the Patamona people of the Guyana highlands told the story of "a dwarfish and strangely misshapen race of beings."

Indeed, Whitehead adds that “a trope of the monstrous, used to express alterity, was already present in native thought before the European arrival” (93).

In effect, other explorers agreed with Raleigh in that this was the land not only of the acephali but of amazons, cannibals and other wonders. Lawrence Keymis, Raleigh’s lieutenant who led the advance on his second incursion into Guyana, reports that the Caribs as well as the Guianans both spoke of “headlesse men, and that their mouthes in their breasts are exceeding wide” (13-4).⁴⁵ Another explorer, Robert Harcourt reports in his 1613 text A Relation of a Voyage to Guiana of men “having great eares of an extraordinary bignes” (41).⁴⁶ In 1625 the Dutch sailor Lourens Lourenszoon reported that after five years of captivity among the Arocouros of the Amapá Coast (between the Oyapock and Amazon rivers southeast of the Orinoco River) he witnessed the capture, torture and killing of an acephali he described thusly: “he was short of height, thick, corpulent and fat of body. On top, where every human has a neck, he has a long lock of black hair. In the middle of his chest, he has a nose. The eyes were a hands-width from each other. The ears close behind the armpit” (n.p.)⁴⁷. What all these reports have in common is the tendency to “stress the collective cultural meaning” interpreting as cultural uniformity the conflation of European expectations with native expressions of alterity.

What is more, these men’s *experience* of the Caribbean space itself in the tropical rainy region with its torrential rivers, valleys, waterfalls, islands, diversity of fauna and flora unlike those seen by most Europeans must have further impressed upon their minds

⁴⁵ As cited by Whitehead p.93 from Keymis’ 1596 A Relation of the Second Voyage to Guiana.

⁴⁶ As cited by Whitehead p.94.

⁴⁷ As cited and translated by Whitehead p. 93 from Nicholas Wassenaer’s Twaelfde del of ‘t vervolg van het Historich Verhael aller gedenckwaerdiger geschiedennis die in Europa [...] America [...] voorgevallen zijn (Amsterdam, 1627).

the possibility of the existence of wonderful and awe-inspiring things such as acephali, amazons, cannibals and golden cities (el dorado). Whitehead explains that “Raleigh engages in the collection of reports of these marvels with a firm skepticism as to their literal existence but with a definitive appreciation of the importance of establishing the bounds of the possible” (91). The significance of Raleigh’s process is undeniable: by aligning the new Caribbean space with the tradition of the marvelous he contributes to the endearing of the landscape to the English Queen thus making his report part of the scores of promotional documents aimed at the incentivizing of royal or private financial as well as other types of investment of resources.

This image of the extraordinary and marvelous which can be found amidst the outbound voyage and the return home also contains within it the experience of another people and another nature. In fact, Zumthor describes Marco Polo’s text as “a horizontal projection of an experience” (815). Presenting details of new lands and peoples, sights never seen, early modern travel accounts challenged conventional perception and documented resources that were already or soon would be at the disposal of the European market. Descriptions of flora and fauna never before seen by Europeans led the way for the field natural history and eventually to the discipline of Science, which sought to classify these new specimens taxonomically. Without a doubt, the discovery of new and different peoples, the natives peoples of the Americas, who were simultaneously perceived as closer to an original natural human condition and as brutes, caused an epistemological crisis that Science and Religion rushed to assuage.

In his article “Writing up the Log: The Legacy of Hakluyt,” T. J. Cribb suggests that of all the influence and challenges travel narratives must have incited in their

audience, the predominance of firsthand experience over traditional ways of acquiring knowledge, was perhaps the most significant. The traveler's observations on trade, the land, and the sea, of which many travel narratives like the ones compiled by Richard Hakluyt⁴⁸ were chock full, revolutionized commerce, cosmography and philosophy. For Cribb the travel narrative's emphasis on experience, as exemplified by Hakluyt, aided in the creation of "a new episteme: the scientific" (104). Therefore, the empiricism which has dominated science since the seventeenth century can be said to have developed in the practice of the traveler. In fact, in his Comentarios Reales de los Incas (1609), El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega explains in the beginning of his history that he will not discuss the shape of the world and sky, or whether or not all the earth is habitable, or the existence of antipodes, as it is customary to do in histories. For this he cites three reasons: that this was not the aim of his project, that being an Indian he could not presume to do this, and the third, "porque la experiencia, después que se descubrió lo que llaman Nuevo Mundo, nos ha desengañado de la mayor parte de estas dudas" 'because, after having discovered this they call the New World, experience has lead us towards the truth in most of these questions' (7).⁴⁹

The fantastic elements embedded within the depiction of otherness in the travel narrative, which Juan Francisco Maura⁵⁰ considers romance-like, bring our discussion to the novel as a genre with an underlying travel narrative. Paul Zumthor notes that though in Arabic literature the travel narrative was identified as an independent genre related to the novel as early as in the tenth century, in the western world, the character of the

⁴⁸ Namely, Principal Navigations of the English Nation (1589).

⁴⁹ My translation.

⁵⁰ Juan Francisco Maura, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca: o el arte de la automitificación. See Bibliography for details.

relation between the two has yet to be fully articulated.⁵¹ Nonetheless their linkage is clear. In terms of their form, both depend primarily on narrative. In other words, their main preoccupation is to tell a story, though description also plays an important role in both. Also, much like the travel narrative structure, the conventional novel or *Bildungsroman* follows the story of one character, a hero, from his birth, through his eventful life and to his maturity or death. The narrative focuses on the perspective and experiences of the protagonist, oftentimes male, in the arduous process of physical, moral, psychological and social development.

Indeed, the relevance of the travel narrative to the novel has been indirectly ascertained by some critics. In the seminal Theory of the Novel, Georg Lukács, discusses the novel's structure as a journey.

The inner form of the novel has been understood as the process of the problematic individual's *journeying towards himself*, the road from dull captivity within a merely present reality – a reality that is heterogeneous in itself and meaningless to the individual – towards clear self-recognition. (My emphasis. 80)

Similarly to Lukács' description of the novel, the travel narrative also has to do with the makings of the individual subject, not from his birth to his death, as seen in the novel, but from his departure to his return which can be seen as a metaphor for these. Like the novel, the travel narrative revolves around the journey of the subject-writer, and his quest can likewise be seen as the human quest for self-definition. The travel narrative may even have been a key piece in the development of the novel as seen in Michael McKeon's argument for the birth of the genre out of and in response to early modern preoccupations

⁵¹ For a detailed discussion of travel literature and the novel see Percy G. Adams, Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel. See Bibliography for details

with issues of truth in narrative and individual virtue against which travel narratives (of which the picaresque is his main example) acted as foil.⁵²

There is however a major difference between the novel and the travel narrative and that is the novel's dependency on the printing press for its emergence and survival.

Walter Benjamin explains,

What distinguishes the novel from the story (and from the epic in the narrower sense) is its essential dependence on the book. The dissemination of the novel became possible only with the invention of printing. What can be handed down orally, the wealth of the epic, is of a different kind from what constitutes the stock in trade of the novel. What differentiates the novel from all other forms of prose literature – the fairy tale, the legend, even the novella – *is that it neither comes from oral tradition nor does it go into it*. This distinguishes it from storytelling in particular. The story teller takes what he tells from *experience* – his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale. The novelist has isolated himself. The birthplace of the novel is the solitary individual, who is no longer able to express himself by giving examples of his most important concerns, is himself uncounseled, and cannot counsel others. (My emphasis. 87)

Given its long oral tradition, the travel narrative had already been a popular and widely-received genre many centuries before the advent of the printing press, though during the early modern period the press did make it possible to disseminate information faster and wider making possible the use of the travel narrative as promotional material for investment in the Americas. As Benjamin's storyteller, the traveler also tells a tale based on his experience. The travel narrative's connection with storytelling and thus oral tradition is well documented during the classical as well as the medieval period. During the early modern period the travel narrative gains momentum from the printing press but the purpose and intention of the writing exercise keeps the narrative within the bounds of the oral tradition. In fact, most of the travel narratives of the period were written as *reports* or as *relaciones* which were intended as verbal testimony to the crown. Though

⁵² Michael McKeon, The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740. See Bibliography for details.

on occasion travel narratives may make references to other books, like Raleigh's reference to Mandeville's text cited above, these are more like references to an oral medieval tradition rather than to a printed one since a medieval text's reception cast a far wider net in oral than in written form.

In addition, the counsel that Benjamin sees as inherent in a genre of oral origins is homologous to the implicit morality of the travel narrative as the traveler overcomes obstacles and returns home as discussed by Paul Zumthor, or its usefulness, as it furnishes information and gives delight that satisfies curiosity as noted by Barbara Korte.

About the storyteller Benjamin has claimed, "death is the sanction of everything that the storyteller can tell. He has borrowed his authority from death" (94). Brian Musgrove points to a link between the storyteller's death and the traveler's return home after having faced a dangerous voyage. Not only does his return and presence give an air of authority and thus verisimilitude to his report, but the traveler ceases to be one as soon as he is home, in essence dying. Following what he calls the *travel narrative thanatos* Musgrove claims, "the attempt to master the travel experience and to occupy the terrain of otherness is fundamentally morbid; obstructive of desire and destructive of subject unity" (43).

Related to the novel is the picaresque. Exemplified in the 1554 anonymous El Lazarillo de Tormes, the picaresque is characterized by mobility. Usually of low social origin, the protagonist *pícaro* or rogue is an anti-hero for whom neither morality nor lawfulness are significant. He is a marginal figure outcast of the social and economic system whose tale is told often in the first person and in a confessional tone. He is thus destined to travel, from benefactor to benefactor (as in the case of the Lazarillo) or from

place to place (as in the case of Moll Flanders who travels across the ocean to the Americas). The structure of both the travel narrative and the picaresque privileges mobility as it hinges on the displacement of a subject that stands outside the system precisely because he is not static. For this reason more often than not the picaresque, as well as the travel narrative, tends to be episodic. The link between the traveler and the *pícaro* was evident to Sir Walter Raleigh who, feeling nervous about being branded as a *pícaro* and eager to regain the favor of the crown in the hopes of legitimizing his venture, clarifies in the “Epistle Dedicatorie” to his travel account, that his aim was not “to goe journeys of picorie” but of doing serious exploring for the benefit of the crown (121).

Travel narrative as a structure can also be seen in narratives of pilgrimage and hagiography, both of which depend on the displacement of a subject that retains the focus of the narrative. But in contrast to the secular early modern narrative this subject is driven by religious and not personal or financial goals. Jás Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés, in addition to Paul Zumthor, spend a lot of time on the discussion of late antiquity and medieval narrative of pilgrimage as predecessors of the early modern travels of exploration and ethnography, such as Le Voyage de St Brendan, published sometime during the twelfth century, which presents a sea voyage in search for paradise believed to be an island in the vicinity of Ireland. Another example would be the popular legend of the repentant whore Marie L’Égyptienne who fled to the desert where she lived forty years always walking towards the east.⁵³ Even Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales (fourteenth century), who used pilgrimage as a literary recourse, also features a journey either as the

⁵³ See my “Body as Text: The Fasting and Wildness of (Female) Nature in Rutebeuf’s La vie de sainte Marie L’Égyptienne” for a brief discussion of the saint’s legend as a travel narrative. See Bibliography for details.

means, or the *raison d'être* of the narrative. In their introduction to Voyages and Visions, Elsner and Rubiés link the travel narrative to what they call the “pilgrimage model,” which stands as the “mythical paradigm of the West” (7). They begin to trace their model not in the Christian era but in Greco-Roman Antiquity, turning from hagiography to the romances of the crusades and chivalry of the Middle Ages. A crisis ensues in the Renaissance, when, according to the critics, a naturalistic and ethnographic paradigm focused on experience and observation begins to push out traditional religious ideologies. Indeed, the early modern travel narrative distinguishes itself as a secular, not sacred, pilgrimage which features a more self-aware and individualized subjectivity unconcerned, at least textually, with spiritual ambition or sacrifice. Instead, the early modern travel narrative centers on a subject-traveler that seeks recognition and personal benefit.

In addition, the early modern narrative has a direct link to legal discourse. In Spanish, the *relación* was an official document meant to serve as testimony before the judges and advocates of the court. In contrast to the *probanzas* which retold an *interrogatorio*, or question and answer session, of a witness to serve as evidence in court, the *relación* compiled only the testimony of the witness suppressing details such as the date, time and place the testimony was taken or the home and profession of the witness (Adorno and Pautz 1:363). More importantly, it recorded the testimony in a style that made easier its reading and comprehension. It was in fact “prepared to facilitate the coherent and assimilable presentation of information to the judges” (363). In the case of sixteenth century *relaciones* that had to do with travel to the new lands these official documents served the double duty of accounting for expenditures in financial as well as

human resources and securing future investments thus fulfilling an important role within the colonial project.

The Colonial Context of the Sixteenth Century Travel Narrative

As mentioned above one of the striking differences between the sixteenth century travel narrative and travel narrative in general is that in the early modern period the depiction of otherness around which the narrative is organized is put to the service of the crown and its expansionistic drive. This section attempts to explain how exactly the early modern travel narrative achieves that.

For most early moderns, the travel narrative was the only sort of contact they could ever hope to establish with the newly encountered lands and peoples. Containing representations of the unknown and unattainable, the travel narrative became a document of state imbued with political meaning. This is so much so, that Richard Helgerson argues that even though in the sixteenth century all books written in English contributed to “the writing of England” as nation, none did more than chronicles, of which he cites Richard Hakluyt’s Principal Navigations of the English Nation (1589) as a key example. For Helgerson, Hakluyt’s compilation of travels of trade and conquest, “betrays an imperial ambition of the most far-reaching sort, the ambition to expand England’s newly sovereign power over the entire globe” (316). Indeed, in his preface to Hakluyt’s text, David Freeman Hawke explains that though Hakluyt translated and included documents originally in Spanish, Portuguese, French, Latin, and Italian, his express purpose was to collect the documentation belonging to English travels: “I meddled in this work with the navigations only of our nation,” (as cited by Hawke xiv). In fact, William H. Sherman notes that Hakluyt’s compilation as well as others of the type (such as Richard Eden’s

The Decades of the New World (1555)) are filled with “patriotic rhetoric fired by political and commercial competition” as they sought “to challenge European perceptions of English inaction and to promote new initiatives by showing that the English had been men full of activity, stirrers abroad, and searchers of the remote parts of the world” (19). Consequently, the early modern travel narrative is part of the colonial discourse that constitutes European hegemony. Hawke adds citing Hakluyt: “What at first glance seemed a potpourri of mariner’s narratives, promotional tracts, business letters, ship’s logs, and government documents had been cemented into an English epic by Hakluyt’s compulsion to put between covers all he could find ‘which might commend our nation for the high courage and singular activity in the search and discovery of the most unknown quarters of the world’” (xv). Travel narratives were also the physical testimony of the empire as they brought back evidence of incursion and control of extended geographical areas, a consequence of empire. Written in the sixteenth century, the travel narratives examined in this study were written by Europeans concerning the Caribbean landscape and its people and thus they are irremediably tied to the colonization of the region.

Additionally, most travel narratives had an explicit targeted audience as well as a legal, political and economic purpose that fueled their writing. The audience was conventionally addressed in the dedication of their narrative written most often in letter form. For example, Jean de Léry addresses François de Coligny, son of Gaspar de Coligny who made possible Léry’s venture into Brazil, in order to “perpetuer icy la souvenance d’un voyage” ‘perpetuate here the memory of a voyage’ (47; Whatley xli). Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca writes his Relación (1542) as witness to the impossibilities he endured and testimony of his character’s caliber so that he may be considered for a more

profitable charge (see Chapter Four for more details on Cabeza de Vaca and his text).

From his part, the Bishop Don Bartolomé de las Casas, writes in his Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las indias (1552) to Don Felipe, son of Charles V, in the hopes that the prince would beg his father the emperor, to prohibit the cruelty and enslavement of the “humble and docile Indians.” In fact, he claims that the text was written “only for the public good and the prosperity of the royal state” [“por sólo el bien público y prosperidad del estado real”] (73).

Another example is Christopher Columbus who writes to the King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella so that his text may serve as proof of his obedience. Thus in the Introduction to the diary to his first voyage he claims that he embarked on such voyage,

para ver los dichos príncipes y los pueblos y las tierras y la disposición d’ellas, y de todo, y la manera que se pudiera tener para la conversión d’ellas a nuestra sancta fe, y ordenaron que yo no fuese por tierra al Oriente, por donde se costumbra de andar, salvo por el camino del Occidente, por donde hasta oy no sabemos por cierta fe que aya passado nadie. (96)

Hakluyt’s compilation aside, most early modern travel narratives were written with the express intention of explaining the expense of resources to an authority, or of persuading the same authority for ampler allowance in expenditure. This is precisely the case of Sir Walter Raleigh who writes in order to dissipate a courtly intrigue to which he had fallen victim. In Raleigh’s “Epistle Dedicatorie” to his travel narrative he addresses Lord Charles Howard and Sir Robert Cecyll, both men who had inspired against him for the favor of James I, by manner of raising doubts of whether his travels had taken place or not. From its beginning, Raleigh’s account is then aimed at offering evidence for his travel, proving his character in order to clear his name, and providing the crown with the possibility of monetary gain as can be seen from the following.

For your Honors many Honorable and friendlie parts, I have hitherto onely returned promises, and nowe for answeare of both your adventures, I have sent you a bundle of papers which I have devided between your Lo. & S^r Robert Cecyl in these two respects chiefly: First for that it is reason, that wastful factors, when they have consumed such stockes as they had in trust, doe yeeld some cullor for the same in their account, secondly for that I am assured, that whatsoever shalbe done, or written by me, shall neede a double protection and defence. (120)

Out of this imperial thirst came the need to produce more sophisticated and accurate maps, and early modern travel narratives afforded the knowledge that made geography and cartography possible. Leslie B. Cormack explains the importance and value of this to the English.

Indeed, the study of geography helped the English develop an imperial world view based on three underlying assumptions: a belief that the world could be measured, named and therefore controlled; a sense of superiority of the English over peoples and nations and thus the right of the English nation to exploit other areas of the globe; and a self-definition that gave these English students a sense of themselves and their nation. (45).

That is precisely what the travel narrative accomplishes: a sense of control, the superiority of the traveler and the establishment of the traveler's identity as subject. The other depicted in the narrative serves as foil to the traveler's subjectivity as it turns into the subject's object. This subject-traveler relation to the object-other is colonial in itself since it denies any agency or voice to the other.

In addition, given that the traveler's obsession with the other is focused on his body (the savage, the cannibal, the amazon, the *acephali* are all figures in which the body is prominent), the traveler succeeds not only in the objectification but also the erotization of the other. In fact, it is the other's alien body what most attracts the subject-traveler as well as the reader; it is the body of the savage what brings pleasure to the travel narrative. This "estheticization of the primitive," as Certeau calls it, is key to the genre: "what travel literature really fabricates is the primitive as *a body of pleasure*" (228, 226).

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the modern subject's insistence on the body of the other can be seen as a reference to a human-nature relationship of domination. In other words, the traveler's description of the other prioritizes the body which he strives to control. Thus in the diary to the first voyage, in the entry for October 11, 1492, Christopher Columbus describes the other's body. His admiration and wonderment at the body of the Amerindians is openly expressed.

Ellos andan todos desnudos como su madre los parió, y también las mugeres, aunque no vide más de un farto moça, y todo los que yo vi eran todos mançebos, que ninguno vide de edad de más de XXX años, muy bien hechos, de muy fermosos cuerpos y muy buenas caras, los cabellos gruessos cuasi como sedas de cola de cavallos e cortos. (111)

Certeau's "estheticization of the primitive" is analogous to the estheticization of the landscape in order to make it more enticing to possible investors. For example, Columbus insists that the islands he encounters in this first voyage are "most beautiful," "green," and "very fertile" ("fermosísimas," "verdes" and "muy fértiles"). In her "Visible Bodies: cartography and anatomy," Caterina Albano explains the correlation between modes of representing the body and space by her citation of Gerard Mercator with which she begins her article "the aim of geography is to enable contemplation of the magnificence of God's creation, the mark of divine perfection manifesting itself both in the configuration of the world and in the human body."⁵⁴ But, as will be discussed at length in Chapter Five it is the female body which best exemplifies the "estheticization of the primitive."

There is still another way in which the travel narrative is always colonial: as a written text the travel narrative presents itself as representation of reality and truth, and as

⁵⁴ As cited indirectly by Albano from Mercator's *Atlas sive cosmographiae meditationes de fabrica mundi e fabricate figura* [1595].

a narrative it presents itself as a totality. Yet this totality is not represented but produced by the traveler writer. In the case of sixteenth century travel narrative the reader should remember that this kind of narrative was the only way most early modern Europeans could get acquainted with the New World. In addition, they made up they only source of information entrepreneurs and the crown itself had access to in order to project their expectations, plans and investment. In this way, a personal narrative centered on the 'I' became the only way of *discovering* the new world and describing *reality*.

