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Araştırma makalesi/Research article

The Collapse of Nature's Boundaries: Psychoanalytic, Philosophical and Ecological Approach to Nastassja Martin's *In the Eye of the Wild*

Doğanın Sınırlarının Çöküşü: Nastassja Martin'in *Vahşi Hayvanlara İnanmak* Adlı Eserine Psikanalitik, Felsefi ve Ekolojik Bir Yaklaşım

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Abstract

This article discusses French anthropologist and writer Nastassja Martin's narrative *In the Eye of the Wild* about her survival of a bear attack during ethnographic research among the Even people of the Kamchatka Peninsula, Russia. Martin's framing of her encounter with the bear as a meeting that represents the moment when the boundaries between wilderness and civilization are erased prompts the work to be reconsidered as an eco-narrative that engages with oppositional themes such as nature and culture, human and animal, dream and reality. The analyses of Martin's encounter with the bear are interdisciplinary, combining

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psychoanalytic, philosophical, and ecological perspectives. The psychoanalytic approach is informed by Lacan's concept of the 'objet petit a', exploring how Martin's encounter with the bear symbolizes a desire for unity with nature. The philosophical perspective uses Plato's idea of 'khōra' from the Timaeus to examine Martin's post-attack transformation, suggesting a state beyond the traditional nature-culture divide. Ecologically, the article considers the blurring of boundaries between humans, animals, and the natural world, which challenges the human-animal dichotomy and explores the collapse of old boundaries within Martin's identity and experience. In summary, the analysis is an interdisciplinary exploration of themes of desire, transformation, and the collapse of boundaries framed within the context of an eco-narrative.

Keywords: *Eco-narrative, ecocriticism, khōra, objet petit a, bear*

Öz

Bu makale, Fransız antropolog ve yazar Nastassja Martin'in Rusya'nın Kamçatka Yarımadası'ndaki Even halkı arasında yaptığı etnografik araştırma sırasında bir ayı saldırısından sağ kurtulmasını konu alan *Vahşi Hayvanlara İnanmak* anlatısını tartışmaktadır. Eserde Martin'in ayıyla karşılaşmasını vahşi doğa ile medeniyet arasındaki sınırların silindiği anı temsil eden bir buluşma olarak değerlendirmesi, eseri doğa ve kültür, insan ve hayvan, rüya ve gerçeklik gibi karşıtlıklar içeren temalarla bir eko-anlatı olarak yeniden düşünmeye sevk etmektedir. Martin'in ayıyla karşılaşmasına yönelen bu analiz, psikanalitik, felsefi ve ekolojik perspektifleri birleştiren disiplinlerarası bir yaklaşımdır. Burada psikanalitik yaklaşımla Martin'in ayıyla karşılaşmasının doğayla bütünleşme arzusunu nasıl sembolize ettiğini, Lacan'ın 'objet petit a' kavramından hareketle açıklamaktayım. Felsefi olarak Martin'in saldırı sonrası dönüşümünü incelemek için ise Platon'un Timaeus'taki 'khōra' fikrini kullanarak geleneksel doğa-kültür çelişkisinin ötesinde bir durum önermekteyim. Ekolojik yaklaşımla insan-hayvan ikiliğine meydan okuyan Martin'in kimliği ve deneyimi üzerinden insanlar, hayvanlar ve doğal dünya arasındaki sınırların bulanıklaşmasını sorgulamaktayım. Martin'in fiziksel ve zihinsel olarak dönüşerek doğa-kültür, insan-hayvan ayrımlarının ötesine geçtiğini, Medka olarak sınırları aştığını vurgulamaktayım.

