UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

Faculty of Philosophy

Emma Dahlbacka

The Horse, the Howl and the Hatchet
Nature Representations in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* and *Hatchet*

Master's Thesis

VASA 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

UNIVERSITY OF VAASA
Faculty of Philosophy
Discipline: English Studies
Author: Emma Dahlbacka
Master's Thesis: The Horse, the Howl and the Hatchet
Nature Representations in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* and *Hatchet*
Degree: Master of Arts
Date: 2010
Supervisor: Gerald Porter

ABSTRACT

Avhandlingens mål är att undersöka och jämföra hur naturen gestaltas i Gary Paulsens *Hatchet* (1987) och den engelska översättningen av Astrid Lindgrens *Ronja Rövardotter* (1981), *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*. Detta görs från ett ekokritiskt—företrädesvis djupekologiskt och ekofeministiskt—perspektiv för att belysa vilken attityd gentemot naturen böckerna implicerar. Hypotesen är att de förhåller sig till naturen på olika sätt, eftersom utgångspunkterna är så olika.

Greg Garrards *Ecocriticism* (2004) är basen för den teoretiska delen, medan den ekofeministiska diskussionen är baserad på Val Plumwoods *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993). De svenska termerna har hämtats från Paul Tenngarts *Litteraturteori* (2008). Ekokritik är en litteraturkritisk riktning tillägnad studiet av relationen mellan litteraturen och den fysiska omgivningen, i praktiken ofta hur litteraturen gestaltar människors förhållande till naturen.

Analysen visar att Ronia förhåller sig aktivt till naturen och upplever den med alla sinnen, medan Brian i *Hatchet* till en början är väldigt passiv, då han bara upplevt naturen genom böcker och TV-program och söker information från dessa. Under bokens gång utvecklar han dock ett mer aktivt förhållningssätt, då omständigheterna tvingar honom att lära sig genom att försöka och misslyckas. Vidare analyseras också djur och vildmarken, och hur gestaltningen av dessa reflekterar böckernas implicita förhållningssätt till naturen. Ronia visar prov på hierarkisk dualism i relationen till några vilda hästar, men hon har även djupekologiska ideal om att alla levande varelser har ett värde i sig själva, och naturen är en ständig källa till glädje och tröst. Överlag är naturen väldigt viktig i boken, vilket även återspeglas i språkbruket. I *Hatchet* gestaltas naturen mer ambivalent, då den först och främst är en fiende, men även där småningom bidrar med tröst.

KEYWORDS: Ecocriticism, the Wilderness, Animal Representations, Swedish Children's Literature, U.S. Children's Literature

1 INTRODUCTION

In his book *Last Child in the Woods. Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* (2008: 1), Richard Louv writes that American children of today have a fading physical relationship with nature. When tree-climbing is too dangerous, tree house-building might damage trees and unguarded children might be approached by lunatics, children are likely to stay indoors with their computer games and PlayStations. Reading this, I could not help looking back at my own childhood: playing taxi with my siblings on the bay, shipping each other from rock to rock with a raft; climbing trees; and running around in the backyard. My nostalgic version of my childhood as one where nature was a key component may be romanticised in retrospect, but the fact remains that Louv's description felt very distant from my own experience. Although concerned voices have been raised over the same issues in the Nordic countries as well, studies suggest that children in Finland and Sweden do have a closer relationship with nature than many children in the United States of America (see e.g. Mårtensson 2004).

Interested in literature and children's literature in particular as I am, it was not long before the question of whether this difference in attitude can be seen in literature as well arose. Louv (2008: 368) mentions that people "who care about nature often mention nature books as important childhood influences", while Graham Greene (1951: 13) has observed that "it is only in childhood that books have any deep influence on our lives". The way nature is represented in the books that children read can thus be an important factor in their formation of a way of relating to nature. It might seem counterproductive to read about nature instead of playing outdoors in nature, but as Louv (2008: 166) says, reading "stimulates the ecology of the imagination". Furthermore, he remarks that it is quite possible to combine the two by reading "outside, say, in a tree house" (Louv 2008: 368).

My object in this thesis is to study comparatively how nature is portrayed in one Swedish and one American children's novel, specifically *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* [*Ronia Rövardotter*, 1981] by Astrid Lindgren, and *Hatchet* (1987) by Gary Paulsen, in order to establish what kind of attitude towards nature the protagonists of these books

have. My hypothesis is that the basic stances are different, particularly as they reflect the characters' familiarity with nature. To do this, I will use an ecocritical framework from a primarily deep ecologist and ecofeminist perspective, and pay particular attention to two aspects of the natural world, animals and the wilderness. Analysing how these two tropes are dealt with in the books, in terms of naming, silence and other features, will give a better understanding of the underlying view of nature that forms the value foundation of them. It is my belief that implicit messages can be more powerful than explicit ones, and that literature can influence readers' mindsets, which is why it is important to take a moment to consider what embedded attitudes the books we read communicate. I use the term *representations* of nature to signify that the focus lies on literary constructions rather than actual, physical nature; but the analysis regards these representations, not what they represent. The main title of this thesis alludes to the features mentioned above: the Horse stands for the horses in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*, the relationship with which is the basis of much of the discussion regarding animals in the book; the Howl is what unites the two books, given that both protagonists scream and disrupt or cause silence; and the Hatchet signifies the piece of civilisation that Brian from *Hatchet* carries with him throughout his stay in the wilderness.

This thesis will analyse the primary material from an ecocritical standpoint. I use Greg Garrard's *Ecocriticism* (2004) as the main source for outlining the theory of ecocriticism, while Val Plumwood is the primary theoretical source of the ecofeminist discussion. Ecocriticism is a developing field and the boundaries are still somewhat indistinct, but Garrard (2004: 5) defines it in its widest sense as "the study of the relationship of the human and the non-human, throughout human cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term 'human' itself". As a discipline of literary criticism, ecocriticism deals with representations of the physical environment in literature, and how that environment is portrayed; just as feminist criticism studies literature from a gender-centred viewpoint, "ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies" (Glotfelty 1996: xviii). When it first emerged as a discipline in the mid-eighties, ecocriticism was used primarily in analysing creative non-fiction nature writing, but even though that is still a substantial part of ecocritical analysis work, it can be used beneficially on other texts as well; Gabriel Egan's

ecocritical analyses of Shakespeare's plays is only one example of this. Egan (2006: 34) points out that "the history of politicized criticism teaches us to move from the obvious cases to the not so obvious", and states that criticism should not be confined to the positive representations which it embraces, but concern itself also with the problematised antitheses it seeks to change. In Western tradition, nature is seen as something completely separate from, and more often than not, inferior to what we call culture and human civilisation. The tendency to divide the universe into us and them is highly problematic, be it dualism between humans of different nationalities, races or religions, or between humans and nature. Both protagonists in the primary material for this thesis experience this in a concrete way when the circumstances force them to surrender to nature's powers and they find that working with nature is more productive than working against it.

1.1 Comparative Literature as a Methodology

The methodology used in this thesis is comparative, the main theoretical source for which is Susan Bassnett (1993: 1), who says of the term *comparative literature* that it "involves the study of texts across cultures, that it is interdisciplinary and that it is concerned with patterns of connection in literatures across both time and space". She also quotes Henry Remak, who wrote that in addition to dealing with literature beyond the borders of one single country, comparative literature studies the relationships between literature and other areas of belief and knowledge, such as music, biology, politics or philosophy (Bassnett 1993: 31). This is particularly fitting to the subject of this thesis, as two texts written in different cultures will not only be compared to each other, but also analysed through a theoretical framework that has its roots in ecology. At first glance, it might seem that the term is only another word for common sense, since reading always includes making connections to and associations with other works of literature. As Matthew Arnold said, "No single event, no single literature is adequately comprehended except in relation to other events, to other literatures" (quoted in Bassnett 1993: 1). The history of comparative literature is more complicated than that, however, since the implications of the term have been debated ever since the beginning.

The term was first used as the title of a series of French anthologies at the beginning of the nineteenth century, *Cours de littérature comparée.* Comparative literature had a golden age in the 1950's and 60's, when it was seen as radical and transgressive. By the end of the 70's, it went out of fashion in Western literary circles, but the subject gained ground in Asia. Bassnett (1993: 5) notes, however, that comparatists in China, Japan, India etc. based their ideas not "on any ideal of universalism but on the very aspect of literary study that many western comparatists had sought to deny: the specificity of national literatures". A shift of perspective took place: from starting in Western literature and looking out, comparatists were now scrutinising it from the outside. Both primary texts of this thesis are written in Western societies, and they will therefore be compared with traditional Western stereotypes, such as silent nature and the masculine wilderness, to discover how the myths are treated in the narratives.

Bassnett suggests that people who use comparative literature end up with it, rather than start with it. This enlightens one aspect of the field, which is that the texts and contexts are the focus of the study, rather than the theory itself. The theory is a means by which one can acquire a goal. Bassnett (1993: 1) writes that the journey towards comparative literature sometimes begins with a reader who "may be impelled to follow up what appear to be similarities between texts or authors from different cultural contexts". In the case of this thesis, the journey—to use Bassnett's term—started with an idea to compare examples of literature of two different cultures, American and Northern European, more specifically Swedish, in order to establish similarities and differences in how these texts approach nature. Comparative literature as a method suits this purpose well, since the primary texts of this thesis, *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* and *Hatchet*, were chosen because they are written in different cultural contexts, but share common traits, such as a forest setting and young protagonists who have to use and adapt to nature in order to survive. Although the cultures where the books were written has most likely influenced their implied attitude towards nature, the cultural differences will not be particularly focused upon in this thesis, as it is a close-reading of the books, and any speculations as to how culture has affected their creation would be pure conjecture. Additionally, considering his name and home state, it can be assumed that the American Paulsen has Northern European ancestry, which might influence his cultural heritage.

With cultural contexts thus blurred, the focus of this thesis will be on the books specifically, even though the occasional comment about the larger context they reflect might be made.

Furthermore, this is a qualitative study. One way to deal with the question of whether a close or distant relationship with nature can be seen in children's literature would be to do a quantitative study of a larger bulk of primary material, in order to possibly establish a trend and draw some general conclusions, which is not possible in the study at hand. The quantitative approach would hence seem appropriate for the subject if one wanted to pinpoint a trend in the literary tradition of a country. I have chosen the qualitative approach for different reasons. One is, strictly speaking, limited time and space: a quantitative study would demand efforts far beyond the limits of a master's thesis. But there are other factors that encourage a qualitative reading as well. For one thing, even if a trend is established, what the individual child reads is largely up to chance and may not reflect the trend of a literary tradition as such, making the trend somewhat irrelevant. Secondly, the qualitative approach allows for an opportunity to look below the surface. A book about teenagers in inner-city New York may seem like a bad example of nature relations, but may very well hide a positive representation of nature in an urban setting. Just because Ronia lives her life in a natural setting does not immediately make the book a positive representation of nature; Brian from *Hatchet* may be intimidated by the forest location he lands in, but the book may still project a constructive relationship to nature. These are things that need a closer reading to be disclosed, making a qualitative approach suitable for this project.

In practice, the qualitative method was first involved in the selection of primary material. Bo Eneroth (1984: 169) writes that the quantitative method strives to make a selection which is representative and mirrors the population, while the qualitative method intends to gain some insight into a phenomenon. In order to be able to handle the material and gain that insight, the qualitative analysis favours a relatively small selection of primary material. In the case of this thesis, this meant choosing only two books for an in-depth analysis. These books will be presented more closely in the following subsections.

1.2 *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*

Astrid Lindgren (1907–2002) is the most prolific Swedish writer of children's fiction and "one of the best-known children's writers in the world" (Nikolajeva 2007: 1). She is one of the twenty authors who have the longest entries in the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Children's Literature* (2006), "which, given the Anglo-American bias of this publication, is the indisputable acknowledgment of her universal reputation" (Nikolajeva 2007: 1). Counting picture books and compilations of short stories, her collected works comprise over 100 books, songs and plays not included. Lindgren debuted in 1944 with the more classic girl's book *Britt-Mari lättar sitt hjärta* [Britt-Mari unburdens her mind] (not translated), but her breakthrough came with the book published the following year, *Pippi Långstrump* (the translation *Pippi Longstocking* came out in 1950). The book was highly controversial because of the protagonist's lack of respect for authorities, but quickly became popular among children, and Pippi is still one of the most epitomic characters of Swedish children's literature. Astrid Lindgren went on to publish other popular works such as *Mio, My Son* [*Mio, Min Mio*, 1954], *Karlson on the roof* [*Lillebror och Karlsson på taket*, 1955], *Emil in Lönneberga* [*Emil i Lönneberga*, 1963] and *The Brothers Lionheart* [*Bröderna Lejonhjärta*, 1973]. *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* was Lindgren's last full-length book to be published, except for the original manuscript of Pippi Longstocking, *Ur-Pippi*, which was published posthumously in 2007. (Astridlindgren.se 2009)

Ronja Rövardotter was first published in Swedish in 1981. It was translated into English by Patricia Crampton and came out in the United Kingdom as *The Robber's Daughter* in 1983, and two years later in the United States as *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*. This thesis will use the latter version for analysis. The book can be seen as belonging to many different genres; Maria Nikolajeva (1996: 19–20) writes that it is related to the robber novel tradition and the adventure story but that it is also a typical fairy tale, fantasy, a historical novel, a love story, a modern psychological family story and a *Bildungsroman*. In addition to these genres, it could also be called a wilderness text, which is naturally one of the aspects which will be of most importance for the purpose of this thesis.

The novel tells the story of Ronia from the stormy night when she was born until she is about twelve years old. She lives in a fort in a forest, together with her mother Lovis, her father Matt the Robber Chieftain and his twelve robbers. The book tells how Ronia learns to get to know the forest around her, with its creatures and natural phenomena, as well as her shifting relationship to Birk, son of the rival robber chieftain. Together they overcome the prejudices and stereotypes of their fathers and their forefathers before them. The novel is set in a forest, and nature plays a very substantial part in the book, first and foremost as a source of joy, but also as a means of livelihood, a provider of adventures and an enemy. Astrid Lindgren herself said that when she grew up, nature was more important to her than the people around her: "the fields and meadows where the animals grazed, the trees you could climb, the river and the lakes where you could swim, and the big forest where you could picture trolls and fairies behind every mossy rock" (Björk & Eriksson 2007: 64, my translation). This attitude comes across in most of her literary works; her protagonists have animal companions (*Pippi Longstocking* [*Pippi Långstrump,* 1945]; *Emil and his clever pig* [*Än lever Emil i Lönneberga,* 1970]; *Seacrow Island* [*Vi på Saltkråkan,* 1964]), sleep in the forest and climb mountains (*Happy Times in Noisy Village* [*Bara roligt i Bullerbyn,* 1952]) and hang flapjacks in the trees, pretending to be a lamb grazing in the forest (*The Children on Troublemaker Street* [*Barnen på Bråkmakargatan,* 1958]).

Because Astrid Lindgren is such an epitome of Swedish children's literature, it is hard to establish at what age children in fact encounter characters such as Ronia. Like many other popular characters of fiction, Lindgren's characters have outgrown the books themselves and it is now difficult to draw a line between the books and everything around them. Children are likely to come across Ronia not only through the book, but through the 1984 film version, retellings, songs and miscellaneous commercial products. It is thus unknown at what age children in actuality read *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*, but in many aspects the book follows the children's book tradition, for instance by having a child protagonist and a happy ending. The happy ending is commonly associated with traditional children's literature, although Maria Nikolajeva (1996: 34) writes that it is a relative term, and dependent on genre conventions, historical and cultural differences; a child who dies at the end of a story would not be

seen as a happy ending today, while 19th century moralising stories saw it as the child being reunited with God, thereby achieving ultimate happiness. However, few would contest *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* having a happy ending: the child is reconciled with her father, the two robber chieftains and arch enemies make peace, the robbers eventually stop stealing, and if anyone wonders how they will make their living in the future, Ronia conveniently happens to find out the whereabouts of a silver mine.

Ronia the Robber's Daughter naturally lends itself to an ecocritical analysis by the fact that the whole story is located in a forest setting and the woods play a large part in Ronia's and the other robbers' lives, as a place to live, a place to hunt and a place to earn their livelihood. Jørgen Gaare and Øystein Sjaastad (2004: 78) call the book Astrid Lindgren's great love song to nature, which is fitting, considering that nature is present in the book almost as its own character. It is always there, but because the human beings' lives so greatly depend on it, there is never a question of disregarding nature and taking it for granted; instead, they have the greatest respect for it and their lives are shaped by it.

1.3 *Hatchet*

Gary Paulsen is a very productive American author of children's literature and young adult fiction. He was born in Minnesota in 1939 and published his first book, called *The Special War*, in 1966. According to his publisher's website, Paulsen has written over 175 books, as well as articles and short stories, and is still publishing books ("Gary Paulsen" 2009). *Hatchet* and two other of his works, *Dogsong* (1985) and *The Winter Room* (1989), were Newbery Honor Books. Since 1922, the Newbery Medal is given annually by the American Library Association to the author of the most notable contribution to American children's literature, making it the oldest children's literature award in the world.

Hatchet was first published in 1987 and can be classified as an adventure story, a Robinsonade and a coming-of-age novel. The book tells the story of the 13-year old

Brian Robeson, who is on his way to Canada to visit his father when the plane crashes somewhere in the middle of the secluded forest. With nothing but a hatchet and the clothes on his body, Brian has to survive alone in the wilderness for 54 days before he is found and can return to civilisation. Unfamiliar with a lifestyle in such an environment, the boy has to work out crucial aspects of survival such as how to get food, build shelter and light a fire. After *Hatchet* gained popularity, readers sent letters to Paulsen complaining that Brian's story was never quite finished. As a result, Paulsen wrote an alternative-ending sequel called *Brian's Winter* (1996), as well as four other books in the Brian saga. This thesis will deal only with the first book.

Paulsen includes natural settings and adventures in many of his books; perhaps understandably so, as he grew up in a secluded forest in Minnesota, has participated in a 1,180-mile Alaskan dog sled race twice and has worked both as a sailor and as a farm hand. In response to readers' questions, Gary Paulsen has written a book called *Guts. The True Stories Behind* Hatchet *and the Brian Books* (2001), in which he relates real life experiences that he has built on when writing *Hatchet* and the other books about Brian Robeson. From his stories, it is clear that nature plays a great part in his life in very diverse ways. Relating a plane incident, he illustrates very clearly how our attitude towards nature can change in an instant:

> I was just musing about how much I truly loved the woods, the wildness of it, when the engine stopped. […] No longer was the forest sliding by beneath us wonderful scenery; it had become a place that would try to wreck the plane, try to freeze us, try to starve us, try to end us. (Paulsen 2001: 13)

Paulsen (2001: 13) draws from this the very notion which more than anything else shapes the Western attitude to nature, namely that we need to be in control, superior, or nature is seen as a threat: "I had spent a lot of time in the bush but it was always at my own behest, when I wanted to be there and in the condition I wanted to be in". He explicitly uses his experiences with nature in his literary works and through them portrays a version of nature that is nuanced, diverse and ever-changing.