The text's insistence in its unmediated representation of truth and totality is the basis on which Certeau mounts his attack on traditional historiography: it purports to represent a whole that though is always fictive and never factual it is never recognized as such. Tom Conley, Certeau's translator in The Writing of History, goes as far as claiming that history's insistence in producing "totalities of knowledge" is a mythic desire that "is sapped by the very methods that are used to bring form and symmetry to knowledge" (xi).

Furthermore, since narrative produces meaning and meaning is never apolitical but it is always invested in the culture which produces it, the 'reality' represented will always be a lie. The travel narrative colonizes world perspective as it imposes a reality that is particular (belonging to and produced by the traveler-writer) passing it off as collective. Hayden White would agree as he sees narrative as a "meta-code, a human universal on the basis of which transcultural messages about the nature of reality can be transmitted" (1). For him meaning is irretrievably tied to narrative as, "the absence of narrative capacity or a refusal of narrative indicates an absence or refusal of meaning itself" (2).

Moreover, as mentioned before, not only does the early modern narrative have a direct link to legal discourse, but also, as a narrative, it is invested in colonial law itself. In his article “Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century,” Stephen Greenblatt argues that since, as the bishop of Ávila said to Queen Isabella “language is the perfect instrument of empire,” the consolidation of the Spanish language in a grammar could have only aided Spain’s colonial project (17). We are reminded that “every claim to territorial possession is made through the slant of a narrative, whether it is a narrative that brings forth or falsifies the evidence of a claim” (Zumthor 813). Narrative’s linkage to legality is further explained by White: “narrative in general, from the folktale to the novel, from the annals to the fully realized ‘history,’ has to do with the topics of law, legality, legitimacy, or, more general, authority” (13). In fact, White adds that as it imagines “the need to represent reality as history,” historical self-consciousness is “conceivable only in terms of its interest in law, legality, and legitimacy, and so on” (14). For Roberto González Echevarría too, the tie between narrative and legality is clear: “legal rhetoric became the states verbal arena of power. The *letrados* had to devise a language that would magnify the implicit threats and so constructed a body of texts that pledged to maim, constrain, or annihilate the body of the disobedient subject” (xi). In fact, González Echevarría’s book Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative makes this its central claim: the law is the dangerous textual environment from which the Latin American novel emerged and evolved. In short, since “it hangs on a sequence of successive places, a series of toponymies mapping out the discourse, as if to signify a symbolic appropriation of territory more than to effect

a projection into an expanse,” colonial aspirations are central to the travel narrative (Zumthor 812).

Because of its written character, because of narrative nature, because it features the body of the other eroticized for self-pleasure, and lastly because as it revolves around the subject-traveler, the sixteenth century travel narrative emerges as an integral part of early modern colonial discourse.

The Narrator as (Imperial) Subject

As discussed above, the travel narrative in general is centered on the figure of the subject-traveler as he lives through new episodes. In the case of early modern travel narrative and sixteenth century in particular, the subject-traveler has a legal, financial and personal investment in the narrative. In effect,

the chronicles must be understood in relation to a center of power that the writers attempt to manipulate and turn in their favor by identifying their own private interests with those of that power. In other words, they reflect and echo the Crown’s imperial “I/eye” in the New World. Far from being the *free observations* of the chroniclers, these texts were the official vehicle of religious and cultural power. (My emphasis. Spitta 32)

Power, transacted or maintained, is then a main preoccupation of the early modern travel narrative writer. Spitta reminds us that the writer’s descriptions of the peoples, the flora and the fauna are part of a colonial discourse and as such betray an imperial ideology. In fact, in his introduction to Colonial Encounters, Peter Hulme defines the concept of colonial discourse as

an ensemble of linguistically-based practices unified by their common deployment in the management of colonial relationships.... Underlying...is the presumption that during the colonial period *large parts of the non-European world were produced for Europe through a discourse* that imbricated sets of questions and assumptions, methods of procedure and analysis, and kinds of writing and imagery.... (My emphasis. 2)

The early modern travel narrative is a constitutive part of the media that produced the new lands through discourse. This idea of discursive construction of a place, a world, is congruent with current philosophies of ecological criticism, as discussed in Chapter One, which maintain that in very practical and concrete ways, language in specific and discourse in general produces nature as it mediates our grasp, our understanding and every interaction with it. As will be shown in this dissertation, Caribbean Nature and the native people's ecology is produced by the narrative as foil to Europe's.

The form's emphasis on experience also directs the reader towards an imperialist subject. Since experience comes about when a perceiving subject is within contact with an object, the narrative that is produced never waivers its attention on the "I": I see, I think, I do. In fact, it has been argued that

Travelogues not only gave an account of the objects found but also of the process by which they were found, that is, the story of the traveler's life as he journeyed in search of the secrets of nature, which of course also turns out to be a voyage of self-discovery. (104)

It follows, that the experience of otherness inscribed in the travel narrative and presented to the reader is organized around the individual subject-narrator and told from his perspective. The reader learns how new peoples and new landscapes seem to the narrator who always operates within his own frame of reference. Furthermore, these new people and natures remain static; known to the reader only by what the narrator observes. They are his objects of curiosity, perusal and study, and as such remain unchanged. In fact, the travel narrative form allows for only one subjectivity; the observed people and nature have no voice and no text outside of the one assigned by the narrator who controls the tale. As it describes, his watchful eye objectifies. The reader identifies with the authority of the narrative voice and lives difference, in all its wonderment and horror,

vicariously through it. As he narrates experience, the subject-traveler discloses his own self. This self betrayal does not escape the narrator himself. In the following example, L  ry warns the reader that if he focuses too much on himself it is because his authority comes from personal experience of place.

Si quelqu'un, di-je, trouve mauvais que, quand ci-apr  s je parleray de la fa  on de faire des sauvages (comme si je me voulois faire valoir), j'use si souvent de ceste fa  on de parler, Je vis, je me trouvay, cela m'advint, et choses semblables, je respon, qu'outre (ainsi que j'ay touch  ) que ce sont matieres de mon proper sujet, qu'encores, comme on dit, est-ce cela parl   de science, c'est    dire de veu   et d'experience: voire diray des choses que nul n'a possible jamais remarqu  es si avant que j'ay faict, moins s'en trouve-il rien par escrit. J'enten toutesfois, non pas de toute l'Amerique en general, mais seulement de l'endroit o   j'ay demeur   environ un an: assavoir sous le tropique de Capricorne entre les sauvages nommez *Touo  pinambaoults*. (98)

As can be seen, the early modern narrative hinges on the *experience of place* of a subject-traveler turned narrator. This experience of place can easily be seen as the endurance of the ordeal of unfamiliarity and strangeness. In effect, Michel de Certeau's tripartite model for the travel narrative mentioned in the first section of this chapter, an outbound voyage, a depiction of otherness, and a return voyage, has been likened to the three stages of initiation rites as described by the Belgian anthropologist and folklorist Arnold Van Gennep. In his 1909 book Les Rites de Passage, Van Gennep sought to analyze the rituals and ceremonies humans use in order to cope with transitional stages such as coming of age, the event of marriage or death. He identifies three stages which describe an individual's social, physical or psychical stage of development. The first stage, *s  paration* refers to the individual's isolation from the rest of the community. The second called *marge*, refers to a liminal stage or threshold marked by an intense experience which the individual must face alone. Finally, *agr  gation*, points to a reintegration into the community with a new personal identity and/or status. As an

example we can think of a young boy who is taken from his mother to be brought to the forest where he hunts for the first time and afterwards is made to spend twenty eight days in the dark of a hollow tree trunk. The boy experiences killing and death and confronts the anxiety of being separated from his mother and being by himself in a dark and humid place without food which is his own symbolic death. At the end of this extension of time the boy is once again welcomed to the community this time as a man and fully participating member of societal organization capable to take on a wife and have his own family. He is reborn and thus takes a new name sharing his experience with the rest of the community. As the initiated takes on a new identity, which will from now on define him with all its implications, Van Gennep's model in fact constitutes a theory of subjectivity.

Moreover, since reintegration to society is usually symbolized by a re-naming ceremony in which the initiated retells his experience, the use of language or symbolic discourse guarantees a *narrativizing*. In other words, the construction of the new subject at some point requires the translation of experience into a narrative. In fact, the reintegration ceremony or ritual is itself symbolic discourse. Rituals, explains performance theorist Richard Schechner, "involve a special ordering of time, a special, non-productive value attached to objects, and often a special place set aside in which to perform" like narrative does (as cited by Bowie 145). Social anthropologist Stanley J. Tambiah adds,

Ritual is a culturally constructed system of symbolic communication. It is constituted of patterned and ordered sequences of words and acts, often expressed in multiple media, whose content and arrangement are characterized in varying degree by formality (conventionality), stereotypy (rigidity), condensation (fusion), and redundancy (repetition). (119, as cited by Bowie 142).

In this sense, ritual is language itself: a language necessary as intermediary between the experience of the ordeal that renders the boy a man and the new subjectivity as a male adult. Like narrative, ritual requires a form and structure as well as some flexibility and repetition. As the boy soon-to-be-man performs the ritual he *narrativizes* his experience into a new subject.

Moreover, the individual's ordeal that the reintegration ritual *narrativizes* is none other than his confrontation with nature in solitude. In fact, when Mircea Eliade explains the rites of passage in his book Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries he emphasizes the importance of separating the boy from the mother and putting him inside a rotten tree trunk, for example, where he had to withstand solitude, hunger, and cold. There, he faces nature far from the comfort of his community, takes a glimpse into the spirit or magical world through visions and the like, afterwards emerging a man. Since for Eliade rites of passage are most often than not about recreating cosmogonic (myths of origins of the world) or ontological myths (myths about the origins of being) they are about nature and the human relation to nature.

This anthropological model of subjectivity has been used by mythographer Joseph Campbell in order to explain the making of the hero figure in universal mythic narrative. In The Hero with a Thousand Faces (1949), Campbell describes three stages: *separation, trials and victories of initiation, and return*. Belonging to a Jungian tradition, this model has been widely used to study a protagonist's development as traced in a narrative text. Within the travel narrative, the subject-traveler can then be seen to correspond to the figure of the hero and the voyage as the trial the protagonist hero must endure. Campbell

saw the hero myth as a central narrative structure, a monomyth, of outmost importance in virtually all cultures and embodying a society's ideals (Bowie 285).

It is important to note that the archetype of the hero is a gendered one since conventionally women are either, the object of desire, the prize, or the obstacle to be surpassed. In fact, Fiona Bowie explains,

Although the sex of the hero is unspecified, the sequence clearly presupposes a male hero, and at the level of psychological integration the journey only makes sense from a male perspective. (Bowie 286)

Apart from the universality ascribed to the hero myth, the fact that this is a male narrative structure based on a male model of subjectivity is another reason why Campbell's monomyth argument has been largely contested. Still, it is not difficult to see that within the travel narrative, the idea of a traveler in search of fortune and fame braving the odds is also gendered, and as mentioned in the Introduction to this project, early modern narratives feature male narrators almost exclusively since it is not until the second half of the 17th century that the narrative voice of a non-fictional travel narrative to the Americas is female (see Catalina de Erauso's The Ensign Nun). In fact, female hero myths do exist but typically they do not "involve the type of outward journey and return characteristic of the monomyth" (Bowie 289).

As can be surmised from above, early modern travel narrative is written by a male traveler that, tacitly and in the service of the colonial project, uses only himself as point of reference as he struggles to translate his experience of otherness (another place, another people) into narrative form. That is to say, that the travel narrative is the signifying process by which the narrator, upon returning to the original point of departure renders textually the process by which he builds himself as an (imperial) subject. Since it

is written *in the service of the colonial project*, as I stated above, or, in other words, as it usually seeks to clear the traveler's name, prove beyond doubt his service to the crown, and secure the crown's favor by way of further investment or the bestowing of nobility titles, the resulting construction of the native and of the natives relation to the environment (or the native's ecology) with the narrative will be articulated in terms of subject/object and culture/nature. These are the cultural fields described in the preceding chapter used to inscribe the experience of alterity to which Certeau referred.

Reading the Ecology of Subjectivization and Ecological difference

Modern subjectivity's dependence on the text, as Dussel and Greenblatt have argued, allows for the textual analysis of sixteenth century travel narrative as an appropriate method for teasing out the ecology within subjectivization and the expression of difference in ecological terms. Critic Donald E. Hall explains the text's significance in the study of subjectivity.

Indeed, as literary and cultural critics have aggressively expanded what they mean by the term text, the textuality of the self as a system of representations has, itself, become a singularly important arena of investigation and speculation. Thus in exploring subjectivity, we are in effect exploring the 'self' as a text, as a topic for critical analysis, both in and beyond its relationship to the traditional texts of literature and culture. (5)

In truth, sixteenth century travel narrative serves as an ideal text through which to study the ecology of subjectivization within early modern European colonial discourse. But, having presented the travel narrative as a tripartite structure like Certeau sees it, having discussed it as an initiation rite from an anthropological perspective, and finally, having explored its literary mythic quality, how exactly should one conceive the ecology within subjectivization in the travel narrative? In order to do this, this project follows Jean Joseph Goux's reworking of the Freudian-Lacanian paradigm of subjectivization

and Engels' model of history, so that a new model emerges for the study of the human-nature relation in the travel narrative. This original model is characterized by three stages: separation-ordeal-reintegration. In the first stage, the traveler-writer is physically as well as psychically separated from what is familiar to him. He is full of expectations and well-established hierarchies as he journeys into the unknown. Then, he comes upon the ordeal by confronting alterity; the other place and the place of the other, the experience of which he merges in one. A physical, epistemological, or combined crisis ensues, while meaning shifts. The experience of the new environment challenges the internalized symbolic order itself as it forces the traveler to an extralinguistic experience. Finally, the traveler-writer once again identifies himself with the abstract general equivalent (the Crown's imperial ambitions, Capital, Christianity), who aids him in the assignation of value and the narrativizing, that is, the ordering of his experiences into a coherent narrative. Hierarchy is reestablished as binary opposites are reconfigured while the traveler re-establishes himself as subject and the Amerindian and Caribbean nature as object. The ecological difference creeps into the text. Caribbean nature is thus produced by the narrative, though in an effort to "naturalize" its dominion narrative will claim to be produced by nature. The nature produced by the text, to which a new human relation is established is not the original nature, as Goux repeatedly points out, but it is "historical nature: the *other* nature" (214). The re-repression of the once repressed is achieved.

When considering ecological difference within a text it is important to distinguish between differences in ecological philosophy or ideology and differences in ecological practices. On the one hand, ecological philosophies such as the predominant model for human to nature relationship found within early modern Christianity, or the predominant

ecology within Amerindian tradition are contingent to a material and historical context, and cannot be judged as inferior or superior without losing sight of significant cultural differences. On the other hand, difference in the ecological practices of, for example, appropriating collective agricultural plots for the pasturing of sheep owned by a single man versus the mixing of various cultivars such as beans, maize, and manioc in a collective site side by side other useful trees (agroforestry), can be hierarchically arranged in terms of what is preferable and what is not. Though also rooted in a material and historic-cultural context, these practices can still be judged in terms of their impact on the environment.

It follows, that there is a question of ethical value within ecological difference that does not apply to other kinds of differences. As an example, let us consider the way two people may deal with refuse. If person A decides to throw his refuse in the nearest river, whereas person B recycles, composts, and finally dumps the rest in a preselected collective dump site then, one can judge person A's actions (or ecological practices) as damaging to the environment and therefore as inferior to person B's. The difference can be expressed in a binary like this one, responsible dumping/irresponsible dumping; or recycling/dumping, where the first term is seen as preferable to the second. This value judgment would remain standing even if these differences are considered to be cultural. In effect, one can recognize the difference in these ecological practices and may even understand the cultural and historical circumstances that constructed them but the fact remains that one still needs to press for a less detrimental and more ethical way of dealing with refuse.

What serves as basis for the judgment of these ecological practices is empirical scientific knowledge. Though this project does not wish to treat scientific knowledge as outside of culture and thus unproblematic, it still recognizes the significance of the information that the scientific method affords us when it comes to the state of the environment and our impact on it. The cultural and historical contingency of science as well as the negative effects it has had on people, animals and the environment itself cannot be denied. However, scientific knowledge should be recognized not as just another way of interpreting the world in which we live, but as an invaluable tool in the knowing of that world. For obvious reasons, an ecological reading of a text must take into account the role of science in the value judgment of ecological practices.

However, this study concerns itself with neither Caribbean Amerindian nor European early modern ecological practices. Rather, it identifies and seeks to analyze the ecological difference within the ecological philosophy the narrator-traveler inscribes. Granted, the ecological philosophy the narrator-traveler inscribes in his text is his own and that which he infers from the Amerindian ecological practices he observes. The task of uncovering and evaluating ecological practices in early modern texts necessarily falls outside the theoretical framework and scope of this project, being more suitable for an anthropologist, environmental historian or an ecologist.

In general, North American ecological criticism centered on English departments, has traditionally focused on the ethical aspect of the ecological difference when reading texts. That is to say, they have looked at a text in order to decide if the description of nature or the relationship between the human and the non-human characters within the text is detrimental or beneficial to nature. The aim of this project is rather, to look at

differences in the way the relationship between human and non-human elements are constructed textually by a narrator, and to study how these differences are used to articulate other types of differences between human characters. Far from looking to applaud or denounce a certain ecological philosophy or practice, the type of ecological criticism proposed here seeks to uncover assumptions and associations embedded deep within early modern colonial discourse. This type of reading, I believe, contributes valuable information about our relationship to the environment grounding this study firmly within an ecological perspective.

Conclusion

As argued in this chapter, travel narrative in general can be seen as the underlying narrative structure to various literary genres. As a structure, travel narrative organizes the story into an outbound voyage, a depiction of the other and a return voyage. Though classical and medieval travel narratives already featured descriptions of new landscapes, animals, and peoples, it is during the early modern period that the narrative structure secures its ties to colonialism by promoting the investment of capital and human resources in the conquest and colonization of the new lands. In addition, early modern travel narrative is the product of an individual's process of *subjectivizing* or self-fashioning, vis-à-vis the American other rendered object. The reading of the ecology of subjectivization considers both the process of subjectivization and objectivization through the human-nature relationship. The ecological perspective on which this project is based is not one of value judgment but of the identifying and analyzing of differences in the ecological philosophy of both the subject and the object.

The following two chapters will analyze the text as a process of narrativizing by which the other and his ecology are inscribed using the cultural fields of subject/object and culture/nature. Chapter Four will focus on the ecology of subjectivization or the process by which the I-Conqueror comes to identify himself as subject textually and ecologically in dialectical relation to the Caribbean landscape and its peoples by identifying ecological difference in the other. To that end, the chapter will study examples of the way in which the subject defines himself as such by a specific relation to the environment that is opposite to the native's relation to the environment.

On the other hand, Chapter Five will focus on the text as the process by which ecological difference is identified and recognized as the marker of the other as object. Examples will illustrate how the subject-traveler constructs the Caribbean environment and its native people's as object because of the difference between their relation to the environment and the European's. It should be obvious that the main problematic issue in the articulation of difference is the judging and organizing of that difference in hierarchical pairs that are perpetuated only through violence. As it should become clear, both chapters will analyze textual construction of subject and object in the context of their relation to the environment.

CHAPTER FOUR

**THE NAKED HERO IN PAINFUL PILGRIMAGE: THE ECOLOGY OF
SUBJECTIVIZATION**

It was my hint to speak-such was my process-

And of the cannibals that each other eat,

The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads

Do grow beneath their shoulders.

(Shakespeare, Othello, 1.3.144-7)

While Chapters One through Three put forth the theoretical lens through which to see the textual construction of the subject in relation to an ecological difference, Chapter Four will attempt to flesh out said narrativizing process in Cabeza de Vaca's 1542 Relación, and Raleigh's 1598 Discoverie. In order to do this, first the chapter will identify moments of self-fashioning in the text. In other words, the discussion will focus on instances of willful manipulation of the representation of the subject. Then, the representation of the Caribbean experience in the service of the construction of the narrator as subject will be explored. The measure of control that we will see the narrator exercise over the text as a mode of representation tends to follow conventional narrative patterns that would have been recognizable to the texts' contemporary readers such as that of the hero and the pilgrim. These two figures go to great pains to prove to their readers that their relationship to nature is not only different but antithetical to the Amerindian's relationship to nature. For this, they interpret and represent their experience

of nature. This interpretation of experience needs to happen after the fact and in the service of a specific, concrete purpose that translates to money and status.