Anahtar sözcükler: *Eko-anlatı, eko eleştiri, khōra, objetpetit a, ayı*

Introduction

In August 2015, Nastassja Martin, a French anthropologist and writer who had been living for months among Even people in Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula for ethnographic research, was attacked by a Kamchatka brown bear and survived. Her book, 'In the Eye of the Wild' describes the attack and its aftermath. Since the attack, life has never been the same for Martin, who has been shuttling between a hospital in Russia, Salpetriere Hospital in France, and her home for long periods of treatment. Not only does she face social stigma in France due to the deep scar left on her face by the bear, but among the local people where she was conducting her research, she is no longer simply Nastya (the locals believe that the bear did

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not kill her on purpose); they view her as an uncanny figure, a half-human, half-bear-Medka. The starting point for this study is Martin's characterization of this event as a meeting, not an attack:

> The event is: a bear and a woman meet and the frontiers between two worlds implode. Not just the physical boundaries between the human and the animal in whom the confrontation open fault lines in their bodies and their minds. This is also when mythical time meets reality; past time joins the present moment; dream meets flesh. (Martin, 2022: 107)

This moment of encounter, which culminates in the attack, symbolizes the erasure of boundaries between wild nature and the civilized world. For her, it is a meeting prepared in advance; her experience fulfills an ancient dream, a reminder of a nature long abandoned by human beings. Seeking the revelation of the 'warrior' within her, Martin confronts the bear rather than fleeing from it. She plunges into the encounter with fierce energy, and by the end, both she and the bear have leftmarks on eachother's bodies. Martin reflects on the encounter, stating that she had created the very circumstances that led her to the bear's mouth, to its 'kiss': "I struggle to explain it, but I know that this encounter was planned. I had marked the path that would lead me into the bear's mouth, to his kiss, long ago. I think: who knows, perhaps he had too" (Martin, 2022: 68).

I regard 'In the Eye of the Wild' as an example of an eco-narrative because it not only explores but also challenges common understandings of the relationship between humans and the natural world (Huggan&Marland, 2023). Martin's text raises critical questions about ecological boundaries, interspecies connections, and the ethical implications of human-animal interactions. These questions can help expand the eco-narratives framework by introducing perspectives often overlooked in mainstream environmental discourse. For example, the encounter between Martin and the bear invites us to question the traditional boundary between humans and animals, suggesting that these distinctions are fluid and permeable. By interpreting this text as a bear-human encounter, as Martin suggests, I intend to show how this meeting reveals transboundary patterns that offer alternative readings of human-animal contact. This encounter challenges the anthropocentric narrative that often dominates our understanding of wilderness and animals. For instance, Martin's depiction of the bear as a subject rather than merely an object of human observation allows for an interpretation of wilderness as a dynamic, relational space where humans are not the central agents. This, in turn, opens up alternative understandings of wilderness, where humans are seen not as separate from but as interconnected with other life forms. Such a reading pushes against the idea of wilderness as a space to be tamed or conquered, offering instead a vision of nature that is wild, untamed, and mutually constitutive of all beings. In this way, *In the Eye of the Wild* provides an opportunity to rethink our place within the natural world and consider a more reciprocal relationship with it.

Martin's work contains both an autobiography and an ethnographic narrative. In the tradition of her French colleague Philippe Descola, Martin looks beyond the human and addresses the collective existence of all beings without distinguishing between nature and

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culture. This perspective indicates that her journey between the human and animal worlds is a conscious choice. As an anthropologist, Martin's exploration of the boundaries between these realms allows her to challenge the concept of civilization as an isolated human domain. However, the narrative also conveys a sense of alienation from her profession, often excluding nature and objectifying non-human entities.

Martin's eco-narrative highlights the possibility of a deeper, reciprocal relationship between humans and nature. By focusing on her personal experiences, including both the tragedy of the attack and her subsequent reflections, she explores the impact of nature on human life and the potential for a new understanding of this connection.

The primary objective of this study is to show how the bear serves as a mediator in Martin's relationship with nature. Additionally, I aim to demonstrate that Martin's transformation into the uncanny Medka after the attack presents an alternative way to understand the fundamental strangeness of the natural world. The paper analyzes Martin's encounter with the bear through an interdisciplinary theoretical framework, incorporating Lacanian psychoanalysis, Platonic philosophy, and ecocriticism. These diverse frameworks will help to illuminate Martin's narrative's symbolic, psychological and ecological dimensions, allowing for a deeper exploration of how human-animal interactions can challenge traditional boundaries. I make the connection between philosophical and literary analysis through the practice of deconstruction, which opens up the hidden meanings, assumptions, and hierarchies embedded in the text to philosophical scrutiny (Derrida, 1978).

