AN ECOPOETIC INQUIRY INTO

EMILY DICKINSON'S DWELLING EARTHWARD

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AN ECOPOETIC INQUIRY INTO
EMILY DICKINSON'S DWELLING EARTHWARD

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

An Ecopoetic Inquiry into Emily Dickinson's Dwelling Earthward

This thesis re-introduces Emily Dickinson as a nature poet and furthermore, an ecopoet through the examination of selected poems with an emphasis on the unique features applied by the poet from breaking down grammar rules to upsetting the conventional rhythmic ordinance of verse. The importance of Dickinson's peculiar composition is underlined after the philosophical discussion of animal from antiquity to present day, from an ontological outcast to an ethical object and finally to an autonomous subject. Introduction of ecology to literature and in particular to poetry is analysed through ecocriticism. With a specific emphasis on the current environmental crisis and animal liberation movements, this thesis re-reads Dickinson's poetry with the help of animal studies and ecopetic disciplinary approaches. By presenting Emily Dickinson's dwelling earthward as an exemplary one and perhaps as a way of salvation of human and non-human relations, the ultimate aim is to show the possibility to enhance the perception of nature in the eyes of human animal by carrying it from the circumference to the centre of attention.

ÖZET

Emily Dickinson'ın Dünyaya İkameti Üzerine Ekoeleştirel Bir Çalışma

Bu tez, Emily Dickinson'ın dilbilgisi kurallarını bozmasından, şiirin geleneksel kafiye şemasını altüst etmesine kadar, kendine özgü özelliklerini vurgulayarak seçilmiş şiirlerini incelemek suretiyle şairi bir doğa şairi, dahası bir ekoşair olarak yeniden tanıtmayı amaçlamaktadır. Hayvanın, antikçağdan günümüze kadar felsefedeki yeri, ontolojik bir yabancı oluşundan, etik bir nesne ve en son özerk bir özne oluşu tartışmasından sonra, Dickinson'ın kendi has şiir söylemesinin öneminin altı çizilmektedir. Ekoeleştiri ve ekoşiir vasıtasıyla ekolojinin edebiyat ve özelikle şiirle tanışması incelenmektedir. Doğayı çemberin dışından, ilginin odağına taşıyarak insan hayvanının gözündeki doğa algısını yükseltmenin mümkünlüğünü göstermek için bugünkü çevresel krizi ve hayvan özgürleşmesi hareketlerine vurgu yapan bu tez Dickinson'ın şiirini, hayvan çalışmaları ve ekoşiirsel disiplin yaklaşımıyla yeniden okumaktadır. Bu çalışma, Emily Dickinson'ın dünyaya ikametini bir örnek ve insan ve insan-dışı için belki de bir kurtuluş olarak sunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This is the age of environmental crisis. The bees, the worms are disappearing, the trees are being pulled out from their roots, the globe is heating or flooding, a garbage island as big as the state of Texas is swimming in the ocean, the plastic used for ten minutes ends up blocking the throat of a bird or piling in the stomach of a great sperm whale. All of this began with the exile of animal from human society. In Europe from the thirteenth century to the eighteenth, animal was considered to be capable of being responsible for the damage it gave; like the human perpetrator, animal was held in authorities' custody till its trial. Even though, almost always animal was found guilty, a trial was necessary. This practice is not applied now that present human society believe animal does not hold a moral agency to be punished for the actions it takes. However, losing the moral agent status for animal came with losing its physical place in society; animal is now absent from the same streets once it walked freely. Animal has been one of the great philosophical discussions because it is believed that defining animal's place means defining human's place in nature. Reminiscent of the Saussurean gesture of establishing one thing through its negative; what human is thought to be is the thing that which is not an animal. Therefore, to prove in what ways human is not an animal is the main concern for human animals who cast non-human animal out.

This thesis joins this discussion through the oeuvre of one particular poet and the way she interacts with nature in her poetry. Since the emphasis is especially on animal in

this study, it opens with the discussion of animal and animality through the prominent philosophers' interactions with animal and animality. Animal is traced from the antiquity as an ontological outcast, to the present day as an autonomous subject. Once animal's subjecthood is established in philosophy, this study introduces ecocriticism and ecopoetry to base its argument concerning animal and nature in literary disciplines. This subjecthood grants natural life's place on the text as it is in physical life and consequently strips nature of off the cultural baggage it has been carrying in representation. This approach to literature affects the reading of Emily Dickinson's poetry and when her nature is studied along with zoology, entomology and ecology it indicates the possibility of earthy relation with nature. As a general pattern of Dickinson's poetry, human persona's encounter with the small worlds around her especially underlines the importance of even the smallest parts of nature. Through this act of highlighting the natural world beneath the feet, this study aims to remind human beings' place in nature and perhaps topples their authority. The only way to prevent the current environmental crisis is to acknowledge the endless number of worlds around ours and recognise their importance as no less than humans'.

The chapter names of this study follow the metamorphosis of butterfly: "Egg," "Caterpillar," "Chrysalis" and "Butterfly." After the introduction, the second chapter of this thesis, "Egg" analyses animal's place in philosophy. Beginning with the first query about animal with Aristotle, ends with a contemporary animal liberation scholar Peter Singer. Between these two, Cartesian, Kantian, Hegelian and Heideggerian animals are discussed and examined one by one with their main differences. From the beginning of animal's journey in philosophy, it has been considered as a complete other and the ontological difference, as it can be seen through the first chapter, has become greater

with each scholar till Heidegger. After the rupture provided by Heidegger, the ontological discussion will be replaced with biological and consequently ethical one. With the help of Darwinian view of continuation among species and Uexküll's observation about animal perception of the immediate environment. Animal, both as a philosophical and a biological question is present in this chapter.

The third chapter, "Caterpillar" introduces ecocriticism as the theoretical background of this thesis. From its historical roots with questions like why and why now, ecocriticism is discussed in this chapter. Merging ecology with literature, it is ecocriticism's main argument that the way nature is represented should be examined closely to establish a new criticism which will aid humans' perception of the world around them. Combined with the scientific approach established in the first chapter, here away from the anthropocentric view, the possibility of a better language is constituted. As the forerunners of the field, Huxley, Meeker and Rueckert's works are examined along with the contemporary representatives of ecocriticism. With a transition to the poetic discourse, here ecopoetry is introduced, as well. A subfield of ecocriticism, ecopoetry is traced back to the ecologically conscious verses of both English romantic and American transcendentalist traditions.

The fourth chapter "Chrysalis" introduces an Emily Dickinson apart from her letters and as the poet who produced everlasting poetry. Although her description as the white moth of Amherst, referring to what she wore, how she confided herself and the town she spent almost her entire life in, is very tempting, from this chapter on, this study concentrates on her manuscripted poetry rather than her biographical details. As it has been established in the studies about Dickinson, even when the sole purpose of the study is her poetry, critics end up discussion her recluse life more than the hundreds of poems

she produced before her death. Apart from this loyalty to the work of the poet, the aim of this study is to offer a fresh perspective looking at Dickinson as a nature and even an ecopoet. Because of the overall confessional tone in her poems and quaint lifestyle of the poet Dickinson has been considered as a continuation of romantic tradition in some circles and a representative of transcendentalism in some other circles.

Dickinson's dwelling earthward, giving its title to this study, comes from a letter she wrote and summarises her wish in life. Her persona seems to reject the kingdom above to have enough of nature. However, she knows that this is an impossible task: "Of Nature I shall have enough / When I have entered these / Entitled to a Bumble bee's / Familiarities" (J1220). [1] This little poem gives the essence of Dickinson's poetry. The persona is always in quest to go back to nature, to become a part of it again. Her own familiarities do not quench the persona, she wants to know more of the life below her feet and above her head. Aware of the fact that she is an animal fallen from nature, she observes it diligently.

Like in the Bible, this fall, too, comes with knowledge. This time knowledge of language is what makes Dickinson an outcast. There is a stark difference between the earth she observes which is not silent but not understandable to her human ears, and what she speaks which is understandable but renders her a stranger to nature. After this point, Dickinson's poetry becomes a place of struggle for the persona trying to understand but not attach meanings and names to animals and other creatures. She observes nature and recites it in the only way she knows how. She compares the mass of a group of insects to a Christian mass and their songs to a hymn. She interprets nature

[1] Throughout this study Thomas H. Johnson's editing and numbering of Dickinson poems is preferred; the letter "J" before the number of poems indicates the last name of the preferred editor.

"New Englandly" (J285). It is important to underline this feature of Dickinson's, namely never losing her human perspective. She dwells earthward as much as possible as a human and mostly looks at the tiniest creatures which are closest to the earth with envy.

At this point the poet's circumference discourse becomes significant. By this I refer to Dickinson's attention for the worlds that are not visible to the eyes which are fixed at the centre. In a letter she writes "My business is circumference" (Dickinson, 1931, p. 290). This shows her displease with what is at the centre. In the same way, her persona never directs her gaze to the centre. Her business is to observe circumference and bring what it contains to the centre, as the subject of the poem. During this practice, she states the wordless nature and its wonders mostly because nature achieves far superior art than hers without uttering a word. For the circumference discourse, the act of noticing the small nature like bees and worms around her becomes quite significant because those creatures are exactly what populate the circumference. For that reason Dickinson's poetry is filled with these animals of the earth. Another important characteristic of Emily Dickinson is that even though she is a language founder, she avoids being a namer of nature. She is aware that nature does not operate with names. She knows that naming one thing eventually causes that thing to end up in the circumference because it loses what is unknown about it. For that reason her persona is bitter about religion, in the holy book of which nature is only there to give a lesson or become an exile. She cherishes science over religion many times in her poetry. The reason for that is the fact that science carries the two qualities that Dickinson has, wonder and humility before nature.

The fifth chapter of this thesis connects the discussion that has been carried in the second and third chapters now with the poetic stance of Emily Dickinson. Her poetry

responds in many ways to the issues of animal studies, ecocriticism and ecopoetry. Animal that has been banished from the daily life finds a representation, and an almost accurate representation in her poetry. The way she lets animals, plants, rocks be is the main reason why she is considered as an ecopoet in the context of this study. The question of animal touches all these fields of philosophy, biology, ethics and poetics, and becomes unanswerable with just that which is not a human.

This study highlights the importance of Emily Dickinson's approach to nature for ecocriticism and animal studies. The way the poet comes closer to the earth to observe the minutest creatures becomes a pathway to turn the "I" of the poet into "eye" of her. Even though with a romantic sensibility Dickinson's personas utter the word "I" or even though with a transcendentalist sensibility, they try to be the overseer of nature, it is oftentimes seen that the "I" of the persona is her eyes which do not carry an omniscient power, on the contrary they fail to see everything. In their quaint position, Dickinson's personas are the ones who repeatedly fail to become one with nature, even though they wish to do so. The main reason of this constant failure turns out to be the human language that renders human persona a complete stranger to the life around her. For this reason Dickinson's poetry seem to be closer to the philosophy of Jacques Derrida because he believes the biological continuation between human and animal is not enough to save what has been lost through language. However, Dickinson's constant act of returning to nature to observe and highlight even the smallest among creatures, carries her poetry closer to idea of each creature's having a perceptual world of themselves. This also underlines the ability of those creatures having a meaningful existence without the interference of human. Thus, this approach of her poetry converges on Jakob von Uexküll's *Umwelt* as it suggests millions of perceptual worlds of animals living together

without one having a dominance over the others. Therefore throughout this thesis, a new approach to Emily Dickinson will be introduced where anthropocentric reading of her poetry is replaced with a more ecologically conscious one to situate the poet among the precursors of ecopoetry.

This study differentiates from the other researches focusing on Dickinson's ecopoetic tendencies. There has been a tradition of fascination with the poet's life as it has been regarded out of ordinary. In this regard, the critics have been reading her garden as her escape place from a society she had been estranged. The novelty that this thesis brings to the ecopoetic discussion of Emily Dickinson comes from its refraining from the biographical speculations about the poet and her letters. This study focuses only on the poetry of Emily Dickinson through the question of nature and especially through the question of animal.

CHAPTER 2

EGG

"Answer me, mechanist, has nature arranged all the springs of feeling in this animal in order that he should not feel?"

Voltaire in *Philosophical Dictionary* on Bêtes: Animals

Animal has always been in question even though animal studies, being a part of the important movements of the 20th century is quite a belated one among the others. This chapter will follow that movement beginning with the introduction of animal to philosophy and how it is perceived by different scholars through history. Along with the animal in question, animality of human and of animal will be discussed. Through these inquiries, the question concerning animal will be seen to be evolved from ontological to ethical in the end. Therefore it will lead to a more contemporary subject of what animal is and what it means to human.

2.1 Animal in ontological question

The most famous and the oldest of these questions begins with Aristotle. Socrates, before Aristotle and pre-Socrates philosophers before him had views on what animal is; however it is Aristotle who questions animal as a matter of a philosophical inquiry by itself for the first time. For this reason, he is accepted as the first zoologist in the scientific circle and also the one who introduces animal in philosophy "by transcending the nominal definition of what a body is and determining its organic designation"

(Yücefer, 2015, p. 226, own translation) .[2] In *Nicomachean Ethics* (1926) Aristotle discusses what human virtue is and answers: "excellence of soul" (p. 61). The excellence of soul is tied to body in Aristotle as he claims that the soul is divided into two by "irrational and other capable of reason" (p. 63). This seems to be the root of the discussion which is at the very basis of animal studies namely the discussion of soul in animals which then turns into an ontological question and an ethical one in the end. The irrational part of the soul according to Aristotle is innate for "all animate things and not peculiar to man" (pp. 63-65). What is peculiar to man, in that sense, is the balance of the dance of rational and irrational in human's psyche: "in the self-restrained man it [rational principle] obeys the behest of principle and no doubt in the temperate and brave man it is still more amenable for all parts of his nature are in harmony with principle" (p. 67). Aristotelian human owns a body and soul, and Aristotelian animal does so likewise. However, there are moments in which human body bears no difference to an animal body, it is when humans sleep because Aristotle states that human soul ceases to be rational (p. 65) and carries no difference between animal soul. When it is not asleep, human body turns out to be a battle ground for rational and irrational parts. This discussion takes Aristotle to the point of choice or purpose; "[t]he irrational animals do not exercise choice, but they do feel desire, and also passion … a self-restrained man acts from choice and not from desire" (p. 129). Therefore it seems that there is a clear connection between the body that desires and the soul that could restrain from desire rationally. Although every animate thing has a soul, it is only man who is expected to carry the rational part of it and to act accordingly. This is where the famous Aristotelian

[2] In Hakan Yücefer's original writings: "Nominal beden tanımının temellendirilerek aşılmasıyla, bedenin gerçek, organik belirleniminin ortaya çıkarılmasıyla birlikte hayvan sorusu da felsefeye girmiş oluyor."

description of man as *zoon logikon*, rational animal, comes into play. Humans are supposed to be rational for the sake of the soul they carry but they are still like animals because of the body they own. "There appears the description of human body, the embryo of human gets humanised by accepting reason from outside (Şan, 2015, p. 163, own translation).[3] Human becomes an equation of animal plus reason.