Narrativizing the Subject

In Othello (1602), William Shakespeare, presents in the mouth of the Moor the making of a subject through narrative. As he tells the story of his life travels, Othello *narrativizes* his self completing a transformation from suspected rapist Black Moor to a Christian subject. In doing so, he clears his name and makes himself worthy of Desdemona before her father's eyes and worthy of Venetian's trust in the Duke's. Cited at length, the following is Othello's speech to the Duke and Senate of Venice in which he states how he came to love and marry Desdemona. The speech was delivered in an effort to defend himself from Brabantio's accusations of witchcraft in order to enamor his daughter. His loyalty, honor, and worth as a man, a Christian, a Venetian - his very subjectivity - had been questioned. He responds:

Her father loved me, oft invited me,
 Still questioned me the story of my life
 From year to year – the battles, sieges, fortunes
 That I have passed.
 I ran it through, even from my boyish days
 To th' very moment that he bade me tell it,
 Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
 Of moving accidents by flood and field,
 Of hair-breadth scapes i'th' imminent deadly breach,
 Of being taken by the insolent foe
 And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence
 And portance in my travailous history;
 Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,
 Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch heaven
 It was my hint to speak-such was my process-
 And of the cannibals that each other eat,
 The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
 Do grow beneath their shoulders.
 (1.3.129-147)

Othello's narrative, from his youth all the way to the present, is a travel narrative: the story of his life's journey to Venice through many adventures. Centered on the experiences of the I-traveler, the relation of his *pilgrimage* as he calls it, (1.3.154) aims to dispel all doubts concerning his character. Through its telling he confirms himself a man, a Christian, a Venetian subject, and Desdemona's true love. The figure he concocts is that of a hero: a man who survives ordeals and strife and comes back to be recognized in his new identity; that of rightful husband, dedicated Venetian, and lord of Cyprus. He speaks of ill luck ("disastrous chances"), "moving accidents", escapes, having been taken captive and then sold to slavery. In turn, for every "distressful stroke/That my youth suffered," Desdemona "gave me for my pains a world of sighs" (1.3.158-60). In fact, his story is so compelling that, "She'd come again, and with a greedy ear/Devour up my discourse" (1.3.150-1). Until, finally, she falls in love with Othello through the telling of his story: "she loved me for the dangers I had passed/and I loved her that she did pity them" (1.3.168-9).

Othello claims "rude I am in my speech/And little blest with the soft phrase of peace" (1.3.83). Yet he speaks in verse while everyone else speaks in prose belying awareness and conscious self-fashioning. Though an "unvarnished tale" (1.3.91), Othello's narrative, or *process*, as he calls it, has tremendous power: that of *subjectivization*, or the textual construction of the subject through *narrativizing*. His speech is after all a well-crafted legal statement addressed to the city's senate with the purpose of clearing Othello's reputation and dispelling all accusations and doubts. The persona he conjures up in his narrative is so potent that even the Duke is utterly

convinced of his innocence and affirms “I think this tale would win my daughter too” while trying to dissuade Brabantio from pressing the matter further (1.3.172).

As a subject, Othello does not construct himself in a vacuum. In order to become trustworthy and honorable, indeed, in order for him to become an individual with a defined identity and agency in the eyes of his audience, Othello delineates his own figure in opposition to the environment as well as against the ethnic other. Notice that he refers to his narrative as a “travailous history” through caves, deserts, quarries, and hills. The description of the accidents of the landscape is meant to explain the weariness and hard labor that the adjective *travailous* implies. Each feature of the landscape is modified with an adjective that further emphasizes the difficulty of the terrain: *antres* (caves) are *vast*, deserts are *idle*, quarries and rocks are *rough*, and hills are so big in size that their summits *touch heaven*. Othello *becomes* as he suffers, as he bears the threat of uncertainty, lack of control and pain of this impenetrable landscape. This is the image of wilderness, not harnessed nature. Othello survives wilderness and in this process becomes a subject much like the figures of the hero and the pilgrim do.

Othello also immediately counterpoises the descriptions of this strange and dangerous nature with descriptions of the other, the people of these landscapes: cannibals, and men with eyes in their chests⁵⁵. These others are marked by a physical and obvious difference, such as eyes in the chest when they belong in the face, and the cannibal who is always assumed to be deformed in some way. It follows that this is not a generic other but an ethnic other. Therefore, it can be argued that there is in Othello’s mind an

⁵⁵ This is a clear reference to the body of medieval and New World travel narratives. E. A. J. Honigmann, *Othello*’s Arden editor, cites Philemon Holland’s 1601 translation of Pliny’s *Historie of the World*, as the most probable source for both the cannibal and the ewaipanoma, but then concedes that “just about all the items supposedly taken from Pliny, the most likely source, could also have come from other scattered publications” (5). A more likely source would be Raleigh’s *Discoverie*, published in 1597 and cited by Honigmann as Shakespeare’s source in another instance of the play. Why would Raleigh’s text be a probable source in that instance and not for the figure of the cannibals and the ewaipanoma, which together with the Amazons were the most infamous figures of Raleigh’s text during his time?

association between the ethnic other and the toilsome landscape he describes just a line or two before. His contextualization of the encounter with the ethnic other within a specific hostile landscape adds his experience of these people to the reasons why his incidents were so *travailous*. Though the ecological difference of the ethnic other will be discussed in full in Chapter Five, since both the cannibal and the ewaipanoma are neatly placed within an environment that represents physical challenge and fear in Othello and his audience, wilderness, it is clear that these others relate to their environment in a way that contrasts to the way that Othello does.

Othello's own construct as a subject against the environment reflects a particular ecology or human to nature relation. This relation is what is referred to as the *ecology of subjectivization*. In other words, the process of the textual construction of the subject through *narrativizing* implies a specific kind of human to nature relation. This relation, or ecology, is antagonistic, paralleling the subject to object relation. The dialectics of said *ecology of subjectivization* are the subject of this chapter.

As can be seen in Othello's speech, the self-consciousness of the text points to its narrativizing as a self-fashioning. Greenblatt describes self-fashioning as a process that involves an individual who belongs to the middle class, submits himself to an absolute power outside the self, and constructs himself dialectically in relation to an alien⁵⁶. The process occurs through language before an experience of threat or loss of self. Cabeza de Vaca's background, as will be discussed soon, reveals a man preoccupied with possessing rank and money. In addition, his submission to Charles V and the Crown is obvious in his proem:

Sacra, Cesárea, Católica Magestad:

⁵⁶ Greenblatt's model was described in detail in Chapter Three.

Entre quantos príncipes sabemos aya auido en el mundo, ninguno pienso se podría hallar a quien con tanta verdadera voluntad, con tan gran diligencia y desseo ayan procurado los hombres servir como vemos que a Vuestra Magestad hazen oy.
(16)⁵⁷

The narrator also constructs himself dialectically through his narrative, first against Pánfilo Narváez, the leader of the failed expedition, and then against the Caribbean nature and the indigenous all around him. In his own words his text concerns,

lo que en nueve años por muchas y por muy extrañas tierras que anduve perdido y en cueros, pudiesse saber y ver, así en el sitio de las tierras y provincias y distancias dellas, como en los mantenimientos y animals que en ellas se crían, y las diversas costumbres de muchas y muy bárbaras naçiones con quien converse y viví. (18)

Finally, Cabeza de Vaca's self-fashioning occurs through his *relación* as a kind of speech act which he offers as the only service that "un hombre que salió desnudo pudo sacar consigo" (20).

Like Cabeza de Vaca, Walter Raleigh also belonged to the middle class, and as the son of poor gentry he sought fame and fortune through military service to Queen Elizabeth's Crown or by taking to sea in the search of riches. He repeatedly declared himself loyal subject to the Queen, and ardent Protestant, as can be seen by the last sentence of his Epistle Dedicatorie, "I shall ever remaine ready to doe you all honour and service" (124). He strove to differentiate himself from the Spanish whom he criticized harshly as Conquerors that are cruel, tyrannical and oppressive against the Indians (134, 199). He also represents Guianan nature and landscape as radically different. For example, he speaks of Brasil wood and berries that are used for dyeing "a most perfect crimson and Carnation" that "al France, Italy or the east Indies yield none such" (195).

⁵⁷ Quotations from Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación* are taken from Adorno and Pautz' edition based on the Zamora (1542) printing. The first reference corresponds to the folio's number and the side (r=recto, or v=verso), followed by the page number of Adorno and Pautz edition in Volume One of their authoritative study. The translation, also taken from Adorno and Pautz, will be followed by the page number of Volume One of their study.

In fact, “there is no country which yeeldeth more pleasure to the Inhabitants, either for these common delights of hunting, hawking, fishing, fowling, and the rest, that Guiana doth” (194). He uses these descriptions to call attention to his persona as *discoverer* and mediator between Old World power and New World riches. This dialectical process of self-fashioning takes place through his text,

For your Honors many Honorable and friendlie parts, I have hitherto only returned promises, and nowe for answeare of both your adventures, I have sent you a bundle of papers.... (120)

As Othello’s narrative subjectivizes him in opposition to nature, so will Cabeza de Vaca and Raleigh construct their subjectivity *narrativizing* vis à vis the environment and an indigenous other marked by an ecological difference. This chapter will explore the textual construction of the subject, or the *subjectivization* of Cabeza de Vaca as a naked hero and Raleigh’s as a pilgrim in opposition to the Caribbean environment.

Cabeza de Vaca as the Naked Hero

Álvar Núñez Cabeça de Vaca (Cabeza de Vaca, hereafter) was born between 1485 and 1492, being impossible to set an exact date (Adorno and Pautz 343). He was born in Jerez de la Frontera, an Andalusian town near Cádiz in southern Spain. His parents were Francisco de Vera and Teresa Cabeza de Vaca, both of whose names implied noble and military heritage. He was particularly proud of his paternal grandfather, Pedro de Vera Mendoza, involved in the Crown’s colonial enterprise as conquistador of the Great Canaria, making reference to him in the dedicatory epistle (proem) of the Relación. Legend says that his peculiar name, Cabeza de Vaca (Head of a Cow), was bestowed by the Crown of Alfonso VIII of Castile upon one of his maternal ancestors when in 1212, during the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa against the Moors, he marked with the skull of a

cow a mountain pass by which the enemy's position could be overturned. Hence his name was changed from Alhaja to Cabeza de Vaca. Nevertheless, Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz disprove this legend in their three volume authoritative study of the text. In turn, the critics identify Fernán Ruiz Cabeza de Vaca, a caballero who fought along Fernando III "El Santo" in the celebrated Christian victory over the Muslims of Córdoba on June 29th, 1236, as the probable founder of the lineage. At any rate, Cabeza de Vaca's name was that of the lower nobility and undoubtedly linked to the imperial projects of the Reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula and the conquista of the new colonies.

On June 17, 1527 Cabeza de Vaca sailed from Sanlúcar de Barrameda (Cádiz) towards the Caribbean as the royally appointed treasurer of an expedition lead by Pánfilo Narváez. Founded by Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain, the Council of the Indies had instructed Cabeza de Vaca in their *capitulaciones* to report to the emperor and look into every and any matter that may concern the kingdom including "the peopling, and pacification, informing us extensively and particularly of every matter, especially of how our commands are obeyed and executed in those lands and provinces, of how he natives are treated, our instructions observed, and other of the things respecting their liberties that we have commanded" (as cited in Adorno and Pautz, 4, v.3).

Pánfilo Narváez, leader of the expedition, had been recently appointed the governorship of Río de Palmas and Florida after having proven himself as a seasoned conquistador and colonizer of Cuba, Jamaica and Hispaniola and having made a name for himself in Cortés' expedition in Mexico with whom he held a competitive and inimical

relationship⁵⁸. This new expedition to Florida, the first after Juan Ponce de León's death, was to achieve an even higher success by finding great quantities of coveted gold.

The expedition stopped at the port of Santo Domingo in the Hispaniola (modern Dominican Republic) and later on at the port of Santiago as well as two others in Cuba in order to acquire horses, goods, and people before heading off to Río de Palmas on the western side of the Gulf of Mexico. However, a hurricane hit while in Cuba on account of which they lost sixty people, twenty horses and two ships. Attempting to go from the port of the village of Trinidad in the southwestern side of the island towards Havana in the northeastern shore, the remaining ships got disoriented by succeeding hurricanes and tempests and probably lack of expertise from their pilot. After sailing aimlessly for a couple of weeks within the Gulf of Mexico, the retinue of around three hundred ended up on the western shore of Florida (now Tampa Bay) notwithstanding their intention to go to the northwestern side of the gulf. What follows is a harrowing tale of wandering through hunger, pain, death, enslavement, cannibalism, and miracle healings.

The adventure reached its end in 1536 when Cabeza de Vaca and a two other Spaniards (Andrés Dorantes and Alonso del Castillo, in addition to Estevanico a Moorish black slave) were found by the Spanish in San Miguel de Culiacán (modern northwest of México). Having trekked from the western coast of Florida to the northwest coast of Mexico, and hugged the coasts of the Gulf of Mexico from Florida through modern day Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas in makeshift canoes for nine years, they were the only thing left of Narváez's expedition. After sojourning in Mexico-Tenochtitlan among the Spanish, Cabeza de Vaca finally returned to Lisbon on August 9, 1537, ten years after having sailed towards the Caribbean. The men had suffered much

⁵⁸ Cortés had in fact led his army against Narváez's in Mexico and imprisoned him for months.

and still had found no gold. The wealth and success the Spanish had attained in Mexico was not to be repeated in Florida.

The text, entitled in full: La relación que dio Álvar Núñez Cabeça de Vaca de lo acaescido en las Indias en la armada donde iva por gobernador Pánphilo de Narbáez, desde el año de veinte y siete hasta el otoño de treinta y seis que volvió a Sevilla con tres de su compañía⁵⁹ (Relación, hereafter), was first published in Zamora in 1542. It had been five years after his return to Spain and fifteen years after having been stranded on the Florida coast for the first time. However, according to Adorno and Pautz the text must have been written over the course of 1537-40 (4, v.3), only ten years after having sailed to the New World. The text, some 67 folios long, recounts from memory the author's journey into the New World as proof of his loyalty to the Spanish crown and commitment to its purposes. A second edition was published in Valladolid in 1555 titled La relación y comentarios del governador Álvar Núñez Cabeça de Vaca, de lo acaescido en las dos jornadas que hizo a las Indias. Both texts are almost identical except for minor differences in the dedicatory epistle as well as discrepancies of spelling, certain omissions of tribal names, and titled chapter divisions in the second edition (Maura 63). The Comentarios section of the report were notes taken by Cabeza de Vaca's secretary Pedro Hernández during his governorship of Río La Plata the post he was awarded by the Council of the Indies in response to his relación.

The text has enjoyed a wide popularity. It has been edited, published and translated numerous times since its original publishing many times under the name Naufraios or in English, Shipwrecks. Many critics have been drawn to the text because of its obvious historical and ethnographic value. Some of the text's most attractive

⁵⁹ translation

elements are: shipwrecks and other pains and calamities suffered by the Spanish, descriptions of the indigenous and their strange customs, acts of Spanish cannibalism, miracle healings, the narrator's role as shaman, his nakedness, and his Indian markings, among others. The adventurous and fabulous elements of the text are such that it has been said that this is one of the most entertaining narratives of the New World, "esta obra posee una serie de elementos novelescos que la hacen digna de ser una de las narraciones más entretenidas del Nuevo Mundo" (Maura 24).

In fact, the text's cogent narrative structure and not least, its fabulous elements, have been widely interpreted as romance-like giving way to a whole critical vein that focuses on the analysis of the text's literary genre. Within this critical inclination we can find Enrique Pupo-Walker's and Dwight E. R. Tenhuisen's study on the Relación as hagiography. (Chapter Three described the relationship between travel narratives and hagiographical texts.) As a literary mode, the hagiography is centered on the development of a protagonist that overcomes conflict and at the end receives a new identity- that of a saint. In this way, it is possible to recognize the journey of the hero within the saint's life. In fact, Dwight E. R. Tenhuisen argues for the use of Van Gennep's three stages of initiation rites as the underlying structure for hagiography in general and Cabeza de Vaca's text in specific. This section will focus on Cabeza de Vaca's text as the *narrativizing* of the *separation*, *ordeal* and *reintegration* of the hero.⁶⁰

Cabeza de Vaca's relación is a self-conscious one that is aware of the distance in time and place in which it was written. In fact, the Treasurer wants to reassure his

⁶⁰ As explained in Chapter Three, this study makes use of Joseph Campbell's adaptation of Van Gennep's stages into the three stages of the journey of the hero in order to understand the narrative structure of the travel narrative and to look at the construction of the narrator as subject. These stages are easily recognized in the narrative structure of the Relación. Explained in detail in Chapter Three, the stages are *separation* (in which the hero distances himself from the time and place of origins); *ordeal* (in which the hero survives a challenge by the use of his wit and skill); and *reintegration* (in which the hero returns home victorious and acquires a new identity).

audience of the veracity of his narrative by claiming that he was careful to commit every detail to memory so that his text could: first, be witness to his will; second, could serve the Crown; and third,

Porque aunque la esperança que de salir entre ellos tuve siempre fue muy poca, el cuidado y diligencia siempre fue muy grande de tener particular memoria de todo, para que si en algún tiempo Dios nuestro Señor quisiese traerme adonde agora estoy, pudiesse dar testigo de mi voluntad y servir a Vuestra Magestad como la relación dello es aviso, a mi parescer no liviano, para los que en su nombre fueren a conquistar aquellas tierras; y juntamente traerlos a conocimiento de la verdadera fe y verdadero Señor y servicio de Vuestra Magestad. Lo qual yo escreví con tanta çertinidad que aunque en ella se lean algunas cosas muy nuevas y para algunos muy difíciles de creer, pueden sin dubda creellas, y creer por muy cierto que antes soy en todo más corto que largo, y bastará para esto averlo yo offrescido a Vuestra Magestad por tal. A la qual supplico la resçiba en nombre de servicio, pues éste solo es el que un hombre que salió desnudo pudo sacar consigo. (18-20)

Since the Narváez expedition had failed, Cabeza de Vaca first focused his efforts on attaining permission from the Casa de contratación to conquer and settle Florida. However, upon arrival to Spain Cabeza de Vaca learned that this permission had already been granted to Hernando de Soto. Consequently, he abandoned all hope of being appointed to Florida turning his attention to the governorship of Río de la Plata. Adorno and Pautz explain Cabeza de Vaca's situation.

Cabeza de Vaca's efforts would have been devoted to casting a report of his Florida experience sufficiently impressive to persuade the emperor to grant him a royal commission for conquest. He needed to construct a petition of considerable scope that would demonstrate his personal integrity and professional skills not only of soldiering but also of managing people and, in particular, exercising moral leadership regarding the proper treatment of the Indians in so that, once pacified, they could serve the economic needs of Spanish settlement. (55 v. 3)

It is therefore possible to infer that the purpose of Cabeza de Vaca's Relación must have been, first, to fulfill the mandate of his post as treasurer of the Narváez expedition, and second, to seek a new royal commission on his behalf. The official

character and legality of the Relación as a report and petition must be stressed since it confirms awareness and self-consciousness in its careful construction. Written from a first person point of view, the text is organized around Cabeza de Vaca's figure and his experiences. Like that of so many other explorers who were lost or disappeared from the Crown's sight, Cabeza de Vaca's actions and overall performance as the king's official had been questioned. To compound this, was the fact that when the Spanish found Cabeza de Vaca once again he had "gone native". In other words, he had a similar appearance to the Indians (mostly naked, but with their same coverings) and demonstrated having close relationships with them advocating for their wellbeing, as will soon be seen. Therefore, the Relación also serves to re-identify himself as Spanish, Christian and civilized by clearing his name, and confirming his honorable deeds. It was also meant to assure a new post and overall, improve his status for himself and his heirs.

Cabeza de Vaca's *narrativizing* begins with the description of the ships and goods that sailed off the port of Cádiz, recounting stops at Santo Domingo and the port of Santiago, Cuba where the expedition gathers more goods and people. Then, while anchored at the port of Trinidad the narrative describes a powerful hurricane that destroys two ships with its crew, all provisions, and even the village of Trinidad. The hurricane was so strong that Cabeza de Vaca says that the men had to walk around holding each other's arms lest the wind would blow them away. In fact, he says of the landscape: "la tierra quedó tal que era gran lástima vella: caídos los árboles, quemados los montes, todos sin hojas ni yerva" (30). As it leaves them stranded and lacking, this hurricane and the subsequent storms represent a break with the culture system (European, proto-capitalist, Christian, Spanish) the travelers were used to navigate. As it were, Nature pulled them

apart from what was familiar throwing them in a strange land with less than half the accoutrements they had collected. The event marks off the narrative completing the first stage in the making of the hero.