Theoretical framework: Lacan's objet petit a, Plato's khōra, and ecocriticism

According to Lacan, the primordial lack is the state of being born. The child's separation from the mother's body constitutes a condition of being incomplete, of being someone's missing limb. This condition emerges as a pre-linguistic need to return to the body from which one was severed. However, when the subject enters the realm of language and attempts to express this lack symbolically, it transforms into a desire for an unattainable object. The desire for the mother is not the wish to possess her but rather the longing to reunite with her, to once again become a part of her - a desire that obliterates the self as a subject. Because of this, it cannot be articulated with in the symbolic realm. This unattainable object of desire is what Lacan calls objet petit a (Zizek, 2005: 228). This study associates the bear in 'In the Eye of the Wild' with Lacan's concept of objet petit a (Lacan, 1977), representing humanity's rupture from nature and the longing to reunite with it, to become a part of it again. This is akin to the primordial lack formed by the separation from the mother's body, which transcends the limits of language and becomes an unfulfillable desire. Interpreting this concept through the lens of the desire for union with nature offers a perspective on the individual unconscious and a collective human experience. Humanity, through modernization and the rupture from nature, has experienced a profound loss. Like the mother-child relationship, this loss carries both longing and threat: while one seeks to reunite with nature, there is also a fear that such a union might dissolve the boundaries of the self. In Martin's case, the bear symbolizes this desire, embodying the human and wild union, which she longs for but can never fully integrate.

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Plato's khōra, as outlined in his Timaeus dialogue, refers to a space that exists between the sensible and intelligible worlds, a kind of third realm that defies categorization. Derrida's later interpretation of khōra expands this idea to describe a space that cannot be defined as one thing or another but is a potential space for all things (Derrida, 1995: 89). In the context of Martin's experience, the khōra serves as a metaphor for the transformation she undergoes after the attack, representing a third state between the human and the animal, the rational and the spiritual, the civilized and the wild. Her body becomes a field of encounter, a khōra, invaded by animate and inanimate human and non-human beings. In Martin's body, everything penetrates, and all boundaries disappear.

On the other hand, ecocriticism examines the relationship between literature and the environment, emphasizing the cultural construction of nature and its representation in texts. (see Glotfelty&Fromm, 1996; Hiltner, 2014; Hugan&Tiffin, 2010). This approach critiques the exploitation of nature and highlights alternative ways of existing concerning the natural world. Martin's narrative, which oscillates between the scientific and the spiritual, offers a counterpoint to the objectification of nature that often characterizes Western thought.

A detail frequently underlined in the text is the back-and-forth between Martin's dreams and the real world. Dreams, which Freud defines as a means of accessing the unconscious and which Daria regards as a way to establish 'a connection with creatures outside,' have driven Martin to the brink (Martin, 2022). Her dreams led her to walk alone on a glacier in Siberia, mobilizing her unfulfilled fantasies and desires. Martin's desires appear in her dreams and are a means of reconstructing, at least in her inner world, the broken unity of humans and nature that causes her alienation from herself and nature. This view differs from the scientific training she received and implies the spiritual side of knowledge. Descola says that the Açuares, even when they speak to them through incantations (anent), do not receive an immediate answer because such an answer can only be given in dreams. They can be fully realized in dreams and trances induced by hallucinogens (2013: 12). Reading this book also points to the existence of a way of life that can be called mystical or spiritual, a way of life that is immanent in nature. Martin's interest in nature is inseparable from the existential question of the meaning of human life. I argue that this work, oscillating between the boundaries of nature-culture and science-myth, reveals the need to reflect on nature's unique, incomparable reality and our dependence on it not only with reason but also with spirit. As Adorno and Horkheimer argue, the Enlightenment demystified the world, shattered myths, and overturned dreams through knowledge (1995: 46). However, the spirit that unites all creatures of nature is also lost. The way is paved for the objectification of the non-human.

These three theoretical frameworks-Lacan's objet petit a, Plato's khōra, and ecocriticism-work together in this study to examine Martin's transitory space after her encounter with the bear. Lacan's objet petit a helps us understand Martin's desire for a deeper connection with nature, which is both fulfilled and disrupted by the bear. Plato's khōra provides a philosophical backdrop for understanding the third space she occupies, where the boundaries between species, cultures, and even realities dissolve. Derrida's interpretation of khōra will further illuminate the third space Martin occupies, one that challenges dualities and offers a new

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way of understanding the interdependence of all beings. Finally, ecocriticism illuminates the broader ecological implications of Martin's transformation, highlighting the interdependence between human and non-human life.