Judging by a method that is sometimes used when it comes to children's literature, the age of the protagonist, *Hatchet* perhaps has a slightly older target audience than *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*. Drawing the line between children's books and young adult books is never easy, but some choose to avoid the difficulty completely by counting both as children's literature; Nikolajeva (1996: 9) suggests that children's literature comprises works of literature written for, published for and marketed to children, which, following the United Nations definition, means human beings of ages 0-18 years. However, although young adult novels and children's books have much in common, there are also some quite significant differences between the two, the role of the parents being one. In children's literature, the parents are often removed in order for the adventure to take place; even though there is often a character that fills the role *in loco parentis*, part of the children's literature tradition involves a carnivalesque inverting of power structures, temporarily giving the protagonist child freedom and power. Roberta Seelinger Trites (2001: 473) claims that "the issue of power" is actually the main difference between children's and young adult fiction: to grow, the adolescent must find their place in power hierarchies by learning to negotiate institutional power, balance their parents' power with their own and realise "what portion of power they wield because of and despite such biological imperatives as sex and death". In practice, this means that each of these three issues appear more frequently in young adult novels; and parents and other authority figures are often present as part of the conflict in the book. The parents in the young adult novel are therefore regularly more prominent—albeit more problematic—than in the children's book.

Göte Klingberg (1968: 169) writes that young adult novels are often more realistic than children's books, and mentions relationships between youths and their divorced parents as one example. He continues that one way of defining the young adult novel is that it deals with young adults' problems of adjusting to society, which includes the inevitable process of separation from their parents (Klingberg 1968: 186). Sharon Creech's *Walk Two Moons* (1994) is one example of a young protagonist who seeks to understand her dead mother; in Cynthia Voigt's *When She Hollers* (1994), the father is too present, as a sexual abuser of the protagonist. The later example is one of Sonja Svensson's (1999: 110–111), who writes that abusive and neglecting adults feature abundantly in

contemporary young adult fiction. Judging *Hatchet* by these standards, it follows the children's literature tradition more than young adult fiction in that Brian is removed from his parents, who do not appear in the book as acting characters at all. At the beginning, it does seem that the parents' divorce is going to be an issue in the book, but once in the forest, Brian has to focus on other things.

1.4 Children's Literature and Ecocriticism

Although ecocriticism is a developing field which is spreading among disciplines, there has so far been only a limited amount of research combining it with children's literature. The compilation *Wild Things. Children's Culture and Ecocriticism* (2004), edited by Sidney I. Dobrin and Kenneth B. Kidd (2004: 3), was, according to the editors themselves "the first book-length project" to address the "intersection(s)" of the two fields. It contains ecocritical readings of different aspects of children's culture, ranging from literature by J. M. Barrie, Beatrix Potter and Philip Pullman to nature magazines, songs and TV-shows. In the introduction, the editors list other efforts to bring the fields together, such as special issues of the *American Nature Writing Newsletter, Children's Literature Quarterly* and *The Lion and the Unicorn* (Dobrin & Kidd 2004: 3–4). Dobrin and Kidd (2004: 4) also state that "classic children's literature has long been preoccupied with natural history, ecology, and human-animal interaction", making a combination of children's literature and ecocriticism natural.

If little has been written in terms of combining ecocriticism with the whole field of children's literature, it follows that ecocritical research into the primary works of this thesis is close to non-existent. There are at least a few articles on the subject, however. In the 2007 Astrid Lindgren-themed issue of *Barnboken. Journal of Children's Literature Research,* Roni Natov features with an article called "Pippi and Ronia. Astrid Lindgren's light and dark pastoral". While not explicitly discussing the stories in ecocritical terms, she nevertheless examines them as versions of pastoral, a frequently used trope of ecocriticism, and talks about the characters' relationship to the nature and animals around them. In the article, Natov (2007: 92) reads *Pippi Longstocking* and

Ronia, the Robber's Daughter as pastoral stories, "drawing away from the worldly world in order to escape it and, by implication, to challenge it". She claims that while "Pippi is pastoral itself, the green world that never darkens, eternal freedom and childness", Ronia represents "the innocence that disrupts the old order" and challenges "the forces of denial that govern the robber world" (Natov 2007: 93). As the heroine of a dark pastoral, Ronia "never loses her love of nature, both the light and dark sides" (Natov 2007: 93).

In the same issue, David Rudd (2007: 38–39, original italics) discusses animals—not just "the animal *per se*, but […] the figurative use of the term 'animal'"—in an article called "The animal figure in Astrid Lindgren's work". He begins with bringing up Astrid Lindgren's campaign for animal rights, eventually leading to the 1988 "'Lex Lindgren', for the more humane treatment of animals" and continues by discussing the way she confounds categories in order to question "the whole way we conceptualise animal and human" (Rudd 2007: 38). Rudd illustrates his point with an example from *The Children of Noisy Village* [*Barnen i Bullerbyn*, 1962], where the narrator Lisa talks about her neighbours, who do not have a dog, but they do have a grandfather—thereby implying that dogs and grandfathers are practically two versions of the same thing. He primarily discusses the animal figures in *Pippi Longstocking*, but also mentions that the characters in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* is described in animal terms—a point which will be discussed further in section 5.5.

Ecocritical work—or indeed literary criticism overall—on *Hatchet* is scarce, but at the 2008 Children's Literature Association Conference at Illinois State University, Mary Jeanette Moran read a paper called "Is Nature Natural?: Negotiating Normality in Gary Paulsen's *Hatchet*". In it, she discusses several aspects of normality in the novel: how it "naturalizes male gender roles even as it redefines the normality of everyday life for its protagonist and the normality of simplistic language in literature written for children" (Moran 2008: 1). She uses Brian's attitude towards food as an example of redefining normality: what he initially sees as normal—having groceries readily available in the refrigerator, to be used whenever desired—has masked the amount of work needed to turn plants and animals into food, which he comes to realise is enormous. However,

Moran (2008: 5) claims, his reaction to the artificial food he finds in the survival pack "indicates why it is so hard for people to change the way they think about eating and, more generally, to modify an accepted version of normality". She also remarks that, although *Hatchet* is a Newbery Honor book and has been "incredibly well-received by young readers, especially boys" (Moran 2008: 8), there has been virtually no literary critical work written on the novel.

Having given an overview of the primary material and the work that has previously been done on the subject, it is now time to shift the focus to the theoretical basis of this thesis. Chapter two will give an outline of what ecocriticism and the ecocritical positions deep ecology and ecofeminism stand for as well as discuss some particular issues that are problematic from these viewpoints. It will also present critique of the field. In chapter three, animals and the wilderness will be addressed both from a general ecocritical perspective and in terms of their application to children's literature. The thesis will then move on to the analysis part, which starts with a discussion of the protagonists' attitude to nature, separately and contrastively, in chapter four. Chapter five and six will deal with representations of animals and the wilderness in the novels. Finally, chapter seven will present the findings and draw conclusions thereof.

2 AN OVERVIEW OF ECOCRITICISM

Cheryll Glotfelty (1996: xviii) defines ecocriticism as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment”. The coinage of the term is commonly attributed to William Rueckert (1996: 107), who used it in 1978 to mean “the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature”. Glotfelty (1996: xix) writes that as “a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on land; as a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between the human and the nonhuman”. Ecocriticism thus does not solely deal with literary representations of reality, but also, to varying degrees, with the reality that literature is created in and reflects. This fact can be attributed to its roots in environmentalism, the modern version of which is generally seen to have begun with Rachel Carson’s book *Silent Spring* (1962). Some people, such as Richard Kerridge (quoted in Garrard 2004: 4) go further in their definition, saying that the “ecocritic wants to track environmental ideas and representations” and that “ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis”. Even if one prefers the less moralising definition of Glotfelty, ecocritics generally have a political agenda, which is also apparent in positions such as ecomarxists and ecofeminists.

As a discipline of literary criticism, ecocriticism is relatively young. Glotfelty (1996: xv) writes that in an “authoritative guide to contemporary literary studies” published in 1992, there was no mention of an ecological approach to literature. This does not mean there were no scholars who were interested in such an approach, or who wrote from a similar perspective, but that there was no overarching theory that joined them. Glotfelty (1996: xvi) continues that literary and cultural scholars developed “ecologically informed criticism and theory since the seventies”, but their studies were categorised into a range of different groupings, including American Studies, human ecology, science and literature and so on. The first collaborative projects establishing a field of environmental literary studies were undertaken in the mid-eighties, continuing to grow during the nineties. In 1990, the first academic position in Literature and the Environment was created at the University of Nevada, Reno; in 1992, the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) was formed; in 1993, the journal

ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment was founded, and "ecological literary study had emerged as a recognizable critical school". (Glotfelty 1996: xvi–xviii) Although the field is now joined under a collective term, there is a wide range of different ecocritical positions, reflecting the diverse academic background of the discipline. Deep ecology and ecofeminism are two positions that are relevant to this thesis, as both the question of intrinsic value of living things, and stereotypical gender roles of wilderness texts are evident in the primary material; and they will therefore be presented more thoroughly in the following section.

2.1 Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism

Ecocritics have many different approaches to understanding environmental issues, engaging distinct "literary or cultural affinities and aversions" (Garrard 2004: 16). Garrard (2004: 16–32) lists a number of different positions on which ecocritics base their arguments. These include *cornucopia*, strictly speaking not an environmentalist position at all, but claiming that environmental threats are illusory or exaggerated, and only valuing nature in terms of its usefulness to us; *environmentalism*, which Garrard defines as being concerned with things like global warming and pollution, but reluctant to alter one's lifestyle to achieve a change; *social ecology* and *eco-marxism*, claiming environmental problems stem from unequal hierarchical systems among humans; *Heideggerian ecophilosophy*, drawing on philosopher Martin Heidegger's critique of industrial modernity and differentiating between being and merely existing; *deep ecology* and *ecofeminism*. Because the theoretical framework used in this thesis is primarily based in deep ecology and ecofeminism, it is worth taking a closer look at these two positions.

Deep ecology is the most influential position outside academia, and "the explicit or implicit perspective" of most ecocritics, according to Garrard (2004: 20). One of the key points of deep ecology, as set out by Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss, is that human and non-human life has intrinsic value, independent of its usefulness to human gains. Deep ecologists demand a shift from anthropocentric to ecocentric value systems,

criticising the sharp dualism between humans and nature present in Western culture. This ecocentrism could be criticised for being misanthropic, but different people have different levels of ecocentrism, and few are hardcore ecocentrists when put to the test. Arne Næss suggests that "'vital' human needs" trump the good of other beings or things, "thus ruling out difficult conflicts between the interests of humans and the interests of a man-eating tiger or a bubonic plague bacillus". (Garrard 2004: 21–22) This can be compared to Edward O. Wilson's (2002: 133) division of responses to the question of whether other species have undeniable rights; from anthropocentrism, claiming that only that which affects humanity is important; via pathocentrism, extending intrinsic rights to include "intelligent animals for whom we can legitimately feel empathy"; to biocentrism, admitting to all organisms at least the right to live. He continues that even though these might seem mutually exclusive, they often coincide; like Næss, Wilson (2002: 133) suggests that "in life-or-death conflict", the priority is, "first humanity, next intelligent animals, then other forms of life".

Ecofeminists, then, claim that environmental problems not only stem from anthropocentrism, which assumes superiority for humanity over nature, but also from androcentrism, which assumes male superiority over women. Not only are these two assumed superiorities based on the same dualistic logic, but women and nature have throughout Western history often been associated, suggesting "common cause between feminists and ecologists" (Garrard 2004: 23). In Karen J. Warren's (1996: xv) words, the ecofeminist claim "is that language which so feminizes nature and naturalizes women describes, reflects, and perpetuates the domination and inferiorization of both" in neglecting to see or understand the cultural analogy of these two dominations. Talking about nature in feminine terms is something that has been done for a long time—you need only think of a concept such as 'Mother Earth'—and although that in itself is a point of discussion, the main problem arises when nature is also antagonised and conceptualised in terms of humanity's superiority to it. The hierarchical structure extends not only to concern human and non-human, but also man and woman, when nature and women are seen as belonging to one and the same inferior category: the interests of nature and women alike can be shrugged off as not important.

One could potentially choose to see the bond between women and nature as something real, but positive; this reading is somewhat problematic, however. One risk in trying to argue a closer relationship—albeit a positive one—between women and nature is simultaneously attributing to all women 'natural' virtues such as nurturance. Val Plumwood (1993: 9) claims that this "replaces the 'angel in the house' version of women by the 'angel in the ecosystem' version", since all women are not "empathic, nurturant and co-operative" and "do not necessarily treat other women as sisters or the earth as a mother; women are capable of conflict, of domination and […] of violence". The problem is, again, one of conceptualising things dualistically and too simplistically, thereby excluding other traits which may be important. While the distinction is quite clear in theory, it might be harder to pinpoint when it comes to actual examples in real life. The following subsection will try to shed further light on what constitutes a problematic dualism, discuss what could then be seen as positive or negative representations of nature, and finally briefly mention a few arguments against ecocriticism.

2.2 Hierarchical Dualism and Other Issues

A concept very often criticised by ecocritics is that of dualism. Val Plumwood (1993: 43) writes that western thought is structured around contrasting pairs, such as culture/nature, male/female, human/non-human and self/other. There is nothing inherently wrong with differentiating between two things; it would be very hard not to. However, the problem arises when arbitrary assumptions and hierarchical concepts are entered into the equation. According to Plumwood (1993: 47), a mere distinction between things becomes a dualistic construction when "the qualities (actual or supposed), the culture, the values and the areas of life associated with the dualised other are systematically and pervasively constructed and depicted as inferior". The process of domination then becomes a part of the culture and the dualism is internalised both in the 'inferior' and the 'superior'. Plumwood (1993: 48–55) further lists a number of features characteristic of dualism:

1. *Backgrounding* (denial)

   The master tries to deny dependency on the slave, while simultaneously using the other's services. Backgrounding means defining oneself against an inferiorised Other; "it is the slave who makes the master a master" (Plumwood 1993: 48).

2. *Radical exclusion* (hyperseparation)

   The master claims higher capabilities; the slave is forced to become submissive, thereby proving him- or herself to be naturally enslaved.

3. *Incorporation* (relational definition)

   The slave is defined only as that which is of use to the master, and not encountered as an independent other.

4. *Instrumentalism* (objectification)

   The slave is conceived of as an instrument of the master's will.

5. *Homogenisation* (stereotyping)

   All slaves are seen as homogeneous; differences are ignored.

Since the concept of dualism primarily builds upon differences that are already existing, not creating them, the solution to the problem is not to eliminate the boundaries or use a merging strategy, although this might seem like a logical (if seldom possible) thing to do. Instead, Plumwood (1993: 60) writes: "Dismantling a dualism based on difference requires the reconstruction of relationship and identity in terms of a non-hierarchical concept of difference". This includes (1) recognising what has been backgrounded and acknowledging dependency, (2) "reclaiming the denied area of overlap", (3) retrieving "positive independent sources of identity", (4) admitting that the other has value and needs independent of others and (5) acknowledging the diversity and complexity of the other. (Plumwood 1993: 59-60)

Culture/nature is one dichotomy which has been thoroughly discussed among ecocritics of all positions. Paul Tenngart (2008: 156) writes that if we see humanity as part of nature, the relation between nature and culture must be rethought and they should not be seen as sharply separate, but as hybrids. Nature cannot be seen as completely detached from human influence, since gardens, farmlands and parks all are examples of natural culture or acculturated nature (Tenngart 2008: 156). Additionally, he remarks that,

assuming humankind is to blame for global warming, the entire Earth and all natural phenomena are directly affected by human civilisation (Tenngart 2008: 156). This only stresses the point that boundaries are often based on arbitrary cultural and societal constructions, rather than inherent differences.

This thesis will occasionally use the terms *positive* and *negative representations* of nature. Such value-charged terms of course demand a definition and explanation. In this thesis, the term *positive representation* refers to a deep ecologist way of portraying nature as having intrinsic value, while *negative representation*s only show nature in a cornucopian, extractive view, as something that only has value insofar as it is useful to us human beings. While negative representations tend to show nature very simplistically, whether it be as a frightening place, beautiful landscape or producer of wood, positive representations allow nature to be several things at once and do not reduce it to only one aspect. Negative representations show a dualistic version of the relationship between nature and human beings, which, using Plumwood's vocabulary as presented above, means that nature is defined as that which humans are not (backgrounding); it is seen as something inferior which we must rule over (radical exclusion); it is defined only in terms of what it can provide (incorporation); it exists only as a means to our ends (instrumentalism) and it is, as stated above, only seen as for example a frightening location (homogenisation). Positive representations, then, show nature and humans as mutually dependent upon each other and having things in common; and nature as having positive traits, value in itself and being diverse and complex.

In children's literature in particular, right and wrong are often presented as diametrical opposites, where the two are sharply distinct from each other and seldom mix. However, domination, cruelty and lack of respect are all parts of nature, and there is no absolute line between what is good and what is evil. As Annie Dillard (1974: 179) says, "there is no right and wrong in nature; right and wrong is a human concept". Is it not then possible to say that trying to preserve nature and override domination is, in fact, unnatural? That may be. However, the ones who ultimately suffer if we do not are us

humans. Richard Louv (2005: 296) quotes a friend of his, trying to teach his son not to romanticise nature:

> Forests and deserts, I discovered to my vast confusion, were nothing like the Garden of Eden. Wild things killed wild things, and there was no justice in the way this happened. […] it's people, not nature, who create morality, values, ethics—and even the idea that nature itself is something worth preserving. We choose to be shepherds and stewards, or we don't. We will live wisely—preserving water and air and everything else intrinsic to the equations we're only beginning to understand—or we won't, in which case Nature will fill the vacuum we leave.

The idea here is that nature has existed long before humans came along, and would continue existing and adapting even if we were not here. Admitting the intrinsic value of nature and respecting it is a selfish thing to do, as well as an unselfish one, because, from an ecological perspective, humans have no claim to superiority. Christopher Manes (1996: 22–23) writes that, even though evolutionary theory as a cultural phenomenon has been used to justify human domination of nature, Charles Darwin's findings revealed that "in the observation of nature there exists not one scrap of evidence that humans are superior to or even more interesting than, say, lichen". On the contrary, as far as scientists can tell, "evolution has no goal"—and if there happens to be one, we cannot discern it "and at the very least it does not seem to be us" (Manes 1996: 22). Similar to the Louv quote above, Manes (1996: 24) writes that if fungi went extinct, it would have a catastrophic effect on the rest of the biosphere; but the disappearance of humanity would go virtually unnoticed by most life forms on Earth. One can of course find other grounds to base human superiority on—art, speech, philosophy, opposable thumbs—but ecologically speaking, all life forms are equal.

Essential to ecology, and in extension ecocriticism, is the importance of *locus*, place—it is a discipline firmly rooted in the soil of the earth. Neil Evernden (1996: 99, original italics) writes that there are many kinds of possible relationships between humanity and nature, but "the only one that is really relevant to a discussion of man [*sic*] and environment is *the relation of self to setting*". The perception of self in a small male fish who attacks much larger enemies during the breeding season, because its sense of self

seems to have expanded to include his whole territory, is very different from the 'normal' version that suggests a being is only as big as its skin, and from the post-Descartian version that suggests that we are "not a part of an environment, we are not even part of a *body*", but some concentrated, metaphysical self (Evernden 1996: 97–98, original italics). In this view, "one who looks on the world as simply a set of resources to be utilized is not thinking of it as an environment at all" (Evernden 1996: 99). This person is a tourist who can only grasp the superficialities of a place, while a resident is "part of the place, just as the fish is a part of the territory" (Evernden 1996: 99). Another person who has expressed similar views is Wes Jackson, founder of an organisation called the Land Institute, which is dedicated to sustainable agriculture. In his book, *Becoming Native to This Place* (1994), he stresses the importance of feeling connected to the land and being native to a place, in order to solve our environmental problems. He is not advocating a return to an old, simplified way of living, but an existence that is eco-centred and place-centred. In order to profoundly connect with nature and the land, we need to be at home there—which is signalled by the very word *ecology*, derived from Greek *oikos*, meaning house, dwelling place or habitation (Tenngart 2008: 158).