While he narrates these events, Cabeza de Vaca is careful to differentiate himself from Narváez's leadership of the expedition thus calling attention to his own subject in a careful manipulation of narrative representation. He builds up his character slowly. In fact, the narrator belabors a specific moment in the sequence of events in which a disagreement between himself and Narváez questioned his honor and valor later resulting in the loss of the ships. Narváez suggests that he and others should go inland and that the ships should go by the coast until they reached the port of Rio de Palmas which they supposed to be very near. Cabeza de Vaca said that he did not think that was a good idea and that first the ships should be left "en Puerto seguro y poblado" (40). He stressed the fact that they had no interpreter and that they were in an unknown land "de que ninguna relación teníamos, ni saber lo que de la tierra queríamos, y que entrávamos por tierra de que ninguna relación teníamos, ni sabíamos de qué suerte era, ni lo que en ella avía, ni de qué gente estava poblada, ni a qué parte della estávamos" (40). A bit later he repeats again that in his opinion it was best to get on the ships and "ir a buscar Puerto y tierra que fuesse major para poblar, pues lo que avíamos visto en sí era tan despoblada y tan pobre quanto nunca en aquellas partes se avia hallado" (40). What made Cabeza de Vaca show so much trepidation was experience, "tantos trabajos avíamos passado, tantas tormentas, tantas pérdidas de navíos y de gente avíamos tenido hasta llegar allí (42). Narváez insists in that everyone should pick up their things and walk inland, telling Cabeza de Vaca to

stay with the ships since he was too afraid. Cabeza de Vaca refuses to stay behind and resents the implication of cowardice. He goes on narrating the episode,

Y viendo que importunándome tanto yo todavía me escusava, me preguntó qué era la causa porque huía de açetallo, a lo qual respondí que yo huía de encargarme de aquello porque tenía por cierto y sabía que él no avía de ver más los navíos ni los navíos a él, y que esto entendía viendo que tan sin aparejo se enstravan por la tiessa adentro, y que yo quería más aventurarme al peligro que él y los otros se aventuravan y passer por lo que él y ellos passassen que no encargarme de los navcuíos y dar oacasi3n que se dixessa que, como avía contradicho la entrada, me quedarva por temor y mi honrra anduviesse en disputa, y que yo quería más aventurar la vida que poner mi honra en esta condiç3n. (44)

It is clear from this passage that Cabeza de Vaca is being careful about his construction and that he recounts the moment carefully in order to disassociate himself from failure and lack of leadership. Being preoccupied with how he could be seen and how his actions could be interpreted, he goes through great lengths to assure his audience that he was opposed to the decision. If the reader remembers that Cabeza de Vaca writes after the fact, when he already knows the disastrous outcome of the expedition including the presumed death of Narváez, the control over the construction of the narrative becomes clear. The failure of the whole expedition, his being lost for nine years, the markings on his skin, the hole in his ears- all these were signs that he knew would be read and interpreted; a story teased out of them. That is why he goes through these lengths to explain.

Another instance of Cabeza de Vaca's measured construction is apparent in the beginning of his text. In the Dedicatory Epistle addressed to Charles V, Cabeza de Vaca emphasizes what he has done and what he deserves. In his view it is not necessary to explain everything he did in order to be certain that he acted in a manner pleasing to the

emperor since his deeds and services were as well known and amply demonstrated like those of his ancestors.

De mí puedo dezir que en la jornada que por mandado de Vuestra Magestad hize de tierra firme, bien pensé que mis obras y servicios fueran tan claros y manifiestos como fueron los de mis antepassados y que no tuviera yo necesidad de hablar para ser contado entre los que con entera fe y gran cuidado administran y tratan los cargos de Vuersta Magestad y les haze merced. (f2r,18)

It should be remembered that Cabeza de Vaca had a tangible goal in writing this relación: he wanted his service to be recognized in the form of a governorship in the New World. His self-fashioning as a hero helps construct a legal subject deserving of a royal appointment. He makes use of legal references that result in the understanding of his subjectivity as the modern I-Conqueror that Dussel describes. In this context, the text serves as witness and alibi; validating his claim and reaffirming his worth. Cabeza de Vaca goes on:

Mas como ni mi consejo, ni diligencia aprovecharon para que aquello a que éramos idos fuesse ganado conforme al servicio de Vuestra Magestad, y por nuestros peccados permittiesse Dios que de quantas armadas a aquellas tierras an ido, ninguna se viesse en tan grandes peligros, ni tuviesse tan miserable y desastrado fin, no me quedó lugar para hazer más servicio deste, que es traer a Vuestra Magestad relación de lo que en nueve años por muchas y muy estrañas tierras que anduve perdido y en cueros, pudiesse saber y ver, así en el sitio de las tierras y provincias y distancias dellas, como en los mantenimientos y animales que en ellas se crían, y las diversas costumbres de muchas y muy bárbaras naçiones con quien conversé y viví, y todas las otras particularidades que pude alcançar y conocer que dello en alguna manera Vuestra Magestad será servido. (18)

Here, Cabeza de Vaca expresses his disappointment before the failure that was Narváez's expedition. His text is described as the only way he could be of service to the emperor- the only way he could fulfill his duty. Moreover, the phrase "anduve perdido y en cueros" paints an image of the treasurer as a victim of the "estraña tierra." It also provides the opportunity for him to focus the reader's attention on his ordeal. He

presents the *relación* as useful ethnographic work that records the customs of the Amerindians- future and possible Spanish and Christian loyals- which is put to the service of the Crown's imperial project.

It is important to go back to an image that would have surely caught the attention of contemporary readers of the Relación. That is, the image of the narrator's nakedness: "por muchas y muy estrañas tierras que anduve perdido y en cueros" and "éste solo es el que un hombre que salió desnudo pudo sacar consigo" (18; 20). As another instance of Cabeza de Vaca's temperately woven *narrativizing*, the image encapsulates his experience of ordeal pointing to the juxtaposition of his subjectivization to the natural environment. It is a powerful image that signifies the risk the narrator was able to overcome: the threat to lose himself in the new nature. As mentioned above, Cabeza de Vaca's successful return to land is meant as a testament to his virtue, resulting in the reader's admiration. But this reintegration is not without conflicts for though he comes back, he comes back naked. His nakedness can be read as a sign which ambiguously points to a shedding of the Spanish civilization, and the vulnerability of an unprotected body. In the end his account incites pity, and celebration for a man turned hero. When in mid trek, Andrés Dorantes and Alonso del Castillo find Cabeza de Vaca emaciated and naked, they were moved to great pain and sadness in empathy. They wished they could comfort him with clothes to wear.

Y llegados nosotros se espantaron mucho de vernos en la manera en que estábamos. Y resçibieron muy gran pena por no tener qué darnos, que ninguna otra ropa traían sino la que tenían vestida. (102)

The lack of clothes also made them vulnerable to the weather; forcing them to experience the elements unprotected which had the result of changing their appearance so that they seemed more like animals, like the Amerindians.

Ya he dicho como por toda esta tierra anduvimos desnudos, y como no estábamos acostumbrados a ello, a manera de serpientes mudávamos los cueros dos vezes en el año. (170)

There is a telling scene in the narrative in which the Spanish undress voluntarily. After much hunger, a group of Amerindians bring fish, roots and nuts to the Spanish who, after accumulating enough food and water decided to get on their canoes again and go on their way. The narrator continues,

Y desenterramos la barca de la arena en que estava metida. Y fue menester que nos desnudássemos todos y passásemos gran trabajo para echarla al agua, porque nosotros estábamos tales que otras cosas muy más livianas bastavan para ponernos en él. (96)

And, as they try to sail off, a wave hits them with such force that they were all wet and being naked they felt so cold they let go of the oars and with a second wave the canoes were flipped over and the Spanish were washed upon the shore half drowned except three who suffocated under the canoe. At that point, he explains,

Los que quedamos escapados [estábamos] desnudos como nacimos y [habíamos] perdido todo lo que traíamos. Y aunque todo valía poco, para entonces valía mucho (96).

Here, the lack of clothing indicates a mixing up and upheaval of his values: that which was worth very little began to be worth a lot. This is the confusion of the experience of nature that pushes the subject into an extra-linguistic experience which the process of *narrativizing* will try to organize and absorb. Such experience challenges the symbolic absolute and upsets the order of things by turning upside down and inside out Cabeza de Vaca's values.

The image of a naked Cabeza de Vaca must have been a powerfully shocking one to the Relación's contemporary readers. It must have likened him to animals and the Amerindians who, according the Europeans, lived in the law of nature before the Fall. In his 1572-4 essay, "Of the custom of wearing clothes," Michel de Montaigne, a French contemporary of the narrator, contemplates the idea of human nakedness arguing that clothes stifle the essence of our bodies: "we have extinguished our own means by borrowed means" (167). Here, there is an implied comparison of humans to animals in that animals do not wear clothes and rely on their own means. Montaigne's line echoes idea of human inherent self-sufficiency spoiled by effeminate civilization that would later be taken up and expanded upon by Jean Jacques Rousseau in his Discourse on the Inequality (1754). Moreover, in his essay, Montaigne relates the use of clothes to the deceptive and convoluted discourse of civilized society in contrast to the straightforward and honest one of the Amerindian's as Marie Josephine Diamond argues⁶¹. In his preface, he had already used the image of nakedness as a metaphor for his intention to speak of himself openly and honestly in his essays,

Had I been placed among those nations which are still said to live in the freedom of nature's first laws, I assure you I should very gladly have portrayed myself here entire and wholly naked. (Montaigne 2)

In contrast to Montaigne, when Cabeza de Vaca speaks of being naked he does so within the context of his ordeal ("anduve perdido y en cueros") and not as a metaphor for the Amerindian's admirable transparency. Nakedness is yet another thing he has to

⁶¹ See her "Montaigne 'Des Cannibales' Savage Society and Wild Writing," in Civilization in Crisis: Anthropological Perspectives. Ed. Christine Ward Gailey. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1992. (37-56). Diamond's main claim in this article is that in the analysis of the textual construction of Montaigne's subject, cultural difference should be taken into account as a constitutive factor. She also calls attention to the importance of the encounter with the New World to this construction not only as historical context, but also as the event that congealed the exploration and *experience* of divergent cultural practices for Montaigne and Europeans.

overcome in order to return to Spanish society. When, at the end of his preface he claims that his text was the only thing that a naked man could carry with him (“pues éste solo es el que un hombre que salió desnudo pudo sacar consigo,” 18-9) he hopes to incite pity in his readers so that they would ignore the fact that after having been in the New World for almost a decade he had neither acquired, nor seen the expected riches.

Furthermore, there is a direct and clear relation between his nakedness and the land in which he found himself. In this narrative, images of nakedness are always presented in a specific context, storms, swollen seas, diseases, and famine, seem always to frame the image of the naked, beaten down, Christian. In effect, it is the land itself that precipitates the shedding of clothes. On a couple of occasions the narrator stops short of his story saying that anyone can imagine what would have happened “en tierra tan extraña y tan mala, y tan sin ningún remedio de ninguna cosa, ni para estar ni para salir de ella” (103). A bit later on he adds that there is no need to go over the crew’s ordeal in detail since merely considering the place where they found themselves suffices to understand; “Dexo aquí de contar esto más largo porque cada uno puede pensar lo que pasaría en tierra tan estraña” (66).

It is the land, therefore, who mistreats the narrator in such a way that he is stripped naked. The land is a sadistic actor, the Spanish men its victims. But the Spanish are not innocent victims, since they are made deserving by their sins, “tal era la tierra en que nuestros pecados nos habían puesto” (72). There are, from the very beginning of the narrative, certain expectations based on the appearance of the landscape regarding the fate of the Spanish.

Cuento esto assí brevemente porque no creo que ay necesidad de particularmente contar las miserias y trabajos en que nos vimos, pues *considerando el lugar* donde

estávamos y la poca esperanza de remedio que teníamos, cada uno puede pensar mucho de lo que allí pasaría (my emphasis; 78).

In this way, the land itself dictates the events of the expedition and the parameters of the narrative. Cabeza de Vaca's narrative, though a careful contrivance, is thus naturalized; passed off as the expected and direct outcome of the hero's ordeal.

In fact, as if to explain the Spanish expedition's failure, descriptions of desolate land abound in Cabeza de Vaca's narrative: "hallámosla [la tierra] muy pobre de gente y muy mala de andar por los muy malos passos y montes y lagunas que tenía;" "vista la pobreza de la tierra;" and finally,

E la tierra es tan áspera y tan çerrada que muchas vezes hazíamos leña en montes, que quando la acabávamos de sacar nos corría por muchas partes sangre de las espinas y matas con que topávamos que nos rompían por donde alcançavan. (58; 60; 172)

The narrative makes a point to underline the hardships suffered by the Spanish survivors such as the fact that they are forced to eat raw food (162), eat dogs (164) and even eat each other (125, 141). It seems to be the land itself which de-civilizes even the most gallant hidalgo. There are so many scenes of pain based on the description of the land that in the Introduction of his edition of Cabeza de Vaca's text, Juan Francisco Maura claims that Cabeza de Vaca "parece recrearse en las descripciones de pobreza y desolación de las tierras por las que pasa" (59). In comparing Cabeza de Vaca's descriptions of North American southwestern nature to El Inca Garcilazo's, Maura argues that "no debieron de ser tan miserables las tribus de indios con los que convivió; se trata de un recurso más para elevar su figura al plano de mártir" (59). Furthermore, for the critic, "dar una descripción tan desolada de esas tierras no es otra que una técnica novelesca para resaltar aún más la figura del protagonista en su lucha frente a la

adversidad” (59-60). Hence, for Maura, the descriptions of desolation serve to help set the narrative structure and further emphasize Cabeza de Vaca’s role as protagonist or hero.

As it has been seen, much like Othello, Cabeza de Vaca fashions himself through his narrative. It has been argued that through his Relación, he constructs his legal identity as loyal to the crown and as a conqueror, while fashioning his very subjectivity as a modern and pious individual. In his narrative the I-traveler turns to the I-Conqueror, a worthy and honorable subject against the environment, following the modality of the hero. This hero conqueror embodies the subject’s will-to-power (as Enrique Dussel would put it) which he wishes to project to the Crown and the world in order to gain material recompense in the form of a new appointment and thus fame and wealth. His relation to the environment cannot be ignored since he is only hero because of the ordeal that the environment and the other afford him. Therefore, what Cabeza de Vaca’s text reveals is the *ecology of subjectivization*, or the human to nature relation that is implicit in the process of subject formation. Since nature is the ordeal that he must overcome, it follows that the image of the Caribbean land that emerges is one that is inimical to his will.

Walter Raleigh as the Pilgrim in Painful Pilgrimage

Sir Walter Raleigh also seeks to construct himself narratively as a modern subject in opposition to nature and native Amerindian ecology. Much like Othello, in his travel narrative The Discoverie, Raleigh constructs himself as a pilgrim or as a humble and penitent man who undergoes the trials of travel in the name of piety. Because Raleigh’s self-fashioning has been argued convincingly and at length by other critics, especially by

Stephen Greenblatt in his books Sir Walter Raleigh: The Renaissance Man and His Roles, (1973), and Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare, (1980), we will not attempt to do that here. Suffice it to mention, as Benjamin Schmidt has done, that

Raleigh was above all a performer on the stage of Elizabethan politics, and he epitomized that quality of his day that the literary critic Stephen Greenblatt has labeled “Renaissance self-fashioning”: the ability to project, or perform a public persona, which in Raleigh’s case meant the capacity to present himself as the embodiment of the daring, dynamic and devoted courtier. (6)

Born in Devon around 1552 Raleigh was the son of the all but destitute lesser nobility. Throughout his career he was soldier fighting for the Huguenots in France, and against the Irish in Ireland. He also was considered a poet and historian, evidenced by his writings. In addition, he was a sailor and explorer, first with his half-brother Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and later on his own. Above all, he was a courtier and the Queen Elizabeth’s favorite. He seems to have been keenly aware of his mortality and the futility of human enterprise before the reversals of fortune. In his poem “On the Life of Man,” a particular view of life as *theatre mundi* in which man is subjected to life’s upheavals is apparent: “Where we are dressed for this short comedy,/ Heaven the judicious sharp spectator is,/ that sits and marks still who doth act amiss,” (1194).

His travel narrative, The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana was published in 1596 based on Raleigh’s 1595 trip to the Spanish outpost of Trinidad and Guiana in the northeast of South America. The purpose of his trip was to travel inside the continent through the Orinoco River in the search for Manoa, or El Dorado. As explained in Chapter Two of this study, his text was written as a factor’s

report in order to account for the expenditure of resources and to persuade the Queen to invest more in the conquest and subsequent colonization of Guiana.

In Raleigh's account the three stages of the hero are distinct: in *distancing* he leaves England and the crown's favor, in *experiencing* Raleigh described the indigenous peoples as civil yet manly, and he asserts that they do not work the land yet reap its bountiful benefits. His depiction of the other is filled with fetishes and stereotypes as he features cannibalism, idolatry, Amazons, Devil worshippers, and *acephali*, among others. *Narrativizing* is particularly interesting because his text serves a twofold purpose: to clear his name from the accusations of fraud that had been leveled against him in court and to manage an invitation to the Queen to invest time and money in the Americas.

Raleigh begins his text by complaining: "I have beene accompanied with many sorrows, with labor, hunger, heat, sickness, & peril" (121). He requests the reader's pity and recognition by arguing,

But, if what I have done, receive the gracious construction of a *paineful pilgrimage*, and purchase the least remission, I shal thinke all too little, and that there were wanting to the rest, many miseries. (My emphasis; 121)

Like Cabeza de Vaca when he emphasizes his experience left him naked and that his text is the witness to so many ordeals, Raleigh claims that, "I am returned a begger, and withered" (121). Raleigh's characterization of his journey as a "paineful pilgrimage" full of misery coupled with his portrayal of himself as a beggar are part of the topoi shared by Othello and not a few travel narratives whose purpose seems to be to prove the subject-traveler of recognition and admiration. Of his ordeals he says: "I have beene accompanied with my sorrows, with labor, hunger, heat, sickness, & peril" (122). In fact, as if to highlight his virtue, Raleigh adds that he could have stolen some of the gold he

saw “I could have laid hands and ransomed many of the kings & *Cassiqui* of the Country, & have had a reasonable proportion of gold for their redemption,” but instead “I have chosen rather to beare the burthen of poverty, then reproch, & rather to endure a second travel & the chaunces therof, then to have defaced an enterprise of so great assurance” (124). The aim of his text is to serve as evidence of his journey and to assure a second journey.

In opposition to the Spanish in Trinidad, Raleigh constructs himself as a moral and discreet man, who did not wish to plunder, nor tell the Indians what they wanted. Guiana, he argues to Elizabeth, is already discovered, which means it was ready for the plucking of the English. He elaborates thus,

The countrie is alreadie *discovered*, many nations won to her Majesties love & obedience, & those Spanyards which have latest and longest labored about the conquest, beaten out, discouraged and disgraced, which among these nations were thought invincible. (my emphasis; 198)

Guianan nations are already subdued and have pledge their allegiance to the Queen. The Spanish, who thought themselves invincible, have been cast from the region.

The word *discover*, which can be found in the citation above as in the title and many times throughout the body of the text, underscores the importance of his subjectivity as point of departure and reference in the experience of the New World. The word was oftentimes used in reference to travels and voyages and signifies the bringing into light what as previously unknown (OED). But, unknown to whom? To the speaker, of course. Raleigh’s usage of the word reflects his preoccupation: even before arriving at Guiana, Raleigh had discovered it. His was a deliberate, “purposed discovery” (134).

In his preface to the reader, Raleigh sets forth the purpose of his trip: to obtain gold. In fact, gold is so important to Raleigh that in “The 21st and Last Book of the Ocean

to Cynthia,” a poem addressed to Queen Elizabeth, he writes, “To seek new worlds for gold, for praise, for glory,/ To try desire, to try love severed far,” (ln. 61-2). He explains that gold is of paramount importance in England’s rivalry with Spain. Raleigh argues that it is *Indian Gold*, or gold from the New World, which sustains Spain’s influence on Europe and England.

It is his Indian Golde [the King of Spain’s] that indaungereth and disturbeth all the nations of Europe, it purchaseth intellignece, creepeth into Councels, and setteth bound loyalty at libertie, in the greatest Monarchies of Europe. If the Spanish king can keepe us from forraine enterprizes, and from the impeachment of his trades, eyther by offer of invasion, or by beseiging us in Britayne, Ireland, or else where, he hath then brought the worke of our perill in greate forwardnes. (f:3v, 127)

He wishes England would acquire that gold. The way in which he argues for the existence of gold without any proof of it is a way in which Guiana is *purposely discovered*, that is, it is intentionally brought to light. In fact, Raleigh says, “I was resolved that gold must be found” (1203). This is an instance in the text in which he consciously manipulates the representation of the Caribbean experience in order to construct an image of a Guiana that is already discovered. In the first couple of pages of his account, he explains that at Trinidad they were informed by an Amerindian that gold was near, so Raleigh sent forty men to fetch it. But what the men had found was not really gold but pyrite, or as he calls it marcasite. Gold was found later, in Guiana. He makes sure to mark the difference assert that,

In Guiana itself, I never saw marcasite, but all the rocks, mountains, all the stones in the plains, in woods, by th rivers’ sides are in effect, thereof shining, and appear marvelously rick, which being tried to be no marcasite, are the true signs of rich minerals, but are no other than el madre del oro (as the Spaniards term them), which is the mother of gold, or as it is said by others, the scum of gold. (1203)

Much to Raleigh's despair, a rumor had been circulating court that what he had brought back from the trip was not gold and that in fact there was no gold in Guiana. Thusly, he answers to his detractors, who accused him of buying gold ore in North Africa to later claim he had brought from the New World,

I do not well comprehend, for mine owne parte, I am not so much in love with these long voiajes, as to devise, thereby to cozen my selfe, to lie herd, to fare worse, to be subjected to perils, to diseases, to ill savours, to be parched and withered, and withall to sustaine the care and labour of such an enterprize, excepte the same had more comfort, the the fetching of Marcasite in Guiana, or bying of gold oare in Barbary. (127)

Here the harshness of the experience of the voyage acts as witness to Raleigh's truth: he must be telling the truth, what he brought must be gold, because he would not have otherwise bore the trials of the voyage in order to bring marcasite from Guiana or purchase ore in Barbary. In other words, following Raleighian logic, his suffering guarantees the existence of gold. It is alchemic, transforming marcasite into gold.