In this study, I propose that Martin's journey from human to Medka can be understood as a deconstruction of boundaries-between human and animal, nature and culture, reality and dream. Her experience challenges the traditional dichotomies that have long defined our relationship with the natural world and offer a new vision of interconnectedness. By examining Martin's narrative through this integrated theoretical framework, this study aims to demonstrate how the bear, as both a literal and symbolic figure, mediates Martin's relationship with nature, transforming her into the uncanny Medka and revealing new possibilities for understanding the wild. This theoretical approach enhances our understanding of Martin's personal transformation and invites us to reconsider the boundaries we draw between ourselves and the non-human world.

1. Boundaries between savage and civilized

Following Philipp Descola's footsteps, Martin thinks about much more than the anthropos. Descola's questions are similar to Martin's: 'When does nature end and culture start when I have a meal, when I identify an animal by its name, or when I trace constellations in the sky?' (2001) What defines wilderness? Where can we find wilderness? Alaska, then Kamchatka, is where she searches for the savage within. In every sentence, Martin wrote about the relationships between humans and non-humans in Alaska before Kamchatka prepared her for the encounter with the bear and, in a way, foreshadowed it. Morin (2007) says that the dichotomy of human/animal and culture/nature is a certainty that the process of creation and construction leads to. For him, there is no definite distinction or line separating humans from animals (pp. 6-7). As Lorenz (2007) reminds us of an old Chinese proverb, all animals are hidden in human beings, but human beings are not entirely contained in animals (p. 404). The more we read about Martin, the more we realize that there has always been something wild in her soul, and the reason she is going to Kamchatka is not to get to know others but to get to know herself, the savage in her. To understand her own roots, the first creature she will look at, both similar and dissimilar to herself, will be the animal (Berger, 2017: 23), the bear. What we read throughout the narrative is the discovery of the boundary between human and animal, i.e., animism. Thoreau defines the animal as our most primitive ancestor, a part of which is still alive, thinking of the children who still act on their instincts while playing house, who look with great interest at the cave entrances (2002: 58). Although human is seen as the human stage of animal life, instead of becoming an animal to understand the animal (Whitehead, 2019: 34) that belongs to the wild world from which he has already departed, he humanizes the animal by attributing human qualities. Humans are ascribed to non-humans an interiority similar to their own. The state of culture is thus extended to non-humans with all their characteristics (Descola, 2013: 117). The humanization of animals and their use in certain situations (industrialized animal images) destroys the possibility of seeing their wild nature. Their existence is reduced to either a pest to be destroyed on sight or a toy to be touched because it is cute.

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The border between civilization, which protects humans from wild nature and separates him/her from his/her animal ancestors, is a set of rules and regulations that govern the relationships that allow many people to live in the community. It is the most powerful obstacle, the aggressive instinct (Freud, 2011), and wild nature, which Martin can only cross with the help of mute dreams, is erased the moment she meets the bear, the species closest to her. The time Martin waits for the moment of encounter that radically changes her life, and what she experiences afterward, is a moment of encounter that she has been living in dreams for a long time or that her dreams have made her experience. It is as if Martin's whole life has flowed into that moment:

> I am a doctor of anthropology, sanctioned by the hallowed seats of learning. I have a partner who lives from peak to peak, a home nestled in the mountains, and a book in production. It looks as though everything is fine. And yet something is gnawing at me, there's something nibbling away deep in my belly, and my head is burning; it's as if I'm coming to an end, the end of a cycle too, perhaps. Meaning is withering, I feel as though I'm living inwardly what I described finding in Alaska among the Gwich'in: I don't recognize myself anymore. It's an appalling feeling, because what's happening to me is precisely what I thought I had observed among those I was studying. The forms I've known as mine are falling away. My writing is foundering, I've nothing interesting to say anymore, nothing worth trying to say. My love has finally seeped away, despite the words, despite the heights, despite the peaks -their demands and their indifference. (Martin, 2022: 95)