This section has discussed some of the concepts that have been discussed to great length among ecocritics and can be called problematic. Among these are hierarchical dualism and place in a physical, realistic way as well as a more metaphorical reading. Problematic specifically for this thesis are also the concepts of positive and negative representations of nature. Ecocritics point out the problems with these issues, but ecocriticism itself is also debated for various reasons, some of which are discussed briefly in the following subsection.

2.3 Critique of Ecocriticism

Will Slocombe writes that ecocritics such as Denys Trussell have condemned postmodernism and post-structuralism for "their abandonment of the real", but argues that ecocriticism shares the same problem (Slocombe 2005: 493). Slocombe

acknowledges that ecocriticism is useful as it returns our focus to place rather than space, grounding us in material reality, in analogy with SueEllen Campbell (1996: 133), who says that theory "sees everything as textuality", while "ecology insists that we pay attention not to the way things have meaning for us, but to the way the rest of the world—the nonhuman part—exists apart from us and our languages". The trouble with ecocriticism, according to Slocombe (2005: 504), is that it tries to concern itself with 'the real', yet does it through language, which is always metaphorical and separate from reality. Kate Soper (1995: 25) divides ideas of nature into three different versions: the metaphysical, the realist and the lay/surface concept. The metaphysical idea of nature, she writes, is "the concept through which humanity thinks its difference and specificity […] the concept of the non-human" (Soper 1995: 25). The term *nature* used as a realist concept refers to the physical world, whose laws we must live by. The lay or surface concept of nature, meanwhile, is what we generally mean in everyday use of the word nature: "the 'natural' as opposed to the urban or industrial environment ('landscape', 'wilderness', 'countryside', 'rurality'), animals, domestic and wild, the physical body in space and raw materials" (Soper 1995: 25). The trouble is to know which of these nature versions is being discussed and being able to separate the real from the metaphorical and so on.

In an attempt to lay down some basic principles of ecocriticism, William Howarth (1996: 69) also criticises certain aspects of the field. He writes that ecocriticism can only be adversarial and not self-scrutinising if "its political agenda insists on an Us-Them dichotomy". Ecocriticism "faces resistance in current literary studies" he says, primarily because of the difficulty of connecting science and literature, two disciplines that "have grown widely apart" (Howarth 1996: 76). Although humanists speak of fields, maps and frontiers, "literature dwells Nowhere"; and combining this with something as place-based as ecology seems illogical to many people (ibid. 77). This can be compared with Campbell (1996: 130), who discusses the similarities between theory and ecology, and writes that the comparison becomes somewhat complicated as theorists claim that we create all meaning, there "are no texts without readers"; while ecologists stress the fact that "we do not create the land itself or its other inhabitants". This way of looking at it does make the gap between literary criticism and ecology seem

unbridgeable, but perhaps a change of point of view is the only thing that is needed to simplify the combination.

Neil Evernden (1996: 93) writes that ecology may be a science, but in stressing inter-relatedness and denying the subject-object relationship that most science is founded upon, it "undermines not only the growth addict and the chronic developer, but science itself". He illustrates with several examples how all living things are inter-related—not just causally connected, but actually related on a molecular level. Literature, one could claim, is built the same way: books are written by different authors and discuss different things, but they are all made up of words and characters, and they are all connected, through basic morphemes and graphemes, and the intertextuality that unites them. As Rueckert (1996: 108) writes, works of literature "are a verbal equivalent of fossil fuel (stored energy), but they are a renewable source of energy, coming, as they do, from those ever generative twin matrices, language and imagination". The transference of certain aspects of ecology—like the denial of the subject-object relationship Evernden mentions—to literature is thus perhaps not so illogical. Returning to the discussion of place a few paragraphs earlier, Evernden (1996: 102) concludes that the "right to place, to know where one is from, is a right that is difficult to argue with the tools of the scientist". According to him, mixing the arts and humanities with science is not only logical, but crucial, if one wants to get to the "underlying roots of the environmental crisis rather than simply its physical manifestation" (Evernden 1996: 102). Ultimately, he writes, there "is no such thing as an individual, only an individual-in-context, individual as a component of place, defined by place" (Evernden 1996: 103). Seen from this point of view, saying that science and literary criticism cannot logically be combined is only a reflection of an ingrained inside-the-box way of thinking, and ecocriticism is an attempt to bridge the gap between the two disciplines.

Paul Tenngart (2008: 159) writes that ecocriticism has been criticised as too narrow[1], since most primary texts that have been studied belong to the nature writing genre,

[1] See e.g. Steven Rosendale in *The Greening of Literary Scholarship: Literature, Theory, and the Environment.* Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002; Karla Armbruster and Kathleen R. Wallace in *Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism.* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001.

already preoccupied with the subject of nature and more often than not characterised by an environmental undertone. However, as the discipline has developed, the area of primary material has been expanded, and this very thesis would not exist if ecocriticism was limited to nature writing only. Tenngart (2008: 159) also says that ecocritics have been accused of having an overly romantic, nostalgic and conservative view of the world, and advocating a turning back of the clock and return to a less developed society. Although this in some cases is a perfectly relevant critique, there are also those that, like Harold Fromm (1996: 33-34), co-editor of one of the key works of ecocriticism, explicitly assures us that they are not interested in a "return to Nature":

> The reader should be assured that I am not engaged in presenting these observations in an effort to make the familiar attack on "technology." I have no personal objections to meat in plastic containers or flush toilets and air conditioning. In fact, I like them very much. I have no desire to hunt animals, to chop down trees for firewood, to use an outhouse, or to have smallpox. […] I would much prefer to listen to music or work in the garden than to struggle for survival. […] What I am trying to do is to present a picture of man's [*sic*] current relation to Nature.

In short, criticising certain aspects of modern day civilisation does not necessarily exclude that one can appreciate other things about it—or even the same things, only done in a different way. Although it sometimes may seem that ecocriticism advocates a return to a pre-industrialised time, few ecocritics would in fact declare themselves supporters of such a scheme. It might be of relevance here to point out that one of the primary works of this thesis, *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter,* is written in a culture where many people indeed annually retreat from civilisation to summer cottages without flush toilets and air conditioning. Few live in such circumstances all year round, however.

This chapter has provided an overview of what ecocriticism is, its history, and how it has evolved. Hierarchical dualism and the importance of place were discussed as examples of issues that ecocritics have dealt with. A few different ecocritical positions were then introduced, leading up to a more in-depth presentation of deep ecology and ecofeminism, in which the main theoretical framework of this thesis has its roots.

Finally, critiques of ecocriticism were also presented. The following chapter will continue outlining ecocriticism by discussing several aspects of how animals and the wilderness have been treated in literature and how ecocritics have analysed these tropes.

3 TROPES OF ECOCRITICISM

In his book *Ecocriticism*, Greg Garrard goes through a few different tropes and concepts which in one way or another have been problematic for ecocritics; these being pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, animals and the earth. This thesis will focus especially on two of these, namely animals and the wilderness, in terms of their conceptualisation and representation in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* and *Hatchet*. The following sections will outline different aspects of these tropes, both from an ecocritical perspective as they are presented by Garrard and others, and more generally as seen in children's literature. Both animals and the wilderness are namely frequently a part of traditional children's literature, as will be seen.

3.1 Representations of Animals

Garrard (2004: 136) writes that the study of relationships between humans and animals in the humanities is "split between philosophical consideration of animal rights and cultural analysis of the representation of animals". The animal rights phenomenon was started primarily by Peter Singer's book *Animal Liberation* (1975), in which he draws on philosopher Jeremy Bentham's claim that the capacity to feel pain makes a being worth moral consideration, suggesting that cruelty to animals was analogous to slavery (Garrard 2004: 136). In conflict with animal liberationists, who base their argument on pathos, environmentalists take their stance in ethos, arguing not for the individual organism but the environment as a whole. Garrard (2004: 139–140) illuminates the difference by taking hunting as an example: liberationists are generally against it, whereas environmentalists see hunting as necessary when a local environment as a whole is threatened. Within the "rhetoric of animality" (Steve Baker's term, quoted in Garrard 2004: 140), liberationists typically study the place of domestic animals while environmentalists study representations of wild animals.

3.1.1 Animals in Children's Literature

One key aspect in the study of representations of animals in literature is the question of anthropomorphism, or ascribing human shapes and qualities to animals. There are a number of different ways in which authors throughout literary history have done this, especially in children's literature, ranging from stories where the characters behave, dress and talk as humans but look like animals, such as Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* (1908), to animals to whom certain human qualities such as speech or clothing are ascribed, but that are still separate from the humans of the story or keep animal traits, for example the horse in C. S. Lewis's *The Horse and His Boy* (1954). Maria Nikolajeva (1996: 13) makes a further distinction of anthropomorphic animals: most of them represent children, such as the animals in Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1902) and Jean de Brunhoff's *The Story of Babar* (1931); but there are also examples of animals functioning as "adults in disguise", giving the story "a slight satirical tone", such as *The Wind in the Willows*.

The reverse of anthropomorphism, theriomorphism, using animals as metonyms for human beings, has also been used, mainly "in contexts of national or racial stereotyping, such as when Nazis depicted Jews as rats" (Garrard 2004: 141). One example of this in literature is Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus* (1986, 1991), a World War II story where Jews are drawn as mice, Nazis as cats and Poles as pigs. While anthropomorphic animals in literature usually function as humans, theriomorphising the human characters usually invokes negative connotations of animals, thus implying that they—and the human beings likened to them—are inferior. In Plumwood's (1993: 4) words, to be defined as nature "means being seen as part of a sharply separate, even alien lower realm, whose domination is simply 'natural'".

Animal stories have often been seen as "a genre specific to children's literature" and Nikolajeva (1996: 12) writes that the Romantic view of children as united with nature has contributed to the great number of animal and nature stories for children. Lassén-Seger (2004: 35–36) represents another way of looking at it, writing that while the many animal characters in children's literature is generally considered to prove a special

connection between children and animals, to her, a more probable reason for this is that "because children's literature is created mostly by adults for children, the great number of animal characters in children's fiction is primarily a reflection of an adult preoccupation with regarding children and animals as interchangeable". Common to these two critics, and others along with them, is the notion that animals in children's literature generally represent something else, and are thus not a reflection of a realist concept of nature. This is interesting in light of the animal/human-dichotomy, as the boundaries are blurred between the two, but it is also noteworthy that animals are stripped of their own value as they appear only as substitutes for something else, not in their own right.

Even if one chooses not to see children's literature merely as a psychotherapeutic tool for the adult authors, the fact remains that the books we label children's literature are—almost without exception—written by adults. This problematic, especially as regards the metamorphosis theme Lassén-Seger discusses, that is, children physically turning into animals, also taps into the question of human nature. Val Plumwood (1993: 4) says that to "be defined as 'nature' in this context is to be defined as passive, as non-agent and non-subject". In the contrasting pair human/nature, humans are attributed with traits generally considered positive, such as reason and intellect, while nature is defined as that which is not human.

As already discussed, many children's stories include anthropomorphic animals; but there are also a number of stories describing animals realistically with their natural behaviour in their natural environment. As examples of these latter books, which are not necessarily written for children specifically but have become a part of their reading, Nikolajeva (1996: 12) mentions Ernest Thompson Seaton's *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1899) and Sheila Burnford's *The Incredible Journey* (1961). It is important to note, however, that even though environments are portrayed realistically, true realism can hardly be achieved when it is impossible for a human being to know what it feels like to be an animal. Michelle Paver's book series *Chronicles of Ancient Darkness* (2004–2009) is a good example of this: the protagonist, Torak, befriends a wolf, who occasionally acts as the focalizer of the novels. The wolf is not anthropomorphised, and

Paver (2006: 26; 27; 60) has him use descriptive terms rather than the names of things—snow is referred to as “the Bright Soft Cold”, fire “the Bright Beast-that-Bites-Hot” and “Not-Breath” means dead—in an effort to express his non-humanness; but there is of course no way of knowing whether that it how actual wolves perceive their environment in real life.

There are also many nonfictional animal books aimed at children, such as the dinosaur books many kindergarten boys clutch to their chest. Going through the different genres of young adult literature, Jean E. Brown and Elaine C. Stephens (1995: 35) mention nonfiction as one of them, stating that many “students read nonfiction exclusively”. Furthermore, they write that “various research studies indicate that adolescent males show a far greater preference for nonfiction than females do” (Brown & Stephens 1995: 35). Brown and Stephens divide nonfictional books into two categories: biography/autobiography and informational books; animal books naturally belong in the second category. The reason for reading informational books is twofold: “to gain the satisfaction of learning new information and to experience the satisfaction of reaffirming what is already known” (Brown & Stephens 1995: 36). One of the main differences in how animals are represented in non-fiction as opposed to fiction is that they are generally described from a human perspective, while fictional animals frequently appear as characters, telling their own story, more or less anthropomorphised.

Nikolajeva (1996: 13) distinguishes between stories where the animals exist in a world of their own and stories where a child protagonist interacts with animal characters. Parallel to animal stories, she also discusses toy stories, and mentions that in some cases the line between them might be one of perception: A. A. Milne’s *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) is often seen as an animal story by children, who see the characters as real, while adults tend to see them as toys. Furthermore, she states that both “toys and animals in children’s texts must be seen as representations of children and therefore typical figures in children’s fiction” and that authors use animals or toys as a narrative device, rather than writing in a specific genre (Nikolajeva 1996: 14). Nikolajeva does not further discuss whether this is true for all animal books or only the anthropomorphic ones; neither does she address the question of where animals featured in children’s literature

as minor characters or objects of subplots fit in. As will become apparent, the animals in both *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* and *Hatchet* have a different function than Winnie the Pooh or Jean de Brunhoff's Babar the Elephant.

3.1.2 Metaphorical Use of Animals

Animals are additionally often used in a more abstract way as negative vehicles in metaphors and other imagery. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980: 3) write that our "ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature". Accepting this statement as true, it logically follows that the figurative language we use can tell us something about how we conceptualise our lives. In everyday life, people might be referred to as being *sly as a fox*, *slippery as an eel* or *stubborn as a mule*, as well as being a *bitch* or a *beast*. Although ameliorative animal imagery is also used (*cute as a kitten*, for example), being compared to an animal is usually a bad thing, as is made clear by the phrase *he is such an animal*. Metaphors by their very nature highlight certain things and hide others, and both aspects illuminate the conceptual framework that lies behind. The examples above suggest that animals in our culture are primarily conceptualised as inferior and separate from humankind. But Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 145) claim that since the metaphorical concepts that characterise many of our every-day activities structure our present reality, new "metaphors have the power to create a new reality". For this thesis, it thus makes sense to take a closer look at the figurative language used in the primary material, to see what kind of conceptual system it is based upon.

In children's literature, there are numerous examples of humans being described in animal terms. Maria Lassén-Seger (2004: 39–40) mentions Gillian Cross's *Pictures in the Dark*, where the outsider, Peter, is frequently "referred to in terms of animality and wildness": trying to comfort him, for example, feels like "'reassuring a frightened animal'". The epithets become more fitting later on, when the reader finds out Peter can turn into an otter. In J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, characters are also frequently likened to animals. Like the example above, this often happens as foregrounding to characters magically being able to turn into animals, but also in other cases; in *Harry*

Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, Ginny Weasley, who never morphs into an animal, is "curled like a cat on her chair" and makes "a noise like an angry cat" (Rowling 2003: 423; 69).

Although no characters in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* magically turn into animals themselves, the book does feature supernatural creatures, such as wild harpies and gray dwarfs, which demand attention. These are not animals in the everyday sense of the world, since they do not exist in reality, but in the story they are as natural a part of the forest as the fox cubs and the wild horses. So should they be seen as animals? Þuríður Jóhannsdóttir (1999: 139) writes that children and adults explain things differently; the things that adults count as supernatural may to children appear more natural, because they can base their explanation on magic, mystique and the extraordinary. This would seem to encourage a reading where supernatural creatures can be considered to be merely very exotic animals. In an ecocritical analysis of C. S. Lewis's works, Nicole M. DuPlessis (2004: 116) remarks that, although anthropomorphising the animals of Narnia diminishes their resemblance to real-life animals, the "talking animals and supernatural creatures (such as naiads, dryads, fauns, and centaurs) traditionally linked to nature and the natural are not simply 'not nature'". She takes a different view of the problematic, trying to argue that the supernatural creatures should not be seen as human, but as at least animal-like. Although labelling the fantasy creatures in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* as one thing or the other may not seem very important, it does influence how nature is perceived, and the question will therefore be discussed further in section 5.3.

3.1.3 The Significance of Naming

Names and the process of name-giving in stories is a matter of interest, because naming has throughout history been a powerful sign of mastery. The Christian Bible tells of Adam naming the animals and thereby becoming the master of them, a narrative which, incidentally, has induced Lynn White Jr. (1996: 10) to blame Christianity for the Western dualistic view of humanity versus nature, stating that Christianity preaches that "it is God's will that man [*sic*] exploit nature for his proper ends". Regardless of the origins, the tradition continues today: naming is a means of control and domination, a

way to signal that the one who gives the name has power over the other. Colonialists arriving in different parts of the new world took it upon themselves to give the native peoples and places names, even though they were not called upon to do so. Remnants of this can still be seen today, when native peoples go back to using original names or invent new ones for themselves and their places. Slaves were not allowed names; names are for human beings. The naming of a thing bears the same significance as the raising of a flag on a mountaintop or the moon, or marking your territory with urine, if you will: I was here first, this is my place.

Naming can be used as a method or symbol of domination, but it can also have more positive connotations. The greatest honour imaginable is getting something named after you, whether it be a child, a place, a plant or a star. Evernden (1996: 101) writes that the "act of naming may itself be a part of the process of establishing a sense of place", and that perhaps "the naturalist, with his [*sic*] penchant for learning the names of everything, is establishing a global place, making the world his home, just as the 'primitive' hunter did on the territory of his tribe". In this way, naming functions more in the way a married couple might choose to have the same surname, to signify that they belong together, rather than as a sign of ownership.[2]

Animals, as representations, tropes and characters, are well-represented in children's literature. They feature both as realistic or near-realistic parts of fiction and non-fiction, and as representations of human beings. As such, they can represent both adults and children, and can function as manifestations of the adult author's view of children. In children's literature, animals are often anthropomorphised; and as vehicles of metaphors, they are frequent in many genres of literature. The naming of animals is an aspect which can be seen both as inclusive, in creating a bond to it, and exclusive, in stressing one's superiority over it. Finally, animals can also represent actual animals, in which case questions of animal welfare and the rhetoric of animality are brought to the fore. From animals we move on to the next important trope, which is the wilderness.

[2] Historically speaking, the wife taking the husband's name did indeed imply a degree of ownership, and still might in some cases. In our contemporary society however, the name change demands a conscious decision as the wife keeping her maiden name, the husband taking the wife's name or them choosing a new one altogether are all viable and not uncommon alternatives to the traditional version.

3.2 The Wilderness as a Trope

According to Greg Garrard (2004: 59), wilderness—or rather the idea of the wilderness, nature as untouched by civilisation—"is the most potent construction of nature available to New World environmentalism". The wilderness has connotations of both "trial and danger", "freedom, redemption and purity" and "the sublime" (Garrard 2004: 61; 61; 63). In Western literary tradition, the wilderness trope generally has two separate connotations: on the one hand, a sublime Eden-esque type of wilderness as nature at its purest; on the other, a place of darkness and danger. The first version is primarily an aesthetic one; nature valued and admired for its breathtaking beauty only. There is nothing wrong with enjoying a beautiful landscape; but an aesthetic position need not necessarily be purely based on what the eye can see. Neil Evernden (1996: 96–97) writes about children's relationship to nature as basically aesthetic; but in analogy with Edith Cobb and John Dewey, he sees the aesthetic experience in the relationship between the environment and the individual: rather "than a subject-object relationship in which the observer parades before the supposedly beautiful view, we have instead a process, an interaction between the viewer and the viewed, and it is in that joint association that the aesthetic experience lies". The second interpretation of the wilderness trope corresponds with the origin of the word *wilderness*, which developed from an Old English word meaning wild or savage; the wilderness in this sense is "the realm of beasts, savages, evil spirits, magic, and the menacing amorphous unknown" (Wilson 2002: 144).