The description of reason plus animal equals human, undoubtedly places human, or rather man as Aristotle thought of it, above animals and leads the discussion to the infamous Aristotelian hierarchy. Even though Aristotle does not give a name to his ranking of the living beings he discusses in *Historia Animalium,* this ranking is taken up by Christian philosophers later and the idea of great chain of being or *scala naturae* where animals are placed below men which are placed below angels and god. In spite of that hierarchy Aristotle is still a part of a world-view which saw a kinship with animals thanks to the Greek belief of anima, of a wandering soul that can transport from one body to another, regardless of its being a plant or animal or human. Therefore, no matter how metaphysical Aristotle's view on animals gets, it still protects a pagan belief that keeps human grounded along with animals. However, in the hands of the religious scholars, this hierarchy Aristotle commences leads to an irremediable separation of human from the rest of nature. Since it allows an ontological difference between animal and human this separation affects the way human beings interact with animals from early on to this day. It is undeniable that human still has a body just like the animal does but it is now thought that human lacks a crucial ingredient: animality. The philosophers who consistently underline this animality of animal are as such: for René Descartes,

[3] In Emre Şan's original writings: "Böylece insan vücudunun tanımı ortaya çıkar, insan embriyosu dışarıdan aklı kabul ederek insanlaşır."

since animals lack cogito they lack reason and logos and therefore they are no more than automated flesh deprived even of feeling. For Immanuel Kant animals do not hold a moral status because they lack subjectivity. For Georg Hegel animals cannot have the right to their life since they do not will it. For Martin Heidegger animals are poor in the world and they cannot possess a world. These approaches to the subject, after the base Aristotle sets before them, raise great walls around animal and prevent it to be discussed in any other way.

Drained from the sieve of the approaches above, animality can first be summarised as being deprived of logos and any blessings it brings to the body, as being deprived of the dignity of life, as being heavily dependent on the environment that surrounds, and as being stripped of off time and duration. Therefore animal is this being who dwells only in present and only presents itself as the other to human beings to be fed in large quantities in small spaces, to be raised to be killed and to be eaten or to be hunted for its fur or feather or for its head to be hung on the walls to symbolise glory. Animal cruelty in Ancient Greeks had been looked down upon but not because of the very concern of animal, mostly because it would contaminate the hands of the doer. Greeks had a way to deal with punishing animals; that was to exile the animal out of the polis.[4] As Timofeeva (2018) explains, it was

> …not so much about punishment as about clearing away pollution, maintaining the frontier of a community. Whatever created trouble should be cast out. Not because it had committed a crime, but rather because it had caused a misfortune. (p. 39)

[4] This theme is also familiar to the ancient tragedy reader, as Medea in Euripides' play was guilty of killing of her children out of revenge of her husband Jason, the playwright chooses to send Medea away to Athens since leaving her on the stage would not resonate well with the ancient Greek audience who would seek for a catharsis which would only come along with a purification.

It was more or less the same reason why Christian tradition also followed this path when it comes to animal cruelty. As it will be seen in this chapter about the Kantian ethics, more than animal, it was thought that it would contaminate the person who would commit the deed. However, it is Descartes who put an end to the Aristotelian understanding of universe and on a trickle-down effect of the Greek benevolence towards the animals. In the abovementioned hierarchy known as *scala naturae,* all the steps of the ladder points towards one and one thing only, god. Although the earth is the centre of the universe and on top of it is seated human; god is "the first mover and ultimate end, at the summit" (Descartes, 1968, p. 20). The Aristotelian, sense-based perception of the cosmos is shaken "by reducing the matter to its mathematical expression" (p. 20). This old feud between the Cartesian and Aristotelian way of seeing the world becomes important for the animal in question as the translator of Descartes, F. E. Sutcliffe states, "As mind, infinitely separated from a world which is matter, the role of man can only be that of dominating his surroundings, of becoming 'master and possessor of Nature' (p. 21).

It is interesting to see Descartes' divorcing science from god and on his empty throne placing a new notion. The dogmatic notion of the old world view which always points to a god is now debunked. "The decisive theoretical break came with Descartes" (Berger, 2009, p. 21) in terms of man's situating himself before both nature and god. With Descartes it is now seen that human has a whole new meaning among the other creatures and before the creator. After the famous epiphanic moment of *cogito, ergo sum,* Descartes explains how by his thinking he holds a god-like authority and autonomy before nature:

> I thereby concluded that I was a substance, of which the whole essence of nature consists in thinking, and which, in order to exist, needs no place and depends on no material thing; so that this 'I', that is to say, the mind, by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body, and even that it is easier to know than the body, and moreover, that even if the body were not, it would not cease to be all that it is. (Descartes, 1968, p. 53)

This is a very crucial moment in philosophy where man is not animal rationale anymore. The Aristotelian understanding has now ceased to be. Each man is now a substance to which the essence of nature is in constant attribution. This is achieved only by thinking, on the man's part. Descartes apparently cuts all the links that bound man tightly to the earth, as his mind is elevated from his body and he becomes ontologically superior to the corporeal others; animals, plants and other creatures. The links he has lost with his animality has now been tied to god himself; his non-corporeal existence knows not of time and space and it is not bound to any external being to be ever-present. Descartes' metaphysics seems to leave human still in between animal and god but more distant from animal and much closer to god.

However, this does not mean that Descartes turns a blind eye to the biological similarities human body carries with many animal bodies. Although he believes that the animal is basically a machine created by god, only moving by means of the animal spirit within its body and could feel neither pain nor affection, he is aware that on the physical level the human shares a great deal with them.[5] This point is exactly what keeps Cartesian man from declaring himself god and Cartesian system's always requiring a god: his bodily needs, his animality, at the end of the day render him imperfect. Then,

[5] At the beginning of his Discourse V. he suggests his reader to have the heart of a large animal with lungs before them to examine as he is pointing out one by one the similarities the humans share with the animals.

there must be a perfect god who created man imperfectly. Furthermore, he concludes that;

> [I]f there were any bodies in the world or any intelligences or other natures which were not wholly perfect, their existence must depend on his power, in such a way that they could not subsist without him for a single instant. (p. 56)

This is the only humble point in Descartes' stand. He is humble before god because his corporeal existence is dependent on god's will. Yet, the Cartesian man has a soul, a reason, an ability to think, to feel, something that makes cogito possible only for human beings, something "that even if the body were not, it would not cease to be all that it is" (p. 53). As a consequence of his debate, modern animal studies scholars are always in discussion with Cartesian order of the universe as reading Descartes is more or less like looking into the mirror and seeing oneself as "master and possessor of Nature" (p. 21). Descartes sees that man can be divorced from his senses through reason because trusting the senses belongs to animal. A similar approach to senses is considered by Immanuel Kant who is aware of the animality of human and sets out duties for the man to go through and salvage himself from that animality as much as possible. Perfection is one of the words Kant uses rather often to remind human beings why they are on this world. He certainly does not deny animality in man but he draws an elaborate picture of a hierarchy that is similar to Aristotle's. However, according to Kant (1964), being a rational animal is "being of little significance and, along with the other animals, considered as products of the earth, has an ordinary value" (p. 95). What is more important than to have an extraordinary value is being a "subject of a morally-practical reason" (p. 96). The gist he adds to Aristotle's *homo phaenomenon,* which is man that manifests himself to the others, is *homo noumenon,* which is independent from the senses of the others, man as "an end in himself" (p. 96). Kantian man possesses what he

calls an absolute inner worth, a dignity on top of Aristotelian man's rationale and Cartesian man's reason. Nevertheless, Kant does not deny this carnal existence of human body to the point where Descartes claims that the human possesses something that would not cease to be even without a body. In the end, it is the will of the person to choose: "he regards himself as a sensible being (according to his animal nature) or as an intelligible being (according to his moral predisposition)" and he assures his reader that "his insignificance as a human animal cannot injure the consciousness of his dignity as a rational man" (p. 97). Therefore, for Kant, man is another animal who should "[l]ive accordance with nature" but because of this dignity he possesses inherently "[m]ake [himself] even more perfect than nature created [him]" (p. 80).[6]

Kantian man has the freedom to choose to do the right thing. He should live in accordance with his inherent dignity through the set of moral duties he encounters, to be further away from his animality. But this brings the question of the relationship of human animal with animals who apparently lack the freedom to be one way or another: "All animals have the capacity to use their powers according to choice. Yet this choice is not free, but necessitated by incentives and *stimuli*. Their actions contain *bruta necessitas* [animal necessity]" (Kant, 1997, p. 125). According to Kant, the reason why humans have freedom is because they have the inner worth. This immediately puts animal below human as it suggests that animals lack dignity. Unlike the Cartesian animals, Kantian animals are not simply automata which are fuelled by the animal spirits in their muscles to move around, but they act according to a principle: "All animal acts

[6] To be more detached from his animality Kant suggests that man should cultivate his spirit, his mind and his body. For the last one he offers true gymnastics for the man to fulfil himself which in the end turns out to be doing cardio to literally run away from his animality.

are regular, for they take place according to rules that are subjectively necessitated *principium*, whereby all actions in that sphere take place according to a rule" (p. 125). Animals in Kant, have to live in congruence with nature because they cannot live any better whereas the human has the freedom and furthermore the duty of dignity to make themselves even more perfect than nature created them. Kantian ethics in that sense takes a different turn than Cartesian attitude towards the animals which finds it okay to rip the heart of a large, lunged animal just to prove a point in an argument, because Kantian ethics absolutely disapproves of any cruelty towards animals. Kant certainly regards animals as things (p. 147) and man's instrument (p. 213) yet he still finds it pitiful to hunt or torture them.

> Towards *bruta* we have no immediate duty; among men, indeed, no less than animals, if we consider the animosity of the one to those of the other species, the inclination and physical instinct might well prevail, to destroy one another for the satisfaction of their needs. Yet it cannot be denied that a hard-heartedness towards animals is not in accordance with the law of reason, and is at least an unsuitable use of means. Any action whereby we may torment animals, or let them suffer distress, or otherwise treat them without love, is demeaning to ourselves. It is inhuman, and contains an analogy of violation of the duty to ourselves, since we would not, after all, treat ourselves with cruelty; we stifle the instincts of humaneness within us and make ourselves devoid of feeling; it is thus an indirect violation of humanity in our own person. (p. 435)

It is certain that Kant is not in any way affectionate or loving towards animals but in order not to lose the battle of animality, not to give oneself in to the naturally raw and wild instincts of the human animal, man should not be like an animal. His image of this humane human is ultimately another way of being detached from the animality in human. It is another duty for human to overcome to be perfect. Kantian man is not morally responsible towards animals simply because "animals lack the mandatory

metaphysical status to hold a moral status" (Önol, 2015, p. 142, own translation).[7] The only moral responsibility man holds is towards his fellow human brother. The more inhumane he chooses to be even towards animals, the more he would injure his own humanity.

The discussion of animality takes another turn with Hegel and his understanding of it. To him, animality is complete opposite of subjectivity. Hegel (1995) makes it clear that thinking is man's virtue and animals cannot possess that virtue by any means. This virtue opens man to a universality that no animal could ever reach. Humans' being open is a result of "being inwardly present to themselves" (p. 148). Unlike humans, the Hegelian animal is only outwardly present to the others. It has drives and instincts but it lacks the shackles to restrain those. Being robbed of that restrain actually restrains animal of having "[t]he most boundless universal" (p. 149) that is freedom. Hegel argues that the will and self-knowledge of human beings prevent them from acting like animals. He calls humans "volitional beings" and he claims this lays "in their anatomy" (p. 149). It is quite interesting how he establishes being volitional by having will as something peculiar only to the humans but it is coded in their bodies, in their anatomy as something both animals and humans share. Although he makes it clear that what distinguishes man from another animal trapped in its body is his spirit and his will, he also claims that this will is to be found in the living organisms of man. The natural state, he claims that man has left never to be returned, seems to be haunting the Hegelian man in the form of his anatomy.

[7] In Tuğba Ayas Önol's original writings: "…hayvanlar, ahlaki statü için zorunlu olan metafizik statüden yoksundur."

In *Philosophy of Right* (1952) Hegel defines what man is: "[m]an is pure thought of himself, and only in thinking has he the power to give himself universality and distinguish in himself all that is particular and definite" (p. 24). On the opposite side of this definition there sits animal, lacking the will to produce a proper I, by the virtue of will. Hegelian animal is nothing but a "living thing" (p. 54) that lacks subjectivity, completely. Therefore it is under the complete sovereignty of humans who "stand above impulse" (p. 30). Concerning subjectivity he states:

> All things may become man's property, because man is free will and consequently is absolute, while what stands over against him lacks this quality. Thus everyone has the right to…destroy the thing and transform it into his own for the thing, as externality, has no end in itself; it is not infinite self-relation but something external to itself. (p. 54)

In accordance with this view, Hegelian animal that is nothing but a living thing, offers only an externality which is to be improved and developed only in strength unlike a human being whose spirit as well as his body is to be ripen in time. Hegelian animal is born almost complete while Hegelian man is born only carrying "the potentiality of being human" (Hegel, 1995 p. 151) because an animal does not stand a chance of gaining a self-consciousness. Hegel believes even "the first cry of the child is already different from that of an animal" (p. 153). After this already distinguished first cry, the child is on the way of becoming a subject, growing both externally and internally. Hegel does not deny animals off of having a spirit but he claims that this spirit of the animal stays as it is from the day it was born till it dies. What Hegel denies animals from is subjectivity. Animal comes to a point where it is not even carrying the life it seems to own properly: "Animals are in possession of themselves; their soul is in possession of their body. But they have no right to their life, because they do not will it" (Hegel, 1952 p. 56). The only way to will something is to utter the word I and the Hegelian animal

lacks just that. Thus, this external being, deprived of the ability to free itself from internal desires and instinct through the act of thinking, dooms to be man's property to be transformed or destroyed according to man's liking.

Different from the Hegelian animal, Heideggerian animal's failure is being concealed; similar to the Hegelian animal, though, Heideggerian animal cannot quite die. Martin Heidegger, inquiring into the matter of being, deals a lot with animal in his writings. Giorgio Agamben (2004) calls him "the philosopher of the twentieth century who more than any other strove to separate man from the living being" (p. 39). To understand Heidegger's stand towards animals, one must look at the works of one of the founders of ethology, Jakob von Uexküll by whom Heidegger is inspired the most and whose scientific works Agamben mentions as "contemporary with both quantum physics and the artistic avant-gardes. And like them, they express the unreserved abandonment of every anthropocentric perspective in the life sciences and the radical dehumanization of the image of nature" (p. 39).

Uexküll is an important animal behaviour scientist who came up with the term *Umwelt* when examining the animals. The author of *Onto-Ethologies* (2008) Brett Buchanan translates the word as "surrounding world" or "environment" (p. 7) however, the writer of the Introduction of Uexküll's *Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans* (2010) Dorion Sagan more properly calls it "animal's perceptual life-world" (p. 2) because perception will become important in Uexküll's discussion. *Umwelt* represents the collapse of the idea that there is a unity among the creatures of the earth and each creature lives according to that unity, that they share one single world.