The desire to escape from civilized life in the service of Eros (Freud, 2011: 78) and the longing for wildlife, despite all its dangers and eeriness, are not only Martin's feelings but can also be seen in many examples of films and documentaries in popular culture that deal with people who have similar experiences. It can be said that the common place where people with similar experiences meet is the search and the desire to push and cross the boundaries that define essential duality. Why, despite all the comforts, glamour, pleasure, and security, do all these people, at the cost of their lives, fall under the spell of uncanny nature instead of civilization? Where does the border between wilderness and civilization begin? Who or what defines this boundary? Martin, like her contemporaries, says that what she cannot find in civilization, she finds in the wilderness, in the forest:

> No one listened to Antonin Artaud, but he was right. We have to get out of the insanity our civilization is creating. But drugs, alcohol, depression, and in fine madness and/or death are no solution; we must find something else. This is what I sought in the forests of the Far North, and only partially found, and it is what I'm still chasing now (Martin, 2022: 95).

Martin believes that the problem she has is not just her own. Her body's misery comes from the world (Martin, 2022: 96). Freud questions the cause of this restlessness, this deep and long-lasting dissatisfaction. According to him, humans have established dominance over nature by controlling his/her forces. The extraordinary achievements and progress in the technical field make people proud and make their lives easier, but they do not satisfy the expected pleasures and do not make people happy (2011: 46-48). In a Freudian analysis, the

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struggle against the rule of the father, who represents the spirit independent of the effects of nature, is essentially a struggle against the power of civilization. Some imposed rules and behaviors appear to the child, who is not yet tamed, as a representation of civilization. The child submits not to be punished and loved, but with this submission, develops a hostility toward the father, which in time turns into anger against civilization itself (Horkheimer, 1998: 131-32). People for whom the rule of the strong is imposed as an eternal rule spend their entire lives suppressing and devaluing nature within and without (Horkheimer, 1998: 134). The process of taming/civilizing a child can be compared to the helplessness and acceptance of the monkey in Kafka's story 'A Report to an Academy: The Gate of Freedom,' which descends and narrows as it is whipped (2018: 207).

The attraction of wilderness lies in the fact that it still has unknown aspects. The attitude of boredom (blase), a state of unresponsiveness and indifference to the infinite number of stimuli of cities, the pinnacle of civilization built of stone and steel, comes from easy access to everything, from a life of unlimited pleasure. For the bored, everything is the same gray (Simmel, 2003: 91-92). The fact that Martin, who expresses that she has everything, goes to the bear who calls her in her dreams is also an expression of escape from boredom, which is a form of struggle. To escape from the many stimuli of the civilized world that make people feel bored and exhausted, a solution is to take refuge in nature, which promises nothing. Nature, whether a landscape, a garden, or a countryside, has something good for humans (Cauquelin, 2016: 20,44). But the nature we let in is different from the wild nature, 'nature for us is made, as both fiction and fact' (Harraway, 2024: 312). For example, the garden is different from an angry, stormy, desolate nature; it is controlled. The inside is the outside. Landscape, which creates a link between culture and nature, is not nature, but something produced by it and of it. The landscape is reminiscent of nature, domestic; it places its own 'civilized' counterpart between us and nature; it is the symbolic scheme of our close contact with nature (Cauquelin, 2016). However, uninterpreted nature is an organism that breathes, remembers, and has its own order and functioning:

> I think of Clarence, the old Gwich'in wise man from Fort Yukon in Alaska, my friend and valued interlocutor for all the years I lived in his village. I always found it amusing when he used to tell me that everything was always "recorded" and that the forest was "informed." "Everything is being recorded all the time," he used to repeat. The trees, the animals, and the rivers: every aspect of the world remembers all we do and all we say, and even, sometimes, what we dream and think. This is why we should take great care with the thoughts we formulate, for the world forgets nothing, and each of the elements within it sees, hears, and knows what has happened, what is occurring now and what lies ahead. There is a watch kept by all living things apart from humans, and their lives are ever ready to spill beyond our human expectations. So every thought-form that we send out goes to join and mingle with the old stories that shape the world around us, as well as the conditions of those who inhabit it. (Martin, 2022: 89-90)

In mythical times, humans can integrate with a plant or an animal, and an animal can take the form of another animal (Descola, 2013: 122). After the attack, Martin becomes one with nature. But the strange thing is that Martin had only met the bear once before it attacked her.