The Naked Hero in Painful Pilgrimage

The preoccupation with a human controlled environment as can be appreciated in the binomial nature/wilderness is what drives the *naked hero* through his *painful pilgrimage*. When Othello describes the environment he had to confront, "Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle," he is referring to wilderness (1.3.142). In fact, the adjective *idle* in this verse can be read as a reference to Wyclif's 1388 translation of the Bible in which "idle and void" are used to describe the world before God's intervention in the book of Genesis. Carolyn Merchant explains the significance of wilderness within Judeo-Christian tradition,

The inhospitable arid wilderness contrasted sharply with the bountiful, fruitful Garden of Eden and with the promised land of milk and honey. The expulsion from the Garden into the wilderness equated wilderness with the evil introduced

when Eve submitted to the temptation of the serpent. The desert represented a land to be subdued and made arable, a land whose fertility was tied directly to the amount of rainfall. (131)

Wilderness must be tamed by reason in order to produce nature. As it was discussed in Chapter One, early modern Europeans were intent on bringing reason and order to nature: “the ultimate civilizing mission became that of exploring, comprehending, and controlling the wild places of the earth in order to make them agreeable to human life and work” (Richards 22).

Non-Christians did not live under the precept of the human responsibility to control and impose order on nature therefore, their land was wilderness. In the end of his narrative, Raleigh insists in that the Queen should invest in Guiana since its land has yet to be brought to productivity. He goes on to argue,

To conclude, *Guiana* is a Countrey that hath yet her Maidenhead, never sacket, turned, nor wrought, the face of the earth hath not beene torne, nor the vertue and salt of the soyle spent by manurance, the graves have not beene opened for gold, the mines not broken with sledges, nor their Images puld down from their temples. It hath never beene entered by any armie of strength, and never conquered or possessed by any Christian Prince. (f.96/196)

This is a fascinating passage in which ecological difference is readily apparent. The passage begins with stating that Guiana still conserves her virginity and follows with the images of un-worked and unfertilized land, caves that have not been mined, graves that have not been sacked and images that have not been taken. Leaving the female metaphor aside since it will be discussed at length in the following chapter, let us now concentrate on the other images. The paragraph is a call to conquest for the possession of gold and for offsetting the Spanish hold on the region. But it is also a rhetorical move to establish Guiana and its people as *conquerable* because they do not cultivate the land. To be sure,

there was already in Europe the idea of spent, overused and exhausted⁶² land. But this passage serves to claim that Guiana's soil has not been spent. It also serves to justify English colonization. In fact, in Thomas More's narrative, Utopians considered it fair to invade another country and pursue a just war if their land was not being used correctly. In other words, not only is Guiana *conquerable*, but also, it *must be conquered* since it is the Christian duty of the English to help this wilderness reach its highest potential.

Most interestingly, Raleigh did observe and recognize difference in native's relation to the land. For example, of the Tiutiuans he claims they did not farm extensively and were hunters and gatherers since they,

refuse to feed of aught but of that which *nature without labor* bringeth forth. They use the tops of palmitos for bread and kill deer, fish and pork for the rest of their sustenance; they also have many sorts of fruits that grow in the woods and a great variety of birds and fowl. (my emphasis; 159)

Raleigh's mistake is to assume Amerindian naiveté before the fruits and vegetables they gathered. As discussed in Chapter One and has been evidenced by archeologists and environmental historians, Amerindians were careful to spread the seeds of desired fruits and vegetables alongside naturally occurring trees. Keeping with their semi-nomadic lifestyle they were still able to practice agroforestry. Raleigh's critique of Amerindian lifestyle rests on the fact that, from his vantage point, Amerindian nature is *nature without labor*. This marks an ecological difference that Raleigh is unable to overcome. Instead he co-opts it subsuming it into this narrative: Guiana is conquerable, Guiana must be conquered. In this way, his text constructs Guiana's landscape in a particular way, untouched, despite all evidence to the contrary.

⁶² See my discussion of the early modern environmental context of Europe expounded in the first chapter of this study.

In similar fashion, Cabeza de Vaca observes with great sorrow the fact that the Amerindians he encountered in the last part of his trek did not cultivate the land. The fact inspires great sorrow since their lack of cultivation resulted in sickness and lack of constitution.

Fue cosa de que tuvimos muy gran lástima, viendo la tierra muy fértil y muy hermosa y muy llena de aguas y de ríos, y ver los lugares despoblados y quemados y la gente tan flaca y enferma, huída y escondida toda. Y *como no sembravan*, con tanta hambre se mantenían con cortezas de árboles y raíces. Desta hambre a nosotros alcançó parte en todo este camino, porque mal nos podían ellos proveer estando tan *desnaturados* que paresçia que se querían morir. (my emphasis; 238)

The beauty of the land, its obvious fertility, and abundance is contrasted to the weakness and sickness of the people. The people also flee and hide. And because they did not cultivate the land, they suffered great hunger and as a consequence so did Cabeza de Vaca and his fellow Spanish. In fact, they were so *desnaturados* that it seemed that they wanted to die. The word *desnaturado*, from *desnaturar*, points to the rupture of the link between the vassal and his lord. In effect, during the Middle Ages, the right to *desnaturarse* belonged to the feudal lords who were capable, if they so wished, to *desnaturse del rey* or disavow their “natural” (in the sense of *expected*) allegiance to the King relying then on their own resources. In this sense, the Amerindians were here *desnaturados* because they were not yet linked to either Charles V the Emperor, or to the God. But even more so, they were *desnaturados* because they did not follow the Christian dictum of being stewards of the land. They were instead removed from Nature and from their Creator precisely because they refused to participate in the transformation of wilderness into something useful. In the revised edition of the text, Cabeza de Vaca, careful craftsman of his narrative, substituted the word *desnaturado* for *desventurado*.

This is a telling slip since it seems to him that to be *desnaturado* is to be without good fortune. Thus, for our narrator, the terms *ventura* and *natura* are metonymically bound.

There was a Christian way and an Amerindian way of cultivating the land as the following passage shows. Cabeza de Vaca sends Lope de Oviedo to climb a tree and report on what he could see. Lope de Oviedo observes that “la tierra estava cavada a la manera que suele estar tierra donde anda ganado, y paresçiole que por esto debía ser tierra de christianos, y ainsí nos lo dixo” (92-4).⁶³ Here, the furrows in the land were read as signs of the presence of Christians, which betrays the notion of a Christian way versus an Amerindian way of cultivating. There is then recognition that Amerindians work the land and relate to animals in a different way than Europeans do.

But Europeans were not the only ones to notice ecological difference. Amerindians also took note of differences in the relation to nature among the Europeans. For example, Cabeza de Vaca narrates that by the end of his trek when the Amerindians that accompanied him found the other Spanish, they heard from the Spanish mouths that “ellos eran los señores de la tierra a quien avían de obedesçer y servir” (248). In turn, the Amerindians refused to accept this insisting in that,

los cristianos mentían, porque nosotros veníamos de donde salía el sol y ellos de donde se pone, y que nosotros sanábamos los enfermos y ellos matavan los que estaban sanos, y que nosotros veníamos desnudos y descalços y ellos vestidos y en cavallos y con lanças, y que nosotros no teníamos codicia de ninguna cosa antes todo quanto nos davan tornávamos luego a dar y con nada nos quedávamos y los otros no tenían otro fin sino robar todo quanto hallavan y nunca davan nada a nadie (248-50).

Here, the Spanish are characterized by the Amerindians (as reported by Cabeza de Vaca) in contrasting ways. Cabeza de Vaca and his fellow travelers are nakedness, shoeless, healers of the sick, and without covetousness, but in fact liberal. The other Spanish were

⁶³ translation

fully clothed, in horses, with weapons, covetous, and projected a culture of acquisition and accumulation. These were the lords of land, whereas Cabeza de Vaca was not. In fact, the Amerindians had great fear of the Spanish and as a result flee. Cabeza de Vaca complains that the land had been abandoned and laid fallow for fear of the Spanish,

Anduvimos mucha tierra y toda la hallamos despoblada, porque los moradores della andavan huyendo por las sierras sin osar tener casas ni labrar por miedo de los christianos. (238)

Cabeza de Vaca and his fellows insist in that they are Spanish, just like the others, and that they would persuade the other Spanish not to take the Amerindians as slaves, not to take them from their land, not to cause them any harm (238). So, as to prevent the Spanish from taking the Amerindian land, Cabeza de Vaca tried to persuade the Amerindians so that they, “se bolviessen a sus casas y se asegurassen y sembrassen su maíz” (248). In response, the Amerindians said that,

ni querían ni podían sembrar ni labrar la tierra, antes estaban determinados de dexarse morir, y que esto tenían por mejor que esperar ser tratados con tanta crueldad como hasta allí. (238-40).

The Amerindians neither wanted nor could cultivate and preferred death to being treated like such. The fact that the land was not being cultivated would inspire pity in Cabeza de Vaca since he thought that, “finalmente es tierra que ninguna cosa le falta para ser muy buena” (248). So, he exhorts them to go and cultivate the land so that it would not remain unpopulated, because it was fertile and rich land and thus should not go to waste the Treasurer seems to say.

Finalmente nunca se pudo acabar con los indios creer que éramos de los otros cristianos, y con mucho trabajo e importunaçión los hezimos bolver a sus casas y les mandamos que se asegurassen y assentassen sus pueblos y sembrassen y labrassen la tierra, que de estar despoblada estaban ya muy llena de monte, la qual sin duda es la mejor de quantas en estas Indias ay y más fértil y abundosa de mantenimientos. (250-2)

On another occasion, Cabeza de Vaca expresses disappointment when he perceives the land as arable and fruitful, but not being able to produce what it is meant to produce,

Por toda la tierra ay muy grandes y hermosas dehesas y de muy buenos pastos para ganados, y parésceme que sería tierra muy fructífera si fuesse labrada y habitada de gente de razón. (150)

Here ecological difference is readily appreciated. Cultivation is a marker for reasoning and ultimately for culture and ethnicity since the people of reason must necessarily be Christians. But since New World land was largely uncultivated, it was up to people of reason to make it fruitful.

Conclusion

As evidenced in this chapter, the early modern travel narrator constructed himself textually using the discourse of ecological difference. Both, Cabeza de Vaca and Raleigh created a Caribbean nature in the sense that they did not represent a landscape, as much as produced the image of a land that could be and needed to be put under Christian tutelage in order to bring it to full fruition.

But, what of the Caribbean Amerindian himself? If he does not cultivate the land and refuses to assume the role of nature's steward, if he is *desnaturado* then, who is he? How does the European's confrontation with ecological difference affect the image of the Amerindian that emerges from these texts? The answer to these questions will be explored in the following and last chapter when the textual construction of the Amerindian as objet, or the process of objectivization, is analyzed. As it will be discussed, the Caribbean Amerindian is constructed in terms of race and gender and a lack of writing, all of which are intimately related to the ecological difference.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CULTURAL OTHER: THE ECOLOGY OF OBJECTIVIZATION

No city wants to enlarge its boundaries, for the inhabitants consider themselves good tenants rather than landlords.

Raphael Hythloday, Utopia (More 32)

In his long history entitled Comentarios reales de los Incas, published in 1609 in Lisbon, El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega explains the origins of the name *Perú*. While exploring the coasts of Panamá and environs, Vasco Núñez de Balboa sent four ships to explore the coasts to the south of the isthmus. One of these ships coasted all the way south of the equinoctial line and finally reached an estuary where an Indian was fishing. The Spanish were careful to ambush and apprehend the Indian, then they asked him the name of the place where they were. El Inca continues the narrative,

Le preguntaron por señas y por palabras *qué tierra era aquélla y cómo se llamaba*. El indio, por los ademanes y meneos que con manos y rostro le hacían (como a un mudo), entendía que le preguntaban mas no entendía lo que le preguntaban y a lo que entendió qué [sic] era el preguntarle, respondió a prisa (antes que le hiciesen algún mal) y nombró su propio nombre, diciendo Berú, y añadió otro y dijo Pelú. Quiso decir: “Si me preguntáis cómo me llamo, yo me digo Berú, y si me preguntáis dónde estaba, digo que estaba en el río”. Porque es de saber que el nombre Pelú en el lenguaje de aquella provincial es nombre apelativo y significa río en común, como luego veremos en un autor grave. (My emphasis, 12)

Intent on sizing up the land and its mining potential, the Spanish wished to learn how to call it. Their intention points to a first step in the process of possession and indicates a certain remove from the land in question. There are at least two factors that would permit the Spanish to maintain a remove from the immediate experience of nature and allow

them to focus on geography from above, like a bird's eye view. The first one is European navigation technology which allowed them to traverse great distances in a relative short time without having to stop to get food and water, thus giving them the idea that everywhere was within their reach if only they sailed long enough. The second is maps and other navigational charts which already translated the four dimensional experience of nature into a two dimensional display creating the illusion of possible domination⁶⁴. As visual representations of space, these lines of ink on a piece of paper, these cartographies, helped develop European spatial identity. Both writing and cartographing, like other modes of signifying that rely on two dimensional representation, are bound by the same conventions which Walter Mignolo explained thus,

Finally, it should be noted that all these maps have something in common: in a culture with alphabetic writing, where conventions have established that reading proceeds from left to right and from top to bottom, a hierarchy for a meaningful distribution of objects on the space of the page has also been established. (279)

Writing, in this sense, had made the world smaller and given the impression that it was within European grasp. It was American spatial identity that the Spanish were trying to ascertain when they asked the unfortunate Amerindian in the river “what is this land called?” Naming, after all, was very important for the Spanish. As critic Gustavo Verdesio reminds us, “the act of naming is crucial for colonial discourse in general” (37). Unlike the European perspective, the Amerindian perspective would not have been based on a global point of view struggling to focus on the local. The Amerindian perspective would have been based on the local with projections for the global. Naturally, when

⁶⁴ To be sure, Amerindians, did have native maps, as well as a kind of writing as explained by Walter Mignolo. But, in contrast to European systems of signifying, the Amerindian (and in particular Mexican) writing system was picto-ideographic, as opposed to alphabetic, and Mexican pre-Columbian mapping was comprised of “mainly territorial configurations created by the record-keeping and spatial boundaries” as opposed to Western maps which were more “an organization of space, a localization of places, and an indication of distances” (294).

asked “what is this called?” the Amerindian would interpret the demonstrative “this” to mean precisely this, something within his grasp, while the Spanish’s “this” referred to something well outside their grasp. The difference in perspectives constitutes an *ecological difference*, a difference in the human to nature relation. El Inca goes on with the episode,

Los cristianos *entendieron conforme a su deseo*, imaginando que el indio les había entendido y respondido a propósito, como si él y ellos hubieran hablado en castellano, y desde aquel tiempo, que fue el año de mil y quinientos y quince o diez y seis, llamaron Perú aquel riquísimo y grande Imperio, corrompiendo ambos nombres, como corrompen los españoles casi todos los vocablos que toman del lenguaje de los indios de aquella tierra, porque si tomaron el nombre del indio, *Berú*, trocaron la *b* por la *p*, y si el nombre *Pelú*, que significa río, trocaron la *l* por la *r*, y de la una manera o de la otra dijeron Perú. (My emphasis; El Inca 12)

Not only did the Spanish and Amerindian not share the same spatial referents and perspective, but also, the Spanish assumes and expects to be understood and to understand. The Amerindian is obviously unsure of what is happening and offers two potential answers to their questioning: if you are asking this, then X, if you are asking this, then Y. The Spanish, we are told, understood as they wished and in doing so assumed a transparency that was not there. Their imagined understanding is parallel to the imagined control and ownership they believed they could exert over the land before them. To the Spanish, that the Amerindian would have his own mode of signification completely independent from the European was not a possibility. It also seems impossible to the Spanish that the name the Amerindian might offer be his own. This passage underscores the denial of indigenous subjectivity on the part of the Spanish: why would the Spanish not be able to understand? Why would they be interested in his name? The Amerindian is not seen as a subject, but rather as an object that blends into the landscape. The Amerindian’s different relation to the experience of nature that allowed

him to think of himself and the river as possible subjects for questioning was not shared by the Spanish for whom such a line of questioning would be very unlikely. In this sense *ecological difference* in the other is occluded. The event serves as an example of *objectivizing*, or the process of constructing the Amerindian as an object in discourse and the role of *ecological difference* in this process. So, the Spanish do not admit the Amerindian as thinking and speaking subject, and thus deny the *ecological difference* between them.

In his article “Nature and Silence,” Christopher Manes argues that the current crisis in ecological ethics is owed to the fact that, as a culture, we either deny nature the possibility of language or we ignore its communication. In fact, “nature has grown silent in our discourse, shifting from an animistic to a symbolic presence, from a voluble subject to a mute object” (17). Language expresses volition, will. There is no subjectivity without self-expression. Manes explains that though “animism undergirds many contemporary tribal societies, just as it did our own during pre-Christian times,”⁶⁵ the fact is that as a culture we are far too removed from this perspective, instead invested in literal culture (18). The breakdown of animism is what precipitates the denial of nature as a speaking subject, Manes explains. Following exegetical tradition, the focus turns from animism to conceiving of nature as a book which must be read and as literal language from which morals must be teased out (Manes 19). Manes goes on,

According to medieval commentators, eagles soared higher than any other bird and could gaze upon the sun, undazzled, because they were put on Earth to be a symbol of St. John and his apocalyptic vision, not the other way round. From this hermeneutical perspective, it was inconceivable that eagles should be autonomous, self-willed subjects, flying high for their own purposes without

⁶⁵ Citing famous English anthropologist Edward B. Tylor and others, Manes claims: “Indeed, the overwhelming evidence suggests the universality of animism in human history” (18).

reference to some celestial intention, which generally had to do with man's redemption. Exegesis swept all things into the net of divine meaning. (19)

Western culture is a literal culture which means that its hegemonic ideology is based on written texts opposed to animistic cultures in which “animals, plants, and even ‘inert’ entities such as stones and rivers are perceived as being articulate and at times intelligible subjects, able to communicate and interact with humans for good or ill” (Manes 15). By denying its ability to communicate, nature's subjectivity is obliterated and thus objectivized. The role of *ecological difference* in writing and orality will be the main focus of the first two sections of this last chapter.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the interpretation of animistic nature and ecological difference in the text of Friar Ramón Pané regarding the indigenous peoples of the Antilles, the Taíno Indians. In this text, the tension between nature and wilderness, expressed in terms of writing vs. orality, is most palpable when discussing a specific scene involving the burial and urinating of Christian images. In the following, the chapter will explore the possession of writing as a key cultural difference with deep ecological repercussions for the Amerindians and the Spanish. This difference was argued as a principal difference between the two groups by Tzvetan Todorov almost thirty years ago. My purpose here is to examine the relationship between writing and ecology as difference. Since, at the very essence of the writing/orality binomial one can find civilization/barbarism, it follows that orality is irremediably tied to what is transient, to the body.

The chapter will also discuss the figure of the cannibal as the racial other whose reverse ecology challenges our presuppositions of the human place within the chain of being and shatters our confidence in our subjectivity. Because of its privileged position

in imperial ideology, the cannibal is an important sign that must be read if we pretend to understand the colonial project in the Caribbean. Finally, gender difference will be discussed as a type of *ecological difference*. More specifically, the section will explore woman's conflation with the land. The violence against her in the forms of rape and natural resource extraction will be explored. What emerges is a discussion of the other side of the dialectics of the textual construction of the subject: the process of *objectivization*.

Ramón Pané and Ecological Difference

The nature/wilderness binomial and the ecological difference it uncovers are evident in the Relación de Fray Ramón acerca de las antigüedades de los indios, las cuales con diligencia, como hombre que sabe el idioma de estos, recogió por mandato del Almirante, (Relación, hereafter) written in 1498 by a brother of the order of St Jerome. Directly addressed to Christopher Columbus, as it is evident in the title, the text was conceived as a report of the beliefs and rituals of the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean Antilles, the Taíno. The original manuscript and all copies having been lost, the text was made available to modern readers by a reconstruction from three different sources: Peter Martyr's summary in Latin in a letter addressed to Cardinal Ludovico de Aragón (written in 1494, published in 1516); abstracted passages in Spanish written by Bartolomé de Las Casas and included in chapters CXX, CLXVI and CLXVII of his Apologética Historia de las Indias [ca.1559]; and an Italian translation of the *relación* as it was included in Ferdinand Columbus' Historia del Almirante (also lost) made by Alfonso de Ulloa and published in 1571.⁶⁶ To complicate matters further, the original text was written in

⁶⁶ Ferdinand was Christopher Columbus' second son.

Spanish, but there is little doubt that Friar Ramón Pané's first language was Catalan. In fact, in his Apologética Historia Las Casas comments on Pané's command of Spanish,

All this Fray Ramón says he has understood from the Indians. He says some other things that are confused and of little substance, as a simple person who did not speak our Castilian tongue altogether well because he was a Catalan by birth, and therefore it is better not to relate these things. (Arrom 66)

In addition, one must add the fact that though apparently Pané did his best in learning the Taíno language, it appears he only knew of one of the three languages spoken in the island and even then, not so well. The purpose of the Relación is made clear from the beginning: Pané describes his text as the result of “lo que he podido aprender y saber de las creencias e idolatrías de los indios, y de cómo veneran a sus dioses” (21). The writer would structure his text with a narrative frame that introduces and editorializes the cultural content.