> The sight of flitting insects, such as dragonflies, bees, and bumblebees, which cavort in a meadow full of flowers, always awakens in us the impression that the whole world would be open to these enviable creatures. Even earthbound

> animals such as frogs, mice, snails, and worms seem to move about freely in a free Nature. This impression is misleading. The truth is that every animal, no matter how free in its movements, is bound to a certain dwelling-world, and it is one task of ecologists to research its limits. (p. 139)

Uexküll makes this observation from the organism scale to the universal scale and sees that each being has its own world. Accordingly, each being has a different perception of what is around. Like soap bubbles, as he famously gives as an example, the earth is surrounded by each and every *Umwelt* to produce the contrapuntal music, another example he gives, of the earth itself. With these numerous *Umwelt*s linked together, the great symbiosis of the world is constructed with great ties to every single being on the planet from the tiniest to the greatest. Overwhelmed by the number of the possible worlds Uexküll says: "Forever unknowable behind all of the worlds it produces, the subject–Nature–conceals itself" (p. 135). This position Uexküll takes in his approach to nature and beings of nature, certainly stands against the previous thought of animal's being "a soulless machine, vacuous object, or dispassionate brute" (Buchanan, 2008, p. 2). It is important to note that Uexküll calls animals as carriers of meaning which is something Heideggerian animal is deprived of even though he bases his discussion on animals on Uexküll's *Umwelt*. Once animal becomes a carrier of meaning, this means, it does not need humans to generate a meaning and attach that onto the animal. Hence, with this study, Uexküll inspired fields like zoosemiotics and biosemiotics, as such: "Organisms, according to Uexküll, actively interpret their surroundings as replete with meaningful signs. They are not merely passive instruments or message bearers, but actively engaged in the creating of a significant environment" (p. 2). Therefore the organism is in constant relationship with its own surrounding world to the point generating a meaning from it and leading a meaningful life.

This is where Heidegger parts his way from Uexküll's proposal. The reason is that he believes there must be a difference between the dwellers of *Umwelt* and the ones actually exist, or as he calls Da-sein. In *Being and Time* (1996) he explains this as follows: "Da-sein is a being that does not simply occur among other beings. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that in its being this being is concerned about its very being" (p. 10). Da-sein is not a simple being-in-the-world, then; according to Heidegger it is the only one that actually exists since it is the only one who can refer to the very being it owns. Heidegger puts a great importance to that self-reference and even criticises Descartes for not putting enough stress on sum of *cogito, ergo sum* and instead establishing all of his arguments on cogito "even though it [sum] is just as primordial as the cogito" (p. 46). Heidegger is at unease with the traditional metaphysical approach to man as only a more able animal and he wants to cut all ties between human and animal to the point where there is only an abyss in between as he believes "that their distinction is nothing less than ontological" (Timofeeva, 2018, p. 137). One of the great differences between the Heideggerian human and animal is that human is "[t]hrown being-together-with things at hand is grounded in temporality" (Heidegger, 1996, p. 380). Unlike everything else:

> [t]he being that exists is the human being. The human being alone exists. Rocks are, but they do not exist. Trees are, but they do not exist. Horses are, but they do not exist. Angels are, but they do not exist. God is, but he does not exist. (Heidegger, 1998, p. 284)

This claim, however, does not compromise the reality of these things; it puts an emphasis on the eminent role of the human as an open, world-having, world-forming therefore truly existing being. He makes this distinction earlier in his *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* (1995) where he underlines, only

man has world whereas both the stone and the animal are worldless; the animal is deprived of a world therefore it is poor in the world whilst the stone does not even have a world to be deprived of, man however is the only one who has a world and only one who could form that world (p. 196). This settles the first of the concepts of Heidegger's 1995 book's subtitle: *World, Finitude, Solitude.* The other two follow the same principle which is the ability to have a world. Being deprived of a world comes with being deprived of time and death, too. "The mortals are human beings. They are all called mortals because they can die. To die means to be capable of death as death. Only man dies. The animal perishes" (Heidegger, 1971, p. 176). Being mortal comes with two conditions; existing and existing in time. As he establishes with the series of examples that do not exist, Heidegger presents man truly existing alone in the world. Now with this claim, he stands alone in time and that settles the solitude of man.

What Heidegger builds upon the theory of Uexküll turns out to be the quite opposite of it. Where Uexküll looks and sees an endless amount of worlds integrating one another and creating a great symbiosis of a contrapuntal melody, Heidegger sees things that do not quite exist and cannot properly die. *Umwelt* of the animal has become its cage, for Heidegger believes the essence of the animal is captivity. Apart from the three concepts of metaphysics, having a world, dying properly in it, living alone on it, that grant human this distinguished feature, perhaps the most important one is the language. Heidegger (1993) in his "Letter on Humanism" famously writes: "Language is the house of Being, in its home man dwells" (p. 217). This statement puts man in an awkward position in nature which seems like not his home. It is of no doubt that animal does not dwell in language for Heidegger, therefore the house of being is no house for the animal; but then nature is no home for man, either. In his attempts to divorce man

from his animality, thus, Heidegger becomes the one who divorces him from nature, too. The theory he establishes around *Umwelt* grants human beings a *welt* distinct from nature which physically constructs their *Umwelt*.

2.2 Animal in ethical question

Ignoring this physical nature around has cost man to have a truer relationship with animal, as well. Jacques Derrida in *The Animal that Therefore I am* (2008) examines the prominent figures of the western philosophy and comes to the conclusion about animal that "…it can look at me. It has this point of view regarding me. The point of view of the absolute other…" (p. 10). What this statement assumes is the subjectivity of the other and that has been thought what is missing from the animal, the possibility of a subjecthood. That is the reason why the philosophers he discusses have not felt the need to address animals (p. 13). As the name of his book suggests he examines Cartesian view of the animal to a semantic level: "It happens that there exist, between the word I and the word animal, all sorts of significant connections. They are at the same time functional and referential, grammatical and semantic" (p. 50). After remarking this anonymity and singularity the words of I and the animal share, he continues:

> Whosoever says "I" or apprehends or poses herself as an "I" is a living animal. By contrast, animality, the life of the living, at least when one claims to be able to distinguish it from the inorganic, from the purely inert or cadaverous physico-chemical, is generally defined as sensibility, irritability, and *auto-motricity*, a spontaneity that is capable of movement, of organizing itself and affecting itself, marking, tracing, and affecting itself with traces of its self. This *auto-motricity* as auto-affection and relation to itself is the characteristic recognized as that of the living and of animality in general, even before one comes to consider the discursive thematic of an utterance or of an *ego cogito*, more so of a *cogito ergo sum*. But between this relation to the self (this Self, this ipseity) and the *I* of the "I think," there is, it would seem, an abyss. (p. 50)

Like Heidegger, Derrida takes an issue of Descartes' not having dwelt on ego more than cogito. However, he points out a different stance. He uses the word abyss, one of the frequently used words by Heidegger to remark the difference between human and animal, but Derrida uses it for the animal who calls himself human. Moreover, he suggests that this abyss is not because of an ontological separation between these species but more of a different way of living. The animality of human is quite like the animality of animal itself. However, the "I" loses its anonymity and its position as a living animal, the moment it is followed by "think" thus creating an abyss never to be repaired. To emphasise the role of language on Cartesian logic, he is playing with the famous outburst of Cartesianism and says, "I say that I think therefore I am" (p. 88). Now the existence of human is provided by self-referring and self-representing, or more like self-assuring language in which man's domination over nature is a sure thing. "And this domination is exercised as much through an infinite violence, indeed, through the boundless wrong that we inflict on animals" (p. 89). This is where Derrida's discussion is not only ontological, any more. He discusses something else is at play.

Derrida turns out to be a different scholar than any other in question of animal where he discusses the matter not only in relation to ontology but also to ethics. For this reason he is discussed as the last scholar with ontological and first scholar with ethical concerns in this study. The point where he problematizes animal as more of an ethical discussion is the when he comes up with a word he makes up: *l'animot*. *L'animot* is a hybrid word, formed by the words *l'animal* and *mot* which means the animal and word in French. He believes that the western philosophers, by using "the animal," not giving attention to the sex, to the species, to what that animal actually is, have created

themselves a singular animal, the animal, *l'animot* where they place for everything that does not stand for humanity. *L'animot* represents the animality of animal and it makes every action legitimate towards animals to underline the infinite alterity of animal because "[i]t is a matter of putting the animal outside of the ethical circuit" (p. 106). As once it is established, the animal lacks the inner dignity and therefore the inherent quality like in Kant or once it is sure that the animal cannot die it perishes; the oldest cultural fraternal mottos of the western society, like "Love thy neighbour" or "Thou shalt not kill" are not potent for the animal object or the phrase "Know thyself" now never refers to the animality man carries inside and out. Derrida asks the question animal studies scholars are still asking to themselves now:

> How to have heard here a language or unheard-of-music, somewhat inhuman in a way, yet not so as to make myself the representative or emancipator of an animality that is forgotten, ignored, misunderstood, persecuted, hunted, fished, sacrificed, subjugated, raised, corralled, hormonized, transgenetized, exploited, consumed, eaten, domesticated… (p. 63)

Derrida, in his ethical position towards animals, discusses also the 18th century utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham. Bentham's can be considered as the first ethical stand for animal rights since he is the first one who lays the issue of animal cruelty on the table. He opposes the idea of human superiority over animals because of the faculties of talking and reasoning and he brings about a new, binding faculty for humans and animals:

> It may come one day to be recognized, that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum*, are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate? What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or, perhaps, the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog, is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversible animal, than an infant of a day, or a week, or even a month, old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer? (Bentham, 1996, p. 283)

His position is different that of Hegel's who believes even the cry of a human infant is much different than that of an animal. This simple question weighs more than it seems because for the first time someone is reminding people the corporality humans share with the animals. This turns the ontological question into an ethical and therefore a political one. No matter how they are assumed to lack language, reason or soul, animals have bodies, much like humans do. The corporeality of the human has been thought as something to be avoided. Emre Koyuncu (2015) emphasised the Christian belief of the flesh's tendency to sin and he states that this difference between man and animal, flesh and soul is on the basis of religious discipline practices since discipline first and foremost means for a man to tame the animality he is carrying inside (p. 94). However, animality turns out to be something people cannot shake off as it is revealed by this note of Darwin (1968): "Our ancestor was an animal which breathed water, had a swim bladder, a great swimming tail, an imperfect skull, and undoubtedly was a hermaphrodite. Here is a pleasant genealogy for mankind" (p. 15). *The Origin of Species* is the boldest step to underline the continuation of the species and is a way of meddling with *scala naturae*. Paradoxically, states the editor of 1968 edition of the book, Darwin's revelation of the continuity between species has "cut the emotional ties between man and nature" (p. 42). Instead it has established some real biological ties between man and nature which foresees a struggle for existence for each species and man is not an exception: "Nature, according to Darwin, was the product of blind chance and a blind struggle, and man a lonely, intelligent mutation, scrambling with the brutes for his sustenance" (p. 43). Although man is referred here as a lonely, intelligent

mutation, much like Uexküll's *Umwelt*, his is not the only world affecting his life, each species has been woven to one another:

> The structure of every organic being is related, in the most essential yet often hidden manner, to that of all other organic beings, with which it comes into competition for food or residence, or from which it has to escape, or on which it preys. (p. 128)

Derrida claims he does not believe a "homogeneous continuity between what calls *itself* man and what *he* calls the animal" (Derrida, 2008, 30). Here, he does not deny the biological, factual continuity between humans and animals. Rather, he makes an emphasis on what calls itself man who turns into a "he" from "it" and what he calls animal. Language, here is the greatest contributor to this abyss between man and the rest of nature. It is through language Adam has named nature to bring order to chaotic earth which he has to face after losing a perfectly tamed garden.

After the ontological discontinuation and biological continuation discussion of man and nonhuman animal, ecologically conscious writing has flourished. Peter Singer is one of the forerunners of the animal liberation movement with his book *Animal Liberation* (2002). His book examines the tyranny of human animal over nonhuman animals and questions the traditional ways of humans usurp animals in factory farms, slaughterhouses and in the laboratories. Singer continues Bentham's point about suffering and faces the solipsistic side of the question, namely how we know animals can feel pain. Furthermore, like Uexküll's *Umwelt* that grants non-animals a subjecthood in their own world, Singer establishes the same with the element of pain.

> A capacity to feel pain obviously enhances a species' prospects of survival, since it causes members of the species to avoid sources of injury. It is surely unreasonable to suppose that nervous systems that are virtually identical physiologically, have a common origin and a common evolutionary function, and result in similar form of behavior in similar circumstances should actually operate in an entirely different manner on the level of subjective feelings. (p. 11)

Singer, although he is not the one who first use the word, popularised the term speciesism with this book. He argues that the only reason why human beings are at ease with the idea of using and abusing the flesh of other is because of the inherent otherness they see when they look at nonhuman animal. He argues, if reason or speech would be enough to determine who has equal right to live without pain, people would be also at ease with the idea of making experiments with humans who have irreparable brain damage (p. 18). Humans do not even consider the wrong-doing of the great industries that torture animals on a daily basis for the well-being of a human society. "Most human beings are speciesists" (p. 9) claims Singer for this particular reason. Institutionalized mentality of speciesism (p. 42) numbs people who make experiments on animals, and individualized appetite of speciesism numbs people who devour the flesh of nonhuman animals, daily. "We tolerate cruelties inflicted on members of other species that would outrage us if performed on members of our own species" (p. 69). Singer establishes a parallelism between racism and speciesism; more precisely Nazism and speciesism. He reminds the reader that Nazi scientists have also used the flesh of a group of others; he gives one of the detailed descriptions of a Jew being observed in a decompression chamber by a Nazi scientist and he assures us that this torment chamber has not disappeared; it swallows nonhuman animals, now. Singer quotes Jewish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer, here: "In their behavior towards creatures, all men [are] Nazis" (p. 84).

Peter Singer traces back this speciesist tradition in the western thought and shows that, even in as early as Saint Thomas Aquinas' writings, animals, as well as plants, are created for man. Unfortunately this view does not sound absurd, still, for the 21st century humans as it opens a myriad of sources for them to have dominion over and

an endless justification for each action they please to take. He states that since the Renaissance is thought to be not in favour of medieval dogmatism and its values, one might naturally assume that the nonhuman animal could finally have a sigh of relief during this period. However, Renaissance humanism attains the human and human only as the measure of all things (p. 198) and after all it does not go further away than Christianity when it comes to the nonhuman animal. “Like the original Christian insistence on the sanctity of human life, this was in some ways valuable advance in attitudes to human beings, but it left nonhumans as far below humans as they had ever been” (p. 199). Following the Renaissance, this new born human is now after the enlightenment and, this is where, Singer claims that the given position of the human being has not been forgotten but it is now more in tune with nature. This is the time when Kant despises animality but despises more the man who tortures animals as it is a sign of animality and it is the time for Bentham to ask if animal can suffer like humans do, Rousseau’s noble savage “strolling naked though the woods, picking fruits and nuts” (pp. 202-203), and Darwin’s theories on the descent of man have been popularised to bridge the gap between humans and nonhuman animals to the point where speciesism would flow under that bridge. However, as Singer discusses as the last remark of his book, speciesism continues today, it has not been flown away. Although, hopefully, no modern human believes that nonhuman animals are senseless machines, people are still comfortable with animal cruelty as long as it happens somewhere they can turn a blind eye. “[H]umans come first” (p. 220) is maxim of the modern human but he reminds his reader that there is something directly related to the human’s attitude to the situation of the animal liberation today:

> Nevertheless, Animal Liberation will require greater altruism on the part of human beings than any other liberation movement. The animals themselves are incapable of demanding their own liberation, or of protesting against their condition with votes, demonstrations, or boycotts. Human beings have the power to continue to oppress other species forever, or until this planet unsuitable for living beings. (pp. 247-48)

Singer's perception of the matter makes the question of animal political. After the ontological and ethical discussions, he brings a new perspective which not only stops human sitting at the top of throne of creation but also makes human bend down and give an ear to animal, speak for it, be just to it and more importantly live side by side with it.