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In her first encounter with the bear, while bathing in the river with Charles, she follows a dog called Shaman, following a growl heard in the forest, even though Charles is afraid and does not want to. The giant bear she sees with its two cubs stares at her, and the dog then roars: 'My heart is exploding in my chest; I raise myself a little and gaze at her. She lets go of the tree, stands erect, stares at us both, and then gives a long, uninflected growl' (Martin, 2022: 33). So they quietly retreat away from the bear's territory. Knowing that the bear lives in the forest, Martin goes out on the day she meets the bear and is attacked. Ivan hugs her and cries. He asks her why she did not listen when he told her not to go. Martin gives an answer that cannot be translated into any other language: 'I had to go to meet my dream' (Martin, 2022: 36).

The main difference between wild animals and pets is that pets are 'heimlich,' i.e., known, familiar, close, and intimate. This is because they have been raised and are used to humans. 'Heimlich' becomes 'unheimlich' with negative suffix. In other words, it becomes homelessness, the tension between the familiar and the strange. In fact, the 'unheimlich' (uncanny) was once 'heimisch,' the familiar; the prefix 'un-' is a sign of suppression. The tension between 'heimlich' and 'unheimlich' is the relationship that creates the uncanny. Quoting Shelling, Freud explains the 'unheimlich' as everything that is revealed as a secret that should remain hidden (Freud, 2019). What makes Martin feel uncanny is that something she does not know in her familiar world appears in her dreams, and the uncertainty has an uncanny effect on her. The bear is the uncanny, resulting from the alienation of what was once familiar and known to the self through repression, its concealment in the unconscious. The bear haunts Martin, the secret that must remain in her dreams, and the secret is finally revealed. The bear is Martin's uncontrollable past. Even if it is completely forgotten, it is her familiar side, her equal. But Andrei warned her when she went into the mountains: "I can hear his words, reminding me of our talks during my feverish wanderings and warning me against the bear's spirit that is following me, waiting for me, that knows me (…) No, nothing is his fault. What he did was this: he guided my feet so that I could go to meet my own dream" (Martin, 2022: 291).

As Martin climbs to the spot where she meets the bear, she tells herself that she must come down. It's as if her mind is telling her to go, but her soul is telling her to stay:

> I encountered the bear because I didn't know how to set boundaries between myself and the outside world; I couldn't set boundaries because my mother couldn't ever set any for me. You should have laid down the law for once and said no to your daughter. You need to rein her in. Make her see reason. Stop her. Restrict her (Martin, 2022: 72).

Martin's obsessive interest in boundaries is rooted in her mother's attitude toward her, as expressed in her own words above. The absence of the father figure in Martin's life, who represents the reason for civilization, is the main reason for her inability to know the border. Beyond that, our boundaries between ourselves and nature make our world safer (Cauquelin, 2016: 12). The window frame cuts, separates, and pushes back excess and diversity. The window sets boundaries and tries to keep out the wild. What you see through the window is not nature but landscape (Cauquelin, 2016: 93-95). The garden, too, evokes nature with its new, specialized qualities. As an anthropologist who studies the process of transition from nature to culture, Martin is also obsessed with boundaries because of her profession:

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> For years I've been writing about edges and margins, about liminality, the frontier zone, the space between worlds: about that very particular place where it is possible to encounter a force that is other, where you risk being changed, from which it is difficult to return. I have always thought I mustn't fall for the bait of fascination. (…) I followed my archaic encounter all the way through, but I did come back, for I am not dead. Hybridization took place and yet I am still myself. At least I think so. Something that looks like me, with the features of the animist mask on top: I am inside out. The animist principle in humans is the distorted face of the mask. Half man half seal; half man half eagle; half man half wolf. Half woman half bear. The underside of the face, the animals' human core-this is what the bear sees in the eyes of the person whose gaze he should not meet. This is what my bear saw in my eyes: his share of humanity, the face beneath his face (Martin, 2022: 100-101).