The question of the wilderness is a central one in ecocritical rhetoric, Garrard (2004: 59) writes, because it "does not share the predominantly social concerns of the traditional humanities": it challenges the status quo of cultural and literary studies. Thus far, the 'wilderness texts' dealt with by ecocritics have been chiefly non-fictional nature writing, texts bordering on philosophy or history and not considered particularly interesting by the literary criticism community as a whole, such as the previously mentioned *Silent Spring* or nature writing by writers like Thoreau and Emerson. These wilderness texts share with pastoral—typically implying a retreat from the city to the countryside—"the motif of escape and return", but while pastoral nature is

domesticated, the wilderness is untamed and the forces of nature are sharply differentiated from the forces of culture (Garrard 2004: 59–60).

Garrard (2004: 60) asserts that the notion of the wilderness is a relatively new one, as the designation of "a place apart from, and opposed to, human culture" must be based on an agricultural economy, rather than the hunter-gatherer, for whom the distinction would not exist. As Edward O. Wilson (2002: 143) writes, before "agriculture and villages were invented, people lived in or very close to nature. They were part of it, and had no need for the concept of wilderness". Rebecca Raglon (2009: 60) writes that American literature has contributed in a unique and important way to "the aesthetic, ethical, political and spiritual values of wild nature" in world literature. These values, she writes, are typically discovered when an author makes a solitary journey into "more-or-less pristine wilderness" (Raglon 2009: 60). Writers such as Thoreau and Edward Abbey went into the wilderness to get away from certain negative traits of civilisation (or "syphilization", as Abbey [1968: 199] at one point refers to it) and try to discover something more genuine, to become one with nature.

That is a futile task, however: an intrinsic paradox of the wilderness is that as soon as you—the human—step into it, it ceases to be the wilderness. Yet, "the ideal wilderness narrative posits a human subject whose most authentic existence is located precisely there" (Garrard 2004: 71). One claim regarding wilderness is that 'true' wilderness only could be found in the past, since few places on Earth remain untouched by humans. Rebecca Raglon (2009: 61) uses the term *post natural wilderness* to deal with anthropogenic nature such as "the gated suburban nature patch, wasteland exploration, and the new post natural wilderness reserves"; in other words, unnatural nature. However, Edward O. Wilson (2002: 145) says that the "glory of the primeval world is still there to protect and savor". That includes what he refers to as the "five remaining frontier forests", namely "the rainforests of the combined Amazon Basin and the Guianas; the Congo block of Central Africa; New Guinea; the temperate conifer forests of Canada and Alaska combined; and the temperate conifer forests of Russia, Finland, and Scandinavia combined" (Wilson 2002: 161). But Wilson (2002: 145) does not incorporate only these 'true wildernesses' in the term, but also "micro-wildernesses"

that can consist of only one single tree in an urban park, home to thousands of species. In other words, the wilderness need not necessarily always be some sublime scenery far away from civilisation: there is life and self-sustaining ecosystems almost everywhere if you only care to look.

The wilderness as a concept is a perfect example of a term in which human beings see nature as Other and inferior. The concept is by definition something strange and dialectically opposed to civilisation. This dualistic way of defining wilderness as anti-civilisation fits into Val Plumwood's framework of hierarchical dualism, as it creates a sharp border between humanity and nature, where the latter is considered to be of lesser value. Paradoxically, Byerly (1996: 54) writes that the "idea of wilderness refers to the absence of humanity, yet 'wilderness' has no meaning outside the context of the civilization that defines it". She speaks here of the idea of wilderness—"a fiction, a cultural myth" (Byerly 1996: 53)—not the wilderness itself (whatever that may be); as when people are defined as the Other, the image of them and projected characteristics might have a basis in reality, but may as well be completely fictional.

She also writes about the creation of Yellowstone National Park, the oldest national park in the world, which for many Americans constitutes the very idea of wilderness. In its establishment, Byerly (1996: 57) writes, there was never any intentional preservation of wild nature involved; the national park that "the public has come to perceive […] as its primary provider of the wilderness experience" was created solely for the enjoyment of the people. A Wilderness Act was passed in 1964, which enables parts of national parks to be designated 'wilderness areas', and where wilderness is defined as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man [*sic*], where man himself is a visitor who does not remain" (Wilderness Act 1964). However, it continues to say that the wilderness area "generally *appears* to have been affected *primarily* by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work *substantially unnoticeable*" (Wilderness Act 1964, my italics), which implies that the wilderness does not have to be natural, as long as it appears to be so. As Byerly (1996: 57) writes, it "describes an image, not a reality".

3.2.1 The Wilderness in Children's Literature

The use of the wilderness trope in children's literature (and indeed in other types of literature as well) is divided into a gendered dichotomy. Ecofeminists have challenged the traditional wilderness ideals, "showing that the wilderness is typically associated with masculine values, while domesticity is associated with women in an unacceptable binary opposition" (Raglon 2009: 61). This means that traditional girl's books, such as Frances Hodgson Burnett's *A Little Princess* (1904), generally take place indoors, while traditional boy's books, such as Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) are mostly set outdoors. This binary is reflected in the characters of children's literature too, as "the heroes in wilderness and animal stories are, as a rule, boys, and, accordingly, the attributes that are associated with masculinity are the ones that are presented as life saving" (Darja Mazi-Leskovar 2004: 49). This "gendered dichotomy of masculine wilderness and feminine domesticity" (Garrard 2004: 76–77) is yet again an example of the way nature is conceptualised in both a humanity/nature-dualism and male/female-dualism.

One aspect of nature that becomes more pronounced in the wilderness, far from protective walls and roofs and central heating, is the weather. As both Ronia and Brian come to realize, it is one thing to camp out in a forest on a warm summer's night; quite another to do so when rain storms rage and the winter brings snow and cold. Naomi Wood (2004: 198–199) discusses the Icy Mother-tradition—Hans Christian Andersen's Snow Queen, C. S. Lewis's White Witch, Philip Pullman's Mrs Coulter/Serafina Pekkala, among others—and writes that, while the romantic tradition depicts Mother Nature as kind and nurturing, a different version was imagined in places where "human survival is clearly not 'natural' or paradisiacal—in which any survival must be the result of struggle and tenacity". Arctic nature personified is cold, beautiful and loving but demands submission. Neither *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* nor *Hatchet* includes a personification of nature: this discussion is used here merely to show the different versions of nature, and that weather aspects are often pictured as harsh and challenging.

3.2.2 The Silence of the Wilderness

Claire Jansen (2009: 48) points out that silence is a usual motif in wilderness texts and writes that the rhetoric of silence is "a trope that textually turns dynamic ecosystems to stone". Will Slocombe also discusses silence as a metaphor in terms of Jean Baudrillard's use of it. He writes that "silence is Edenic for Baudrillard", as an opposite to the traffic and constant noise of our contemporary world; silence in this sense is "artificially suggestive of a pre-apocalyptic world" (Slocombe 2005: 496). But while Baudrillard claims that the animals are silent and that that makes them distant and intimate with us at the same time, Slocombe points out that animals are only silent from a human perspective. Or perhaps not even human, just Western—as Christopher Manes (1996: 15) writes, nature is silent in Western culture because "the status of being a speaking subject is jealously guarded as an exclusively human prerogative" (here, we can once again refer to Plumwood's theories of radical exclusion or hyperseparation, reserving specific characteristic for oneself only and excluding it from the other).

Manes points out that in other cultures, such as many Native American tribes, the natural world is not seen as silent, but full of voices with intents. This animistic world view might appear somewhat unscientific and irrational, but the fact remains that, faced with an angry lion, a thundering waterfall or a 50 metre high ocean wave, anyone might be convinced to consider that listening to nature might not be such a bad idea. Furthermore, Manes (1996: 16) refers to Michel Foucault and his demonstration of social power operating through "a regime of privileged speakers", whose words are taken seriously, while silenced speakers, such as women, minorities, children and, in this case, nature, are considered meaningless. As a consequence, Manes claims, nature (and indeed all these silenced speakers) has been exploited for subjective human gain, resulting in the present ecological crisis. According to him, animistic societies have "almost without exception" avoided the kind of environmental destruction present in Western society (Manes 1996: 18). The truth of this and possible reasons for it can of course be discussed; the danger of trying to solve a problem by glorifying something which has previously been shunned is prevalent—Manes' argument is not far from the rhetoric of 'the Ecological Indian'-myth. According to the myth, all Native Americans

lived in harmony with nature as conservationists and environmentalists, until the European Colonialists came, invaded the land and exploited it. Although many Native American tribes had—and still have—a different view of and relationship with nature than the Europeans who no doubt had a major effect on nature as they conquered the frontier, this myth is simplified and lopsided, and only tells one version of the story[3]. This is yet another example of how something diverse and complex is perceived as one-dimensional and homogeneous.

The motif of silence is one that appears in both of the primary books of this thesis; in different ways, but primarily as something odd and unusual. Silence is something unnatural, and can therefore signify danger or a general state of disruption. Gary Paulsen (2001: 74-75) himself writes about silence, or the disturbance of it, in *Guts* when he discusses guns:

> There is nothing worse than what the sound of a gun does to the woods. One second there is the wonderful almost-silence of the forest—birds, rustles of leaves, soft sighs of wind in the pines—and the next instant there is the crashing crack, worse than thunder, alien to everything that is in the woods, harsh and cutting and loud, and warning everything within a mile that you are there. […] All sounds and movement cease—it's as if the noise of the rifle kills the whole woods.

Paulsen's opinion is mirrored in his protagonist, Brian, who, when faced with the choice, chooses not to use a gun, although it would make his quest for food much easier. This will be discussed further in the analysis chapter about the wilderness.

To sum up the wilderness trope, one can see that it consists of many different aspects. It has traditionally had connotations of both a sublime paradise and a dangerous home of beasts. It is also defined as the Other, as a place where no human has set foot; which makes going into the wilderness a paradoxical activity. In Western culture, the wilderness has traditionally been associated with silence and in children's books, the outdoors has conventionally been reserved for boys, while girls remain indoors. In the following analysis chapters, the wilderness and animal tropes will be applied to *Ronia*,

[3] For a more in-depth discussion of the Ecological Indian-myth, see Shepard Krech III's *The Ecological Indian. Myth and History*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999.

the Robber's Daughter and *Hatchet* to see how they are represented in the novels, and how the two narratives differ from each other. This will be done through analysing different aspects of the tropes and the protagonists' attitudes towards them.

4 THE CHARACTERS' ATTITUDE TO NATURE

One of the aims of this thesis is to analyse the attitudes towards nature that *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* and *Hatchet* projects. This chapter will discuss how active or passive the protagonists are in their interaction with different aspects of nature, and how their attitude changes throughout the books. Because of their different backgrounds, it is logical that Ronia has a more active attitude from the beginning, while Brian is more passive; but that also leaves him more room for development. Finally, the importance of one single specific tool—in Ronia's case a knife, for Brian a hatchet—and its function as a reminder of civilisation will be discussed briefly.

Both Ronia and Brian show a certain degree of development in their relation to nature. The change is most obvious in Brian's case, which is logical considering their starting points. Ronia has lived in the forest all her life, and she knows nothing else; although she becomes more humble towards it as the story unfolds, she has a very positive relation to nature from the beginning. She actively goes out into the forest and explores every little part of it, in order to, in Wes Jackson's (1994: 2) terms, "become native to [her] place". Brian's initial attitude is passive, and he more or less just waits for rescue, but as the days go by and no one comes, he develops a more active relationship with nature. He was born and raised in the city and is not very familiar with nature. At one point, he remembers playing with a friend in a park back home, where the trees grew thick and the forest "seemed kind of wild" (*Hatchet*, 52).[4] His word choice is telling: it *seemed* wild, but was in fact human-made nature; his wilderness experience is similar to the one of the Wilderness Act, which Byerly (1996: 57) claims describes not a reality, but an image. Before he comes to the forest, he has only experienced what Raglon (2009: 61) calls post natural wilderness: nature that in one way or another has been manufactured or at the very least altered by human beings. In contrast, *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* seems to confirm the claim that true wilderness could only be found in the past, because it is set in an unindustrialised past.

[4] *Hatchet* will henceforth be quoted with the title and page number only; (*Hatchet*, 52) thus refers to page 52 of Paulsen's novel. Similarly, *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* will be referred to as *Ronia*.

4.1 Ronia the Active

To Ronia, all wonders of life are equal: rivers, trees and human beings. The first time she goes out of Matt's Fort, she takes all of it in with amazement:

> they had talked of the river. But it was not until she could see how it came rushing in wild rapids from deep under Matt's Mountain that she understood what rivers were. They had talked about the forest. But it was not until she saw it, so dark and mysterious, with all its rustling trees, that she understood what forests were, and she laughed silently because rivers and forests were there. She could scarcely believe it. […] Ronia did not know that they were water lilies, but she looked at them for a long time and laughed silently because water lilies were there. […] She lay down on the moss to rest for a while, and the trees rustled high above her head. She lay there watching them and laughed silently because they were there. (*Ronia*, 13–14)

When she sees Birk, the only other child she has ever met, for the first time, she reacts exactly in the same way as she reacts to the river, forest, water lilies and trees: "Ronia watched him sitting there and laughed to herself because he was there" (*Ronia*, 22). For her, every living thing has intrinsic value, which fills her with joy. In this description, there is no mention of the 'point' of these things' existence; the river, the forest, water lilies, trees and boys are not worthy of consideration and appreciation because they can provide firewood or drinking water or food, but simply because they exist. This extract pictures Ronia as a deep ecologist, who values human and non-human life regardless of its usefulness to her own gains.

She is not a deep ecologist through and through, however; the question of possession is, for example, one that rounds her character. Initially, Ronia and Birk are not friends, and when she sees Birk outside the den of a fox family that she has been watching since the cubs were small, she is enraged. She says to him: "I want you to leave my fox cubs alone and get out of my woods!" (*Ronia*, 39). The forest where she has grown up is her kingdom; they are her woods, and the foxes in it are her foxes. Birk retorts:

> Your fox cubs! Your woods! Fox cubs belong to themselves—don't you know that? And they live in the foxes' wood, which is the wolves' and bears' and elk's and wild horses' wood too. And the owls' and the buzzards' and the wood

> pigeons' and the hawks' and the cuckoos' wood. And the snails' and the spiders' and the ants' wood […] the wild harpies' and the gray dwarfs' and the rumphobs' and the murktrolls' wood! […] In any case, it's my wood! And your wood, robber's daughter—yes, your wood too! But if you want it for yourself alone, then you're sillier than I thought when I first saw you. (*Ronia*, 39)

In this scene, Birk is the deep ecologist, while Ronia's stance is more toward the cornucopian end of the scale. Some of it can be attributed to the fact that she dislikes Birk—she retorts that she is perfectly happy to share the forest with the foxes and the owls, but not with him—but she does have a more possessive view of the forest throughout the book than Birk. However, because Ronia displays these tendencies, and because Birk consequently points them out as wrongful, the book explicitly shows this hierarchical dualism and possession as based on assumed premises and completely arbitrary.

4.2 Brian the Passive

In contrast, Brian Robeson of *Hatchet* is a child of the city, but is forced to adapt himself to nature. Initially, he compares everything he sees and experiences to TV-shows he has seen and books he has read. The aggressive mosquitoes come as a surprise because "in all the reading, in the movies he had watched on television about the outdoors, never once had they ever mentioned the mosquitos or flies" (*Hatchet*, 35). He is very thirsty, and wonders whether the lake water is drinkable: "It was water. But he did not know if he could drink it. Nobody had ever told him" (*Hatchet*, 41). All his knowledge about nature he has acquired through some form of mediation—on TV, in books or by someone telling him. It is a passive knowledge that is predominantly ill-equipped for spending time in the wilderness.

For exmple, in the beginning, he tries to remember things such as "What did they do in the movies when they got stranded like this?" (*Hatchet*, 45), and it helps him to some extent; but the situation forces him to adapt a more active attitude and learn things by experience, and from mistakes. Before he sees birds catch fish in the lake, he has not

even considered that there are fish—food—in the lake. The passive attitude is so deeply rooted in him that even though the hunger is tearing him apart, the idea to look into the lake for food never occurs to him. He goes hungry for quite some time, and when he finally finds a bush of berries, he overindulges. In the middle of the night, he wakes up with tearing stomach ache, "as if all the berries, all the pits had exploded in the center of him, ripped and tore at him" (*Hatchet*, 63). In the morning, he draws the conclusion that he ate too many of them at a time; so next meal, he eats fewer berries, at a slower speed, and makes sure to choose only the dark, ripe berries and leave the light red ones. By learning from his mistakes and adapting a more active attitude, he is able to figure out a more successful way of eating the berries. However, he is able to draw upon his book knowledge in some cases; sometimes to no direct benefit, as when he concludes which way north is, based on "the sun and the fact that it rose in the east and set in the west" (*Hatchet*, 53); but occasionally to great help, as when he remembers from school that fire needs oxygen to burn, leading to him finally making fire.

After a breakdown when he cries bitterly and thinks he cannot survive alone in the wilderness, he wakes up to a realisation: "later he looked back on this time of crying in the corner of the dark cave and thought of it as when he learned the most important rule of survival, which was that feeling sorry for yourself didn't work" (*Hatchet*, 77). He has to try to actively do some work if he wants to survive. One night, he hears a strange sound, and the following morning he tries to figure out what it was. He sees tracks in the sand and gathers some sort of animal came up from the water to do something—maybe "to play and make a pile in the sand?" (*Hatchet*, 93). Brian immediately smiles at himself:

> City boy, he thought. Oh, you city boy with your city ways […] sitting in the sand trying to read the tracks and not knowing, not understanding. Why would anything wild come up from the water to play in the sand? Not that way, animals weren't that way. They didn't waste time that way. It had come up from the water for a reason, a good reason, and he must try to understand the reason, he must change to fully understand the reason himself or he would not make it. (*Hatchet*, 93)

With the help of reason, the signs around him and a television show he once saw, he manages to work out that a sea turtle came up from the water to lay its eggs in the sand. Because he comprehends this, he finds the eggs and is able to eat them.

This begins a change in him, and he comes to see and hear things differently from before: “he would truly see that thing, not just notice it as he used to notice things in the city. He would see all parts of it” (*Hatchet*, 100). He makes a spear to catch fish, but when it does not work, he figures out he needs something with more speed, and he ‘invents’ the bow and arrow. Wise from his experiences, he ponders that maybe “that was how it really happened, way back when—some primitive man tried to spear fish and it didn’t work and he ‘invented’ the bow and arrow. Maybe it was always that way, discoveries happened because they needed to happen” (*Hatchet*, 107). This is very far from the ‘I saw it on TV’-attitude he had earlier, and no doubt one that works better in the wilderness.