CHAPTER 3

CATERPILLAR

"A rose is a rose is a rose, is RNA, DNA, polypeptide chains of amino acids …"

Aldous Huxley in *Literature and Science*

The endless and vicious cycle of speciesism always leaves everyone else but human behind which creates global problems for everyone and everything on earth, including humans. Especially after the second half of the 20th century, environmental studies accelerated among the scholars of ecology and, curiously, of humanities, especially literature. This field of study then took the name of ecocriticism to examine the relationship between language and the earth. As the outcome of two fields, ecology and criticism, ecocriticism already hints an idea about what its concern is. The prefix eco has its root from the Greek *oikos* meaning home; thus, the field is primarily involved with what humans call home, the earth. Therefore, ecocriticism is calling humans back home after Heidegger declared that their dwelling place is language and they cut their ontological links with nature. In this chapter the roots of ecocriticism and along with the poetic discourse, ecopoetry will be discussed. This discussion will be carried out on a literary level with the representation of nature through different approaches of how to carry the physical nature to the text and how to be just while doing so.

3.1 Ecocriticism

First scholars of the field pay great attention to the merging of sciences with literature as it can be understood from the title of Aldous Huxley's book *Literature and Science* (1963). As ecocriticism had not been termed yet, literary ecology has become the term they come to use. Huxley, in his book, compares the man of science and man of letters as the first thing and highlights the deed of observing as their common attitude. He offers an ultimate collaboration for these two disciplines.

> Thought is crude, matter is unimaginably subtle. Words are few and can only be arranged in certain conventionally fixed ways; the counterpoint of unique events is infinitely wide and their succession indefinitely long. That the purified language of science, or even the richer purified language of literature should ever be adequate to the givenness of the world and of our experience is, in the very nature of things, impossible. Cheerfully accepting the fact, let us advance together, men of letters and men of science, further and further into the ever-expanding regions of the unknown. (p. 118)

He draws attention to "suchness of things" (p. 21) for an attempt to divorce natural metaphors off of their long carried associations in the traditional way people read literature. The way to achieve that goal is through knowing what those natural things actually are. The example he gives is one of the most exhausted creatures, ever: rose. He chooses a different way to show the exhaustion of the flower than Gertrude Stein does in her "Sacred Emily" as "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose" (Stein, 1968, p. 187); "A rose is a rose is a rose, is RNA, DNA, polypeptide chains of amino acids" (Huxley, 1963, p. 13). This reminiscent to the perspective to the imagist tendency in literature which supports William Carlos Willams' "no ideas but in things" (Williams, 1986, p. 263) approach; this new attitude now encourages its critics to acknowledge the biology of the world around them. Once one looks at literature in biological terms, it is hard to miss the ecology of the text.

Joseph W. Meeker is one of the first scholars who actually read literature in ecological terms in his book *The Comedy of Survival* (1972). He introduces human beings as the only literary creatures who lack the other abilities of other beings like photosynthesis or flying (p. 3) and with an understanding similar to Uexküll's he believes that humans reaffirm their dignity in their *Umwelt* with the language which enables them "to write great epic poems and mediocre office memos" (p. 3). As the precursor of ecocriticism, he describes literary ecology as "the study of biological themes and relationships which appear in literary works. It is simultaneously an attempt to discover what roles have been played by literature in the ecology of the human species" (p. 9). In his attempt, humans play a crucial role of any other animal in ecology, they help the symbiosis going both on earth and paper. Meeker's avant-garde attitude towards literature leads the way to an effect almost Copernican, Darwinian and Freudian revolutions regarding the centrality of human and human's experience on earth; it topples them, replaces with the centrality of rose and its experience.

Meeker traces the literary representation of human back to mimetic gestures of ancient Greeks in tragedies and comedies with an ecological agenda. Although people tend to believe they are tragic heroes on earth, Meeker believes human is a comedy hero, carrying the features of not a tragic but a comedic character: "Comedy demonstrates that man is durable even though he may be weak, stupid, and undignified. As the tragic hero suffers or dies for his ideals, the comic hero survives without them" (p. 24). Durability of human or of any species is familiar because of Darwin's survival of the fittest theory. Human animal is not different from any other animal, dignity, ideals, reason or language do not come handy in the comedic play of survival. However, Meeker pays attention to humans' deception of being a tragic hero. He makes a comparison between the tragic

hero and pioneer species as it is first to colonise a land before any other plant. “Pioneer species are the loners of the natural world, the tragic heroes who sacrifice themselves in satisfaction of mysterious inner commands which they alone can hear” (p. 28). As they think they are the pioneer species of the earth, humans feel they are obliged to do great deeds to mark their territory bigger than any other animal, to affirm their worth in the world more than any other creature (p. 3). Although the resemblance he sees between colonising plants and tragic heroes seem antropocentrist, it is not; if mimesis begins with the imitation of the physical world around humans, maybe Achilles is only imitating a fireweed “growing on a glacial moraine does for the plants that will succeed it” (p. 28). Human beings’ reason, language, upright posture grants them the lead role on a tragic play it seems, and this is the motive behind nature’s representation as a minor background in literary texts. To emphasise further why human beings are not tragic heroes Meeker examines one of the key behaviours of the tragic heroes; hamartia. This tragic flaw in the plays brings the heroes’ doom along with the doom of the place they live in. The destruction caused by them is are generally redeemed by the suffering of the tragic heroes, themselves. However, Meeker asks, if humans are tragic heroes, who will redeem this destruction.

> Oedipus caused the pollution of Thebes by his sinful murder and marriage, but who causes the pollution of New York? What was rotten in Denmark could be remedied by Hamlet, but who, will take the responsibility for what is rotten in Chicago? No hero will suffer transcendently for the extermination of hundreds of animal species or for the degradation of the oceans. (p. 58)

In nature humans act out like a tragic hero, forgetting their place in the world they live in and forgetting that they are not any more or less than a comedic hero who tries to survive like the rest of the dwellers of earth, they create more bad fortune than an ancient Greek playwright could have ever written. What causes that is humanistic

individualism which follows this tragic literary tradition of the western civilisation and makes human forget about the dependency to the other species. This inter-dependency of the species costs too much to forget for each member of the natural world. Humans cannot afford to ignore the fact that they have to live together in harmony with other species and furthermore, as the only mutation ending up having a mean of such complicated communication like language, humans should be responsible for the wellbeing of the rest of nature. Unfortunately, that is not the case. “The search for personal identity and self-fulfillment has minimized man’s sense of responsibility both to his own species and to the other creatures with who he shares the earth” (p. 59). This minimisation affects also the way people read literary texts and reflect their solipsism on natural metaphors. Meeker suggests an ecological integrity when observing nature, and furthermore underlines that “what he [the observer] is really seeing is the result of natural processes which have proceeded for millennia without any concern for human enjoyment” (p. 132). The last part has become quite important for the later ecocritical studies since the reconciliation of humans with the fact that nature happens regardless of humanity is the first step to this understanding.

At this point it is important to separate anthropocentrism from anthropomorphism. Fireweed’s colonising a glacial moraine can be likened to Achilles’ deed is anthropomorphism but since apparently this attitude is something they share as many other animals, plants and humans do. As a mimetic gesture, humans can only observe things in their own terms simply because they do not know otherwise. However, regarding those around them as nature’s bow to human, or regarding themselves as the meaning-giver to dumb and silent nature is anthropocentrism and it is quite problematic. Meeker argues that although humans believe they are the only species that are capable of

art and therefore this skill shows itself as a superiority point for humans, there is a "prehuman evolutionary past" to human art (p. 191). "Art recalls mankind to experiences which are older than mankind itself, experiences that are shared by man's evolutionary forebears and probably by many other animals as well" (p. 191). Once humans become aware of the anthropocentric tradition of humanism, their understanding of art and literature must be rearranged accordingly. Human beings are a part of a greater ecology where they belong to, not superior to.

At the time when people first realised the damage they had done to the earth, many concerned voices were raised. One of them was Rachel Carson with her book *Silent Spring* (1962) in which she discusses the various ways human beings had been poisoning the earth, animals and plants. Her book has been considered as one of the inspirations for the scholars to face the environmental problems and include them in their agenda. She reminds humans that "[t]he balance of nature is not a status quo; it is fluid, ever shifting, in a constant state of adjustment. Man, too, is part of this balance" (p. 215). She pays great attention to the situation of bees, insects, herbs, birds, worms and many other individual natural bodies which have been under the effect of various poisons used by humans. The title of her work, *Silent Spring* is especially important for the literary studies since even in springtime when nature is revitalising, from the smallest insects to the greatest trees, human beings have had the tendency of turning up the sound of their ideas and ideals on the things they observe and consequently silence nature in literature. Timofeeva (2018), at this point asks a very on point question: "Is it not that the very call of being, which Heidegger is trying to discern in its oblivion, echoes the non-articulated animal voice, in which the philosopher hears only a meaningless sound?" (p. 146). If this is not the sound of being, if this is not the being

itself, then what is? Ecological consciousness is here at play to make humans hear what sounds meaningless to the human ear and hopefully to stop spring turning silent. It is one of the inherent questions about this field as to how this is achievable when the only mean for human to communicate is through language. One of the best examples of this theory in practice will be examined in the next chapter when Emily Dickinson's persona is imbedded nature and observes it with a fresh language of wonder and humility.

William Rueckert in his essay titled "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" (1978) becomes the first to name this gesture of merging literary criticism and ecological awareness. He is inspired by the conservationists and ecologists like Aldo Leopold, Ian McHarg, Barry Commoner and Garret Hardin (p. 73). Rueckert's motive is quite like Meerker's, he is eager "to see literature inside the context of an ecological vision" (p. 79) and for that reason he rereads poems by Adrienne Rich, W. S. Merwin, and Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself" and he gives further examples from works by William Faulkner, Henry David Thoreau and Theodore Roethke. As the title of his essay suggests, or as the very word essay suggests, Rueckert experiments with this new term he has come up with in this way and asks the right questions:

> [H]ow can we apply the energy, the creativity, the knowledge, the vision we know to be in literature to the human-made problems ecology tells us are destroying the biosphere which is our home? How can we translate literature into purgative-redemptive biospheric action; how can we resolve the fundamental paradox of this profession and get out of our heads? How can we turn words into some thing [sic] other than more words …; how can we do something more than recycle WORDS?
> Let experimental criticism address itself to this dilemma. (p. 85)

Rueckert's trial to get word closer to the world begins with these questions. With the environmental awareness and concern he has as a literary critic he wants to have a more genuine relationship with nature and his environment where literature is no more guilty

of adding a meaning that is not there, that is not present. As language is the greatest of human beings' tool to show and spread their superiority, literature have been the playground of the authors and poets to affirm this dominion. Rueckert is determined to get rid of all the human baggage over nature; he calls the literary scholars, poets and authors and says: "Free us from figures of speech" (p. 85).

After Rueckert's essay, the movement that had already had its scholars from different departments of humanities, gained more and more popularity as the climate worsened. The definite definition of the term, comes from Cheryll Glotfelty (1996); "[E]cocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (p. xviii). Literature and the physical environment is woven together tightly from the first epics of the literary tradition to the present day open microphone poetry events. The world has been the setting of the mimesis, of the word. The word, language, literature, speech, reason, have been considered as the opposites of the world, earth, animal, plant, instinct; and ecocriticism is the moment of stopping and looking where we are, where we dwell both literally and literarily. According to Lynn White, Jr. (1996) the roots of humans' ecological crisis begins with the moment they learn how to deal with it, then gain a mastery over it. At the times when people tilled the earth according to the amount of their needs, the connection with the earth was more visible and the weakness of the man was always present in the face of natural phenomena. However, "the capacity of a power machine to till the earth" (p. 8) does not have an end. Therefore White, Jr. believes that "[m]an's relation to the soil was profoundly changed. Formerly man had been a part of nature; now he was the exploiter of nature" (p. 8). Furthermore, humans become the victorious part for the first time when it comes to body, as Harold Fromm claims that it was impossible "that man could win the body-

mind battle on the field of the body" before the twentieth century (p. 30). Once the weakness has been lost, the bold attitude of humans is flourished to claim what they supposed is theirs, the earth. Fromm calls this new attitude of man "Faustian posturings" and he believes, like many ecologists believe, "[they] take place against a background of arrogant, shocking, and suicidal disregard of his roots in the earth" (p. 39).

To stop this arrogant, shocking and suicidal disregard of the Faustian posturing of humans Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess coins the term deep ecology in his essay "The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects" (2015). The deep ecology comes with a set of principles and the first three are the most crucial ones: First one is that each non-human being carries an intrinsic or an inherent value regardless of the interest to the humans. Second one is that richness and diversity of life cannot be damaged and it must be protected. Third is that except from their vital requirements, human beings do not have any right to do anything that would diminish this diversity and richness (p. 50). Once these principles are set, Naess believes the only outcome is a self-realisation which grants humans the fact that earth simply "does not belong to man" (p.54); nonhuman on this earth is as much as what human is. Therefore the realisation of the self is actually the realisation of the nonhuman neighbour and the way to know humanity is also through this altruistic gesture of knowing the other. When Naess gets to the almost slogan like "Maximum symbiosis!" (p. 59) moment, he believes through deep ecology and its principles, "[t]he self is extended and deepened as a natural process of the realization of its potentialities in others" (p. 59). Neil Evernden, in his "Beyond Ecology" (1996) essay discusses the deep ecology and comes to a conclusion. "The deep ecological movement … demands the involvement of the arts and humanities" (p. 102). He underlines the fact that humanities have traditionally ignored what is beyond the

human, for that, they would call a scientist. However, ecology, is more about interrelatedness than interdependence to Evernden (p. 102) and he claims, that interrelatedness is only possible through the "involvement by the arts" (p. 103). As the creators of arts, humans with the set of values of humanities accorded to nature, must be in this process because more than being individuals, they are, as Evernden puts, individuals-in-context. His contribution to the deep ecological movement is the touch of human aesthetics: "Environmentalism without aesthetics is merely regional planning" (p. 103) therefore beyond ecology stands ecologically concerned arts and humanities.

Among the literary arts, poetry seems to be the fittest for this aesthetically charged ecological stand since it establishes direct relations to "mind, body and place" (Heise 2015, p. 171) through tropes like metaphor and simile. Greg Garrard in his book *Ecocriticism* (2012) claims that poetry's oblique poetic language enables "responsible humans … to let things disclose themselves in their own inimitable way, rather than forcing them into meanings and identities that suit their own instrumental values" (p. 31). The poets turn out to be the least interested in a nonhuman being's use value and put great importance of what is unpopular. Or as Mary Midgley states in *Animals and Why They Matter* (1998):

> When some portion of the biosphere is rather unpopular with the human race – a crocodile, a dandelion, a stony valley, a snowstorm, an odd-shaped flint – there are three sorts of human being who are particularly likely to see point in it and befriend it. They are poets, scientists and children. Inside each of us, I suggest, representatives of all these groups may be found. (p. 145)

Therefore poetical withstanding of ecology, or ecopoetry will not fail to represent nature and non-human in it, free from the many-layered meaning burden as it is creating an original and raw relationship with nature, much like the child and the scientist would create. For that reason, the roots of ecopoetics in the Western literary heritage can be

examined in the nature poems of the romantic poetry and transcendental school as the starting point.