2. Collapse of the boundaries

This daring attitude of Martin, who wants to get to know nature from a place where all boundaries are erased, and not with the meanings attributed to it by the window frame, leads her to encounter the true face of nature. The border, the basic concept of Martin's field of study, also determines her practical life. The dichotomy, reflected in the narrative's content and structure, oscillates mostly between East and West, Russia and France, the civilized world and its rules, and wild nature and its laws. For example, she has two notebooks. Borders separate the two notebooks. The black book, which she calls both my inner world and my outer world, in which she writes down her objective and subjective ideas, reflecting the duality that gnaws at her, and the field notebook, in which she writes down the information she gathers in the field. One represents the natural side, which she describes as her emotions, instinctive and wild writing, and the other represents her reason, the civilized side, which is controlled. After the 'archaic' encounter, hybridization took place, and this encounter removed boundaries. She now sees herself as half human, half bear, and the bear as half bear, half human. Only in dreams, where unconscious fantasies come to the surface, can she reach the boundlessness of her real nature (Martin, 2021). The bear bites her and becomes Medka, and the boundary between wild nature and civilization, human and animal, disappears, and she integrates with nature. The book is a type of notebook in which the boundaries between the black book and the daily diary disappear. In this narrative, the boundaries between academic and eternal writing also disappear.

Although Martin places the animal issue at the center of her narrative, her experiences before and after the bear attack, and especially her transformation into a Medka, provide essential details to rethink and question traditional dichotomies from another perspective, beyond the nature-culture dichotomy: "The two faces of the animist mask ought to stop killing each other and instead create life, create something other than themselves. They ought-no: whatever it takes, they must break away from this deadly reflexive duality" (Martin, 2022: 113).

Martin says that she did not realize the significance of her choice to become an anthropologist: 'I simply had not anticipated the impact of this choice, still less the implications of my work on animism. Without my realizing it, every line I had written on relations between humans and non-humans in Alaska had prepared me for this encounter with the bear-had,

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in some way, prefigured it', she says (Martin, 2022: 69). According to animism, a way of relating to nature, there are spirits in nature almost similar to the human soul. Freud says that each of us has passed through the stage of individual development corresponding to the animistic stage in primitive humans because none of us has been completely freed from the remnants and traces of that stage, which can still manifest themselves. Everything that seems uncanny to us today manifests the animistic remnants in our minds (Freud, 2019: 59-60). As Freud suggests, the manifestation of Martin's conscious world (her choice of anthropology as a career) and her unconscious world are the animistic remnants in her mind that do not leave her alone in her dreams. The fact that she goes after the bear, risking everything, is her belief that she has what she has been looking for all her life. It is also no coincidence that Martin is alive. Daria says that the bears have given her a gift by leaving her safe and sound in the human world. Martin's interpretation is as follows:

> (…) the bear and I once more become an expression of something other than ourselves; the outcome of our encounter speaks to absent participants, speaks of people who were not there…For me, a bear and a woman is too big an event. It's too big not to be instantly assimilated into one system of thought or another; too big not to be co-opted by some particular discourse or at least incorporated into one. The event has to be transformed so it can be made acceptable; it must in its turn be consumed and then digested in order to make sense. Why? Because this is too terrible to imagine, because this does not fit the framework of our understanding, nor any framework, even that of the hunters living deep in the forests of Kamchatka. (Martin, 2022: 86)

For Descartes, the animal lacks the capacity to think and feel. Because it has no intelligent soul, it can neither think nor suffer. Therefore, it can be used as an object of scientific experimentation without any moral reservations (Timofeeva, 2018: 75). However, the anthropologist Descola observed in his studies that according to the beliefs of people living in nature, most plants and animals have spirits (wakan) similar to human souls. Because of these characteristics, they are also persons (aents). Non-linguistic communication between them is realized through this wakan. The animals they kill for food are people. The natives believe that they must respect those they kill because they are related to the people who live in the jungle. People can even become animals, and animals can become people, as happens to Martin; the taxonomical (classificatory) quest for truth is always relative and contextual (Descola, 2013: 10-11, 13). Daria, acting on an animistic belief that makes reason immanent in nature rather than separate from it, believes that the bear did not consciously kill Martin because it is a human being. The idea that 'dialogue with animals is possible,' and even the reason why Martin is an anthropologist, is hidden in the sentence that the bears offered them a gift. All these ideas and realized events are traces of animistic vestiges. The idea that the universe acts as a single mind, including its inhabitants, is quite different from the system of thought that argues that human and non-human beings live in separate worlds and that the human mind separates them. The words Martin's friend Clarence spoke at Fort Yukon in Alaska, where Martin had previously conducted studies, suggest that the universe holds everything we observe, imagine and think in its mind and that it has a memory. She repeated the same sentence: Everything is being recorded all the time (Martin, 2022: 89-90).