It is also an important event when his attitude changes from trying to survive until someone comes to rescue him; to trying to survive, period. When a plane comes close, but turns away before they see him, he admits to himself that “it was all silly anyway, all just a game. He could do a day, but not forever—he could not make it if they did not come for him someday. He could not play the game without hope; could not play the game without a dream” (*Hatchet*, 112). He calls the experience a game, something similar to when he and his friend pretended they were lost in the woods in that seemingly wild park back home. Up until that moment, he somehow still passively awaits that rescue which will take him back to ‘reality’, and anything he does is just stalling, trying to stay alive until that moment comes. But after this, he picks himself up and starts living with the sole purpose of staying alive. This episode illustrates the way that Brian up to that point considers the wilderness experience a parenthesis in his life, something not quite real. His view of the situation mirrors what Garrard mentioned as the traditional Western connotations of the wilderness as a place sharply separate from human culture, and the motif of escape and return, implying that the end result—the return—is the crucial part, whereas the wilderness experience is, as Brian calls it, a game, just something to do kill time.

Ronia, in comparison, is from the beginning very active in her attitude towards nature. She breathes in nature with all her senses, and learns things by doing them, rather than hearing about them on TV. When her father tells her to be careful not to fall into the river, she practices cautiousness by jumping on the slippery stones where the river is most fierce; and when he tells her to watch out not to tumble into Hell's Gap, she practices by jumping over it. Although these activities are based on something someone has told her, she does not look for knowledge and skills in what other people have said, but actively searches for it herself. The closest Ronia gets to Brian's 'I saw it on TV'-attitude is when she looks at an injured mare and "seemed to hear Lovis's voice in her ear and knew what to do" (*Ronia*, 119). But this is also a more active stance, in that she has seen her mother do it, and watched how it was done in real life rather than some fictional character on film. Although Brian's attitude towards nature changes during the course of the book, his stance is predominantly a passive one, while Ronia's is active. Both of them keep with them a small part of civilisation even in the wilderness, however, which will be addressed next.

4.3 The Knife and the Hatchet

Both in *Hatchet* and in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*, there is one tool that is very important for the protagonists: a hatchet and a knife, respectively. Brian's mother somewhat proleptically gives him a hatchet before boarding the plane, and it comes to be the most important thing he has for surviving in the wilderness. By the aid of the hatchet, he eventually produces other tools he needs to get food, such as a fishing spear and a bow, and it is also the key component in making fire. He acknowledges that without "the hatchet he had nothing—no fire, no tools, no weapons—he was nothing. The hatchet was, had been him" (*Hatchet*, 162). At one point, he accidentally drops the hatchet in the water and struggles hard, with his life at stake, to get it back. He is willing to risk his life to regain this little piece of civilisation that has so much value to him.

When Ronia and Birk move out to the Bear's Cave, Birk brings with him a knife. Similarly to Brian, he states: "It's the most precious thing we have, remember that.

Without a knife we can't manage in the woods" (*Ronia*, 107). Despite this, on one occasion they misplace the knife, which lead to a heated argument ending with Ronia leaving the cave. Due to more important events, they are reunited and vow never to let an object come between them again, but this episode illustrates the crucial importance of the knife. It is a small reminder of civilisation that they cannot afford to let go of. These two similar incidents are important to this discussion because they show that the main characters in both books are fundamentally based in some sort of society outside the wilderness—to go out in the wilderness, there must be some place to depart from.

This chapter has attempted to show the fundamental difference in the protagonists' attitudes towards nature, and the change that they experience. While Ronia from the beginning very actively interacts with nature and learns things by doing, Brian is used to an indoor lifestyle and attaining his knowledge passively by watching TV. Circumstances force a change in his attitude, however, and he learns to become more active in order to survive in the wilderness. But both remain based in civilisation by the presence of a knife or a hatchet, and Ronia, for all her love of nature, does not take the deep ecologist position at all times. In these instances, Birk often corrects her, which means that the book explicitly points out her possessive tendencies and thereby illuminates that she asserts an arbitrary sense of superiority, which is rather based in her own mind than in reality.

5 ANIMAL REPRESENTATIONS IN THE NOVELS

As discussed in the theory part of this thesis, animals in different forms appear frequently in children's literature. The primary texts for this thesis are no exceptions; although neither of them features animals as anthropomorphic characters who talk and act like humans (the fantasy creatures of *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* notwithstanding; for the discussion of these, see section 5.3), both authors have chosen to let their protagonists interact with animals in different ways. Brian meets several different animals that fill various functions: as potential food, danger and occasionally just as part of nature. Ronia has several encounters with shadow folk and foxes, but her most prominent interaction with animals are with three wild horses.

5.1 Ronia and the Horses

Quite early on, Ronia declares that she wants a horse for her own. There is a herd of wild horses in the forest and she plans "to catch one and take it home to Matt's Fort" (*Ronia,* 78). Birk questions why she would want a horse at the fort and suggests that they catch two and ride them there and then, as "Riding is for the woods" (*Ronia,* 78). They lasso two young stallions and tie them to a tree, but the horses kick and lunge and snap at them when they try to make them understand that they mean no harm. By naming them, they claim them for their own anyway, and Birk announces, "you belong to us now, whether you like it or not!" (*Ronia,* 81). He here exhibits clear signs of what Plumwood calls instrumentalism or objectification, seeing the horse as an instrument of his own will. The horses are robbed of any rights to complain, and he sees them as possessions, to be claimed at his leisure.

That first day, the children keep the horses tied to a tree where they continue struggling to get loose until the evening when they finally give up. Ronia and Birk lead them to the lake so that they can drink, and the horses seem tame enough for Ronia to attempt to ride one of them. She only makes it onto his back before the horse throws her off and both horses gallop away. Some time goes by without further attempts at conquering the

wild horses. The children see them a few times and try to approach them, speaking gently, but the horses run away to some place where they can graze in peace. This reaction, according to the focalizer Ronia, is because neither "Villain nor Savage understood kindness" (*Ronia*, 110). The dualistic relationship between Ronia and the horse is described through what Plumwood calls radical exclusion or hyperseparation, when she denies the horses' capabilities of recognising benevolence, something that she reserves for herself and Birk, the human beings. This in turn gives her a reason for enslaving the horses, and make them submissive—they need to learn to appreciate that they are being treated well.

A third horse is then attacked by a bear, who kills her foal and leaves her bleeding heavily. Ronia sends Birk to fetch some dried moss that can stop the bleeding and stays with the mare herself, holding her and murmuring words of comfort. The horse stands still, "as if listening" (*Ronia*, 119). When Birk returns with the moss, they press it to her wound to stop the bleeding and stay with her all night. After the wound stops bleeding, they lead her to a safe place near their cave, where they continue nursing her back to health. The children's relationship to the mare is completely different from the way they see the first two horses—while they were treated as instruments of the children's will, and acknowledged only for their potential as a method of transportation, the mare is nursed, not so that the children consequently can ride her or something similar, but only for the purpose of her getting better.

The mare would not have survived without the children's care, but the relationship becomes mutually beneficial. Because the mare, which they name Lia, has lost her foal, they milk her and get nutrition from that all summer. Both parties benefit from the exchange: "It was a relief for the mare to have her tight udder emptied, and Birk was glad of the milk" (*Ronia*, 121). After Lia's wound has healed, they let her go and she goes back to live with the wild horses, but they call out to her every night, and she answers "with a neigh to show them where she was, because she wanted to be milked" (*Ronia*, 123). Towards the end of the summer, she starts giving less milk, and although she still comes when they call her, "Ronia could see that she no longer liked to be milked" (*Ronia*, 127). She then looks into Lia's eyes and thanks her for what she has

done for them, and tells Birk to do the same. They sometimes see her again, and she whinnies when they call her name, but she stays with the herd from then on. The children recognise that she is "a wild horse and she would never be a domestic animal, after all" (*Ronia*, 128). In this, they recognise her intrinsic value and independency, and relinquish any claims to her. They also admit that her milk has kept them alive throughout the summer; in comparison, a dualistic construction such as that described by Plumwood would typically indicate the children denying dependency on the horse. Their acknowledging their reliance on her milk is a sign of a non-hierarchical concept of difference, even though her milk is, of course, only a product of her, not her herself.

The children's relationship with Lia also signifies a change in the other horses' attitude towards them. When Lia is back with the herd, but still being milked, the rest of the herd sometimes comes closer and watches curiously. The stallions Ronia and Birk attempted to tame earlier, Villain and Savage, often come, and are more friendly to the children than before: "They could be talked to now, and at last they could even be patted" (*Ronia*, 124). One evening, Ronia again decides to ride and she springs onto Villain's back. After some hard work, he throws her off again, but Ronia keeps trying every evening "to teach Villain and Savage better manners" (*Ronia*, 125). Here again is an example of her tendency towards radical exclusion, claiming for herself the position of superior and teacher, which means that the experience with Lia has not changed her altogether. The horse keeps resisting her efforts, but Birk manages to stay on Savage, which fires Ronia's desire to tame Villain even more. The horse suddenly finds Ronia on his back again, which he does not like, "and he was both frightened and resentful when he realized that it did no good" to try and throw her off (*Ronia*, 125). But Ronia has made up her mind to stay put, so she does, even though Villain gallops at full speed through the woods. Birk, on Savage, finally forces him to stop, and after that the children are allowed to ride the horses. As Birk puts it: "at last both these two wicked beasts know what they're supposed to do and who decides!" (*Ronia*, 126). The wild horses are still seen as subordinate, and are only defined through their usefulness to the children, in Plumwood's (1993: 52) terms *incorporation*.

After this, the horses come running when they see the children, and according to the narrator, there "was nothing they enjoyed more nowadays than racing each other, each with a rider on his back" (*Ronia,* 128). Ronia and Birk are exerting the same type of superiority humans in Western civilisation have done for centuries, but they do also genuinely seem to care for the horses. One evening, they are chased by a wild harpy, and the horses are terrified. Ronia and Birk throw themselves off and let the horses flee, because "it was human beings that the wild harpies hated and wanted to get at, not the beasts of the forest" (*Ronia,* 128). This could be seen as the children acknowledging the horses' intrinsic value—but could also, from a more self-interested perspective, be written down as solely an attempt to preserve the animals for future rides, especially considering they are referred to as *beasts*, which is often a pejorative term.

The horses consequently stay away for a time, as the "harpy had scared them so much that they were also frightened of the humans who had been sitting on their backs when they were hunted" (*Ronia,* 136). But with time they forget about it and come running, wanting to race again. When the children return to the fort for the winter, they tell Villain and Savage they will come to them everyday if there is not too much snow. They notice that the horses have gotten thicker coats as protection against the cold, and conclude that "Villain and Savage would also live to see another spring" (*Ronia,* 156). The children's relationship to Villain and Savage is more complex than the one with Lia. While their relation to her is based on mutual benefit, empathy and nurturance; the stallions are primarily viewed as beings of instrumental value, as riding animals, although some sort of affection can also be seen—eventually—on both sides.

5.2 Brian and the Animals

While Ronia interacts with humans, animals and the shadow folk, which are something in between the two, Brian's only contacts with living creatures in the wilderness are with animals of different kinds. He faces a whole range of different animals, which contextually fill different functions: some animals—fish, birds, rabbits—are prey and a

source of food; some pose a potential threat to him—bears, wolves, a moose; and some are just plain annoying—mosquitoes.

The first animals he comes in contact with—very close contact, at that—are the mosquitoes. As a storytelling device, they function as yet another foreign and hostile part of the wilderness; and Brian's reaction to them clearly shows his attitude towards both nature and knowledge. When the day starts to warm up, the insects attack him with full force: "thick, swarming hordes of mosquitos that flocked to his body, made a living coat on his exposed skin, clogged his nostrils when he inhaled, poured into his mouth when he opened it to take a breath. It was not possibly believable" (*Hatchet*, 34). He cannot believe the hostility and number of the small animals that are everywhere. As is his habit, he thinks of the books he has read and the TV-shows he has seen, but concludes, "Never, in all the reading, in the movies he had watched on television about the outdoors, never once had they ever mentioned the mosquitos or flies" (*Hatchet*, 35). Sometimes his passive knowledge helps him, but there are times when it simply has not accounted for the things that happen to him. Seeing through the bias of the romanticising nature programmes, he states that all "they ever showed on the naturalist shows was beautiful scenery or animals jumping around having a good time" (*Hatchet*, 35). He realises that the mediated version of nature that he has encountered only shows one side, and that the wilderness in reality is much more diverse and complex. This insight is a step towards overcoming what Plumwood (1993: 53) calls *homogenisation.* Until he comes to the wilderness and finds out for himself, Brian's view of nature has followed what TV has taught him and the mosquito attack is just the first of many pointers that he needs to change in order to survive, because although the insects can hardly wound him fatally, there are other animals than can.

There are three significant encounters with animals that could potentially be dangerous to Brian: one with a bear, one with a wolf (or several) and one with a moose. His own reaction to and perception of the experiences are very different in each case, which is what makes them noteworthy. Two days after Brian first arrives in the woods, he finds a bush of raspberries. As he is indulging in sweet berries, he hears a noise, turns and sees a huge black bear. He is paralysed with fear: "He could do nothing, think nothing"

(*Hatchet*, 69). After a while, he does have a similar reaction as with many other things, comparing the bear to one he has once seen in the zoo, but the reality and presence of it hits him hard: “This one was wild, and much bigger than the one in the zoo, and it was right there. Right there” (*Hatchet*, 70). On this occasion, Brian acts purely on instinct, keeping still and waiting until the bear is gone, and then runs away in panic until his thoughts catch up with him. He then realises:

> If the bear had wanted you, his brain said, he would have taken you. It is something to understand, he thought, not something to run away from. The bear was eating berries. Not people. The bear made no move to hurt you, to threaten you. It stood to see you better, study you, then went on its way eating berries. It was a big bear, but it did not want you, did not want to cause you harm, and that is the thing to understand here. (*Hatchet*, 71)

Moments after, Brian notices the birds singing and states that there “was no danger here that he could sense, could feel. In the city, at night, there was sometimes danger” (*Hatchet*, 71). Although it was a shocking experience, he is able to rationalise the situation and learn from it, and even notice that the city can offer greater dangers than nature. This experience teaches him that a city/nature-dichotomy where one represents danger and one safety is not realistic, and that seeing the wilderness as the enemy is not very rewarding.

Later on, Brian also encounters a wolf. This meeting is very different from the one with the bear, primarily because Brian himself is now different. A feeling causes him to stop, and he stands waiting for something to happen, as this feeling was once before followed up by another bear encounter; one that could have ended badly if he had taken another step, as it would have put him between a bear mother and her cubs. He then sees a wolf and has what could almost be described as a spiritual experience. He is amazed by its sheer size and feels as if the “wolf claimed all that was below him as his own, took Brian as his own. Brian looked back and for a moment felt afraid because the wolf was so … so right. He knew Brian, knew him and owned him and chose not to do anything to him” (*Hatchet*, 114–115). Compared to Ronia and her animal encounters, there is a reversal of roles in this sentiment: here, the human being is the subordinate, and the animal is the possessor—at least in Brian’s mind. There is of course a certain level of

anthropomorphism in his interpretation of the situation, as he is ascribing the wolf feelings that it does not necessarily have. But for Brian, this is a profound moment, because the instance he admits that the wolf is in charge but does not attack, he stops being afraid: “Brian knew the wolf for what it was—another part of the woods, another part of all of it” (*Hatchet*, 115). He feels a connection to this other living creature and recognises that he is only one small part of an ecosystem, and that changes him: “the Brian that stood and watched the wolves move away and nodded to them was completely changed” (*Hatchet*, 115). Instead of seeing nature as the counterpart in a nature/human-dichotomy, he acknowledges that he is a part of nature, and that there is no dichotomy.

His new-found sense of belonging does not help him much when a moose finds him, however. He is standing with his back to the forest when out of nowhere, the moose attacks. She hits him, sends him flying into the lake, and charges again when he tries to get out. The experience leaves him with jabbing pain in his ribs and a wrenched shoulder, but also a lack of understanding. Brian has now been in the forest for over a month and has learned to see and hear differently, learned about what drives animals and how nature works; but the moose attack is different, because there is “no sense at all to it. Just madness” (*Hatchet*, 143). Because he cannot comprehend why the moose would attack him, he writes it off as pure madness and continues to view nature as a place where things do make sense. The chaos of nature is not something he can understand intellectually; but he does not dwell on it, as he has by now realised that some things are out of his control. He does not try to master the chaos, but surrenders to it.

Finally, Brian also comes in contact with animals in his search for food. This happens indirectly, as when birds lead him to the berry bushes or when he finds turtle eggs buried in the sand; and directly, as he catches fish and hunts birds and rabbits. He quickly learns “the truly vital knowledge that drives all creatures in the forest—food is all. Food was simply everything. All things in the woods, from insects to fish to bears, were always, always looking for food—it was the great, single driving influence in nature” (*Hatchet*, 122). With the hatchet, he fashions weapons; and by trying different

things and failing, he learns what kind of wood it takes to make a bow, how to catch a fish, and that the secret to discovering birds camouflaged close to invisibility is to look for their shape, not the texture or the colour of their feathers. The first time he catches a fish, he repeats over and over again that he has "done food" (*Hatchet*, 119). But he does not only rejoice in the fact that he now has food, but in everything involved: "he exulted in it, in the bow, in the arrow, in the fish, in the hatchet, in the sky. He stood and walked from the water, still holding the fish and arrow and bow against the sky, seeing them as they fit his arms, as they were part of him" (*Hatchet*, 119). To be able to catch the fish, he has to adapt himself to the ways of nature; just as he has to in order to catch the birds and the rabbits.

The fish are part of one instance where Plumwood's hierarchical dualism is visible in the book. When Brian dives after the survival pack in the sunken airplane, he catches a glimpse of the pilot, and is revolted by the sight. Although he has now learned that the hunt for food is the main driving force of nature, he has "never really thought of it, but the fish—the fish he had been eating all this time had to eat, too" (*Hatchet*, 168). Seen in the light of Plumwood's characteristics of dualism, this attitude constitutes incorporation, because Brian has only considered the fish as far as they are of use to him: as food. They are not encountered as an independent other, with intrinsic value and needs not connected to him. This also ties in with instrumentalism, as Brian conceives of the fish as instruments to his own will. Because he is faced directly with the evidence, he is able to recognise that the fish have needs independent of him, and that their lives do not begin and end with his dealings with them.

Brian's encounters with different animals thus illustrate the development he goes through. From the mosquito attack that he cannot quite believe, because he is so stuck in his passive way of thinking; via the situation with the bear, that he reacts to on instinct, but later rationalises; to the wolf encounter, that reminds him he is part of a larger ecosystem. His pursuit of food further emphasises this last point, as he cannot catch his prey before he learns to attune himself to nature. The moose attack, on the other hand, shows that even though he believes he understands the principles that govern nature, some things are beyond his comprehension and control.

5.3 Neither Human nor Animal: the Shadow Folk

Hatchet is a realistic novel and the animals in the book act accordingly, not as in classic children's literature, as talking creatures who interact with the human characters. *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* presents a slightly more complex cabinet of non-human characters. The animal discussion in this thesis focuses mainly on the primarily realistic animals in the book: familiar creatures such as horses that behave as horses could be expected to in real life, and do not seem to be representative of the 'children or adults in disguise'-animal character that Nikolajeva and Lassén-Seger discussed. There are, however, also fantasy creatures in the novel which cannot be completely ignored.