3. 2 Ecopoetry

Leonard Scigaj defines ecopoetry as "poetry that persistently stresses human cooperation with nature conceived as a dynamic, interrelated series of cyclic feedback systems" (Scigaj, 1999, p. 37). A relation of this sort with nature is fundamentally different from the traditional way humans have been dealing with poetry. As in literature in general, in poetry, too, ecological consciousness lets the poems open up to their originary sense and as William Rueckert would like to see, frees us from figure of speech (Rueckert, 1978, p. 85). Sustainable poetry is the name Scigaj gives to the outcome of an ecopoetic approach that underlines this interrelatedness of the poet with nature. For him, an ecopoet "affirms that human language is much more limited than the ecological processes of nature and uses postmodern self-reflectivity to disrupt the fashionably hermetic treatment of poetry as a self-contained linguistic construct whose ontological ground is language theory" (Scigaj, 1999, p. 11). The description of the ecopoet comes with a humility towards nature followed by destruction of the image of the poet as hermit to establish that human-nonhuman cooperation in the time of an ecological crisis.

Although the poets did not necessarily have the ecological consciousness of the 21st century ecopoet who lives in a globe that is quickly warming and giving alarms on each and every level, the roots of ecopoetic discourse can be found in English Romantic poetry lead by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Historically, scholars tend to look at English romantics from a human centred perspective; in their poetry, they

see nature as an escape from civilisation and reality, the romantic individual is often seen solitary. However, this is a rebound movement to the Enlightenment and the thoughts it brings about like positivism, utilitarianism, idea of order, of engineered societies, rationale and cognition. In the famous "Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*" published in 1801, Wordsworth shows a similar discourse with Scigaj by claiming that "Poetry is the image of man and nature" (p. 9). Poetry as a formal structure sustains his philosophical inquiries, questioning man and nature or man in nature. Therefore this continuation of romantic tradition evolving into a more ecocritically defined movement can be followed. The limited human language is not contributing to what already exists in nature, in Wordsworth, who comes to admit that "The world is too much with us" (Wordsworth, 1909, pp. 353-354). According to Jonathan Bate, what separates nature and human as world and us, is the fact that the concept of environment has come to play in the 19th century with the increasing of city-dwelling. Before that time, the poets did not feel a separation between themselves and nature, or did not feel so as drastically as Wordsworth felt (Bate, 2000, p. 13). Thus, this makes Wordsworth's experience closer to the modern experience. To understand Bate's going back to English romanticism as the roots of ecopoetry, his perception and stating of what ecopoetry must be understood, as well. "Ecopoetics asks in what respects a poem may be making (Greek *poiesis*) of the dwelling-place – the prefix eco – is derived from Greek *oikos*, 'the home or place of dwelling'" (p. 75). Therefore, ecopoetry is directly related to the making of the dwelling-place. In that respect romantic roots of ecopoetry can be explained as

> [W]riters in the Romantic tradition which begins in the late eighteenth century have been especially concerned with this severance. Romanticism declares allegiance to what Wordsworth in the preface to Lyrical Ballads called 'the beautiful and permanent forms of nature'. It proposes that when we commune with those forms we live with a peculiar intensity, and conversely that our lives

> are diminished when technology and industrialization alienate us from those forms. It regards poetic language as a special kind of expression which may affect an imaginative reunification of mind and nature… (p. 245)

The greatest product of human poiesis, the language then, makes its peace with what has been lost during perfecting it. Whilst conversing with pastoral, Wordsworth, as Roszak (2000) puts, is attending nature and conversing with the natural (p. 111). This sort of a relationship has been needed to reconcile human with non-human and Wordsworth is "enabling the possibility of an imaginative sustainability in that relationship, or indeed, the erasure of a need for a separate category of nature" (Gifford 2000, p. 21).

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, a genuine literary and somewhat philosophical tradition was founded. The transcendentalist club Ralph Waldo Emerson established can be considered as the next step of Wordsworthian trial of reconciliation of human with nonhuman. Similar to the Spinoza's philosophy where there is one substance in nature and everyone and everything is attributing to that source of existence, Emerson's philosophy is taking an animalistic and a somewhat pagan turn to the belief of oversoul which is the divine essence in everything and everyone from god. Although Emerson clearly sees human and nonhuman pointing to a greater power, "Nature is the symbol of spirit" (Emerson, 2009, p. 10); and although his transcendentalism seems to take his feet off of the ground to reach that greater power, he is actually quite grounded to the ground. Both because of nature's symbolism he believes and establishes a whole philosophical system around, and because of his inability to divorce his discourse from Christian hermeneutics, with still as an original wording like his famous transparent eye-ball replacing god's omnipresence, Emerson seems to be distant to what is now called an ecopoetic approach to nature. However, even though he is unsuccessful at divorcing his language from an old discourse, as M.

Jimmie Killingsworth (2004) discusses, Emerson successfully marries his language to a scientific discourse,

> …right down to the names of the plants that curl about the poet's feet. He virtually sinks into nature. Grounded in this way, the reflections on truth and beauty seems as much an opportunity to allow the poetic sensibility to play over a natural scene as an occasion to assert a philosophical view. (p. 64)

Therefore Emerson places himself in the English language cannon of nature writing in between English romanticism and this new way of perceiving the earth to the point of becoming one with it. Although Emerson, especially in his scholarly writings, is quite unscholarly, and easily upsets the reader with many layered traditional baggage he has in his discourse, he faces some of the most crucial notions of American identity.

> Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul. Strictly speaking, therefore, all that is separate from us, all which Philosophy distinguishes as the NOT ME, that is, both nature and art, all other men and my own body, must be ranked under this name, NATURE (Emerson, 2009, p. 2)

The not me list according to Emerson includes: nature, art, all the other men and his own body; the last one is intriguing to be put in that list, the idea that his body is not him. He makes the emphasis on the soul, but he also challenges this American puritan notion that the body is one's earthly animal self that has nothing to do with real person. This puritanical Christian abhorrence of the body, the belief that man is born with a physical body only to raise a spiritual one is being questioned. He challenges that separation which becomes very significant for ecopoetry later.

Emerson's transcendentalist attention for nature leads way for American nature writing tradition and inspires Henry David Thoreau to become a pioneer for ecopoetic atonement with nature. His time near the Walden Pond is the ultimate romantic pastoral gesture of the poet's leaving society to contemplate and observe nature and the outcome

of this is *Walden* published in 1854. If, according to Killingsworth (2004), Emerson "virtually sinks into nature" (p. 64) Thoreau does so literally.

> I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. … I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. (p. 70)

Living deliberately for Jonathan Bate, means giving attention to both words and the world (Bate 2000, p. 23). This is quite reminiscent of Nazım Hikmet Ran's *On Living* where he presents what living should be like, "with great seriousness / like a squirrel, for example - / I mean without looking for something beyond and above living, / I mean living must be your whole occupation" (Ran, 2002, p. 132). Thoreau embraces living similarly, like an animal and that seems to be the only way to live deliberately. This gesture renders his position as a key figure in American literature different than any before him. The physicality of his experience, almost survivalist sort of tendency to live like an animal. The long tradition of minding the gap between human and nonhuman seems to be the closest to be actually closed in his narrative. As Greg Garrard (2012) states, "Thoreau's trajectory, and the polyvalence of his nature writing under prolonged critical scrutiny, makes him an exemplary figure whose posthumous career reveals much about the changing place of the environment in American culture and the literary academy" (p. 52).

Thoreau's special attention to wilderness and the importance he puts on what is wild, has a great effect on American ecopoetry and the way human perceives nonhuman. He longs for an expression of the wild. "The Spaniards" he says, "have a good term to

express this wild and dusky knowledge, *Gramatica parda*, tawny grammar" (Thoreau, 2000, p. 25). Therefore Thoreau is applying Scigaj's description of ecopoetics, the "human language is much more limited than the ecological processes of nature" (Scigaj, 1999, p.11); and he seeks for another language, a wilder, duskier one to at least do justice for the environment he has sunk into. American poet of deep ecology and essayist Gary Snyder (2000) provides what this tawny grammar really means when he states:

> [R]eally good writing is both inside and outside the garden fence. It can be a few beans, but also some wild poppies, vetches, mariposa lilies, ceanothus, and some juncos and yellow jackets thrown in. It is more diverse, more interesting, more unpredictable, and engages with a much broader, deeper kind of intelligence. Its connection to the wildness of language and imagination helps give it power. This is what Thoreau meant by the term 'Tawny Grammar'… (p. 129)

The tawny grammar Thoreau longs to establish in the end is the grammar of nature, of the earth itself. The symbiotic relation an ecologically conscious poet is trying to establish is Thoreau's humility towards nature and knowing his *Umwelt* along with the *Umwelt*s of nonhuman beings. Such a grammar, according Snyder, would eventually become the grammar of culture and civilisation (p. 129). Thus, it rearranges language's position from a cultural state to biological and accordingly it disqualifies language as the only intelligent activity to be performed, and as the order bringer to the seeming chaos of the uncivilised earth (p. 130). The discourse built on this romantic, transcendentalist and wild grammar of nature poets is that of ecopoetics.

In this chapter the question of animal along with nature has been discussed in literature with a specific emphasis on poetry. The next chapter will introduce Emily Dickinson as a poet who carries on with the romantic and transcendental ways of looking at and observing nature and furthermore how she transcends these fields to become an original precursor ecopoet of her time.

CHAPTER 4

CHRYSALIS

"My business is circumference."

Dickinson in an 1863 letter to Higginson

Emily Dickinson remains to be one of the most influential and enigmatic poets of American poetry from her death to this day. Her unique style of writing with incorrect grammar, peculiar punctuations, incoherent capital letters and endless sarcasm and wit are the very things that render her poetry enigmatic and influential. Although Dickinson left over a thousand poems, some of her scholars focused on her scarce biographical facts and letters to interpret her poetry. This attempt, I believe, will eventually turn her poetry into extended diary entries, as if they are there for the scholars to understand the life of the poet. Nevertheless, Dickinson's oeuvre is too rich to stand its ground. This chapter discusses Dickinson's poetry in terms of the concerns that have been raised in the previous chapters related to the inter-dependency of the species, animals' importance in nature and human's relation to the natural world. Here Dickinson will be reintroduced as a nature poet with the common practices she uses in poetry like her circumference discourse and different ways of breaking down the representation.

4. 1 Emily Dickinson and nature

Romantic and transcendental traditions of nature writing were in the readings of Dickinson, along with the scientific works of the time and also, Dickinson's own admiration of nature and skills in woodlore are reflected throughout her poetry. Dickinson's personas are often in the midst of observing nature to the minutest details with great wonder; as in both wondering about and wondering at nature. From a brook to the moon, the persona has a great variety of things she wonder about nature and when she observes more, she wonders at the way nature works, sometimes so similarly to human and sometimes so differently. There are moments when her poetry resembles a romantic one when she makes awe her main concern: "No man saw awe, not to his house / Admitted he a man / Though by his awful residence / Has human nature been" (J1733). On the way to the romantic sublime, awe is the first step. But instead of losing herself in the sublimity of nature which is an act eventually casts human nature away from green nature, the persona is bitter because of man's constant failure to understand he already inhabits in that awe. The reason why humans fail to find the romantic sublime is because they are looking for it in grand nature. Dickinson's persona is often distracted by clovers, flowers, worms and insects and through these smallest figures she experiences sublime in nature. There are also moments when her poetry resembles a transcendental one when she puts her over sensitive eye to observe a little caterpillar: "My slow – terrestrial eye / Intent upon it's [sic] own career / What use has it for me – " (J1448). On the way to the transcendental tradition, becoming a transparent eyeball is the first step. But instead of turning into an omniscient seer of nature which is an act eventually casts human nature away from green nature and closer to a supposed transcendental god, the persona's eye is not different than the eye of the creature that she

is observing. It is terrestrial. It is from this world, not from any other. Dickinson's persona is surrounded by nature from grand to gnat, however, her poetry is not a way to reach the father in the sky; it is a way to reach the sky itself: "Perhaps I asked too large – / I take – no less than skies – / For Earths, grow thick as / Berries, in my native town – " (J352). Dickinson's persona is thirsty for an earthly contact and whether it is a transcendental or Christian, god is less than skies. Even though she had been reading and sometimes was influenced by both English Romantic and American Transcendental poetry, Emily Dickinson's nature is nothing like romantic or transcendental. Furthermore, because of the confessional tone of the poet, one may think that Dickinson's nature was what she associates herself with or she was a nature worshipper; or her animals were only allegorical and her nature was superficial. For one reason or another Dickinson has not been considered as a nature poet even though her verse is breathing in and out with natural life. Her almost ecopoetic early sensibility towards nature and with a special emphasis on animals will be the main concern of this chapter.

Her first and most important preceptor, Thomas W. Higginson (1984), describes Dickinson's poetry as "poetry plucked up by the roots; we have them with earth, stones, and dew adhering, and must accept them as they are" (p. 26). The structural unconventionality of her verse goes a step further than free verse and becomes like a plant that is not just pretty with its petals but also earthy with its roots out. Conrad Aiken (1965) finds her style both "incorrigible" and "brilliant" (p. 117). However, he does not show the least sympathy for her nature poems which he considers as "often superficial, a mere affectionate playing with the smaller things that give her delight" (p. 115). Aiken's approach to her nature poetry is not surprising when Dickinson's enigmatic and prudent language is taken into consideration. Her puzzling discourse is capable of upsetting the

critic who is looking for a definite meaning like David T. Porter (1981): “Dickinson’s troping habit oscillates between these poles of effective metaphorical meaning at one extreme and metonymic indefiniteness and lost reality at the other” (p. 58). Porter believes that the reason why her language becomes so difficult to understand and follow is because of her lost referents (p. 54). To him, Dickinson’s poetry turns so much to itself that the natural world, through metaphors and mostly through metonyms, starts only corresponding to the poet’s mind. Porter states that “So remote are her poetic episodes that we inevitably conclude that the basic movement of her mind is allegorical” (p. 65). Allegorical language is evidently paired with a didactic tone. However, Emily Dickinson’s language obstructs any of her sentiments to be didactic because of the inherent bathos which is an abrupt comical end of a serious utterance, she carries in her discourse. Porter himself gives the formulation of it as such: “cloistered syntax, ambiguous structure, and grave word choice” (p. 78). These three keep Dickinson’s language from being a didactic and allegorical.