Following the Taíno beliefs and rituals related in the text, it is possible to reconstruct an animistic conception of nature. For example, many Taíno rituals were based on the adoration of *cemíes* or spirits that the *behique* (or shaman) would casually find in the forest. These *cemíes* were made of stone or wood and treated with special care. In many occasions they were offered food and libations. For example, as Pané explains, stone *cemíes* were used to aid women in birthing. Small stone *cemíes* were covered in cotton fabric and placed in baskets. There, they were offered the same food that the Amerindians would eat, namely, tubers, fish, meat or bread. Animistic philosophy implies a human to nature relation that hinges on interaction and exchange of two or more subjectivities. Energy is recognized as flowing from the natural to the human element, and in fact, little separation is recognized between the two subjects. Pané displays little patience before this Taíno shamanic world. In the narrative frame he

comments as if to reassure himself: “y así les ayuda Dios como el cemí come de aquello, ni de otra cosa, siendo el cemí cosa muerta, formada de piedra o hecha de madera” (**). Therefore it is not the cemí who helps the Taíno, but God. For Pané it is impossible to conceive that a stone or piece of wood could have communicative value or agency. In fact, the cemíes have a great impact on human life so much so that if someone did not tend to their cemí, they would grow sick: “que tu cemí te lo había puesto en el cuerpo porque no le hiciste oración, o no le fabricaste algún templo, o no le diste alguna heredad” (37). The Taíno animistic philosophy comprising human to nature interaction where humans are dependent upon and affected by stone and wood cemíes, must have seemed alien to Pané’s Christian one which emphasized human intervention in order to bring passive nature to its fullest potential thus fulfilling God’s divine plan.

As he translates from the Taíno language to Spanish, from an oral tradition to written one, and from a non-Christian mythic perspective to a Christian historical one, Pané’s text seems fragmentary and confusing not only to most modern readers, but even to the writer himself. Pané’s struggle with the material is so patent in the text that *narrativizing* (or the process through which the narrative is put together) is for him an ordeal. In fact, the text is better understood as the process of the struggle for authority and the intermingling of two distinct discourses: the symbolic and the semiotic; the written and the oral. The text’s historical character which pervades its narrative frame from the beginning overwhelms it by the end, fueling a dismissal for the oral basis of the contents and contempt for its hybridity.

It follows that, the Relación is not seamless; its fabric is noticeably stretched and shrunk, cut and pulled together in order to fit the narrative frame. Above all, it is a self-

conscious narrative that calls attention to its own form without hiding frustration. It is best read as a fragmentary history written by a man that understood very little of what he was writing. Pané's anxiety is evident in both the reported speech and the narrative frame. His stand before the narrative offered to him seems transparent: he does not understand it (31); the beliefs it presents are based on ignorance (35); it is badly organized (24). His excuses for the clumsiness of the narrative range from not having enough paper, to blaming the oral tradition to which his interlocutors belong:

Puesto que escribí de prisa, y no tenía papel bastante, no pude poner en su lugar lo que por error trasladé a otro; pero con todo y eso, no he errado, porque ellos lo creen todo tal como lo he escrito. (28)

And,

Y puesto que ellos no tienen escritura ni letras, no pueden dar buena cuenta de cómo han oído esto de sus antepasados, y por eso no concuerdan en lo que dicen, ni aún se puede escribir ordenadamente lo que refieren. (24)

Their myths, he argues, were taught to them by their elders, and because they do not know how to write, their recollection is vague and that is the reason why the Relación is so disorganized. For the friar the Taíno themselves are childish and ignorant as their story is illogical and told improperly.

Y como no tienen letras ni escrituras, no saben contar bien tales fábulas, ni yo puedo escribirlas bien. Por lo cual creo que pongo primero lo que debería ser último y lo último primero. Pero todo lo que escribo así lo narran ellos, como lo escribo, y así lo pongo como lo he entendido de los del país. (26)

On the one hand, the Taíno narrative is flawed from the beginning, Pané argues, precisely because of its oral character. On the other hand, Pané's narrative is haunted by self-consciousness and feelings of personal inadequacy. In fact, his frustration before the broken narrative is so apparent, and the product so disjointed, that it is tempting to see him as a failed narrator, or one who is unable to produce a logical account.

The frase “como lo compré, así también lo vendo” (45) best expresses the narrator’s discomfort before the narrative. Such discomfort has been read differently by scholars: some have emphasized Pané’s religious background as a friar describing Amerindian idolatries, others have emphasized Pané’s role as ethnographer and interviewer of people who had no incentive or reason to tell the truth. The anthropologist Mercedes López-Baralt reads Pané’s comments on the myths he was collecting as editorial comments designed to devalue the text in an effort to justify forceful conversion of the Taíno (82). Another explanation is that the Amerindian animistic perspective of the Taínos bothered the Friar so much, that he could not bring himself to merely report but had to judge the worth of their narratives. Moreover, the oral character of the Taíno narratives which he attributed to their lack of civilization, inspired distrust in the Friar. It then follows that difference between the Taíno and the Spanish is portrayed in terms of culture and writing vs. wilderness and orality. Moreover, since in speech “the signifier cannot be detached from the individual or collective body,” writing’s dominion, and its assimilation of speech within a narrative, amounts to the dominion of the body of the other (Certeau, Writing 215). Thus, the narrator’s discomfort is due to the perceived ecological difference between the Taíno and the Spanish, and the colonial character of the oppositional binary within Pané’s discourse is disclosed.

There is a specific scene that the reader can find coming towards the end of Pané’s narrative in which ecological difference and the narrator’s recognition, interpretation, and occlusion of it is evident. Pané sets out to say that the story he is about to tell features a “miracle of God to demonstrate his power” (53). He explains that Juan de Borgoña (a Franciscan friar), Juan Mateo (the first Indian to be baptized), and

himself, leave the province of Guarionex to visit and Christianize the cacique Mabiaturé in another province. Before leaving, Juan Mateo's family, who had all converted to Christianity, was left in charge of a small place of worship in which Pané and de Borgoña had left some images before which the newly converted could kneel and pray. The second day of their absence Pané reports that Guarionex sent six men to the chapel to steal the images and to destroy them (here, he refers to himself in the third person);

Por mandato de Guarionex les dijeron que tomasen aquellas imágenes que fray Ramón había dejado al cuidado de los sobredichos catecúmenos, las destrozasen y rompiesen, pues fray Ramón y sus compañeros se habían marchado, y no sabrían quién lo había hecho. (53)

Pané continues to relate that Juan Mateo's family tried to prevent Guarionex's men from entry but they still gained access and stole the images. What comes next is of great interest.

Salidos aquéllos del adoratorio, tiraron las imágenes al suelo y las crubrieron de tierra y después orinaron encima, diciendo: "Ahora serán buenos y grandes tus frutos". Y esto porque las enterraron en un campo de labranza, diciendo que sería bueno el fruto que allí se había plantado; y todo esto por vituperio. (53)

For the careful reader, Pané's interpretation of this event would seem puzzling. In the same sentence the friar understands the Amerindians' intentions in burying and urinating on the religious images as part of a propitiatory ritual meant to fertilize their garden, while denouncing their intention as vituperation. Which one was it? To the question of whether it is possible within the Taíno cosmovision to conceive these special images as propitiatory for their cultivation the answer is, yes. In fact, a strong connection between the stone *cemíes*, the fertility of the earth and the cultivation of cassava had been established earlier in the Friar's text on a number of occasions. First, we learn that *cemíes* are made out of stones that are found in the earth. In Peter Martyr's summary in

Latin of Pané's account it is clear that *cemíes* are made of stones found in the roots of *ajes* so there is a clear connection between stone figures or spiritual meaning and the *ajes* (51).⁶⁷ Then, the Friar describes their shape as that of a “nabo grueso, con las hojas extendidas por tierra y largas como las de las alcaparras” (43). In addition, there was a clear link with cassava itself. The Taínos supreme deity was Yúcahu which means “spirit of the cassava” and three pointers *cemíes* were made in his honor and then buried in the conuco in order to increase the yield of cassava (Rouse 118). Pané himself attests to the fact that some *cemíes*, “tienen tres puntas y creen que hacen nacer la yuca” (43). The images that Pané and de Borgoña had brought to the village and placed in the Chapel were indubitably seen by the Taínos as filled with special powers. They were seen as *cemíes* and treated as such. This is a clear example of the ecological difference between the Taínos and the Spanish. In this case, though the difference is identified (on some level Pané understands why they have buried and urinated upon the figures) it is occluded in the sense that it is not treated as a cultural difference but instead interpreted as if there were no differences between the two groups. As in the case of the name of Perú as discussed above in which the Spanish presume to understand and be understood, here Pané insists in interpreting the event as he wishes to imposing on it his own cultural parameters.

But the question remains: Why does Pané insist in imposing his own cultural parameters? Why does he refuse to accept the difference he knows exists? Why does he interpret as vituperation what so clearly was an act of adoration? In treating Christian images as they would have their stone *cemíes*, the Taínos had taken the figures and the

⁶⁷ About *ajes* José Juan Arrom says: “Los *ajes* eran una variedad de tubérculos llamados también *batatas*, *boniatos*, o *camotes*” (82, note 159).

cemíes as signs that were then supplied with meaning. They had in fact performed an act of interpretation, of reading the images much in the same way that Pané read or interpreted signs on a piece of paper. By this act the Taínos demonstrated that they also read and wrote within a shared complex system of signs. They were in fact a literal culture though they had no books. To see the Taíno as lettered, as participating within a system of signs akin to writing, would have been too much for the Friar to accept since it contradicted European expectations of the indigenous peoples. Moreover, it would deny the possibility of assuming an a priori understanding; it would deny the denial of difference.

Furthermore, to see the Taíno as participating within an alternative system of signs would preclude Pané from claiming his success as evangelizer, since this is the only logical explanation for choosing to interpret the episode as he did. Only the incident's aftermath may shed some light in the reasoning behind Pané's interpretation of a clear act of religious fervor as vituperation. Pané continues the narrative by saying that immediately after Guarionex's Indians bury and urinate on the Christian images, the Indians guarding the chapel run to tell Juan Mateo's family that "la gente de Guarionex había destrozado y escarnecido las imágenes" (53). If it remains unclear why Pané would understand the incident as offensive when he was so aware of its benign intention, it is even more difficult to understand why Juan Mateo's would family interpret the incident as profoundly negative. Indeed, they were so insulted by the happening that they,

Dejaron lo que hacían y corrieron gritando a darle conocimiento a don Bartolomé Colón, que tenía aquel gobierno por el Almirante su hermano, que se había ido a Castilla. (53-4)

Pané goes on to tell us that after having learned what the Indians had done, don Bartolomé decided to apprehend, try, and publicly burn the transgressors. To this, Guarionex, reacted violently planning to assassinate Juan Mateo and the other Indians that had converted. And, though their plans were discovered, Guarionex's men were still able to kill Juan Mateo and his family. Here Pané's interpretation of the burying as vituperation becomes clear: because it justifies Juan Mateo's death as martyrdom. In doing so, not only is Juan Mateo and his family's name exalted but so is Pané's, since he was the one responsible for Juan Mateo's conversion. In fact, when introducing Juan in his narrative a few pages before, Pané had already called him not only a martyr but the first martyr of the new lands, "el primer cristiano que padeció muerte cruel" (49). The friar offers further proof of Juan Mateo's martyrdom:

tengo por cierto que tuvo muerte de mártir. Porque he sabido por algunos que estuvieron presents a su muerte, que decía: "Dios naboría daca, Dios naboría daca," que quiere decir "yo soy siervo de Dios". (49)

In insisting in Juan Mateo's saintly death Pané also insists in his success as friar and apostle of the faith. Since Juan Mateo's death can only be explained as martyrdom (if, in fact, he had been killed for his faith), it follows that he had to die defending Christian images that had never been disrespected in the first place. Pané manipulates the narrative consciously in order to show himself as pious and effective - let us remember that his charge was to investigate the Taínos' beliefs with the intention of ascertaining their capacity to be converted to Christianity.

Antonio M. Stevens-Arroyo argues that "Pané was unable to make the connection between Taíno reverence for their own religious artifacts and their attitudes towards the statues of Catholicism" (78). A careful re-reading of the passage reveals that Stevens-

Arroyo is mistaken and that Pané was indeed able to make the connection. What happened was that the friar remained unwilling to read the incident as it begged to be read because that would mean he would lose a chance to exalt his good work as evangelizer. Stevens-Arroyo adds in reference to the incident that “this action, which parallels the Taíno ritual with their own *cemíes*, was unfortunately interpreted as desecration of Christian beliefs, and Pané notes with some satisfaction that reprisals were taken” (78). Similarly, in her reading of Pané’s text, the anthropologist Mercedes López-Baralt emphasizes that the end of the friar’s *relación* was to leave the door open for the “*evangelización del arahuaco insular por la fuerza*”. Though she does not directly read the passage discussed above at length, López-Baralt does make reference to the death of Guarionex’s Indians at the hands of Bartolomé Colón as a terrible punishment and an example of what was to come for the Taínos. She also implies that Pané relates the incident with approval. I agree with both critics in that Pané did seem to take some measure of satisfaction and displayed approval in the dreadful repercussions of the incident if only because they enabled Juan Mateo’s martyrdom.

That Pané placed great importance in his evangelization mission is evident by his comment on Taíno conversion.

Todas [las personas] se hicieron cristianas, con darles sólo a conocer que hay un Dios, que ha hecho todas las cosas, y creó el cielo y la tierra, sin que otra cosa se discutiese ni se les diese a entender, porque eran propensos a creer fácilmente.
(55)

The friar explains that conversions were in general fast and easy, which he attributes to a child-like credulity inherent in the Taínos. Moreover, going back to the friar’s narrative of the incident, after killing Juan Mateo and his family, Guarionex’s Indians are said to have “*corrieron adonde habían escondido las imágenes y las hicieron pedazos*” (54). Why

would Guarionex's Indians come back to break the images they had already buried and urinated upon? Because that first act was clearly not meant to be read as Pané read it.

Rather, it was this second act upon the Christian figures that was meant to disrespect and infuriate the Spanish.

The story goes on, after a couple of days, Pané tells us of a miracle that occurred at the same spot in which the figures were broken.

Pasados algunos días, el señor de aquel campo, fue a sacar los ajes, los cuales ajes son ciertas raíces semejantes a nabos, y otras parecidas a rábanos; y en el lugar donde habían estado enterradas las imágenes, habían nacido dos otros ajes, como si hubieses puesto el uno por medio del otro, en forma de cruz. (54)

That a crucifix was found at the spot where the figure had been broken could be read as the happy result of the propitiatory rite Guarionex's Indians had originally performed.

Read this way, the scene would confirm Amerindian agency and subjectivity. But, Pané makes skillful use of this event manipulating its symbolism in order to reaffirm his evangelizing by pronouncing the sign a miracle that even the mother of their enemy had been forced to acknowledge.

No era posible que nadie encontrase tal cruz, y sin embargo la halló la madre de Guarionex, que es la peor mujer que he conocido en aquellas partes, la cual tuvo esto por gran milagro, y dijo al alcaide de la Fortaleza de la Concepción: "este milagro ha sido mostrado por Dios donde fueron halladas las imágenes. Dios sabe por qué." (54)

Pané weaves his narrative carefully and with precision so that the signs he describes are interpreted in consonance with his philosophy and mission. Though the friar describes difference he refuses to read it and decides, in turn, to occlude it. Throughout this discussion an issue remains: if Pané was not there when the incident happened and Juan Mateo and his family were dead, who related the incident to Pané? In all probability it was Bartolomé Colón or someone associated with him that related all events.

Writing and Nature

As can be seen above in the discussion of the narrative frame in Pané's text, the lack of writing preoccupied the Friar. In fact, lack of writing was a key difference noted by early modern travelers. The Tupi, the Orinopoque, the Wari, the Taínos, the Caribs and none of the peoples with whom Cabeza de Vaca came in contact had an alphabetic or even pictorial writing. However, they had already developed a complex and sophisticated web of signs to be read and interpreted, as can be evidenced by the episode recounted in Pané in which the Taínos *interpret* the Christian images as cemíes. Moreover, lack of writing does not mean a lack of a mode of representing or even curtails self-representation as this can come about orally and performatively among other ways.

In his text, Pané would criticize time and time again, Taíno myths of the creation of the world, of man and of woman, as well as their beliefs in healing and disease, precisely because of the oral character of their narratives. That the Friar would be uncomfortable with the Taíno cosmogony, for example, is to be expected given his training, and background as an evangelizer and his purpose in traveling to La Hispaniola, to ascertain the Amerindian's potential for conversion. Yet, there is but one point in the Friar's narrative frame that explicitly demonstrates his stand as an evangelizer before what he recounts: their beliefs are based on ignorance (47). The rest of the instances in which he comments on the narrative, he does so in respect to its oral character. Consider the following two excerpts cited above.

Y puesto que ellos no tienen escritura ni letras, no pueden dar buena cuenta de cómo han oído esto de sus antepasados, y por eso no concuerdan en lo que dicen, ni aún se puede escribir ordenadamente lo que refieren. (24)

And,

Y como no tienen letras ni escrituras, no saben contar bien tales fábulas, ni yo puedo escribirlas bien. Por lo cual creo que pongo primero lo que debería ser último y lo último primero. Pero todo lo que escribo así lo narran ellos, como lo escribo, y así lo pongo como lo he entendido de los del país. (26)

As can be appreciated in these two editorial comments Pané interjects into his narrative, the Taíno's lack of writing was something that disturbed him profoundly. Their lack of writing was the reason Pané's narrative is so disorganized: because the Taínos did not keep a tight sequence of events, saying first what should have been mentioned last, and because sometimes they gave conflicting narratives. His phrase, "Y como no tienen letras ni escrituras, no saben contar bien tales fábulas," is evidence to his logic: the Taínos do not know how to tell a story because they have no writing.

The distinction between an oral and written tradition was an important one for the Europeans because in early modern Europe writing functioned as a religious marker. Christians, Jews and Muslims peoples were referred to as being *of the book* because they had a book of prayer.⁶⁸ In opposition, peoples that had no written texts, or which did not assign to the written text the centrality these three religions did, were considered idolatrous. Moreover, in conjunction with cartography, writing had helped proliferate a specific mode of signifying in which a two dimensional representation stood for a four dimensional experience. As a mode of signifying, writing would reflect a mode of production and, in the case of early modern Europe, writing reflected capitalism and its imperial expansionism.⁶⁹ Indeed, when in his text Walter Raleigh claims that,

The west Indies were first offered her Majesties Grandfather by Columbus a straunger, in whome there might be doubt of deceit and besides *it was then thought incredible that there were such and so many lands and regions never written of before*. (My emphasis.198)

⁶⁸ Nowadays the term *people of the book* is used to refer mainly to the Jewish people.

⁶⁹ Jean Joseph Goux reminds us, "each mode of production actualizes, fixes, a mode of signifying" (Goux 75).

He is asserting the early modern belief that the ancients had already covered the world in their writing, and Raleigh sets out to do the same in his unfinished History of the World.

This argument will be developed here: that as a marker of religious beliefs, writing also functioned as an ecological marker of civilization and nature vs. barbarism and wilderness. In describing the Taíno lack of writing Pané emphasizes their naiveté and reporting to Columbus he concludes that the Taínos are childlike and will take to Christianity easily. When faced with Tupi orality, Jean de Léry observes that “they know nothing of writing either sacred or secular; indeed, they have no kind of characters that signify anything at all” (134). For Léry writing is a means for power as readily seen in his interpretation of the Tupi lack of writing, here in full.

Quant à l’écriture, soit sainte ou prophane, non seulement aussi ils ne savent que c’est, mais qui plus est, n’ayans nulls caracteres pour signifier quelque chose : quand du commencement que je fus en leur pays pour apprendre leur langage, j’escrivois quelques sentences leur lisant puis apres devant, eux estimans que cel afust une sorcelerie, disoyent l’un à l’autre : N’est-ce pas merveille que cestuy-cy qui n’eust sceu dire hier un mot en nostre langue, en vertu de ce papier qu’il tient, et qui le fait ainsi parler, soit maintenant entendu de nous ?

[...]