In the forest around Matt's Fort, there are gray dwarfs, harpies and rumphobs which talk and interact with the humans in a way that could be seen as anthropomorphic. The wild harpies are beautiful but ferocious flying creatures with stony eyes and sharp claws and a thirst for blood; the gray dwarfs are small and gray, with eyes that glow in the dark and a desire to bite humans; and the rumphobs are friendly and peaceable, "easily recognizable by their broad rumps and wrinkled little faces and scrubby hair" (*Ronia*, 52), and live in rotten trees or underground holes. These fantasy creatures are sharply different from the human characters and in a division between human and non-human, they are clearly on the non-human side, despite their ability to speak. Even the dwarfs, who are generally human figures elsewhere, are clearly not human in Ronia's world. In terms of silenced nature, their speaking ability is remarkable in that it does not confirm the stereotype Manes talked about, of preserving speech as a human prerogative. In the human/animal dichotomy, however, they do not fit in and rather form a group of their own. This statement is based on the text itself, where the characters make a distinction between animals—bears, wolves, horses—and what are sometimes referred to as "shadow folk" (*Ronia*, 120). It says that bears "and wolves shunned anything to do with the shadow folk. No rumphobs or murktrolls, no harpies or gray dwarfs had to fear beasts of prey" (*Ronia*, 120). From this quote, it is evident that these creatures cannot be considered animals, at least not intradiegetically.

From an ecocritical standpoint, it can be interesting to note that the shadow folk fill the function of monsters in the story, while the realistic animals are more complex creatures. Although some of the fantasy creatures are friendly, like the rumphobs, most of them represent danger of some kind, which is different from the realistic animals. When Ronia is about to go out in the forest for the first time, Matt warns her about a number of things she needs to watch out for: wild harpies and gray dwarfs (and Borka robbers) are among these, but bears and wolves are not. In this way, Lindgren has chosen to transfer the threats that some animals de facto pose to humans onto fantasy creatures, invoking a theriomorphising, rather than an anthropomorphising strategy. The only dangerous realistic animal that appears in the story is a bear who kills a foal and injures its mother, which is sad, but the children are never in danger (although Birk expresses joy that the bear has not killed Ronia). Birk simply states: "Those are the kind of things that happen in Matt's Wood and in every wood" (*Ronia*, 120). The fact that the realistic animals are not dangerous takes away something of their complexity; but seen in this context, the shadow folk might represent the danger of animals, while the animals themselves are representations primarily of the more positive traits. Their function as monsters makes their speaking ability all the more significant, as negative representations logically would be the most likely to be robbed of voice.

The shadow-folk in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* are neither human beings nor animals; and through their very existence, they defy the sharp distinction between the two. Using these fantasy creatures as the monsters of the book, Lindgren has adapted a theriomorphising strategy, and the realistic animals are left with predominantly positive characteristics. However, despite this, they retain a speaking ability, and are not silenced, as could perhaps be expected in the Western tradition.

5.4 Naming as Binding and Bonding

As stated in section 3.1.3, naming has traditionally functioned as a way of laying claims to and binding an assumed inferior, but it can occasionally also represent a bond being created by the namer and the named. In *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*, there are two

significant examples of naming, both involving Ronia, Birk and a horse or two, but different from each other in terms of the reason for the name-giving. The first occasion comes about as a result of the two children deciding they wish to ride a horse, and trying to capture a couple of wild horses to go through with the plan. Ronia tries to make one of the horses understand she wishes him no harm by giving him a piece of bread, but the horse tries to bite her. Birk is shocked and asks, "Do you mean that villain snapped at you when you were giving him bread?"; Ronia looks at the horse and decides that "Villain—that's a good name" (*Ronia*, 80). The stallion Birk has chosen for himself is thereafter named Savage, and is told of its new station in life: "'Do you hear that, wild horses?' Birk shouted. 'We've given you names. You're Villain and Savage, and you belong to us now, whether you like it or not!" (*Ronia*, 81). The naming of the horses functions as a way of claiming them as their own, at the same time as it marks their inferiority and reduces them to mere possessions, the way Joanna Dawson (2009: 71) says that "naming functions like the knife that separates the namer from the named". As such, Ronia's and Birk's action mirrors what has been done in Western culture for centuries by giving names to and renaming assumedly inferior people and things according to their own preferences, and in some cases forbidding them to have a name at all.

Later on in the story, Ronia and Birk find a mare that has been injured by a bear and nurse her back to health. Although Birk joyfully remarks that they now have a domestic animal, the relationship is based on mutual dependence and their naming the horse has a different significance from the previous instance. Ronia is prompted to give her a name, and without thinking long she says: "I think she should be called Lia. Matt had a mare when he was little, and that was her name" (*Ronia*, 121). That they name her at all is more because of the reason Evernden gives, to establish a sense of belonging, rather than asserting superiority. The name itself is not a pejorative term, like Villain and Savage, but a beautiful name; even more so as Ronia associates it with her father, whom she loves and misses very much despite their disagreement. Because it is a name that Ronia connects to her home, it also functions as a means of bringing the mare into her own world, but in an invitational rather than forceful way.

In *Hatchet*, naming does not feature as explicitly, but it is still there to some extent. In accordance with Brian's passive, knowledge-based attitude towards the environment around him, he feels the need to know the names of plants and animals in order to have some sort of control. When he first arrives in the woods, he looks at the vegetation around him and concludes that he "couldn't identify most of it—except the evergreens—and some leafy trees he thought might be aspen. He'd seen pictures of aspens in the mountains on tele-vision" (*Hatchet*, 37). This very much tallies with his overall sense of hopelessness and lack of control—he does not know his surroundings by name, and thereby does not know it at all. To stop from panicking, he orders himself to slow down his thoughts and concentrate on what he knows: "My name is Brian Robeson and I am thirteen years old and I am alone in the north woods of Canada" (*Hatchet*, 43).

Listing simple facts that he can mention by name enables him to focus his mind and regain some control. With that, he is able to calmly state that the "trees were full of birds singing ahead of him in the sun. Some he knew, some he didn't" (*Hatchet*, 58). But he names the things he uses—he calls the berries he finds *gut cherries*, a ball of shredded birch bark which he uses to try to make fire his *spark nest*, and some birds *foolbirds*. When he finally manages to make fire, he thinks, "I have a friend named fire" (*Hatchet*, 87). He keeps track of time by listing events, like "the day of First Meat", "First Arrow Day" and "First Rabbit Day" (*Hatchet*, 129; 138; 138). He also builds a raft and calls it "Brushpile One" (*Hatchet*, 156). Worth noting here, perhaps, is that there is an epilogue which tells briefly about how this experience has changed Brian for life. When home, he does research to find out the proper names of the animals and berries he has encountered in the wilderness. Brian and the reader alike learn that the foolbirds are ruffled grouse and that gut cherries are officially known as choke cherries.

Whether Brian's desire to put a label on everything is in fact an example of a wish to control and dominate his environment or a way for him to establish a sense of place, a home in the wilderness, is of course debatable. As Evernden wrote, the naturalist is perhaps trying to make the world his home by learning the names of everything. Louv (2008: 41) quotes a student who says that she feels as if she is getting to know someone

new every time she learns the name of a plant. Perhaps a clue lies in the word *learn*: the act of naming is more an act of domination than is learning a pre-existing name. Brian calling a type of bird *foolbird* because he thinks “they were so dumb, or seemed to be so dumb, that it was almost insulting the way they kept hidden from him” (*Hatchet*, 131) is a way of asserting his superiority; him researching the established name of the species when he comes home seems more like a way of reconnecting to the place that was his home, and he has now left.

Both books thus features different types of naming, signalling both assumed superiority and a desire to connect to the named animal. Ronia and Birk follow a strong Western tradition of using naming as a tool of domination when they name Villain and Savage and explicitly claiming them as their own through that act, while the naming of Lia signifies a wish to create a bond between them. Brian uses naming primarily as a way of regaining control in a situation he is not comfortable in, and through that asserts dominance; but him researching aspects of the wilderness when he is removed from there signals a longing to reconnect to a place that he misses, even though survival was at the time a struggle.

5.5 Metaphorical Use of Animals in the Novels

Astrid Lindgren has been very careful to incorporate nature not only into the story, but also in the language she uses. Most imagery is based on nature in one way or other. In section 3.1.2, it was mentioned that although animals are sometimes used in an ameliorative way in imagery, they mostly function as negative vehicles in different types of imagery in literature and common speech. Animals and other features of nature are used in both these ways in *Ronia, the Robber’s Daughter*, in addition to being incorporated into what could be referred to as contextual idioms, expressions that in the story fill the function of idioms, but are not used outside this particular fictional world. In contrast, the imagery in *Hatchet* is more based on civilisation, alluding to things like cars and televisions.

Animals as negative vehicles are mostly used in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* when someone in Matt's Fort—predominantly Matt himself—talks about his arch enemy Borka, the Borka robbers or Birk Borkason. The animals chosen for these types of expression are generally those considered disgusting, stupid or just generally of lower status. Borka is for example called a "heathen dog" and "more stupid than a pig", while Birk has to endure epithets such as "snake spawn" and "a snake fry, a louse" (*Ronia*, 29; 58; 29; 90). Ironically enough, considering the men are all robbers, thievery is often added for more effect, as in "thieving dog", "little thief hound" and "those thieving rats" (*Ronia*, 35; 160; 30). These expressions are all in correlation with how animals are often used in imagery—as insults.

Ronia herself, as the protagonist and Matt's beloved daughter, his "little pigeon" (*Ronia*, 9), is primarily described in positive terms, but often using nature references. She is on several occasions referred to as being "as beautiful as a wild harpy" (although wild harpies overall are seen in a negative light, their beauty is unrivalled), "she could run like a fox", Birk and her "swam and dove like a pair of otters" and "in the end she was like a healthy little animal, strong and agile and afraid of nothing" (*Ronia*, 11; 21; 135; 17). This use of imagery is fitting, as Ronia throughout the book is portrayed as a character who lives her life in nature and indeed does not know of any other way of living.

Judging a character by its nature-based epithets, the most complex one is Matt. Ronia sees him as "her forest pine, her strength", while his wife mainly complains that he and his robbers are "as idle as oxen" and "wild goats" (*Ronia*, 87; 61; 74). He is also compared to a wild animal on several occasions; when the fort split in two "Matt was raging like a wild animal" and when Ronia betrays her father by jumping over to Borka's side, "Matt saw her in mid-leap, and a cry burst from him, the kind of cry wild animals utter in their death agony" (*Ronia*, 7; 93). On the same occasion, he is also said to be like "a wounded bear" (*Ronia*, 94). Ronia's mother, Lovis, is only once referred to with nature imagery, and in her case, it is not an animal; instead, she is "steady and safe as the cliff itself" (*Ronia*, 142). It is telling that Ronia and Matt, who are both passionate and temperamental characters, are likened to different animals and other living things,

while the steadfast and even-tempered Lovis is compared to a rock. The diversity and liveliness of nature is reflected in the daughter and the father, while the mother represents the notion that nature has always been around, and always will be.

The characters all use contextual idioms when they use them at all, and since their life is rooted in nature, so are the established expressions. Noddle-Pete, the old grandfather-figure who represents comic relief, says, “If you’ve got lice in your coat, roaring won’t get rid of them” (*Ronia*, 30). By analogy with common “what in the name of…”-phrases, the characters in *Ronia, the Robber’s Daughter* say things like “What in the name of all the wild harpies have you been doing?” and “Where in the name of all wild harpies are you off to in the middle of the night?” (*Ronia*, 65; 101). The expression to be “as safe here as the fox in its lair and the eagle in its nest” (*Ronia*, 19) is also repeated more than once. This is a way for the author to root the entire fictional universe in the wilderness, and reflects to what extent their lives are formed by their environment.

The imagery in *Hatchet* is much less nature-based. At one time, Paulsen writes that Brian “took air like a whale” (*Hatchet*, 163), but that is the only time he is likened to an animal, and even then the comparison is more concrete than, say, likening Ronia to a wild harpy, because it just describes what he does—come up to the surface to take air. The lack of nature-based metaphors and other types of imagery can in part be attributed to the difference in writing styles: Lindgren uses a very vivid language with plenty of imagery, while Paulsen writes more concretely and straight to the point. But it also illustrates a basic difference between the two protagonists and main focalizers, which is that, for Ronia, the wilderness is the only environment she knows, while Brian is new to the whole milieu. He is therefore more likely to compare the things he sees to phenomena he is used to, like flames “consuming the ball of bark as fast as if it were gasoline” (*Hatchet*, 86) and a moose coming “down on him like a runaway truck” (*Hatchet*, 141). His life up until now has been in civilisation, so the language in the book reflects his reality.

As seen, representations of animals appear frequently in the books, and play an important part in helping the protagonists develop a nuanced attitude towards other living things. Ronia's encounters with the horses illustrate both her tendency to hierarchical dualism and her empathy. The way animals are used in the imagery of the novel shows how profoundly the story is based in the natural setting; while the shadow folk blur the line between human and animal. Brian, on the other hand, meets a number of different animals in the wilderness, which all teach him something about the way nature works and where he himself fits into it. For him, there is a continual struggle to adapt from a life in civilisation to a way of living in the wilderness. The aspects of the wilderness that the children encounter will be discussed in the following chapter.

6 THE WILDERNESS IN THE NOVELS

Both *Hatchet* and *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* are set primarily in the wilderness, and follow the "escape and return"-motif that Garrard says is characteristic of wilderness and pastoral texts alike; but the portrayals differ substantially. *Hatchet* follows a classic story structure that contrasts civilisation with the wilderness: Brian starts out in the city, travels to the wilderness, where the main adventure takes place, and at the end returns home. *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* is completely set in a forest, but nonetheless partly follows a similar structure, as she leaves the safety of her home, has adventures in the forest, and then returns home. The big journey into the wild is carried out when she and Birk move away from home in the spring and return in the fall; but even when she lives at home, her daily routine follows the same pattern: in the morning she goes out into the forest, has different kinds of adventures, and then goes back home when night falls. This chapter will analyse how different aspects of the wilderness are portrayed in the two books, discussing the traditional twofold connotations of wilderness in terms of their applications in the primary material, and then moving on to a discussion of the wilderness from an ecofeminist perspective, and finally discussing silence and weather as aspects of the wilderness.

6.1 The Wilderness as Escape or Enemy

In each of the books, the protagonists go into the wilderness; and this passage is portrayed very concretely through one decisive event. Brian makes the journey from city life to nature, and the plane crash is a very tangible image of how his stay in the wilderness comes about through no choice of his own. Ronia in a sense lives in the wilderness to begin with, but the Fort with its robbers constitutes a society and a sort of civilisation; less civilised than many others and an odd sort of society, perhaps, but a society nonetheless. Her passage into the wilderness also comes about through mild force, when the rift between the children and their parents induces Birk to move out, and Ronia follows suit. Birk states it quite plainly: "I'm moving into the forest now […] I can't live in Borka's Keep any longer" (*Ronia*, 99). For Ronia and Birk, the wilderness

functions much as for Thoreau and Abbey, as an escape from civilisation, freedom; although what they seek there is not a more genuine world but a refuge. There are dangers in the wilderness too—the children are attacked by wild harpies that want to scratch out their eyes and they consequently nearly drown in the river—but despite this, the wilderness is never their enemy: "they talked about the wonderful time they could have, even though there were wild harpies. How lovely it was to live in the freedom of the forest, by night or by day, under the sun, moon, and stars and through the slow passage of the seasons" (*Ronia,* 129). Although the children in a sense are exiled from their home, their familiarity with and love for the wilderness allows them to feel at home there as well.

The theory section on the wilderness stated that the term has had two different connotations in Western literary tradition: nature at its purest, untouched by human beings; and a dark and dangerous place. The wilderness in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* falls into the first category. Although the human beings in the story live their lives in the wilderness, they have not altered it much. Matt's Fort is the only building that is featured in the story, and although it is built by men, nature has significantly modified it: the night Ronia is born, lightning strikes and divides the fort into two parts, creating Hell's Gap. When Ronia and Birk move out, they live in a cave, trusting nature to provide anything and everything they might need. Overall, nature is mentioned in very positive terms, and Ronia time and time again rejoices in it: "She loved her forest and all that was in it" (*Ronia*, 136). Apart from joy, the forest also usually brings her comfort when she is feeling down. When she has left her parents and the other robbers behind and moved to the cave, she is "not feeling as happy as she wished, but through the cave opening she could see the light, cool sky of spring and she could hear the river rushing deep down in its gully, and that helped" (*Ronia*, 106). The wilderness also provides a distraction from her grief over Noddle-Pete's death in the end of the book: "Ronia took refuge with Birk in the woods, where it was now winter, and when she was skiing down the slopes she forgot all her sorrows. But she was reminded of them as soon as she came home" (*Ronia,* 174). In contrast, her father sits at home and mourns all day long, making him unable to concentrate on anything else.

The aesthetic aspect is brought forward continuously in the book: the beauty of nature is explicitly stated and described in vivid images. When Birk at one point feels strange, the narrator explains: “He did not understand that what he was feeling, almost like pain, was only the beauty and peace of the summer evening” (*Ronia*, 130). At another point, the spring evening is described as being “as beautiful as a miracle” (*Ronia*, 118). The beauty of the wilderness gives Ronia comfort; when she is sad about leaving her parents and her home, she looks at the lake, which “lay there, very black, but across the water ran a narrow beam of moonlight. It was beautiful, and Ronia’s heart lightened as she saw it” (*Ronia*, 103). She fits well into Evernden’s claims that children’s relationship to nature is principally aesthetic, but an aesthetic experience and process rather than a subject-object relationship: she dives “headfirst into spring. It was so magnificent everywhere around her, it filled her, big as she was” (*Ronia*, 77).

Brian, on the other hand, literally crashes down into the wilderness, so for him the journey into the wild is no quest for self-discovery or freedom, but one that is forced upon him. This naturally shapes his attitude towards nature, which in *Hatchet* is seen primarily as the enemy and a place of danger, similar to the second connotation of wilderness mentioned above. As he regains consciousness after the crash, he considers his situation and initially thinks he was lucky not to have hit the rocks by the lake which would have smashed him to pieces. But he recoils: “he knew that was wrong. If he had had good luck […] he wouldn’t have been flying with a pilot who had a heart attack and he wouldn’t be here where he had to have good luck to keep from being destroyed” (*Hatchet*, 37). His situation feels hopeless, he does not know where he is or how he will ever get away, and if that is not enough, nature keeps throwing struggles at him. Everything is complicated: finding food, making fire, building a shelter; and he finds himself longingly thinking about the ease of life as home: “He was so used to having food just be there, just always being there. When he was hungry he went to the icebox, or to the store, or sat down to a meal his mother cooked” (*Hatchet*, 55). Brian eventually comes up with ways to acquire the things he needs, but as soon as he has overcome one problem, something else befalls him:

> This morning he had been fat—well, almost fat—and happy, sure of everything, with good weapons and food and the sun in his face and things looking good for the future, and inside of one day, just one day, he had been run over by a moose and a tornado, had lost everything and was back to square one. Just like that.
> A flip of some giant coin and he was the loser. (*Hatchet*, 147)

The wilderness in *Hatchet* is primarily portrayed in this way, as an inhospitable environment that presents Brian with one problem after another.

However, nature is not simply a source of trial and danger. The aesthetic aspect is mentioned in this book as well, albeit less exuberantly and actively than in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*. Like many other aspects of his character, Brian's perception of his surroundings also changes from the beginning of the book to the end. Initially, he recognises that the scenery is "very pretty […] and there were new things to look at, but it was all a green and blue blur and he was used to the gray and black of the city. Traffic, people talking, sounds all the time—the hum and whine of the city" (*Hatchet*, 38). He cannot quite take in the sublime beauty of nature, because it is so unlike what he is used to, and what he more than anything else at the moment just wants to go back to.