Wendy Martin (2009) in her study on Emily Dickinson, underlines the fact that Dickinson’s nature understanding, lacking external meanings attached to it prevented her poetry from resembling the puritan or transcendentalist poetry of the environment she inhabited in (p. 86). Martin states that “She saw nature as an end in itself and not merely as a vehicle to philosophical truths” (p. 86). This is the reason why Dickinson can be discussed as one of the precursors of this ecopoetic tendency to appreciate both natural beauty and ugliness, both snow and sun, both nurturing and murdering nature. This exact gesture by the poet sets her apart from her contemporaries and antecedents. Her poetry becomes this vast field of meadow where the poet is interacting with the questions of soul and snake the same. Martin believes the reason why her nature poetry is the way it

is because Emily Dickinson is a nature worshipper: “her love for nature can only be described as worship” (p. 87). It is evident that the poet Emily Dickinson was against a systematic religion which required going to the church every Sunday because she refused to do that. However, coming up to this conclusion through the persona of her poetry is absurd. Dickinson’s personas often gives the perfect advice for the human whose mind is preoccupied with heaven all the time, who is keeping nature out of their minds: “Out of sight? What of that? / See the Bird – reach it! /Curve by Curve – Sweep by Sweep – /Round the Steep Air – ” (J703). If out of sight is out of mind, the persona is perplexed by the people who do not see what is just surrounding them, and tells them to reach it; see, hear, smell and observe what is just in front of them. She knows what is keeping them from doing so is the belief of an eternal heaven above the clouds, but the persona cares too much about nature to believe the existence of heaven, a place supposedly more beautiful than the earth:

> Blue is Blue – the World through –
> Amber – Amber – Dew – Dew –
> Seek – Friend – and see –
> Heaven is shy of Earth – that's all –
> Bashful Heaven – thy Lovers small –
> Hide – too – from thee – (J703)

This is almost a Dadaist moment in her poetry where she repeats the same words over and over again to get them rid of their poetic baggage, an act likens to shaking crumbs off a tablecloth. Once admitting that blue is just blue, amber is just amber, as well as dew is dew and nothing more, the beauty of nature which does not refer to anything else but itself, is way too grand than a supposed heaven. She encourages her reader, her friend to seek and see this as clearly as she sees. The persona takes heaven as her interlocutor and states that its lovers are small as opposed to the lovers of the earth.

Since heaven is believed only by humans, as they are the only target group of this enterprise, it becomes short of a much larger population of animals and plants. Martin states that Dickinson does not accept religious dogma that "Her devotion is not to God, her mission not to achieve heaven; instead her loyalties lie with this life and this earth" (Martin, 2009, p. 93) but at the same time she thinks that Dickinson was a worshipper of nature which evidently requires a sort of dogma to perform. Dickinson's personas might be infidels or blasphemers of a divine religion but they are nature worshippers as much as a squirrel is. She belongs to that greater population of animals who see the earth as their dwelling place and appreciative to both of nature's curse and blessing.

Joan Kirkby (1991) in her book on Emily Dickinson's poetry examines the grammar of the self in her quaint utterance and establishes four features of her poetry. According to Kirkby these are the key features of Dickinson's poetry: defamiliarisation of the world, violating conventional poetry, reaching the unarticulated world and adopting many realities of persons (p. 37). To examine all these four, the poem "Bee I'm expecting you!" (J1035) would be the best since it corresponds to each feature.

> Bee! I'm expecting you!
> Was saying Yesterday
> To Somebody you know
> That you were due –
>
> The Frogs got Home last Week –
> Are settled, and at work –
> Birds, mostly back –
> The Clover warm and thick –
>
> You'll get my Letter by
> The seventeenth; Reply
> Or better, be with me –
> Yours, Fly. (J1035)

This is an epistolary poem written by a fly to a bee, asking it to come quickly. The poem depicts many species coming back home; the beginning of spring, maybe, the said animals are back from migration or hibernation and the fly wants its friend bee to be back, too. The whole depiction of the beginning of spring commences with a defamiliarisation since it represents these species almost coming from vacation. Frogs are at work, birds are back and the clover is waiting for the bee. The poem does not follow conventional rules of poetry, like many of Dickinson's poems. It includes many slant rhymes and does not have a rigid syllabic meter. Furthermore, Dickinson's characteristic dashes and capital letters already banish this poem out of the tradition. The poem both reaches the unarticulated world and adopts the role of another animal rather than human.

Helen Vendler (2010) finds this poem "winsomely playful" (p. 382) and interprets this urgent call of the fly to the bee as a poem of "natural companion" (p. 383). She pays close attention to the capital f of "Fly" and believes that both Bee and Fly are proper names. Consequently, this gesture turns the poem into a fable set in "the Aesopian world" (p. 382). However, this does not explain the capital S of Somebody, capital H of Home, capital L of Letter or capital R of Reply; just like there is no known explanation of the random capital letters in Dickinson's writing style. The poem offers to see different species together living in a symbiosis; not strictly biological but poetical nonetheless. According to Timothy D. Scholwalter (2006), symbiosis is a way of interaction between species and it occurs in three ways; parasitism where one species is turned into a host involuntarily to a parasite (p. 225), commensalism is similar to the parasitism but here the host is not affected by symbiont (p. 229) and mutualism is both the host and the symbiont benefit from each other's company (p. 231). In the light of this

knowledge, it can be said that Dickinson sets the relationship of the bee and the fly as a mutualist relationship. However, a mutualist relationship between species occurs like between a bee and a flower, when the bee collects the sweet nectar of the flower, the pollens of the host stick on the hind legs of the symbiont. Therefore a similar relationship between a bee and a fly seems unlikely. In the poem, the fly writes that the bee is due nowadays and then goes on giving examples of the other creatures that have recently returned. “The Frogs got Home last Week – / Are settled, and at work – ” and “Birds, mostly back – ” (J1035). When the behaviours of these animals examined, birds migrate mostly latitudinal, from north to south (Storer & Usinger, 1957, p. 555), frogs hibernate by burrowing themselves into mud (p. 19), honey bees do not hibernate or migrate, they spend the winter in their hive producing more honey to survive and flies enter a diapause which is not hibernation but a slowing down of metabolism to survive the winter. Thus, the fly is sending the letter to the bee, to let it know the winter is over and it is time for it to leave its hive now. When the winter is over, all these species thrive to do two things: feeding themselves and mating. While the fly live on decaying fruits, vegetables and faeces, and the bee live on the sweet nectar of various flowers, the bird and the frog both live on small insects like flies and bees. Therefore this “winsomely playful” (Vendler, 2010, p. 382) little letter of the fly turns out to be its call for help from the bee, its companion with whom it shares a common fate. Dickinson brings together two species which are normally not symbionts of each other and creates a situation where they are both the victim of much larger species which are fully capable of hibernation and migration unlike the smallest ones like these insects.

Kirkby (1991) finds Dickinson’s nature “a mysterious process” (p. 115); in her verse nature “is to be found in the murmur of insects, the efflorescence of a sunset, the

evanescence of spring, the phosphorescence of decaying things" (p. 115). Dickinson's poetics are in fact loaded with decaying, dying and dead things. Death in her verse is a grand subject matter which the persona is exposed to very often. Joan Kirkby, in her study on Emily Dickinson, portrays a mourning poet grieving for every possible end; end of a day, of a season, of an animal's life. Although she acknowledges the continuity of life in Dickinson's verse, Kirkby highlights a persona lamenting for the death in nature: "Though the individual flower is sacrificed to the renewal of the earth, there is continuity" (p. 130). The word sacrifice comes with a religious baggage like the sacrifice of Christ or of Joseph, both important sons of important men. However, Dickinson portrays a different picture of death when her persona observes a daisy vanished:

> So has a Daisy vanished
> From the fields today –
> So tiptoed many a slipper
> To Paradise away –
> Oozed so in crimson bubbles
> Day's departing tide –
> Blooming – tripping – flowing –
> Are ye then with God? (J28)

The poem depicts a vanished flower. Since it is vanished, the persona does not actually see it but probably knows that it was there before and it is not there now. Being the only one who pays attention to its absence, even the persona describes its abandoning the fields as tiptoeing and she believes it is in paradise now because that is what is supposed to happen. However, the flower's journey does not end there. It is now "Oozed so in crimson bubbles – " (J28) as if the crimson earth is the sea swallowing this little daisy deep in its gut; the departing tide of the day pulls the flower back where it all started. Then for the first time in the poem, there appears the verbs of action, "Blooming –

tripping – flowing – " nothing is over for the daisy vanished in the fields. After these verbs of action the persona asks the rhetorical question, "Are ye then with God?" to show the stark difference of being with god which depicts a state of death with the verb to be, not with a gerund like blooming, tripping or flowing. Therefore the assumed paradise and the thought of being with god after death are actually the ones what make the persona mourn or grieve. The life of the daisy or any other natural being will not stop in heaven forever after death; in this great compost of the earth they will give life to the others and go on living in them. There is no sacrifice to be found in the daisy's disappearance; it does not die for our sins; since there is no statement of the soul, it will not be resurrected when it is due. It is gone forever, and this is beautiful.

Another reason why Joan Kirkby assumes that there is a general tone of mourning in Dickinson's poetry is because she believes that the poet associates herself with the animals or flowers in her work. It is conventional when reading Dickinson's poetry critics would often like to believe that they are reading a suffering soul, a woman in pain. They believe so mostly because of the subjects of her poetry, tiny little insects that people look down upon, flowers in the gardens that people tend to overlook. That is why, Kirkby's reading of "Further in Summer than the Birds" is full of misery:

> Further in Summer than the Birds
> Pathetic from the Grass
> A minor Nation celebrates
> It's unobtrusive Mass.
> No Ordinance be seen
> So gradual the Grace
> A pensive Custom it becomes
> Enlarging Loneliness.
> Antiquest [sic] felt at Noon
> When August burning low
> Arise this spectral Canticle
> Repose to typify

Remit as yet no Grace
No Furrow on the Glow
Yet a Druidic Difference
Enhances Nature now (J1068)

The poem depicts the end of the summer, therefore seemingly, the end of many species' life in nature. Kirkby believes that "[l]ike the poet the insects sing in their dying" (Kirby, 1991, p. 125) in this poem and because she will eventually share the same fate with these "lowly creatures" (p. 125), Kirby states so disdainfully, the persona feels a bond with them.

At the end of the summer, what the persona calls a pathetic, minor nation holds an unobtrusive mass. Throughout this poem Dickinson adapts many of Christian terms into nature and this is the first one; a Christian mass is held to commemorate the last supper of the Christ by drinking wine and eating bread on his behalf. Therefore, it is a way of mourning. However, this literally minor nation's mass is nothing like the humans'; because they do not know of Christ, they do not honour his death or life and it is unobtrusive, unnoticed. Furthermore, the Christian mass is held with the bright hope of Christ's resurrection one day, therefore, as much as being a mourning, it is also a celebration but of afterlife, not this one. Since these grass-dwellings do not know any other life, the only one they celebrate is the one they are living. This nation of small creatures are insects and they are called a nation because of the inherent feature of being a nation: they live together. In their *Umwelt* they create a minor nation, much pathetic than the major one. The reason for their pathetic state is not because their lives are about to end but it is mostly because of human's view on them. They seem pitiable to the human eye, a miserable life so close to earth. In the second stanza, the persona goes to investigate these insects and have a look at their mass. She cannot find any rule or order

in their mass, yet gradually, she feels grace, as in elegance and finesse surrounds these animals. This grace is not the benevolent love of god for his believers, the insects do not seek that grace like good Christians. Exactly this lack of interest in religious grace enlarges their loneliness. The third stanza begins with a word that Dickinson makes up: antiquest [sic]. Instead of saying the most antique or the oldest, she chooses not to and this is a reminder how old insects are. Some of the modern day insects have ancestors from the Cambrian age which was more than 500 million years ago. Their canticle is heard at noon and when the August is burning low, so not just the season, but the month and the day is about to end, too. This is another term Dickinson borrowed from religious discourse to be fit one of the lowliest of creatures. A canticle is a biblical hymn but it is important that it is non-metrical. Therefore the lack of ordinance that the persona observes with her eyes continues here with her ears, too. Now at the end of this stanza the canticle that illustrates the insect mass ends slowly. On the last stanza, the persona acknowledges there is nothing like a Christian grace felt among the attendees of this mass, and no halo to be glowed. Yet, nature is enhanced by a druidic difference. After integrating so many Christian terms into this mass of the animals, Dickinson takes a figure form a pagan belief, meaning a Celtic preacher to say fundamental. This is not specific to this poem; Dickinson chooses to end another one of her poems with a pagan touch; the poem begins with "The Bible is an antique Volume – / Written by faded Men" and ends with "Orpheus' Sermon captivated – / It did not condemn – " (J1545). While the Bible is written by men to condemn others who are not following it, namely the whole flora and fauna, excluding Christian humans, these pagan religions are closer to the masses held by other beings of the earth and they are the ones actually remitting a

fundamental difference to the world since how to perform this mass is not taught to the animals but it happens because of their unabridged biological relation to the earth.

To return to Kirkby's thought that Dickinson is a dying poet singing like the insects of this mass; from a biological point of view, this might not be true at all. The assumption that the insects know they are about to die and they mourn for themselves throughout the poem is an absurd one. Some insects produce more energy and food to spend the winter in their nests at the end of the summer, and some goes into a period called diapause to survive through the winter as established in the discussion of the poem J1035 and according to Url Lanham (1964), this instinct for the seasonal change is so inherent to these animals that even in a laboratory and supplied with their "favorable conditions" (p. 99), the insects still become dormant during cold season and then becomes "active at about the time it would have in nature" (p. 100). If the Christian mass is gathered to mourn for the Christ and celebrate the heaven to go after death, this mass is gathered to commemorate the summer they have just had and celebrate the next spring when they come back from their underground burrows or diapause. Therefore the human perspective of the end of the summer does not carry the same meanings for the animals who are seen as pathetic for their short and close to earth lives. About the poet's association with these animals, Dickinson's persona is one of the voices joining to the canticle of the insects but she is not one of the insects. She is surprised as much as the reader at the importance of this little nation holds and tries to appreciate them but she is still confused because her language is filled with meanings that are not corresponded by the natural world. She still sees no order, no regular melody but she is singing with them nonetheless because she sees them as her fellows. As a general feature of her poetry her personas know some bees personally (J1343), some birds are their "joyous going

fellow[s]" (J1723), a snake is a "narrow fellow" (J986) to them, just as a caterpillar is "a fuzzy fellow" (J173) and worms are "our little kinsmen" (J885). She states, as a poet of nature and nothing more: "Several of Nature's People / I know, and they know me – / I feel for them a transport / Of cordiality – " (J986).