Parquoy, je di que, qui voudroit icy amplifier ceste matiere, il se presente un beau sujet, tant pour louer et exalter l’art d’écriture, que pour monstrier combien les nations qui habitant ces trois parties du monde, Europe, Asie, et Afrique ont de quoy louer Dieu par dessus les sauvages de ceste quatriesme partie dite Amerique: car a lieu qu’eux ne se peuvent rien communiquer sinon verbalement : nous au contraire avons cest avantage, que sans bouger d’un lieu, par le moyen de l’écriture et des lettres que nous envoyons, nous pouvons declarer nos secrets à ceux qu’il nous plaist, et fussent-ils esloignez jusques au bout du monde. Ainsi outre les sciences que nos apprenons par les livres, desquels les sauvages sont semblablement du tout destituez, encore ceste invention d’crire que nous avons, dont ils sont aussi entierement privez, doit estre mise au rang des dons singuliers, que les hommes de par deçà ont receu de Dieu. (381-2)

As it is evident in this quotation, Léry valued writing above speech calling it an “advantage,” and a “gift from God,” even pitying the Tupis for being so “utterly deprived.” In the preliminary study as well as in the notes of his edition of Léry’s text,

Frank Lestringant reminds us Léry was a Calvinist pastor and as such his writing would convey his intentions to moralize while at the same time describing the peoples and landscape of Brazil. Lestringant argues that it would have been impossible for Léry to conceive of writing without the idea of Holy Scripture dictated by the Holy Spirit (n. 2, 380). His discussion develops what he sees as Léry's two views on writing. The first one refers to the idea of writing as a technology for recording thoughts ("technique d'enregistrement de la pensée") that facilitates communication between people notwithstanding long distances, an "advantage". The second one refers to the Holy Scripture. For Léry the question is, following Lestringant, whether a people without writing have access to the truth that is carried in the Bible. Lestringant reminds us that this is a significant issue given Léry's religious background and the cultural context of the religious wars spurred in part by the Protestant insistence on a direct and unmediated relation with the text. To Léry's question of whether people without writing have access to the truth the answer is that they do not. Still there is another way in which the Word of God is revealed and that is the Book of Nature,

Le Livre de la Nature largement ouvert aux yeux des simples et des enfants. Et Dieu sait si ce livre de plantes et d'arbres, de bêtes et d'oiseaux, étale à travers les étendues du Nouveau Monde ses pages les plus richement enluminées. [...] Mais pas plus qu'ils ne savent entendre la voix des missives que les chrétiens d'adressent les uns aux autres, les Brésiliens ne sont à même de déchiffrer les caractères inscrits dans le paysage immense de leurs forêts et des leurs montagnes. C'est une humanité *aveugle et nomade* qui marche sans connaissance, fort éloignée de la vérité qui s'énonce pourtant sous ses pas, à chaque moment de son *errance interminable*. (My emphasis. Lestringant 36)

Here, Lestringant exposes what he believes to be Léry's view of the Tupi. Divinity cannot be revealed to them, neither through the Holy Scriptures, nor through nature, since this last one is full of signs they are incapable of interpreting. The Tupi are blind before

the Book of Nature, blind and nomadic. The description of the Tupi as nomadic and the pronouncement that they are very far from the truth that is enunciated along the way of their *unending wandering*, can be seen as an implicit reference to their presumed lack of agriculture. As discussed in Chapter One, for a long time the Tupi were assumed to be gatherers of nuts, fruits and vegetables while, in truth, they practiced a complex cycle of swidden and agroforestry. In Léry's mind, the lack of writing would be linked to the lack of agriculture in the binomial nature/wilderness. The Tupi, following this logic, did not live in nature, but in wilderness. Here is the ecological difference between the Tupi and Léry.

Among Michel de Montaigne scholars, there is little doubt that Léry's text was the source of the depiction of the cannibal that is the subject of his famous essay "Des Cannibales," (1578-80). Twentieth century anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss also used Léry's text as the basis for his famous indictment on writing in which he exposed the relationship between writing and power. In the thirty-fifth chapter to his Tristes Tropiques, (1955), Lévi-Strauss tells the story of his search for the Nambikwara people in order to record the size of their community. He explains that the Nambikwara "have no written language," and tells of an occasion in which their chief asked for Lévi-Strauss' writing pad and attempted to communicate through drawings and marks he would make on the page. The anthropologist makes use of the anecdote to explore the essence of the written language, first identifying it with power, then considering it as an "artificial memory". He places writing at the heart of the civilization/barbarism binary: writing allegedly affords the civilized the ability to record the past and thus learn from their mistakes developing simultaneously a history (collective narrative of the past) and a

teleology (a sense of destiny). But after careful consideration Lévi-Strauss rejects such a claim. He concludes that writing has been more of an instrument of empire and the establishment of great cities: “the primary function of written communication is to facilitate slavery,” the aesthetic pleasure it brings is a secondary result (299). Lévi-Strauss returns to the frame narrative of the tale commenting that after his adventure with writing the Nambikwara chief was abandoned by his people, as they “felt in some obscure way that writing and deceit had penetrated simultaneously into their midst” (300).

Another French thinker, Michel de Certeau, also makes use of Léry’s text in his reflection on writing and history titled The Writing of History, (1975). There, he notes that Léry’s writing cannot help but model itself against Tupi speech. Thus, for Certeau, Léry’s narrative is arranged on a series of binary opposites all of which correspond to civilization/barbarism. Some of the binomials that Certeau mentions are religion/idolatry, clothing/nudity, and work/leisure, among others (Writing 228). Certeau discusses a moment in Léry’s text in which the binomial writing/orality and civilization/barbarism are clearly aligned. Léry hears from his interpreter part of a Tupi myth of flood, and in a denial of difference, he understands it as a corruption of the Biblical narrative of the Flood with which he was well acquainted. In reference to this, he comments on Tupi orality which allows for the perversion of the truth and the pollution of its purity.

Et de faict, estant vraysemblable que de pere en fils ils ayent entendu quelque chose du deluge universel, qui avint du temps de Noé, suyvant la coustume des homes qui ont tousjours corrompu *et tourné la verité en mesonge*: joint comme il a est’e veu ci’ dessus, qu’estans *privez de toutes sortes d’escritures, il leur est malaise de retenir les choses en leur pureté*, ils ont adjousté ceste *fable*, comme les poetes, que leurs grands peres se sauverent sur les arbres. (406)

Similar to Pané's, Léry's attitude toward orality is regrettable. The fact that both Léry and Pané refer to their text as *history* (the term is in the title of Léry's text), yet they pejoratively refer to the Amerindian narrative as *fable*, points to the overvaluing of writing to the detriment of orality. Both texts establish their legitimacy, indeed their purity (as Léry states), as accurate representations of reality and the truth because of their written quality. Derived from experience, memory, and orality, Amerindian myth and ecology provided a stark contrast against European history and ecology based on the usual conventions of divine revelation and reason held by Western tradition. Certeau deconstructs the conception of history and truth in Léry elaborating the following critique of history. History, which in the west has conventionally referred exclusively to writing, is an attempt to manage space and the body turning them blank in order to write them anew (6). In fact, marked by absence, while speech is marked by presence, writing is for Certeau the discourse of separation from the body, and of nature. As it breaks with the past and presumes to view from the outside, History is a labor of, and against, death. It seeks to replace "the obscurity of the lived body with the expression of a 'will to know' or a 'will to dominate the body' (6). For the scholar, historians,

Fashion an artifice of Nature. They participate in the work that changes Nature into environment, and thus modify the Nature of man. [...] no longer do we face the dichotomy which opposes the *social* to the *natural*, but the connection between a socialization of Nature and a 'naturalization' (or materialization) of social relations. (71)

History and writing also colonize nature as they function as the technology that facilitates and guarantees the blurring of the social and the natural. Historians or the writers of texts civilize nature "which has always meant they 'colonize' and change it" (72). As a history, the travel narrative sees itself as a representative of reality and truth, as a

narrative totality. The problem is that the meanings produced by the narrative cannot help but be invested in the culture which produces them. Imposing as collective a reality that is personal (belonging to and produced by the traveler-writer) and expounding a totality that is a lie, the travel narrative colonizes world perspective. Therefore, the colonialism inherent in writing cannot be overstated:

The power that writing's expansionism leaves intact is colonial in principle. It is extended without being changed. It is tautological; immunized against both any alterity that might transform it, and whatever dares to resist it. (216)

Because of their written quality, early modern travel narratives establish their legitimacy, indeed their purity, as History or accurate representations of reality and truth, while the oral and fabled (mythic) character of Amerindian tradition is looked upon as inferior and inadequate. Thus, history colonizes the fable (myth) as writing colonizes orality.

Moreover, since in speech "*the signifier cannot be detached from the individual or collective body*," writing's dominion, and its assimilation of speech within a narrative, is the dominion of the body of the other (Certeau, Writing 215). In effect, according to Certeau as discussed in Chapter Three, the travel narrative is comprised of an outbound journey, followed by a depiction of savage society, closed off by the return voyage (Heterologies 69). A depiction of the other is then what lends cohesion to the travel narrative and thus is essential to it. This middle part of the travel narrative is what has made these accounts so enticing to readers. Here is where we find the description of the savage, the cannibal that lacks writing and that the travel narrative as a history seeks to dominate.

Race as Ecological Difference: The Cannibal

Ecological difference is most palpable in the emblematic representative of the Caribbean: the Cannibal. The word *cannibal* itself, as it has been amply discussed⁷⁰, derives from *caribes*, the name in Arawak which the Taíno Amerindians native to the Greater Antilles named those of the smaller Lesser Antilles as was recorded by Christopher Columbus. There is little doubt that in the early modern European mind the Caribbean and cannibalism was linked together. In fact, the Spanish had given the same name to the piranhas indigenous to the Orinoco River, as José Gumilla, a Jesuit priest recorded in his early eighteenth century natural history of the Orinoco basin.

Otra plaga fatal que voy a referir es la de los guacaritos, a quienes los indios llaman ‘muddé,’ y *los españoles, escarmentados de sus mortales y sangrientos dientes*, llamaron y llaman hasta hoy ‘caribes’. Contra éstos el único remedio es apartarse con todo *cuidado y vigilancia de sus voracidad y de su increíble multitud*; tanta aquélla y tal ésta, que antes pueda el desgraciado hombre que cayó entre ellos hacer diligencia para escaparse, *se lo han comido por entero, sin dejar más que el esqueleto limpio*.⁷¹ (My emphasis. José Gumilla, “Los Caribes” Historia real y fantástica del nuevo mundo, de Horacio Jorge Becco p. 234)

This passage brings to the foreground the connection between the Caribbean region and the eating of human flesh. Be it a fish or an Amerindian, as a figure, the Cannibal is characterized by his diet. He is an ecological nightmare in the sense that he reminds us that we too are objects of consumption thus reinserting the human being within the food chain. For Cătălin Avramescu the Cannibal has something to tell us regarding our ecology.

The Anthropophagus was an unyielding creature who brought to light the law of a harsh and profound nature. As such, perhaps he has something to tell us about ourselves, the people of a time in which nature has become merely an occasion for the picturesque. (Avramescu 3)

⁷⁰ See studies by Peter Hulme, Carlos Jáuregui, Frank Lestringant among others.

⁷¹ I would like to thank Dr. Margaret Russotto for pointing out the link between the piranhas and the Caribbean cannibals as evidenced in this passage.

The Cannibal's threat is that of wilderness; the figure is outside the law if nature. The figure reminds us of that the human's rightful place is within nature, not outside of it. In fact, traveler-writer, Alessandro Geraldini, presents the Caribbean cannibals as against nature in his Itinerarium ad Regiones Subaequinoctiali Plaga Constitutas, (1521).⁷² Geraldini keeps true to the soon to be discussed dichotomy between the vicious Caribes and the easily converted Arawaks while he describes the cannibals and their landscape.

Llegamos finalmente, con viento favorable, a las *islas malditas* de los antropófagos, que en su lengua se dicen Caribes, es decir hombres fuertes. Estas islas son habitadas por grandes muchedumbres de hombres *absolutamente salvajes*: [...] comen carne humana, habitan en lugares montañosos a donde arrastran sus presas; están continuamente en guerra con las poblaciones cercanas, que no quieren *comer carne humana* y viven como personas pías y honestas siguiendo *la justa ley de la naturaleza*. [...] Estos caníbales no creen en los dioses, *son enemigos de la naturaleza*, viven desnudos, son de alta talla y tienen cuerpos gigantescos y semblantes espantosos... (My emphasis. 211)⁷³

The Caribes or cannibals, which are one and the same for Geraldini, live in the damned islands inhabited by people who live in absolute wilderness. What does it mean to live in wilderness? For Geraldini it is clear it means to eat human flesh, to live in a mountainous landscape, and to be in constant war. Cannibals do not follow the Law of Nature, but are its enemies. They are naked and enormous in size; they are frightening. In this way, the cannibal challenges the Christian neo-platonic conception of the human being as the epitome of nature and steward, as well as the early modern overly emphatic focus on the individual. The Cannibal functions as the denial of subjectivity that is projected onto the Caribbean region.

In his book Canibalia (2005), critic Carlos Jáuregui recognizes the status of the cannibal as a central figure in the early modern period and its colonial project in the

⁷² This passage was already cited in Chapter Two, but not discussed in terms of the cannibals it describes.

⁷³ Originally translated from Latin into Spanish by Luigi Avonto. See Bibliography for details.

Caribbean, “el caníbal tiene que ver más con el *pensar* y el *imaginar* que con el comer, y más con la *colonialidad* de la Modernidad que con una simple retórica cultural” (14).

Jáuregui also claims that the Cannibal is a primary image on the basis of which subjectivity and culture is imagined (11). The Cannibal is the archetypal other as he “provee el significante maestro para la alteridad colonial” (12). Like Jáuregui’s study, this chapter will not burden itself with the question of whether or not the Amerindians actually ate human flesh. But, unlike the critic, this section of the chapter wishes to underscore the physicality, or literality, if you will, of the issue. In other words, what is so terrifying about the Cannibal is the fact that he proves that we too are food.

In Dinner with a Cannibal, (2008), Carole A. Travis-Henikoff seeks to relativize the eating of human flesh by humans with a discussion of cannibalism in the animal kingdom and several examples of anthropophagi brought on by the threat of starvation. She also calls attention to the nutritious quality of the human body, especially the brains (the most caloric food in the world) and also to the good taste of the human body. She calls attention to the ubiquity of cannibalistic practices in the world, some with religious significance, some performed to avoid death by starvation, some done by psychopaths, and some done for its pleasure. Travis-Henikoff’s treatment of cannibalism results in its *naturalization*. Meaning that the reader is left with the impression that if humans eat humans it is because humans are also animals and thus consumable.

But the Cannibal does more than confront the wilderness within nature, he also confronts white with black. The obsession with the cannibal’s diet hides a preoccupation with his ethnicity: ecological difference hides ethnic difference. For example, scholar Cătălin Avramescu argues that Jean de Laet, director of the Dutch East Indies Company

wrote in 1640 that the Amerindians “must have been descendants of the Scythians, since both nations were anthropophagi” (11). Also, Peter Hulme traces the use of the figure of the Cannibal in the Carib vs. Arawak dichotomy that he claims serves as a structural cognitive function not only on Columbus’s texts but also in the historiography of anthropological and ethnological accounts. He points out the loaded vocabulary that these descriptions and narratives have and argues: “What we have, in other words, in texts that claim historical and scientific accuracy, is the elaboration and corroboration of ethnic stereotypes” (49).

The fact that the eating of human flesh was seen as an ethnic marker in addition to being a marker of lack of civilization by the Spanish Crown has been amply discussed as when it ordered Rodrigo de Figueroa (a lawyer in Santo Domingo) to determine which Amerindians were peaceful (Taíno) and which were Caribs since the last ones because of their cannibalism and general hostility were subject to slavery (Rouse 157). That early modern Europeans focused on the Cannibal as a metaphor for ecological and racial difference is understandable given that race was an important factor in the development of modernity. In fact, as David Theo Goldberg argues in *Racist Culture*, (1993),

Race is one of the central conceptual inventions of modernity. [...] the concept assumes specificity as modernity defines itself, refining modernity’s landscape of social relations as its own conceptual contours are mapped out. The significance of race transforms theoretically and materially as modernity is renewed, refined, and redefined. (Goldberg 3)

As was mentioned in Chapter Two, the element of race was central to the development of the modern subject and its object, as they are constructed in discourse. Goldberg goes on,

Racist culture has been one of the central ways modern social subjects make sense of and express themselves about the world they inhabit and invent; it has been key in their responding to that world they conjointly make. (9)

In similar manner, María Eugenia Chaves Maldonado, in her article “La creación del ‘Otro’ colonial: Apuntes para un estudio de la diferencia en el proceso de la conquista Americana y de la esclavización de los africanos,” (2009), argues for what she calls “el criterio de civilidad” as a main category of difference in the very beginning of the Iberian colonial project during the sixteenth century. Within hegemonic discourse, this “criterio de civilidad” overpowers “limpieza de sangre” as a marker of difference in the Iberian colonies where, as Chaves Maldonado explains, “son más bien los criterios de civilidad y el signo del color los que conducen a las producción de los saberes sobre la diferencia” (211). But, what is this “criterio de civilidad”? Referring to the categories of barbarism and culture, the critic’s “criterio de civilidad” is analogous to *ecological difference* in that it focuses on the relationship and perceived distance between a people and the natural realm. The critic adds that, when arguing in defense of the Amerindians, Las Casas justifies his arguments on the native’s natural rights and not in concepts of “pureza de sangre”. Furthermore,

Un conjunto de discursos eruditos consolidaron la imagen del “otro” colonial alrededor de los criterios de civilidad; al mismo tiempo instituyeron el color como un signo que, inscrito en el cuerpo, anunciaba el origen y la calidad de las personas estableciendo jerarquías de superioridad/inferioridad entre ellas. [...] Los eruditos hispanos del siglo XVI, como [Juan Ginés de] Sepúlveda⁷⁴ y [José de] Acosta⁷⁵, privilegiaban criterios de civilidad (instituciones políticas, uso de la escritura, etc.) que servían de parámetros para establecer comparaciones y definir clasificaciones jerárquicas de los pueblos considerados “bárbaros”. (207)

⁷⁴ In his book *Apologia pro libro de iustis belli causis* (1550), Sepúlveda argues that the Spanish not only had the right, but also the moral imperative to civilize the Amerindians and rid them of their barbarism and lack of reasoning. If the indigenous peoples opposed, the Spanish had the right to subdue them through war. It is important to point out that “submission” included the repossession of any and all Amerindian land so that said land could be under Christian tutelage and serve its purpose.

⁷⁵ The text in reference here is *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, published in 1596.

Here, race, like lack of writing discussed above, is presented as a sign for ecological difference. The Cannibal embodies the difference in ecologies between the early modern Europeans and the Caribbean Amerindians.

But, the Cannibal had already been discovered before Columbus set foot in the so-called New World. Columbus had taken his cues from Marco Polo, Mandeville, and the richness of the early modern European imaginary in which the Greco-Roman ancients had already sowed the seed for the assignment of the term *anthropophagic* to the cultural other that remained hostile towards imperial force. Cannibals, and Amazons, for that matter, were already part of the landscape before Columbus saw it with his very eyes. In his Carta a Santángel, (1493), Columbus addresses European expectations concerning the peoples of the new lands.

En todas estas islas fasta aquí no he hallado ombres mostrudos, como muchos pensavan, más antes es toda gente de muy lindo acatamiento, ni son negros como en Guinea, salvo con sus cabellos corredíos,... Así que mostruos no he hallado ni noticia, salvo de una isla que es Carib, la segunda a la entrada de las Indias, que es poblada de una iente que tienen en todas las islas por muy *ferozes, los cualles comen carne umana*. Estos tienen muchas canuas, con las cuales corren todas las islas de India, roban y toman cuanto pueden. Ellos no son más disformes que los otros, salvo que tienen en costumbre de traer los cabellos largos como mugeres, y usan arcos y fleches de las mismas armas de cañas con un palillo al cabo por defecto de fierro que no tienen. Son ferozes entre estos otros pueblos que son en demadiado grado covardes, mas yo no los tenfo en nada mas que a los otros. Estos son aquellos que traran con las mugeres de Matinino, que es la primera isla partiendo de España para las Indias que se falla, en la cual no ay hombre ninguno. Ellas no usan exercicio femenino, salvo arcos y frechas, como los sobredichos de cañas, y se arman y cobigan con launes de arambre, de que tienen mucho. (225)

Sensitive to his reader's preoccupations and curiosity, Columbus explains that he found no monsters in his travels. No monsters, except the Caribes which everyone fears on account of their ferocity and the fact that they eat human flesh. Though, he explains that they are not deformed, they do look different in that they wear their hair long, like

women. Moreover, the Caribs are as ferocious as the other Amerindians are cowards. As was seen in Alessandro Geraldini's passage discussed above, cannibalism acts as a marker of difference between the Caribes and the Arawaks of the region. This dichotomy is the structural binomial that Peter Hulme sought to deconstruct as the basis for a Caribbean ethnic stereotype. Anthropologist Irving Rouse also criticizes the distinction between Taínos and Caribs based on cannibalism and hostility. Rouse wonders,

How are we to explain the discrepancy between the ethnohistorical and archeological evidence? Columbus and his native passengers, from whom he presumably obtained the Carib identification, may have been using the term to refer not to the specific ethnic group they had encountered in Guadeloupe but to *any hostile Indians*, especially those from the small eastern islands, *as was the practice during the subsequent conquest period*. If so, the term tells us nothing about the nature of the local inhabitants.... (my emphasis; 146)

In fact, Rouse explains that the Island-Caribs, as they are referred to in Anthropology to distinguish them from the Caribes living in the northeastern coasts of South America, were descendants of the Caribs of the mainland who lived side by side with the Arawaks (Rouse 21). They called themselves *Carib* or *Kalina* and, as Rouse points out, they informed the Spanish that they had come from the south and conquered an ethnic group called the Igneri. They were semi-nomadic meaning they cultivated to some extent but also fished, hunted, and gathered wild fruits and vegetables. They emphasized warfare and found mates through the technique of bride capture, which would have caused some disruption for their neighbors. Their culture is considered to have attained a Tropical Forest level of development (like the Arawaks of the Bahamian archipelago), lagging behind the Classic Taínos of La Hispaniola and Puerto Rico in pottery and other cultural markers reconstructed by archeologists (Rouse 22). The Island-Caribs would have made poor pottery, it was argued by anthropologists and archeologists for a long time, because

they were “savages” and cannibals (Rouse 131). Regarding their cannibalism, Rouse explains, that the Caribs were “ate bits of flesh of opposing warriors in order to acquire the latter’s prowess” (22).