After he has spent some more time in the wilderness, he is more capable of appreciating its splendour, but it is still described in terms of being "so incredibly beautiful that it was almost unreal" (*Hatchet*, 101). Although he can process what he sees, it is compared to what he is used to, and therefore calls for expressions such as "unreal" and "unbelievable" (*Hatchet*, 101; 158). In contrast to Ronia, Brian observes rather than experiences the aesthetic, and he longs to show it to someone as one would a painting: "Amazing beauty and he wished he could share it with somebody and say, 'Look here, and over there, and see that …'" (*Hatchet*, 158). The reader's first introduction to the landscape in the book is also from an observer's point of view: as Brian flies over the forest, he looks down and remarks that everything is "so still looking, so stopped, the pond and the moose and the trees, as he slid over them now only three or four hundred feet off the ground—all like a picture" (*Hatchet*, 26–27). This observation becomes almost ironic in retrospect when compared to the very real moose that attacks Brian later; far from being still and picturesque, the animal is maniacally aggressive and could easily beat the boy to death.

Like Ronia, Brian can also find comfort in nature's magnificence, however. When he dives down into the lake and sees the pilot, who has then lain dead in the lake water for almost two months, the vision is, unsurprisingly, disturbing. He tries to clear the picture from his head by looking at the shore: "there were trees and birds, the sun was getting low and golden over his shelter and when he stopped coughing he could hear the gentle sounds of evening, the peace sounds, the bird sounds and the breeze in the trees. The peace finally came to him" (*Hatchet*, 168–169). In contrast to the way nature appeared to him at first, as something strange that he could not really process, it now gives him comfort and soothes him.

Simplistically put, one could say that the books each represent one of the classic Western connotations of the wilderness: *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* presents sublime nature at its purest, while *Hatchet* paints a picture of nature as dangerous and antagonistic. The Paulsen novel does, however, contain a more complex view of nature, symbolising Brian's own personal development. In both books, the beauty of nature is important, but the protagonists relate to it in different ways: in Evernden's terms, Ronia experiences the aesthetic aspect, while Brian rather observes it. This also reflects the way the books handle traditional gender stereotypes, as the active adventurer is usually found in boys' books, while the girls stay inside. The following section will analyse the texts from an ecofeminist perspective.

6.2 The Wilderness is for Boys

In section 3.2.1, it was mentioned that children's literature set in the wilderness is generally written about and for boys. However, comparing *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* with *Hatchet*, it is the first that is more reminiscent of books such as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, despite the fact that the protagonist is female. Ronia goes on adventures in the forest, takes care of herself and is not afraid to get her hands dirty. Brian also has adventures, but he does not actively go seeking for them like Ronia, but is subjected to them. This is of course a consequence of their overall situation: Ronia has a safe home that she can return to at the end of the day, while Brian has enough

struggles thrown at him without him adding to them. But it does illustrate the way these books are representative of the children's book tradition, and the way gender roles are portrayed in wilderness texts.

Ronia embodies many of the characteristics that in children's literature are traditionally seen primarily in boys. She is independent, adventurous and daring, and the action is set outside. However, she is also part of the tradition that ascribes to females a position of being closer to nature than men. In a context of a good, motherly Earth, Ronia can be seen as Daughter Earth. She does fit the "angel in the ecosystem" pattern that Plumwood discusses (as mentioned in section 2.1) and shows traits of empathy, nurturance and co-operation; and although there are conflicts, these stereotypically feminine character traits overshadow them. As seen in the section on Ronia and the horses, she immediately takes on the role as nurse when the mare is injured, suffers with the animal and works with Birk in order to restore her to health. It is important to note, however, that the male Birk shows the same characteristics in an equal amount, if not more. He is the one who more than once questions Ronia's spontaneous tendencies towards domination, which she consequently abandons as illogical.

Overall, Ronia's world is a world of men. Apart from herself and her mother, every character in the book is male, and primarily stereotypical macho men at that. The robbers are rowdy, enjoy a good fight and let Ronia's mother Lovis take care of all the housework. Lovis in many ways functions as a mother to all of them, cooking their food, washing their clothes, disciplining them when they are out of line, and watching over all of them ferociously. Her domain is the fort, and she stays there: the only time the reader encounters her outside it is when she comes to the cave to try to persuade Ronia to come home. Although Ronia misses her mother and the lullaby she sings every night, the very definition of comfort and safety, Lovis does not succeed in her mission—only Matt can make his daughter return home again. Despite her nurturance and empathy, Lovis, far from having any sort of special relationship to the Earth, instead functions as the character most firmly rooted in the domestic domain, contextually functioning as civilisation. Instead of being part of "angel in the

ecosystem" tradition, she is representative of the traditional wilderness ideals Raglon discusses, where domesticity is associated with women and the wilderness with men.

As illustrated, there are several ways of reading the books from an ecofeminist point of view: the two discussed here are Plumwood's "angel in the ecosystem" version, where women are seen as intrinsically more close to nature than men, and Raglon's statement that the wilderness is connected with men and domesticity with women. Although these two versions may seem contradictory, it is important to note that Plumwood talks about nature, while Raglon discusses the wilderness specifically. Claiming that a woman is more close to nature because she can give birth to a child does not rule out the opinion that the same woman should stay indoors, taking care of that baby. However, this apparent contradiction does result in the fact that Brian's initial attitude towards nature from an ecofeminist perspective could be seen as both stereotypically masculine and feminine. Raglon's domesticity/wilderness-dichotomy places the initial Brian on the feminine side of the scale, because he is used to an indoor lifestyle, watching television, playing videogames and fetching food from the refrigerator whenever he gets hungry—not the traditional feminine domesticity, perhaps, but domesticity nevertheless. As the circumstances force a change on him, he moves more towards the masculine wilderness identity. However, the book as a whole can be seen as a classic wilderness story, making the male protagonist just another example of the boy's book tradition.

From the Plumwood perspective, Brian's initial attitude follows the classic male stance of separating himself from nature completely. One episode that illustrates this clearly is when he tries to regain some power over his situation by listing his assets. He digs out everything from his pockets—spare change, a fingernail clipper—lists the clothes on his body, the hatchet, and, as an afterthought, remembers that he also has himself. His assets are restricted to himself and the objects he carries with him only; although certain things about his environment—such as being close to a lake, full of water and fish—could be counted as a definite advantage, he does not count these in his favour. In fact, he does not even consider that there could be fish in the lake until quite late in the story: "Somehow it had never occurred to him to look *inside* the water—only at the surface. […] It was, he saw after a moment, literally packed with life" (*Hatchet*, 102, original

italics). There is a whole world in the water, but he limits his assets to the things he has brought with him from civilisation. Evernden talked about the relation of self to setting, which in Brian's case starts out as a perception of himself as the only thing he has, as the tourist who observes, but eventually morphs into something more akin to the resident's stance of being part of the place he is in.

The prolonged stay in the wilderness makes him more aware of his surroundings, however—like, for instance, the encounter with the wolves—and when he suddenly has access to objects of civilisation, he is not sure whether he wants them. The tornado that destroys Brian's shelter also makes the crashed airplane reappear in the middle of the lake, and Brian begins to build a raft in order to get to the plane and acquire the survival pack from it. The pack, he imagines, "probably had food and knives and matches. It might have a sleeping bag. It might have fishing gear. Oh, it must have so many wonderful things" (*Hatchet*, 152). Some of these things would surely make his life easier; but considering that he does have fire and a spear already, this longing for matches and fishing gear seems more like a desire to get back to the civilisation that they represent than a wish for the objects themselves.

He finds the survival pack and starts taking the things out of it one at a time to examine them closely, feeling as if he is unwrapping Christmas gifts. Among things like a knife, matches, butane lighters and a fishing kit, he also finds a .22 survival rifle. Just holding it "somehow removed him from everything around him. Without the rifle he had to fit in, to be part of it all, to understand it and use it—the woods, all of it. With the rifle, suddenly, he didn't have to know" (*Hatchet*, 173). The mere act of picking up the rifle changes him, he ponders, and he does not like the change. Although he previously longed for matches, using a butane lighter gives him a similar feeling, "that the lighter somehow removed him from where he was, what he had to know" (*Hatchet*, 173). The Brian that he was when he first crashed in the wilderness—the passive, strictly knowledge-based child of the city—has changed into someone who actively lives with his environment; and given a chance to change back to what he was before, he does not want to. Not long after these reflections, he is rescued and returns to his old life in civilisation, but the epilogue states that many of the alterations in him are permanent: he

is more observant, thoughtful, and he has a new appreciation of food: “all food, even food he did not like, never lost its wonder for him. For years after his rescue he would find himself stopping in grocery stores to just stare at the aisles of food, marveling at the quantity and the variety” (*Hatchet*, 179). He has left the stereotypically masculine stance towards nature behind and developed a more dynamic view of himself and his surroundings, one that lingers even after he is removed from the situation that has forced him to adapt his attitude.

Mary Jeanette Moran (2008: 5) remarks on the difficulty of maintaining “a new sense of normality in the presence of the old paradigm”, and illustrates this by pointing out Brian’s attitude towards the artificial food packages in the survival pack. He finds a packet of orange drink powder, and although the beverage is “sweet and tangy—almost too sweet” (*Hatchet*, 176), he drinks three in a row. Although Moran (2008: 5) admits to Brian’s reaction being perfectly understandable in light of his situation, she claims that “the ease with which Brian readjusts to the over-sweetened, artificial meals indicates why it is so hard for people to change the way they think about eating and, more generally, to modify an accepted version of normality”. The point is that, although Brian becomes another person in the wilderness, this wilderness persona need not necessarily be a permanent change, but only applicable to that milieu. Because the story ends when Brian is rescued, the epilogue is the only way the reader has of knowing whether the changes he has gone through remain with him when he returns to his normal environment. One might argue that the character stays within the limits of the book, and that speculation as to what that character would do if the story continued is futile; but Moran raises a valid point insofar as it highlights the subjectivity of Brian’s change. Because his adaptation to the wilderness is pointed out again and again, it raises the question of whether it could be perceived through his actions and thoughts even without the explicitness. Although the examples analysed in this thesis would suggest that a change does occur, questioning something that is so often pointed out does make sense.

For Moran (2008: 6), *Hatchet* “reifies conventional gender roles”, and although Brian comes to “redefine his ideas about environment, community, and the means of

subsistence", a change in the normality of gender roles never occurs in the novel. The protagonist learns ways to survive in the wilderness, but "the survival behaviors that Brian identifies as most useful happen to coincide with masculinised ideals of behaviour" (Moran 2008: 6). As an example, she uses the episode where Brian succumbs to tears, and afterwards decides that crying does not help: "It wasn't just that it was wrong to do, or that it was considered incorrect. It was more than that—it didn't work" (*Hatchet*, 77). In this way, she maintains, the text "presents societally constructed gender roles as inextricable from and motivated by the instinct of self-preservation" (Moran 2008: 6). Even though crying would hardly improve Brian's physical situation, it could "provide an emotional release that would then enable Brian to turn a more focused attention on practical matters" (Moran 2008: 6)—which indeed it does, as the boy wakes up from that episode with a clear idea of what he ought to do and in what order. Moran (2008: 6) says that this event implies that "the masculine ideal of stoicism is rooted in a very basic level of human nature: the impulse to survive", rather than being a construction of a certain culture at a specific point in time. Additionally, "the novel suggests that independence, which Brian attains through necessity, constitutes a good in itself apart from its survival value" (Moran 2008: 6). This can be compared to Mazi-Leskovar's (2004: 49) claim that wilderness stories present traditionally masculine attributes as life saving. These implied messages firmly root *Hatchet* in a tradition that preaches that the wilderness is a realm for boys, where there is no place for stereotypically feminine activities such as crying and working together as a team. In contrast, *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* stresses that Ronia would not survive in the wilderness without Birk, nor without the horse that provides them with milk; and the macho man Matt cries bitterly and publicly when Noddle-Pete dies, without comments about it being wrong or unproductive.

As seen, both books can be read differently from an ecofeminist point of view. The novel *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* fits the tradition of boys' books more than girls' books: Ronia's world consists primarily of men, and her role models are therefore male. Her closeness to nature is traditionally seen as feminine, however, and she displays stereotypically feminine characteristics such as empathy and nurturance. Brian is used to a life indoors, which has traditionally been connected with girls; but he clearly

separates himself from nature, and the ideals he identifies with are traditionally masculine. These different stereotypical gender roles are culturally constructed and based on Western society, which is also true for the subject of the following section, namely silence.

6.3 The Silence of the Wilderness

As stated in section 3.2.2, nature is often seen as silent in Western culture, which is a consequence of allowing voice only to supposedly superior human beings. In contrast, other cultures have recognised the voices of nature, animals and other silenced speakers. Silence is a feature in both the primary books of this thesis, but none of them portrays nature as predominantly silent; in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*, silence is almost unnatural and for the most part signals the presence of danger, while in *Hatchet*, it functions as one way of distinguishing the wilderness from the city life Brian is used to from home.

Ronia, the Robber's Daughter depicts nature as full of life, and consequently also full of sound. The sound of spring in particular is described in vivid terms. At one point, Ronia says to Birk: "Listen! You can hear spring, can't you?" and they stand silent together, "listening to the twittering and rushing and buzzing and singing and murmuring in their woods. There was life in every tree and watercourse and every green thicket; the bright, wild song of spring rang out everywhere" (*Ronia*, 78). When spring comes, Ronia always howls her "spring yell" (*Ronia*, 107), because spring is so magnificent and fills her up to the point of her bursting if she does not let it out. This is emblematic of how nature wakes up after the winter, when many animals hibernate, the river is frozen and the forest is quieter than in the summer. In contrast, when Ronia walks in the autumn woods, she remarks that it "was very quiet there now" (*Ronia*, 49). The book portrays a way of life where the changing of the seasons is of utmost importance and can be noticed with all the senses, hearing included.

Aside from symbolising winter, silence in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* often forebodes danger (which winter can be said to represent as well—certainly for the children living in a cave, at least). Far from being somehow Edenic and pristine, as for Baudrillard (Slocombe 2005: 496), silence in Ronia's world is something very unusual and therefore frightening. The first time Ronia and Birk meet, they keep jumping across the dangerous Hell's Gap in an unofficial competition over who is more daring. As they jump, "everything was deadly silent. It was as if the whole of Matt's Fort were sitting there on its peak, holding its breath, waiting for something truly terrible to happen at any minute" (*Ronia*, 25). And the terrible indeed happens—Birk falls into the chasm; but Ronia manages to save him. Later on, Ronia is walking in the forest, and again the silence is ominous:

> It was as if all the living things in the woods had fallen silent and died, and it made her feel uneasy. Were these her woods, the woods she knew and loved? Why were they so silent and menacing now? And what was that hiding in the mist? There was something there, something unknown and dangerous; she did not know what. And that scared her. (*Ronia*, 41)

Minutes later, she is bewitched by the Unearthly Ones, magical creatures that lure people underground, and she would certainly have followed them if Birk had not saved her. In this quote, it is clear that what scares Ronia about the silence is the unknown, that it is unfamiliar to her, someone who knows the forest like the back of her hand. The book, far from following the Western tradition of silencing nature, portrays silence as such a crucial part of the wilderness that its absence in most cases suggests that something is wrong.

Silence is unusual for Brian too, but in a different way. When he first arrives in the forest, he is struck at first by the silence. Moments before, the plane was crashing, making a great noise, and suddenly it is quiet. Now,

> it was silent, or he thought it was silent, but when he started to listen, really listen, he heard thousands of things. Hisses and blurks, small sounds, birds singing, hum of insects, splashes from the fish jumping—there was great noise here, but a noise he did not know, and the colors were new to him, and the colors and noise mixed

> in his mind to make a green-blue blur he could hear, hear as a hissing pulse-sound and he was still tired. (*Hatchet*, 38–39)

As a boy born and raised in a big city, Brian is used to noise, but not the kind of noise that meets him in the wilderness. It is just one more thing that is unfamiliar in the forest and all of it is intimidating to begin with. However, spending more time there, he gets used to it, and it changes him. Sounds start to mean more to him and he says to himself, "I hear differently. He did not know when the change started, but it was there; when a sound came to him now he didn't just hear it but would know the sound" (*Hatchet*, 100). The sounds of the forest become more than sounds—they are sounds made by someone, something, for some reason. Here, like in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*, the wilderness is not silenced, but full of voices with intent.

Nevertheless, it is a real revelation for Brian when he actually encounters silence for the first time. Frustrated by his situation, he howls, startling everything in the forest, and when he stops screaming, it is completely quiet. Brian "listened with his mouth open, and realized that in all his life he had never heard silence before. Complete silence. There had always been some sound, some kind of sound" (*Hatchet*, 47). It does not take long before the usual buzzing and cawing starts up again, but "it was so intense that it seemed to become part of him. Nothing. There was no sound" (*Hatchet*, 48). While Ronia's howl was an organic part of the "fresh, wild song of spring" (*Ronia*, 176), Brian's startles the wilderness to a silence that is as unusual in his environment as in the Lindgren book. The silence here functions as a divider, separating Brian from his surroundings; because it is completely unfamiliar to him, and because the noise he makes is alien enough to the creatures in the forest that they are startled to silence.

Brian changes a lot during the course of the book, and one of the changes is the new perceptive skill he develops. He becomes one of many beings in the forest, and when he hears a sound, he can "know what the sound was before he quite realized he had heard it" (*Hatchet*, 100). His learning to listen to nature is significant as it pertains to the discussion of privileged speakers and silenced nature. The rhetoric of silence that, according to Manes, only gives voice to human beings as the speaking subjects is

reversed as Brian learns to take nature seriously and listen. Not only is nature not seen as silent; but the sounds of the wilderness are also explicitly admitted to being full of meaning and worthy of being listened to.

His new nature self is only attuned to the sounds of the wilderness, which leads to him not recognising the sound of what is most probably a search plane looking for him. He is working on a piece of wood to make a bow and concentrates hard on the task at hand when there is a noise:

> A persistent whine, like the insects only more steady with an edge of a roar to it, was in his ears and he chopped and cut and was thinking of a bow, how he would make a bow, how it would be when he shaped it with the hatchet and still the sound did not cut through until the limb was nearly off the tree and the whine was inside his head and he knew it then.
> A plane! It was a motor, far off but seeming to get louder. They were coming for him! (*Hatchet*, 109–110).

Although his newfound understanding for the sounds of the wilderness is useful there, it seems to have closed off the part of his brain that is still connected to his previous life in civilisation. Because it takes him so long to recognise the sound, the plane has gone before he has time to make a bonfire large enough to be seen from above. It seems that it is impossible for him to live in both worlds at the same time.

None of the books portrays the wilderness as silent, but full of life and sound, deviating from the Western tradition of robbing nature of its voice. But there is silence in both books: in *Hatchet* it features as something completely new and foreign to Brian that separates him from his surroundings; and in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* it symbolises some sort of threat. Besides foreboding danger, it also is a sign of the approaching winter, which brings with it harsh weather conditions that will be discussed in the following section.

6.4 Storms and Snow

When the protagonists live in a cave or a shelter woven of tree branches in the wilderness, they are more exposed to weather than in their respective homes. In that situation, they are forced to live on nature's terms in a very concrete way, as tornadoes destroy their shelter and the winter brings cold and snow. It is one thing to live in the wilderness when the sun is shining and nights are warm, quite another to battle storms and bad weather, which is why it makes sense to analyse how the characters of the book are subjected to and deal with different aspects of weather.

Ronia and Birk get on very well in the cave initially, but as summer turns into fall, the threat of winter becomes more pronounced. From the beginning, they both realise that winter might be the death of them if they continue living in the cave, but they try not to think about it. Any time the subject comes up, they avoid it by referring that problem to the future, dismissing it with a shrug: "it was a long time until winter" (*Ronia*, 113). But the thoughts are there constantly: even as Ronia enjoys a horseback ride on a warm summer evening, she reflects that she "loved her forest and all that was in it. All the trees, […] all the flowers, animals, and birds—then why did it sometimes feel so melancholy, and why must it one day be winter?" (*Ronia*, 136). Through the autumn rains, thunderstorms and cold they live in the cave, but it is not until Ronia's father comes to make up with her and take her home that they leave it. The menacing nature of winter is reminiscent of the Icy Mother-tradition mentioned in section 3.2.1, as cold and demanding submission; but when the kids have returned to the Fort, they can also see the beautiful and loving part of the Arctic nature again. This aspect reflects the Scandinavian winter, and goes along with Wood's (2004: 198–199) point about a different tradition depicting a non-paradisiacal human survival, as opposed to the Romantic notion of a kind Mother Nature.