This cordiality she feels for the nature's people is one of the most differentiating features of Emily Dickinson's poetry. Her persona is always alert for any opportunity of correspondence with nature. Dickinson understands and applies John Berger's (2009) sentiment in her poetry: "The animal has secrets which, unlike the secret of caves, mountains, seas, are specifically addressed to man" (p. 14). She addresses the animals and plants in her poetry because she knows she is addressed by them, too. However, she is also aware of the following sentiment of Berger: "But always its lack of common language, its silence, guarantees its distance, its distinctness, its exclusion, from and of man" (p. 14). As a language maker, as a poet, she refrains from being a namer of things. She does not want to be an Adam in the exile. Often times her incompetence as a poet in front of a natural beauty shows itself in her work:

> Conferring with myself
> My stranger disappeared
> Though first upon a berry fat
> Miraculously fared
> How paltry looked my cares
> My practise how absurd
> Superfluous my whole career
> Beside this travelling Bird (J1655)

In this concise little verse, Dickinson's persona, finds herself in trouble. She is in discussion with herself, perhaps about how to write about this particular bird if the persona is a poet like Dickinson, but the bird takes a flight and is gone. As a result of this gesture of the bird, the persona questions her whole career. She sees how

insignificant her problems are. Her sentiment is familiar with another poet, Melih Cevdet Anday (2008) when he observes another bird, far away from Dickinson both in kilometres and years: “My little sparrow / Perching on the laundry hung rope / Are you looking at me with pity? / However I / Under the sun and the first white leaves / Will watch you fly” (p. 25, own translation).[8] Both personas are in the middle of observing birds which one of them calls “my stranger” and the other calls “my sparrow” and they are both interrupted by the act of the birds, one flies away and the other returns the gaze. The use of the possessive adjective “my” makes the boundary between the animal and the poet blurry. Dickinson is still cautious, she calls the bird a stranger but still aware that making it into a subject of her poetry, she will possess the bird. However, both of the birds refuse that possession and intervene with the day dreams of the poets. The animals make both poets’ careers redundant. This is a common pattern in Dickinson’s poetry; her persona often compares her art with the art or of a state of being of an animal and always ends up facing the fact that her art is incompetent, her words are not enough. The butterflies in St. Domingo, the persona states, “Have a system of aesthetics – / Far superior to mine” (J137) and when she examines a chestnut, she cannot help but surprise how tightly it is surrounded by its umber coat without any seam visible and that what makes her utter: “We know that we are wise – / Accomplished in Surprise – / Yet by this Countryman – / This nature – how undone!” (J1371). The language which is the greatest achievement of the human kind falls apart by the glance of the animal. Therefore, not just the poetic stand of the human but also as the stand of the ruling species of the earth

[8] In Melih Cevdet Anday’s original writings: “Çamaşır asılı ipte / Duran küçük serçem / Bana acıyarak mı bakıyorsun? / Halbuki ben güneşin / Ve ilk beyaz yaprakların altında / Senin uçuşunu seyredeceğim.”

crumbles into pieces by the flight of a bird, by the wings of an insect and by the peel of a fruit.

The reason why Emily Dickinson feels uncomfortable both as a language maker and an observer of superior species is because of her preoccupation with circumference. Scott Knickerbocker (2008) believes that “the artifice of Dickinson's poetic language encourages an ethical stance toward that real world” (p. 185). This ethical stance is significant for Dickinson’s poetry and as well as for the consequences of the human animal’s action in the world. At this point, circumference becomes a key word to understand why Dickinson wrote as they she did and also an important reason why we should read her as an ecopoet.

4. 2 Emily Dickinson’s circumference discourse

Circumference is both the outer edge of a circle, as in periphery and also the distance of the edge to the centre and it is Dickinson’s business (Dickinson, 1931, p. 290). As a poet she believed neither religion nor people pays the slightest attention to what is in the circumference; their business was the centre. She “believed that “circumference” was not only attainable, but already a part of everyday experience” (Kirkby, 1991, p. 34) but it was overlooked and not noticed. Dickinson’s persona who is observing nature very closely and enables circumference to find a place in the centre. She shifts the dynamics of that relationship between what is visible and what is unseen. Traditionally the centre is occupied by human and what is in the periphery is nature. Therefore by simple act of noticing things and representing them as they are renders Dickinson an ecopoet, the act of paying tribute to the environment to be more than a “mere backdrop for the human

drama" (Buell, 2005, p. 4). Dickinson's poetics introduces a grounded, as in literally dwelling earthward perspective to deny anthropocentricism which is related to the centre; and celebrate biocentricism which is in the circumference. In her environment poems, it is often seen that Dickinson not only observes what is in her circumference but also what is in a natural being's circumference. In J154 "Except to Heaven, she is nought", the persona describes clovers as "Unnoticed as a single dew". However, as it is peculiar to Dickinson's poems, the persona in the end faces the importance of that very clover: "Yet take her from the Lawn / And somebody has lost the face / That made Existence – Home!" (J154). As a matter of fact, Dickinson prepares the reader for such an end through the poem by listing the other creatures which are affected by the clover: "Except to some wide-wandering Bee / A flower superfluous blown. / Except for the winds – provincial. / Except by Butterflies / Unnoticed as a single dew / That on the Acre lies." (J154). Dickinson takes one of the smallest, quaintest plants of a field, lists its features as superfluous, provincial and unnoticed but except to the life forms that live on from that plant. This perspective is the most poetic manifestation of the scientific *Umwelt* of Jakob Von Uexküll's. By portraying the significance of a species to its environment Dickinson contributes the discussion of *Umwelt* from a different angle and she does it often:

> Nobody knows this little Rose –
> It might a pilgrim be
> Did I not take it from the ways
> And lift it up to thee.
> Only a Bee will miss it –
> Only a Butterfly,
> Hastening from far journey –
> On it's [sic] breast to lie –
> Only a Bird will wonder –
> Only a Breeze will sigh –

Ah Little Rose – how easy
For such as thee to die! (J35)

Quite similar to the previous poem, this one begins with the unknown rose. This time the persona picks the flower up from its *Umwelt* and almost shrugging her shoulders she utters, "Nobody knows this little Rose – " (J35) an act so little that it cannot even be called murder. However, the list she begins to relieve herself from the guilt gets more crowded each time, a bee, a butterfly, a bird and a breeze. It is highly sarcastic of Dickinson to use the word "only" each time she adds a new one to the list of the ones who will miss the rose since "only" is a word to define singularity; but it gets multiplied over and over. In the end, the persona accepts that she has killed the rose but in a strange anthropocentrism, she assumes it is easy for the rose to die. The poem opens up new meanings once it is thought in relation to humans' correspondence to their environment and the lack of attention and care for the natural life. Human animals might consider a natural being as redundant thinking about its use values for themselves, however, the earth spins on a delicate balance of species living, dying, rotting, biologically resurrecting together and whether they want it or not, human beings are as much valuable as a clover in this cycle of life.

Once it is established that nonhuman beings do have their own environment and each has a unique perception about it, meaning their own *Umwelt* and each of the species is an important part of that world, how Dickinson examines circumference and brings it into the centre can be discussed. One of ways is, as Christine Gerhardt (2014) states, "Dickinson's frequent acts of noticing small nature" (p. 31). According to Gerhardt, "Dickinson's poetic language emerges from an interest in flowers and birds, grasses and insects, and many of the imaginary journeys to the mind's circumference

remain grounded" (p. 31). The poet as the interpreter of the natural world around her, establishes her discourse on noticing the minutest creatures of nature. Gerhardt states that "Dickinson's speakers […] perform acts of noticing what is habitually disregarded, combining sentimental and religious perspectives with scientific ways of seeing in ways that talk back to the evolving environmental discourses of the day while also keeping their distance" (p. 35). Disregarding a species because of its scale comes with devaluing and results in the existence of that species. The reason why Mary Midgley (1998) chooses to mention poets, scientists and children (p. 145) as quoted in the chapter three where ecocriticism is discussed, is because these three groups of people's unending curiosity about the earth they dwell in. As in the example of this poem where the persona's eyes are open for the any creature of any scale:

> So from the mould
> Scarlet and Gold
> Many a Bulb will rise –
> Hidden away, cunningly,
> From sagacious eyes.
>
> So from Cocoon
> Many a Worm
> Leap so Highland gay,
> Peasants like me,
> Peasants like Thee
> Gaze perplexedly! (J66)

The poem portrays two younglings of different species together; one is a plant bulb, other is worm cocoon. Both bulbs and worms actually have features to be noticed by the keen eye, one has attracting colours, scarlet and gold, other is leaping around. Yet, they are invisible to the sagacious, knowing eyes. It is only the persona who describes herself as a peasant and her reader witness these creatures' first days on earth. As it is one of the most common worms, the persona probably observes earthworms leaving their cocoons.

Earthworms are one of the most important animals in the world. They let the oxygen into the soil by simply tunnelling their way through under the surface of the earth or "actually eating the earth where the soil is too compact to permit the worm to burrow through" (Braungart & Buddeke, 1960, p.130) and causing carbon dioxide to leave the soil. Also, the worms enrich the soil via their excrements and enable plants, like the one which is a home for the scarlet and gold bulbs, to get nutriments. Maybe, the bread winner of the plant in the poem is one of the parents of those leaping worms. Just as they are the bread winner of humans, too. Unfortunately, since the time Dickinson wrote this poem, the human animal did not learn enough from her to actually observe and acknowledge their importance. Many farmers around the world are now at a species-watch for earthworms which have been killed over the many years by the chemical pesticides. It is quite impressive that people now face such great scale worm crisis since it takes a lot to actually damage those creatures considering the fact that there might happen to be 50-120 of them per square metre (Alexander, 1990, p. 221). Therefore, in the poem, as well, the worms leaping so gaily in the grass, they are not few. Yet, the sagacious eyes turn a blind eye to these seemingly unworthy animals. Dickinson makes the comparison of the peasant eyes which notice minute animals and plants and sagacious eyes which cannot. The invalidation of knowledge which is indifferent to the earth faces the perplexity of ignorance and yet the latter is celebrated. In the constant act of noticing small nature, the poet does not need to be sagacious to feel wonder, as Knickerbocker (2008) suggests, "her stance toward nature encourages perhaps the most important quality of ecological ethics, that of wonder" (p. 187) or to feel humility as Gerhardt (2014) suggests, "Dickinson […] reconceptualize human-nature relationships

in terms of an environmental humility that does not undo their overriding interest in human concerns" (p. 14).

In Emily Dickinson's circumference discourse, another matter she dwells actively on is language. Human beings as the language founder contribute the abyss between human animal and non-human animal. Many times in her poetry, the persona remarks how any other animal does not need such device, she feeds a robin and in return, "The Robin for the Crumb / Returns no syllable" (J864); or the dun bat has "not a song pervade his Lips – " but then she adds "or none perceptible" (J1575). Therefore, Dickinson does not portray these animals as mute or dumb creatures to attach allegoric roles to each of them, yet she knows their way of communication is not like hers. Furthermore she observes that human language has become more than a mean of existence but now is the purpose of existence, "Can human nature not survive / Without a listener?" (J1748). In her mind, extinction awaits for human beings in the case of scarcity of listeners. However, she is also mindful about nature which utters no syllable and is still very able, "We pass, and she abides / We conjugate Her Skill / While She creates and federates / Without a syllable" (J811). These different ways of communication render her aware of this separation and aware of what a tongue could do, for that reason Dickinson establishes a language always referring back to its lack of ability:

> To tell the Beauty would decrease
> To state the Spell demean
> There is a syllable-less Sea
> Of which it is the sign
> My will endeavors for it's [sic] word
> And fails, but entertains
> A Rapture as of Legacies –
> Of introspective Mines – (J1700)

The persona here desires to tell the beauty but does not manage to do it better than or even compatible with the way nature already presents it. Since "beauty is nature's fact" (J1775) her each and every attempt to mould it into words fails miserably. Her human mind cannot see without a syllable, the beauty comes to her with words and letters meanwhile nature does not have anything to say in the same way. Here the image of syllable-less sea portrays the persona's feeling for nature quite well. As it has been established nature is syllable-less but the image of sea adds to the impossibility to mark it one thing; the shapeless mass of the sea image prevents the poet to chart it, name it or have dominion over it; unlike Adam. For that reason her poetry puts a great importance of seeing and observing and representing as it is without attaching pre-accepted meanings to nature because she knows words fail, "To see the Summer Sky / Is Poetry, though never in a Book it lie – / True Poems flee – " (J1472).

The consequence of being a language maker is becoming a namer and it is the last step of the circumference. Dickinson's persona is fascinated by the unknowable and undone nature and she often times feels uncomfortable to name the beings around her. For that very reason the poet's language becomes descriptive to a point of defamiliarisation. As a pupil of nature, Dickinson sees its endless ways and her discourse becomes bitter for the ones who think they know nature, "But nature is a stranger yet; / The ones that cite her most / Have never passed her haunted house" (J1400). Undoubtedly, the religious discourse which promised a better version of the earth turns out to be a public enemy for the poet who cannot imagine a place better than the nature she knows. Opposing to that in her poetry she praises science quite often and in many instances mocks religious beliefs, "Doubtless, we should deem superfluous / Many Sciences, / Not pursued by learned Angels / In scholastic skies!" (J168). In the

same sarcastic way she begins this poem “If the foolish, call them “flowers” – / Need the wiser, tell?” (J168). Apparently she calls people who think they know nature without any scientific knowledge, foolish.

Dickinson was an avid herbarium maker and interested in entomology and botany and as a New Englander she was familiar with the religious rhetoric of her day with figures like American preacher and theologian Jonathan Edwards and she chooses science over religion, over and over in her poetry. The main reason why religion is perceived as it is in Dickinson’s poetics is because the presupposition of Christianity about nature; the earth has lost all its charm and surprise the moment when Adam named it. As a result of this, the personas in her poetry mostly retain from naming the creatures freely, “By Men, yclept Caterpillar! / By me! But who am I, / To tell the pretty secret / Of the Butterfly!” (J173). Not to call the animal by its name, the persona cannot help but defamiliarise it at the beginning of this poem, “A fuzzy fellow without feet” (J173). She almost fears to call it by its name because by giving a name she would know it all and push it out of the centre, to the circumference. Since the animal does not name itself, the persona feels almost ashamed for the ones who call it caterpillar since it is impossible to attain the pretty secret of a caterpillar’s metamorphosis into a butterfly. Even the thought that caterpillar is another animal independent from butterfly is wrong. Caterpillar is actually the larva stage of an adult butterfly. Therefore, when the men in the poem call it caterpillar, the persona avoids calling it such since she knows at least a small amount of its unfathomable secret.

Whilst the poet is in battle of being a language maker and not a namer, nature’s people, as she calls them, are not bothered at all:

The Butterfly upon the Sky,
That does'nt [sic] know its Name
And has'nt [sic] any tax to pay
And has'nt [sic] any Home
Is just as high as you and I,
And higher, I believe,
So soar away and never sigh
And that's the way to grieve – (J1521)

The butterfly in the sky does not know that it is from the order lepidoptera of the class insecta where it shares with moths, it does not know its larva stage is named caterpillar, it does not know the mouth parts it had when it was a caterpillar are called mandibles and what it has lost those as a butterfly and instead of mandibles, it has this coiled tube is called proboscis (Storer & Usinger, 1957, p. 433). The butterfly does not also know having butterflies in the stomach, living as short as a butterfly or how aesthetically pleasing it is to the human eye. The butterfly is free from all these literary and literal knowledge. The persona marks that the animal does not pay tax and does not have a home. Tax is a human invention to dwell in a place whereas the animal does not know any government to pay any tax to. The environment it dwells is not someone else's to grant to it. Therefore, it does not have a home in the sense that human persona does. The butterfly, if a male, will mate in due time and rest on a branch or if a female, will mate in due time, leave the eggs on a secure leave and then rest on a branch. Unlike the persona, the earth is its home. Therefore it is not surprising that the she finds out the butterfly is higher than the persona and what she calls "us". Only way to live higher, it seems, is dwelling earthward.