Like Columbus, Cabeza de Vaca is also aware that his readers expected some mention of cannibalism. But in his case, instead of describing a cannibal other, the traveler-writer ends up describing a scene in which the Spanish themselves are cannibals:

Y cinco cristianos que estavan en Xamho en la costa llegaron a tal extremo que se comieron los unos a los otros hasta que quedo uno, que por ser solo, no huvo quein lo comiesse. Los nombres dellos son estos: Sierra, Diego Lope, Corral, Palaçios, Gonçalo Ruiz. Deste caso se alteraron tanto los indios y huvo entre ellos tan gran escandalo que sin duda que si al principio ello lo vieran los mataran, y todos nos vieramos en grande trabajo. (104)

In a great reversal of roles in this passage it is the Spanish who eat each other and frighten the Amerindians who, Cabeza de Vaca claims, would have killed them all if they had caught them in the act. But taking into consideration the context of this episode, far from relativizing cannibalism, what this episode does is to underscore the depiction of the land as cruel and over emphasize Cabeza de Vaca’s figure as that of the hero that is able to overcome the de-civilizing threat of the American wilderness.⁷⁶

This section will discuss one last depiction of the cannibal. That is, Jean de Léry’s depiction of the Tupinamba cannibals, which has garnered the attention of many critics. In Chapter XV of his *Histoire*, Léry describes the anthropophagic ritual of the Amerindians thus,

Non pas cependant, ainsi qu’on pourroit estimer, qu’ils facent cela ayans esgard à la nourriture: car combine que tous confessant ceste chair humaine ester merueilleusement bonne et delicate, tant y a neantmoins, que plus par vengeance, que pour le goust (hormis ce que j’ay dit particulierement des vieilles femmes qui en sont si friandes), leur principal intention est, qu’en poursuivant et reongeant ainsi les morts jusques aux os, ils donnent par ce moyen crainte et espouvament

⁷⁶ As was discussed in Chapter Four of this study.

aux vivans. Et de fait, pour assouvir leurs courages felons, tout ce qui se peut trouver és corps de tels prisonniers, depuis les extremittez des orteils, jusques au nez, Oreilles et sommet de la teste, est entierement mangé par eux: j'excepte toutesfois la cervelle à laquelle ils ne touchent point. (366)

As Janet Whatley points out in her introductory study of her English translation, the Tupi's cannibalism is a "socially interpretable." The Tupi do not do it for pleasure, but more so as vengeance and to instill fear in the living so as to show them a lesson. Therefore the cannibal act is a symbol that is inscribed with a specific social meaning. Though the fierceness of the diners is mentioned, the picture that is painted is still human and not entirely wild and savage. The act is further balanced by the counterpoising of European metaphorical and literal cannibalism. Metaphorically, cannibalism is not too far from Europe if the reader thinks of the eating of the body of Christ in the Eucharist, but especially, in the practice of usury, which devours the body of the poor.

Neantmoins, à fin que ceux qui liront ces choses tant horrible, exercées journallement entre ces nations barbares de la terre du Bresil, pensent aussi un peu de pres à ce qui se fait par deçà parmi nous: je diray en premier lieu sur ceste matiere, que si on considere à bon escient ce que font nos gros usuriers (sucçans le sang et la moëlle, et par consequent menageans tous en vie, tant de vefves, orphelins et autres pauvres personnes auxquels il vaudroit mieux couper la gorge tout d'un coup, que de les faire ainsi languir) qu'on dira qu'ils sont encores plus cruels que les sauvages dont je parle. (375)

Frank Lestringant explains that the analogy between the usurer's loan and the eating of human flesh constitute a Medieval and Renaissance common place of anti-Semitism, as can be appreciated in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice, where unable to receive payment to his loan the Jewish Shylock demands a pound of flesh.⁷⁷ This depiction serves as yet another example of the link between race and cannibalism. But Léry demonstrates a profound understanding of cultural difference when he also cites literal

⁷⁷ "L'assimilation du prêt usuraire à l'anthropophagie consitue, aun Moyen Age et à la Renaissance, un lieu commun anti-Semite qui connaît avec le Marchand de Venise de Shakespeare sa plus fameuse illustration" (Lestringant 375).

examples of European cannibalism during the French religious wars, the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, and especially during the famine created by the siege of Sancerre, France in 1572-3 (xxviii).⁷⁸ Finally, he exclaims,

Parquoy qu'on n'haborre plus tant desormais la cruauté des sauvages Anthropophages, c'est à dire, mangeurs d'hommes: car puisqu'il y en a de tells, voire d'autant plus detestable et pires au milieu de nous, qu'eux qui, comme il a esté veu, ne se ruent que sur les nations lesquelles leur sont enemies, et ceux-ci se sont plongez au sang de leurs aprens, voisins et compatriots, il ne faut pas aller si loin qu'en leur pays, ny qu'en l'Amerique pour voir choses si monstrueuses et prodigieuses. (377)

Léry's relativizing of the Amerindian's cannibalism should not be read as approval or understanding. The comment says less about his thoughts regarding the Tupi, than about his reflections on Europe. His tone is moralizing and directed towards his surroundings, as his deictics, *icy* and *par deçà* demonstrate. The traveler-writer's treatment of the Cannibal is similar to Michel de Montaigne's depiction which also serves him to criticize contemporary French society. This moralizing tone is evidently absent from Cabeza de Vaca's account of Spanish cannibalism, though he does note that the Amerindians disapproved of it.

However, as the citation above shows, there is a sector of the Tupi population that indulges in the eating of human flesh with no apparent social meaning whatsoever but rather with a perverse covetousness: old women. If the picture of the cannibal feast painted by Léry before could be said to reside at the limits of civilization and barbarism, culture and nature, the picture of the old Tupi women gorging on human flesh is terrifying. Léry describes the scene more fully,

⁷⁸ "Davantage, si on veut venir à l'action brutale de mascher et manger reellement (comme on parle) la chair humaine, ne s'en est-il point trouv'e en ces regions de par deçà, voire mesmes entre ceux qui portent le titre de Chrestienes, tant en Italie qu'ailleurs, lesquels ne s'estans pas contentez d'avoir fait cruellement mourir leurs ennemis, n'ont peu rassasier leur courage, sinon en mangeans de leur foye et de leur cœur? Je m'en rapport aux histories" (375).

Les vieilles femmes (lesquelles, comme j'ay dit, appetent merueilleusement de manger de la chair humaine) estant toutes assemblées pour recueillir la graisse qui degoutte le long des bastons de ces grandes et hautes grilles de bois, exhortans les homes de faire en sorte qu'elles ayent tousjours de telle viande: et en leschans leurs doigts dissent, 'Yguatou', c'est à dire, il est bon. (364).

The image of an old woman sucking human fat from her dripping fingers is a horrifying one reminiscent of early modern depiction of witches contemporary to Léry's text.

Notice that though men carry out the apprehending and the ritual killing, women, old ones at that, are the only ones that freely express the pleasure that the forbidden food brings them. It seems that for old women the act of cannibalism has no meaning as an educating gesture or, as a symbol of vengeance. Rather, their enjoyment of the human feast points to an immediate physical response to the digesting of the food. Moreover, it is the old women who urge the men to do the killing, cleaving, and cooking, and to do it fast so that they can satisfy their hunger. In this way old women embody the most negative perspective of cannibalism and what it represented for the early modern European.

From Race to Gender in Ecological Difference

The importance of race to the discourse of colonialism and modernity that is born out of early modern travel accounts also exhibits a preoccupation with women and their sexuality as Ania Loomba's book, Shakespeare, Race and Colonialism, (2002) argues by offering the reader an insightful analysis of race in sixteenth century England. Her analysis takes into account the fact that the discourse of difference employed in construction of race works alongside gender and class. She explains that "the nobility were often understood as a 'race' distinct from ordinary folk" and that "racial difference was imagined in terms of an inversion or distortion of 'normal' gender roles and sexual

behavior” (7). Furthermore, she argues that sexuality is paramount to the early modern idea of race.

Finally, sexuality is central to the idea of “race” understood as lineage, or a bloodline, because the idea of racial purity depends upon the strict control of lineage. In the early modern period, the term ‘race’ could indicate a family or household, a nation, a religion, a class, or even an imaginary group, but in every case, the boundaries of this group could only be guarded or expanded by carefully regulating sexual behaviour, especially that of women. (32)

Therefore, it makes sense that early modern travel-writers to the Caribbean would have paid special attention to Amerindian women and their sexual mores. For example, consider the following citation from Amerigo Vespucci’s 1505 letter,

No son muy celosos, pero son lujuriosos fuera de toda medida y mucho más las mujeres que los hombres, que por honestidad se deja de decir los artificios de que se valen para satisfacer su desordenada lujuria. Son mujeres muy fecundas y en sus preñeces no excusan trabajo alguno; sus partos son tan fáciles, que después de un día de paridas, van por todos lados, especialmente para lavarse en los ríos y están sanas como peces. Son tan desamoradas y crueles que si se enojan con sus maridos hacen en seguida un artificio del cual matan a la criatura en el vientre y la abortan; por cuyo motivo matan infinitas criaturas. Son mujeres que cuerpos gentiles, muy bien proporcionadas, y no se ven en sus cuerpos cosas o miembro mal hecho; y aunque andan completamente desnudas, son mujeres carnosas y de sus vergüenzas no se ve aquella parte que puede imaginar quien no las ha visto, pues la cubren con los muslos, salvo aquella parte a la que la naturaleza ha proveído, que es, hablando honestamente, el pubis. En conclusión, no tienen vergüenza de sus vergüenzas, así como nosotros no la tenemos de enseñar la nariz o la boca; por excepción veréis los pechos caídos en una mujer, así como tampoco el vientre caído o con arrugas, que todas parecen que no pariesen nunca. Se mostraban muy deseosas de ayuntarse con nosotros los cristianos. (1505 Lettera, 211-3)

Here, Amerindian women are described in a way that would be echoed throughout early modern travel writing. They are attractive with beautiful athletic bodies. They are also lustful, cruel, and feel no pain or discomfort due to pregnancy or parturition. In feeling little or no pain and keeping her breasts uplifted, in showing no wrinkles, she is animal-like. If the Amerindians are naked, Amerindian women have no sexual modesty or

moderation. And since they are not bogged down by culture's conventions, they do not hesitate to kill the fetuses while still in their womb.

That Amerindian women were seen as sexually wanton is evidenced in Michel de Cuneo's entry in his travel diary dedicated to Gerolamo Annari, a Saonan noble, dated from the 15 to the 28th of October 1495. Originally from Saona, Italy, Cuneo had traveled to the Caribbean in Columbus' second trip which sailed in 1493 and remained there until 1495 when he returned to Spain. In this passage, Cuneo contextualizes the rape of a Caribbean Amerindian woman by foregrounding her nakedness and cannibalism.

Estando yo en la barca, tomé una cambala bellísima, la cual me regaló el señor Almirante; y teniéndola en mi camarote, al estar desnuda según su costumbre, me vino ganas de solazarme con ella. Y al querer satisfacer mi deseo, ella, resistiéndose, me arañó de tal manera con sus uñas que yo no hubiese querido entonces haber empezado. Pero visto aquello, para deciros el final del todo, agarré una correa y le di una buena friega de azotes, de manera que lanzaba gritos inauditos que no podríais creer. Finalmente, *nos pusimos de acuerdo* de tal forma que os puedo decir que de hecho parecía amaestrada en la escuela de las ramerías. (My emphasis. 177)⁷⁹

As Cuneo explains, his rape of the Caribbean woman is brought upon by her nakedness, in addition to her being a cannibal, and her status as a gift to him by Columbus.

Moreover, though he describes her tenacity in resisting his advances, and the whipping he beats down on her, he claims that they finally were able to agree on the sexual relation in such a way that she showed herself to be a skilled harlot. What we have here is a clear association between being of the cannibal race, being naked thus closer to wilderness, and being a harlot. Like Vespucci above, Cuneo presents the reader with a depiction of women that is in many ways harsher than that of men because while the Amerindian man's difference rests on his inability to write or read, her difference rests wholly within

⁷⁹ Translated from the Italian by Luigi Avonto, as cited in *Mirando al otro*, (1995).

the body. To be sure, both were naked, wild and lacked writing, but depictions of women tend to underscore their sexuality in a way that does not the depiction of Amerindian men, notwithstanding comments in reference to sodomy.⁸⁰ Amerindian women best exemplify the otherness of her race and her ecology. She demonstrates clearly her people's particular relationship to nature.

As can be appreciated in the above discussion, women seem to best represent ecological difference as they are often perceived as more animal-like or closer to nature. As Chapter Two explains, Jean Joseph Goux criticizes the classical philosophy of idealism which held that woman was akin to matter while man was akin to form, since it develops into a conflation between woman and nature, on the one hand, and men and culture on the other. Eco-feminist critic Carolyn Merchant summarizes the issue,

Anthropologists have pointed out that nature and women are both perceived to be on a lower level than culture, which has been associated symbolically and historically with men. Because women's physiological functions of reproduction, nurture, and childrearing are viewed as closer to nature, their social role is lower on the cultural scale than that of the male. Women are devalued by their tasks and roles, by their exclusion from community functions whence power is derived, and through symbolism. (144)

The critic explains that several conceptions of nature as woman were in vigor during the medieval and early modern periods, some of these discussed in Chapters One and Two. Here, Walter Raleigh likens the Guianan landscape to a virgin in an exhortation to Queen Elizabeth to invest more resources on the area.

To conclude, *Guiana* is a Countrey that hath yet her Maidenhead, never sacket, turned, nor wrought, the face of the earth hath not beene torne, nor the vertue and

⁸⁰ Consider Cabeza de Vaca's observation on sodomy: "En el tiempo que assi estava entre estos, vi una diablura, y es que vi un hombre casado con otro, y estos son unos hombres amariconados impotentes. Y andan tapados como mugeres y hazen offiçio de mugeres, y no tiran arco y llevan muy gran carga. Y entre esto vimos muchos dellos assi amarionados como digo, y son mas membrudos que los otros hombres y más altos; sufren muy grandes cargas" (188).

salt of the soyle spent by manurance, the graves have not beene opened for gold, the mines not boreken with sledges, nor their Images puld down from their temples. It hath never beene entred by any armie of strength, and never conquered or possessed by any Christian Prince. (f.96/196)

As can be seen here cultivation of the earth is paralleled to sexual penetration and since this land has never been cultivated by a Christian prince (meaning that the Spanish had yet to colonize the area) the landscape, like the Queen to which the text was dedicated, remained untouched by man and thus virginal.

But land is not supposed to remain untouched as wilderness is expected to be transformed into nature, so too must woman be civilized. In "Of Idleness" (1572-4), Michel de Montaigne likens his mind to woman and wilderness, both of which are in need of intervention. Writing is the technology through which wilderness will turn to nature as man is the creator of children through the sowing of his seed in woman.

Just as we see that fallow land, if rich and fertile, teems with a hundred thousand kinds of wild and useless weeds, and that to set it to work we must subject it and sow it with certain seeds for our service; and as we see that women, all alone, produce mere shapeless masses and lumps of flesh, but that to create a good and natural offspring they must be made fertile with a different kind of seed; so it is with the minds. (20)

It follows that, for early modern Europeans women in general had a different relationship to nature than men. There was already between the sexes a perceived ecological difference as it is portrayed in texts.

Conclusion

As can be seen in this chapter, lack of writing was taken by the early moderns as a marker for barbarism and wilderness. Observing the Amerindians were devoid of language, Europeans mistakenly presumed them to be devoid of the ability to interpret complex system of signs while also underestimating their capacity to use the signs to

represent the world to themselves and others. Léry and Pané exalted writing in their texts because it allows for purity and truth. In doing so, they privileged history over the fable and thus, as Certeau argues, the social over the natural. Furthermore, the process of objectivization in their narratives conformed Amerindians to already known figures of the cannibal and the Amazon. What these figures underscore is an ecological difference between the Amerindian and the traveler-writer.

CONCLUSION

By focusing on travel narratives to the extended Caribbean, this dissertation has attempted to identify instances of the textual construction of the modern subject and the role of what I term ecological difference in this construction. As I have argued for the analysis of the role of ecological difference in the construction of the self I have tried to contextualize it within European and Amerindian environmental history, European and Amerindian philosophies of nature, the emerging capitalism system that would soon encompass the world, and psychoanalytical and other theories of subject formation. Ecological difference is defined as the expression of cultural difference in terms that have to do with nature. More specifically, the concept is based on Robert Young's argument concerning race in late colonial Latin America in which he argued that racial difference is in essence cultural difference and that cultural difference is most often expressed in terms ranging on the one hand on the concept of civilization and on the other on the concept of barbarism. I have adapted Young's argument to early colonial period and to the Caribbean in specific. As a result I have emphasized the concepts of nature vs. wilderness, for which there is more textual evidence for the sixteenth century instead of civilization/barbarism.

To be sure, this is not a new notion in the sense that other critics have already indentified the way that racial, gender and class difference is oftentimes described in terms that have to do with a perceived distance between the human and the natural element. However, discussions have taken place in different and varied instances throughout scholarship. As such, arguments have remained disjointed and incapable of informing each other. Here, I have attempted to do just that, and in the attempt have

created the term ecological difference to emphasize the fact that, if the human to nature relationship has been commonly used to convey other kinds of difference maybe, it should be considered as a difference in its own right. I believe this to be the most significant contribution this study can hope to make to Colonial and Caribbean Studies. Furthermore, I believe that, though it has yet to be discussed, ecological difference, alongside racial, gender, sexuality and class difference should become another category of analysis in the close study of texts. As a category of analysis ecological difference would allow the reader to explore the representation and the textual construction of the relationship between subject and environment. I believe this to be a much neglected, yet highly influential aspect of the human animal. To study ecological difference within a text would mean to identify moments within the text in which there is an inkling of the subject to environment relation and to analyze the way this relationship aids to construct an identity or subjectivity itself.

In addition to ecological difference, this study also hopes to call attention to the centrality of the New World and the Caribbean in particular, in Old World early modern so-called developments of capitalism and modern subjectivity. This last term has been used to designate the growing emphasis on the individual and on the idea that s/he can be constructed or fashioned. Scholarship has traditionally called this concept of the self modern, because it is born out of Modernity during the late 16th and 17th centuries, the first two hundred years of contact between the Old and the New World. It is crucial to consider, as it has been by a number of scholars, that issues of race and religion, gender (and later and to a lesser degree class) were central to the development of this conception of the self as malleable. In fact, as some critics have argued, discourses that put forth the

subject also crystallize discriminatory and exclusivist conceptualizations of race, religion, gender, sexuality and class. My argument wishes to add that it also does so with relation to ecology. This is what I have called ecology of subjectivization, the ecology of human to nature relation inherent in capitalism and theories of subjectivity. In their critique of the Descartes-I, ecofeminists have also criticized the ecology within the theory of subjectivity. But, in failing to call it ecology, they have failed in ignoring ecology as a difference that dialectally constitutes the self and the other.

My discussion also called attention to Enrique Dussel's argument in that the capitalist world-system has a specific ecology (which he has termed anti-ecological in the sense that it is in detriment of the environment) that is negative in the sense that it does not promote an ecology between subjectivities but one between a subject and an object. I have also included Jean Joseph Goux's take on Jacques Lacan's subjectivity since it includes nature as an important element against which the subject defines him or herself. The last chapter argued that the figure of the cannibal could be seen as emblematic of both the objectivization of the Amerindian that happens dialectically to the subjectivization of the European narrator and of the experience of ecological difference. The cannibal, the discussion reminded us, is most terrifying as it reinserts humans in the food chain, reminding us that humans are also consumable. The figure was also discussed as an empty signifier that was invoked as an ecological marker of difference among the Amerindians and used to justify enslavement and abuse. Here, I would like to call attention to the fact that the cannibal is thoroughly Caribbean. Not only because the term is derived from Carib, but also because its first enunciation was in Christopher Columbus, and the geographical point of reference was the Caribbean tropics. If, as it has

been argued, the cannibal is emblematic of ecological difference in the Caribbean then, what does that mean for colonial ecological practices in the area? What is the difference between the role of ecological difference in the colonial Caribbean and the colonial American continent? What role does ecological difference play in the textual construction of subjectivity of the criollo or the mestizo of the Caribbean colonial period? What role does it play now? These and other questions that address the centrality of nature in Caribbean narrative, and its relation to the role of nature in the narrative of the Latin American continent are yet to be investigated.

Moreover, issues surrounding racial, gender, and religious difference in relation to ecology in early modern literature of the encounter need to be researched more thoroughly and articulated more fully than this dissertation format and time would allow.

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