When Brian first arrives in the wilderness, he builds an improvised shelter by a stone ridge using dead branches. It hides him well enough from the wind and rain, but as a consequence of a skunk attacking him and eating his food, he goes about making the shelter sturdier to protect him and keep him safe as well. He spends three days fastening

logs and weaving long branches in between to create a wall, but his hard work is undone when a tornado hits. He can do nothing but watch as “the wind took the whole wall, his bed, the fire, his tools—all of it—and threw it out into the lake, gone out of sight, gone forever” (*Hatchet*, 145–146). He is back to where he was after the plane crash: hurt in the dark, with nothing but himself and the hatchet that he still wears on his belt. But the stay in the wilderness has changed him. He says to himself that he is changed: “I’m tough where it counts—tough in the head”, and addresses something else—nature? God? Fate?—when he jeers: “come on. Is that the best you can do? Is that all you can hit me with […] Well, that won’t get the job done” (*Hatchet*, 148; 147). The circumstances make the wilderness feel antagonistic and he sees his existence as a battle between himself and his environment.

Like Ronia and Birk, Brian does not actually have to live through winter in the wilderness, but returns to his home. He is rescued while it is still summer, and although he does come up with ways to store food for future meals, he very much lives from day to day and never thinks about how the change of seasons will affect him. However, the narrator uses the epilogue to tell the reader that Brian’s chances of survival in case he would have had to stay in the forest come fall and winter were not great. He states that predictions are generally futile, but that winter “would have been very rough on him” because he would have lost his sources of food—the fish would have been out of reach when the lake froze, and predators would have made game scarce and sometimes nonexistent (*Hatchet*, 180). This lack of food is of course a result of the weather changing, but of actual weather and how that would affect Brian, the narrator says nothing.

Harsh weather conditions function as a menace in both books, and are one example of the rougher sides of the wilderness. In *Ronia, the Robber’s Daughter,* the worst kind of weather is the snow and minus temperatures that winter brings, which would make it hard to keep warm and possibly even prevent Ronia and Birk from leaving the cave. It is only a threat when the children live away from home, however, and they are able to appreciate the weather again as soon as they have a warm home to return to in the evenings. In *Hatchet*, the tornado that destroys Brian’s shelter is the harshest aspect of

the weather, because it undermines everything that he has built and manufactured for himself so far, and takes him back to the hopeless situation he was in when the plane first crashed in the forest. Apart from physically putting him in a similar situation, it also brings back the attitude he had in the beginning, when he saw nature as the enemy that continually threw challenge after challenge at him.

In conclusion, the wilderness in both books functions as an opposite to civilisation, an environment that the protagonists go out into and return from in the end. For Ronia, this trip into the wilderness represents escape, while for Brian the adventure is forced upon him, and the wilderness becomes an enemy. But both books also emphasise positive aspects of the milieu, predominantly the aesthetics, which the children experience in different ways—Ronia more actively, and Brian more passively. None of the novels represents nature as silent; silence is rather seen as unusual, and especially in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* forebodes danger. This chapter also discussed the books from an ecofeminist perspective as representatives of a primarily male wilderness text tradition, which the books both follow to a certain degree, but in different ways. While *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* as a whole presents a stereotypically masculine narrative, it has a female protagonist, who has a close relationship with nature. *Hatchet* projects stereotypically masculine norms, although Brian is used to a life indoors. Having thus analysed the primary material in detail, the following chapter will draw conclusions and attempt to show the relevance of this whole discussion.

7 CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has analysed nature representations in *Hatchet* and *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* from an ecocritical perspective in order to identify the basic attitudes towards the non-human world that these books convey, primarily through their protagonists. The hypothesis was that these approaches are different in the two books, as one of the main characters has lived her whole life in the forest, while the other has only encountered nature in mediated form. The analysis has shown that the novels de facto do contain varying implicit stances in terms of how the protagonists relate to different aspects of nature, but that *Hatchet* in particular includes a major development and that nature is seen differently at the beginning of the novel compared with the ending.

The analysis has focused on the protagonists' attitudes, as the implicit reader of fiction is often expected to identify with the main character, thus experiencing the narrative from that person's point of view and mediated through that character's values and opinions. The first analysis chapter considered a key point of the hypothesis, which is the basic attitude of the protagonists. From the beginning, there is a fundamental difference in the way Ronia and Brian approach nature: Ronia is active, while Brian is passive. While Ronia dives into the wilderness with all of her senses, and actively searches out every nook and cranny of the forest in order to get to know it, Brian gets his taste of nature through some sort of mediation—TV, books, films—and when faced with the real thing, he continues to look to these sources for information. He changes substantially during the course of the book and adapts a more active attitude of learning by doing and from his mistakes, but maintains something of his passivity throughout.

The following two analysis chapters then discussed different representations of animals and the wilderness, primarily from a deep ecologist and ecofeminist point of view. These two ecocritical positions were the main authorities for the theoretical framework of all the analysis of this thesis. While most of the ecocritical discussion of this thesis could be said to be deep ecologist—as Garrard says, it is the implicit or explicit perspective of most ecocritics, and this is no exception—the main deep ecologist point of interest concerns the intrinsic value of all living creatures, and whether this is

reflected in the stories or not. In *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter,* Birk is the primary representative of deep ecology, particularly as he points out to Ronia that she strips the animals of the forest of their claims to it when she regards it as hers and only hers. But aside from her possessive tendencies—which debatably can be seen as her forming a connection to the land and becoming native to her place—Ronia has a great love and appreciation of the forest and everything in it. She also tends to regard most living creatures with the same attitude, illustrated by the fact that she reacts in the same way when seeing the human boy Birk for the first time as when she sees water lilies and the river for the first time: rejoicing in their existence. However, both children display a dominating attitude when trying to capture a couple of horses to ride on, and although the mutually beneficial relationship with another horse nuances their approach to them, they continue asserting their assumed superiority over the stallions. For Brian in *Hatchet,* recognising the intrinsic value of other living creatures is an acquired ability, but as he spends more time in the wilderness, he comes to see himself as merely one part in a larger ecosystem. This realisation only comes from the encounter with a wolf, and does not seem to stretch to include, for example, the birds he describes as "so dumb" (*Hatchet*, 131), however.

The ecofeministic framework most referred to in this thesis was Val Plumwood's theory of hierarchical dualism, consisting of backgrounding, radical exclusion, incorporation, instrumentalism and homogenisation. As seen in the analysis, several of these can be found to various degrees in the primary texts. Ronia shows signs of radical exclusion, that is claiming higher capabilities for herself, when she assumes that the horses do not understand kindness and need to be taught better manners. In the same episode, she also displays incorporation, defining an assumed inferior according to how well it fulfils her own needs, when the horses are only seen as their riding animals, with no will or rights of their own. Brian in *Hatchet* shows signs of incorporation as well when he does not consider that the fish he eats live their lives independent of him. Both these instances could also be seen as instrumentalism, as the horses and fish are only perceived as instruments of the children's will, as transportation and a source of nourishment, respectively. Plumwood also writes how this hierarchical dualism can be overcome, and traces of that can to a lesser extent be found in both books. In the case of Brian and the

fish, he is faced with the evidence, and recognises that the animals have needs independent of him, thereby taking a step towards overcoming instrumentalism.

Although the analysis chapters have mainly discussed the protagonists and their attitudes, it makes sense at this point to take a step back and consider how the books overall represent nature. The episode with the fox cubs, when Ronia displays possessive tendencies and Birk lectures her about it, is an example of a situation where the attitude of the protagonist and the narrative as a whole do not match. Although Ronia is a prime example of the traditional Western stance of assuming superiority over and laying claims to the environment, the author has chosen to have another character question these views and reject them. The result is that the reader becomes aware of this attitude, which, were it implicit, would perhaps not be noticed at all. But through the explicit rejection of the possessive stance, the book communicates the message that the forest belongs to everyone and that every living creature has intrinsic value. The overall impression of *Hatchet* is also that the book represents nature in what from a deep ecologist perspective could be seen as a positive way, as the narrative shows Brian as more successful and more likely to survive as he becomes more attuned to nature. However, because of his extreme situation, it is hard to say whether his newfound wilderness persona is applicable to life in civilisation.

Nature in *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter* is portrayed as beautiful, diverse, full of life and a natural part of the characters' lives. Although there are a number of instances where Ronia acts superior and dominating, the book as a whole represents nature in a positive way and the affection shines through—as Gaare and Sjaastad (2004: 78) put it, it is a love song to nature. The character of Ronia is indeed nature-based to the point that it is questionable whether she could exist removed from her setting. In comparison, Brian's wilderness experience changes him, but his adventure could plausibly have taken place in another location. The nature representations in *Hatchet* illustrate a more antagonistic nature, but through the development of Brian's character, nature eventually also provides comfort and beauty. However, the novel conveys a more extractive view of nature, as Brian's life in the wilderness to a large extent consists of obtaining firewood, food and other things he needs. Ronia, in contrast, is predominantly content

with spending time in the wilderness, without seeing it as a provider of various necessities—but then again, she does not need to, as her parents provide for her for the majority of the novel.

This project started with Richard Louv's book (2008) concerning the small amount of time contemporary American children spend in nature, and morphed into questions about whether this was true for children in Northern Europe as well. Personal experiences suggested there might be a difference, and sparked an interest to find out whether this assumed difference is real and if it can be tracked in children's literature as well. Although the hypothesis of this thesis contains speculation that the possible difference in attitudes toward nature in the specific primary material can be partially derived from the different cultural context in which they were created, no such theory can of course be proven through a literary analysis of the books themselves. From the analysis, it seems clear, however, that the novels do in fact represent nature differently. Nonetheless, they both share the common trait of being firmly rooted in a natural setting, and communicating a way of living that is unfamiliar to most children in both the United States and Sweden. They both project positive representations of nature and, most importantly, portray a way of living where the environment is a natural and very much present part of everyday life.

WORKS CITED

Primary Works

Lindgren, Astrid (1981/1985). *Ronia, the Robber's Daughter*. (*Ronja Rövardotter*, translated by Patricia Crampton). New York, NY: Puffin Books.

Paulsen, Gary (1987). *Hatchet.* New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.

Secondary Works

Abbey, Edward (1968). *Desert Solitaire. A Season in the Wilderness.* New York, NY: Ballantine Books.

Astridlindgren.se (2009). "Verken" [The works] [Web address]. Stockholm: Saltkråkan Ab, last updated 30th March 2010 [Cited 15.8.2009]. Available at: www.astridlindgren.se/verken

Bassnett, Susan (1993). *Comparative Literature. A Critical Introduction.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc.

Björk, Christina & Eva Eriksson (2007). *Astrids äventyr—innan hon blev Astrid Lindgren* [Astrid's adventures—before she became Astrid Lindgren]. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren.

Brown, Jean E. & Elaine C. Stephens (1995). *Teaching Young Adult Literature. Sharing the Connection.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Byerly, Alison (1996). "The Uses of Landscape. The Picturesque Aesthetic and the National Park System." In *The Ecocriticism Reader. Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press. 52–68.

Campbell, SueEllen (1996). "The Land and Language of Desire." In *The Ecocriticism Reader*. *Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press. 124–136.

Dawson, Joanna (2009). "'A Moon Without Metaphors': Memory, Wilderness, and the Nocturnal in the Poetry of Don McKay." In *Journal of Ecocriticism* [online] 1: 2, [Cited 3.11.2009] 65–75. Available at: http://ojs.unbc.ca/index.php/joe/article/viewFile/116/223

Dillard, Annie (1998/1974). *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek.* New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

Dobrin, Sidney I. & Kenneth B. Kidd (2004). “Introduction: Into the Wild.” In *Wild Things. Children’s Culture and Ecocriticism.* Eds. Sidney I. Dobrin and Kenneth B. Kidd. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press. 1–15.

DuPlessis, Nicole M. (2004). “ecoLewis. Conservationism and Anticolonialism in *The Chronicles of Narnia.*” In *Wild Things. Children’s Culture and Ecocriticism.* Eds. Sidney I. Dobrin and Kenneth B. Kidd. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press. 115–127.

Egan, Gabriel (2006). *Green Shakespeare. From ecopolitics to ecocriticism.* London: Routledge.

Eneroth, Bo (1984). *Hur mäter man “vackert”? Grundbok i kvalitativ metod.* [How can ”beautiful” be measured? Introduction to the qualitative method.] Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.

Evernden, Neil (1996). “Beyond Ecology. Self, Place and the Pathetic Fallacy.” In *The Ecocriticism Reader. Landmarks in Literary Ecology.* Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press. 92–104.

Gaare, Jørgen & Øystein Sjaastad (2004). *Världens bästa påhitt. Nya filosofiska vandringar i Astrid Lindgrens värld.* (*Pippi og Sokrates. Filosofiske vandringer i Astrid Lindgrens verden*, translated by Ulla-Stina Rask.) [The best invention in the world. New philosophical wanderings in Astrid Lindgren’s world.] Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.

“Gary Paulsen” (2009). About Gary; Library [Web address]. New York, NY: Random House Inc., updated 20th January 2009, [Cited 20.8.2009]. Available at: http://www.randomhouse.com/features/garypaulsen/

Garrard, Greg (2004). *Ecocriticism.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Glotfelty, Cheryll (1996). “Introduction.” In *The Ecocriticism Reader. Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press. xv–xxxvii.

Greene, Graham (1951). *The Lost Childhood and other essays.* London: Eyre & Spottiswoode.

Howarth, William (1996/1995). “Some Principles of Ecocriticism.” In *The Ecocriticism Reader. Landmarks in Literary Ecology.* Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press. 69–91.

Klingberg, Göte (1968). *Barn- och ungdomsboken förr och nu.* [The historical and contemporary children’s and young adult book.] Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.

Jackson, Wes (1994). *Becoming Native to This Place.* New York, NY: Counterpoint.

Jansen, Claire (2009). "Poe(Trees) of Place: Forest Poethics in Lithuania and Tasmania." In *Journal of Ecocriticism* [online] 1: 2, [Cited 13.11.2009] 42–54. Available at: http://ojs.unbc.ca/index.php/joe/article/viewFile/112/209

Lakoff, George & Mark Johnson (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Lassén-Seger, Maria (2004). "Exploring Otherness: Changes in the Child-Animal Metamorphosis Motif." In *Change and Renewal in Children's Literature.* Ed. Thomas van der Walt. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers. 35–46.

Louv, Richard (2005/2008). *Last Child in the Woods. Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder.* Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.

Manes, Christopher (1996). "Nature and Silence." In *The Ecocriticism Reader. Landmarks in Literary Ecology.* Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press. 15–29.

Mazi-Leskovar, Darja (2004). "A Happy Blend of Universality and Novelty: *Julie of the Wolves* and *A Ring of Endless Light* as Stories Crossing the Animal-Human Boundary." In *Change and Renewal in Children's Literature*. Ed. Thomas van der Walt. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers. 47–57.

Moran, Mary Jeanette (2008). "Is Nature Natural?: Negotiating Normality in Gary Paulsen's *Hatchet*". 35th Annual Children's Literature Association Conference. Illinois State University. Unpublished Conference Paper.

Mårtensson, Fredrika (2004). *Landskapet i leken. En studie av utomhuslek på förskolegården.* [The landscape in the game. A study of outdoor play at the pre-school yard.] Alnarp: Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Natov, Roni (2007). "Pippi and Ronia. Astrid Lindgren's light and dark pastoral." In *Barnboken. Journal of Children's Literature Research* 30: 1–2, 92–99.

Nikolajeva, Maria (1996). *Introduction to the Theory of Children's Literature.* 2nd edition. Tallinn: Tallinn Pedagogical University.

Nikolajeva, Maria (2007). "Astrid Lindgren—famous and unknown." In *Barnboken. Journal of Children's Literature Research* 30: 1–2, 1–5.

Paulsen, Gary (2001). *Guts. The True Stories Behind* Hatchet *and the Brian Books.* New York, NY: Random House Children's Books.

Plumwood, Val (1993). *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. London: Routledge.

Raglon, Rebecca (2009). ”The Post Natural Wilderness & Its Writers.” In *Journal of Ecocriticism* [online] 1: 1, [Cited 3.11.2009] 60–66. Available at: http://ojs.unbc.ca/index.php/joe/article/viewFile/28/145

Rowling, J.K. (2003). *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Rueckert, William (1996). “Literature and Ecology. An Experiment in Ecocriticism.” In *The Ecocriticism Reader. Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press. 105–123.

Rudd, David (2007). “The animal figure in Astrid Lindgren’s work” in *Barnboken. Journal of Children’s Literature Research* 30: 1–2, 38–47.

Slocombe, Will (2005). “Littered with meaning: the problem of sign pollution in postmodern, post-structuralist and ecocritical thought.” In *Textual Practice* [online]. 19: 4, [Cited 29.10.2009] 493–508. Available at: http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=6&hid=102&sid=0049f22f-9cc9-4a86-bc46-885f8544b248%40sessionmgr104

Soper, Kate (2000/1995). “The Idea of Nature.” In *The Green Studies Reader. From Romanticism to Ecocriticism.* Ed. Laurence Coupe. London: Routledge. 123–126.

Svensson, Sonja (1999). “Dödspolare, skuggmän och förlorade fader. Idyllfobin i 1990-talets ungdomsbok.” [Death buddies, shadowmen, and lost fathers. The idyll-phobia in the 1990’s young adult novel.] In *Forankring og fornying. Nordiske ungdomsromaner fram mot år 2000.* [Anchorage and renewal. Nordic young adult novels before 2000.] Eds. Eli Flatekval, Terttu-Elina Kalaja, Ola Losløkk, Ingrid Nettervik, Bjarne Købmand Petersen and Þuríður Jóhannsdóttir. Oslo: LNU. 107–121.

Tenngart, Paul (2008). *Litteraturteori.* [Literary Theory.] Malmö: Gleerups Utbildning AB.

Þuríður Jóhannsdóttir (1999). “Utenfor bymuren—om folkelig kulturarv og synet på islandsk natur i noen nyere ungdomsbøker.” [Outside the city walls—about folk culture heritage and the perception of Icelandic nature in some newer young adult books.] In *Forankring og fornying. Nordiske ungdomsromaner fram mot år 2000*. Eds. Flatekval et al. Oslo: LNU. 122–144.

Trites, Roberta Seelinger (2001). ”The Harry Potter Novels as a Test Case for Adolescent Literature.” In *Style* 35: 3. 472–485.

Warren, Karen J. (1996). ”Ecological Feminist Philosophies. An Overview of the Issues.” In *Ecological Feminist Philosophies.* Ed. Karen J. Warren. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press. ix–xxvi.

White, Lynn Jr. (1996). “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis.” In *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology.* Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press. 3-14.

Wilderness Act (1964). U.S. Public Law 3.9.1964, 88–577 [online]. [Cited 8.1.2010] Available at: http://wilderness.nps.gov/document/WildernessAct.pdf

Wilson, Edward O (2002). *The Future of Life*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Wood, Naomi (2004). “(Em)bracing Icy Mothers. Ideology, Identity, and Environment in Children’s Fantasy.” In *Wild Things. Children’s Culture and Ecocriticism.* Eds. Sidney I. Dobrin and Kenneth B. Kidd. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press. 198–214.