Dickinson, in these poems, shows a tendency to leave animal in its anonymity. Her personas try not to conquer nature but capture it through observation. She is also aware as a poet, the challenge she faces is not to abuse any species with her language but

still to represent them. In this challenge, her clumsy eyeball, her capital I, wants to blend in and become anonymous like animal:

> I'm Nobody! Who are you?
> Are you – Nobody – too?
> Then there's a pair of us!
> Dont [sic] tell! they'd banish us – you know!
>
> How dreary – to be – Somebody!
> How public – like a Frog –
> To tell your name – the livelong June –
> To an admiring Bog! (J288)

The persona does not want to be named, she wants to be nobody. She finds a being who is as anonymous as herself, maybe a species that is new to science, and that makes them two. The way she upsets the rhyme here with "you know" right after "they'd banish us" is almost said in hurry for the creature not to say its name, too since the persona believes that once it is named and known, once there is no surprise about it, it will be banished out of the centre to the circumference. The second stanza begins with the persona's fear of being somebody. She finds being named and thus become somebody and be public is dull. This last part of the poem seems confusing when the persona's correspondent accepted to be an animal or a plant since she seems to present frogs as boastful creatures, telling their names night and day. However, the fact that the frog did not name itself changes the perspective of the poem. The frog had been examined and named and now has lost its wonder for people. What is left from the admiring crowd of people examining it, is now only an admiring swamp. Therefore the persona warns this unknown creature she finds at the beginning of the poem and tells the fable of the frog who was once anonymous and admired but now is regarded unimportant. This is how Dickinson turns the "I" of the Romantic poet into the "terrestrial eye" (J1448) and closes the abyss between human and animal.

Emily Dickinson's circumference, as it has been examined, is deeply rooted in the matter of language and overlooking. Dickinson's persona fights back with human animal's dominion over nature through breaking down the language and syntax, through resistance to naming and through insistently noticing the small nature around her to bring what is on the circumference to the centre. One of her most famous poems describes human's condition in nature and brings about a criticism for her fellow humans. "Safe in their Alabaster Chambers – / Untouched by Morning / And untouched by Noon – / Sleep the meek members of the Resurrection – / Rafter of satin, / And Roof of stone" (J216). Owing to the coffin image provided by the alabaster chamber, this poem has traditionally been read as referring to death, or as it is pointed out by Vendler (2010) to Dickinson's blasphemy, for she changed the initial "lie" into "sleep" and Vendler takes that this is the poet's remark of her disbelief in the afterlife (p. 39). However, when it is considered with the ongoing discourse of circumference, what lives in their alabaster chambers turns out to be humans. Never gotten their hands dirty, never touched the earth and thus remain untouched by the earth, too. The image of a member of resurrection is an interesting one, like resurrection is a club and the ones who join in and become members are the meek ones because they cannot reject the idea of living once, and as serious as a squirrel and thus needing another life. As they cannot be dwelling earthward they live under a satin rafter and a roof of stone not knowing that they need the earth that they try hard to keep out of their gates.

Emily Dickinson places her personas in the deep corners of her garden to notice the unnoticed, to contemplate on it and represent it without naming and thus turning them into enigmatic verses almost like Sphinx's riddle. To portray the long gone animals who used to be in the daily life, Dickinson applies her circumference discourse for the

ones who have been carrying both religious and literary baggage of human culture and language. As stated before, Dickinson's ethical treatment and equal distance to animals and nature in general are thought to stem from her wonder and humility. To analyse what has been discussed till now, her most important population is the finest example:

> The most important population
> Unnoticed dwell,
> They have a heaven each instant
> Not any hell.
>
> Their names, unless you know them,
> 'There useless tell.
> Of bumble – bees and other nations
> The grass is full. (J1746)

At the very beginning of the poem, the persona declares that what she observes right now is the most important population. These earth-dwelling creatures, indeed, the most significant members of the ecosystem that, despite denying it, humans are only a small part of. Yet they live unnoticed beneath humans' feet. The persona is not, again, the eager believer of the afterlife but more than the thought of afterlife, it is the people's attitude toward afterlife she ridicules. The reason why the most important beings of the earth go unnoticed is because human's constant fear of hell below and wish for the heaven above. It is reminiscent of the time when John Lennon states in his song "Imagine" "No hell below us / Above us only sky" (Lennon & Ono, 1971, 1) and echoes Dickinson's sentiment that is living like an insect, completely earthward. Then, the second stanza summarises the discussion above about language and naming. Their names become useless to the one who studies them diligently, as they do not know of any names, themselves. The persona names one, bumble bees, but many others, too, populate the grass. As a result of her endless wonder and humility towards nature, Emily Dickinson peoples her poetry with some of the most unusual creatures. She makes it

impossible for her reader or for herself to associate with them since they are worms, caterpillars, beetles and bees, the invertebrate animals; not at all look alike human who is a vertebrate animal. However, she insists on dwelling earthward with these animals and they, too, are a part of this great symbiosis called earth. A scientific summary of Dickinson's poetic and ethical ground can be found in David Attenborough's 2005 documentary series for BBC, titled *Life in the Undergrowth*:

> If we and the rest of the backboned animals were to disappear overnight, the rest of the world would get on pretty well. But if they [invertebrate animals] were to disappear, the land's ecosystems would collapse. The soil would lose its fertility. Many of the plants would no longer be pollinated. Lots of animals, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals would have nothing to eat and our fields and pastures would be covered with dung and carrion. These small creatures are within a few inches of our feet, wherever we go on land – but often, they're disregarded. We would do very well to remember them. (Gunton, 2005)

Throughout this chapter Emily Dickinson's observation of the earth beneath her feet has been examined. Despite her traditionally acknowledged fame as the transcendental or the American romantic poet who is in battle with her town's puritanical background, the ways Emily Dickinson can be and should be considered as a nature poet, and furthermore an ecopoet have been discussed. Aware of the perception of her time's regarding plants, animals and especially insects as inferiors to human by the constant validation of religion, Dickinson simply acts against this human superiority over nature. Without the ecopoetical agenda, she is an ecopoet as she is aware of the ways nature works, mysterious to her but explainable by being a student of nature, not of religion. From the smallest to the greatest, Dickinson is aware of the perception of each creature, and like a curious scientist or a child or a poet, she observes without giving any higher meaning to them. Her way of reading and approaching nature is necessary since this is the time of an environmental crisis and speciesism is basically suicide and homicide at

the same time. Dickinson's humility and wonder will banish humans from being demigods of the earth and prevent them from having the authority to cement the earth.

CHAPTER 5

BUTTERFLY

"So call me lioness, yes, if your wish to,

for I have my claws in your heart as you deserve."

Medea in *Medea* by Euripides

This study discussed nature and animal's place in Emily Dickinson's poetic discourse. As one of most influential and prominent of American poets, Dickinson's poetry opened many debates about her personal life as an unconventional woman and a poet. Although her voice as a nature poet is quite strong and grounded, in her cordial tone, researchers have been looking for a confessional aspect. Her condensed language opens new doors to understand the life underneath the feet. This study witnesses many moments of Dickinson's personas bending toward earth to see clearer, to observe better. As a poet and a human animal, Dickinson's ambivalent position in nature is pursued. This ambivalent nature of her position is rooted ultimately of her circumference discourse. Dickinson's personas are always in a delicate communication with the immediate environment around them. The personas' *Umwelt*s often merge with the *Umwelt*s of other natural beings and like the soap bubbles, as Uexküll's example, they witness many layered, diverse nature with each creature. What is in the circumference of other people and of religion, is in the centre of Dickinson's poetics and this act, it has been explored, stems from the endless *Umwelt*s the poet's personas encounter over and over with each poem. With an agenda like that Dickinson approaches nature and observes it free from the meanings suitable for nature's people from her cultural background. She respects the

meaning created by each creature for their environment. This close reading of nature by the poet creates more wonder and more importantly more humility for Dickinson's part. Humility she feels for the greatest and the smallest renders her poetry one of the finest example of ecopoetry according to the definition of it by Bryson (2002) as "while adhering to certain conventions of romanticism, also advances beyond tradition and takes on distinctly contemporary problems and issues" (p. 5). It would be anachronistic to say Emily Dickinson writes for the climate change or the mistreatment to the animals. However, it is undeniable that Dickinson's poetry circles around the contemporary problems and issues of her time. As an inhabitant of a formerly puritan town, Dickinson's discourse establishes a haven for the other species, accepting their physical and biological differences as they are, without connecting the purpose of their existence to the father of the skies. Her language as a poet deviates from the conventional way of representing the world because it is ethically charged for each creature and responsible for the other life forms around her. Even when her persona finds another life form useless for a moment, like she finds a worm which she represents without naming as "A pink and Pulpy multitude / The tepid Ground upon" (J885) she immediately understands the significance of another being as in this case when a bird breakfasts with it and like the dead worm in the poem, her modesties are enlarged (J885). This practice, it has been found out through the course of thesis, saturates her poetry very often.

Apart from exploring Emily Dickinson's poetic discourse, this study underlines the ongoing global crisis that nature faces. Humans are the only species that have altered the environment around them on such a great scale. Some species of otters are known to change the course of the rivers they live in because of the dams they build with rocks. However, human's interference with the earth is beyond changing the routes of minor

rivers. As it has been stated in the previous chapters of this study, there are many species disappearing on the surface of the earth because of many practices that makes the life easier to human and torturing for the animals. For that reason, this study began to explore human-animal relationship from the first scholars who writes about it to the contemporary researchers. In line with multi-disciplinarily perspective of this study, scholars of philosophy and of ecology, zoology and entomology have been studied along with the critics of literature. Throughout the literature review of animal's place in the social sciences performed by humans has been explored. At the end of this review it has been seen that from the beginning of human animal's history on the earth, this species declared themselves as the ruler of the rest of nature. Through the abilities of thinking, speaking and self-affirming, it has been established that humans saw that it is their first-hand right to feel superior to animals and rest of nature and act accordingly. While these views are confirmed, though with slight differences in the ways of expressing them, by philosophers like Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, Hegel and Heidegger, the names who are on the opposing side of this debate have also been introduced as Bentham, Derrida and Singer. Then this discussion has been carried to the literary and poetic fields and the terms ecocriticism and ecopoetry are introduced. These two fields, as it has been stated, have been flourished because of the beginning of the current environmental crisis. Therefore they help this study to paint a whole picture of an urgent call of the earth.

The reason of this call is traced back to the absence of animal from the daily life. The natural life, especially the animals have been kept away from human civilisation to the point, as John Berger states, people feel at ease with the idea of completely marginalising animals by keeping them in zoos as a display (Berger, 2009, p. 36). Human animals have now absolutely forgotten their biological and ecological link to the

non-human animals and the rest of nature. The earth, it seems, not a place to dwell but a place to stand clear of, if not to interfere with. Human interference with the earth has come such a critical point now that it is on the verge of inevitable doom. As a result of such urgent and fatal state of the world, this study offers an ecocentric approach both to the world and to the word, and invites humans to consider their place both on text and on land. As Lawrence Buell (2005) states: "Ecocentrism is more compelling as a call to fellow humans to recognize the intractable, like-it-or-not interdependence that subsists between the human and the nonhuman and to tread more lightly on the earth that it is as a practical program" (p. 102). As it has been discussed on the previous chapters, *Umwelt* is the "perceptual life-world" (Uexküll, 2010, p. 2) of an organism. For a plant, for instance, this can be more limited than an animal; likewise because of the great mobility of human through science and technology and more importantly through language, human's perceptual life-world is the earth itself. Therefore treading more lightly on the earth is ultimately treading more lightly on the *Umwelt* which affects human animals and affected by them. Through science, technology and language, this lonely mutations acquired via complex series of evolutionary roads taken by blind struggle, humans are in a great responsibility towards the other species they share the world with. It is undeniable that the necessary step must be taken is to rid humans from hubris of being human. This exact hamartia of human species is what keeps them to seek a conciliation with nature and for their higher merits matter a lot more than the physical nature around them, the human animal does not notice how high a bee can fly, thus they forget their starting point as another humble species. However, as in "Nature, red in tooth and claw" (Tennyson, 1991, p. 166), the earth has another side to it. Although humans insist at calling it mother-nature because of the nurturing qualities they attribute to motherness of

the earth; nature also has a side that is suitable to the best of tragedies. I find the character of Medea in Euripides' *Medea* useful for my reading of Emily Dickinson's poetry because Medea sets an example for the red in tooth and claw of nature. Cheated, cornered and exiled Medea deeds what seems impossible to the audience and kills her own sons to avenge her humiliation in the eyes of the people of Corinth. *Medea* demolishes the nurturing mother image as a result of consecutive acts of malefaction committed by the husband Jason who is left to live a poor life with what remains after Medea and the bodies of his two sons leave the scene with *deus ex machina*. We see in many ways how nature's sneeze clicks on human's snooze button and how it interferes with our life and we also secretly fear that how easy for the earth to shake humans of off its surface. Emily Dickinson is also aware of this delicate balance of humans with nature. Her persona, in one of her poems knows that if nature attacks, it is not for no reason: "A Burdock – clawed my Gown – / Not Burdock's – blame – / But mine – / Who went too near / The Burdock's Den – " (J229). Therefore, this almost parasitical symbiosis of human species with the earth should turn into a more mutualist symbiosis.

When humans fail to establish a mutualist symbiosis with other species the result is natural crisis and when they cannot do so among themselves, the result is one of the most unfortunate example of speciesism's motives, racism. When Emmanuel Levinas became a war prisoner in Germany at the time of World War II, he had a notebook to report his daily life during these days. There he states how he was treated by the Nazi soldiers as such: "We were subhuman, a gang of apes. A small inner murmur, the strength and wretchedness of persecuted people, reminded us of our essence as thinking creatures, but we were no longer part of the world" (Levinas, 1990, p. 153). Kept from the world they knew, Levinas and other prisoners were the victims of one of the greatest

scale racist events in the world and were just lucky they have not been the victims of Holocaust. “We were beings entrapped in their species; despite all their vocabulary, beings without language. Racism is not a biological concept; anti-Semitism is the archetype of all internment” (p. 153). Although the members of their own species made them feel like animals, Levinas reports that an actual animal, a dog they named Bobby was the only one that made them feel like human again; all it took for the animal was just showing up there and wagging his tail for Levinas to confirm, “For him, there was no doubt that we were men” (p. 153). Just because of the cordiality he received from this dog, Levinas call it, “the last Kantian in Nazi Germany” (p. 153) therefore he highlights an ethical quality that the dog had and the rest of the Nazi Germany lacked. The way Levinas describes his experience in a Nazi camp is unfortunately not different than the speciesism human animal has been applying to the other species of the world. With all of its murderous and bloody history, anti-Semitism is a part of speciesism that can be more murderous and bloody. Despite all their vocabulary, Levinas and other prisoners felt entrapped in their species. This is quite reminiscent of the human animal’s blocking their ears to the language of the natural world, even though it is not similar to that of human language, a language nonetheless. Poetry, an ecologically conscious poetry becomes important right at this moment when one species blocking their ears and blindfolding their eyes, the poet is the dog wagging its tail in wonder and humility.

Lawrence Buell titles his 2001 book as *Writing for An Endangered World*. As it is the main contention of this thesis, it is as much as important to be able to achieve reading for an endangered world. Throughout this study, the potential of language as a diminishing structure of everyone but its speaker has been underlined. Human-animals may have casted themselves out of nature with the help of language, however, it is again

through language this broken link can perhaps be repaired, if not, our further fall from nature can be prevented. Humans may not have roots under their feet to communicate like trees, we may not know the right tone to tweet like birds or chirp like grasshoppers, we may not have achieved to decode the language of whales or dolphins and we may not know the right chemical formulation to understand the morning dew on a petal; but with one foot in the garden, this language may achieve to establish a genuine relation with nature and animal like Emily Dickinson once did. Only through such experience, we may be aware of the ways nature lives, breathes and sometimes dies in poetry; only through this way we may hear the way nature speaks, buzzes, flutters and breezes.

> In the name of the Bee –
> And of the Butterfly –
> And of the Breeze – Amen! (J18)

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