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> People like Daria know they are not alone as they live, feel, think, and listen in the forest, that other forces are at work around them. There is a potency here that's external to people, an intention unrelated to humanity. We find ourselves in an environment that's "comprehensively socialized because it is constantly traveled," as my old teacher Philippe Descola would have said. He revived the word animism to qualify and describe this kind of world (…) (Martin, 2022: 85).

This viewpoint runs throughout the book and is an immanent approach to nature, far removed from the great distinction of modernity, the subject-object distinction, and the distinction between the human subject and the environment, which is treated as an inanimate, dead, and passive decoration. As Daria puts it after the attack, Martin is now immanent to nature: 'Living here, you have to wait for the returns. Of the flowers, the animals that migrate, the souls who matter. You are one of those. I'll wait for you' (Martin, 2022: 115).

Vasya, a seventy-year-old native of the region who lives and shares the same world as the bears he knows on both sides of the border, says with a laugh:

> Bears cannot stand to look into the eyes of a human, because they see the reflection of their own soul there (…) A bear that meets a human's gaze always has to obliterate what he sees there. That's why he'll always attack, if he sees your eyes (…) The difference between the bears and us is they cannot look directly at each other. Do you see now? Yes I see. Luckily they don't have mirrors, otherwise they'd all go mad!(Martin, 2022: 98-99).

As part of the ecosystem, Vasya lives an immanent life with nature, so he knows bears not from their own point of view but from the characteristics of their existence. The boundary between him and the bears is not a boundary drawn by history but a spontaneous distance, just like his agreement with other creatures of nature in a silent language. Regarding Uexküll, Agamben says no forest exists in an objectively determined environment. There is a forest for the botanist, a forest for the traveler, a forest for the nature lover, a forest for the lumberjack, and a forest for the bear (Agamben, 2012: 45-46). There is a forest for Martin. Uexküll shows that there is no just one world; every creature has its own world, 'umwelt' (1957: 29). Although Martin and the bear meet in the same forest, the bear's and Martin's forests collide. This leads to the breakdown of invisible walls. Borders are crossed, worlds collide, and the encounter becomes an attack:

> The law is as follows: when they meet, if they meet, their territories collide, their worlds turn upside down, their usual paths are altered, and their connection becomes everlasting. There is a kind of suspension of movement, a holding back, a hiatus, a dazzlement that grips the two wild creatures caught in this ancient encounter-the meeting that cannot be prepared, nor avoided, nor escaped. (Martin, 2022: 108)

In The Fox, D. H. Lawrence emphasizes the boundary between animals and humans. As March stares at the dead fox, she realizes she cannot understand it. The animal is alien to her, incomprehensible, and out of her reach. His gaze penetrates her brain as if the animal controls her soul without her even noticing (2020). The gaze is the gaze of the wild. It's a gaze from an unknowable realm that the earthly cannot explain, a gaze that can only be understood through metaphor.

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3. Medka or thinking about the possibility of a third state with khōra

Martin followed her dreams and went to the bear with an unconscious desire despite all kinds of dangers. Lacan's concept of the objet petit a can help us understand Martin's desire for the bear. Accordingly, the human being who has lost his/her unity with nature is in a similar state of incompleteness, just as the unity of mother and child is disrupted, and the child wants to return to that unity. His/her basic desire is to return to that wholeness that will make the subject 'complete.' This means the existence of the subject disappears. This is why the subject cannot fulfill this desire. Lacan calls the void created by the subject in the totality objet petit a (Evans, 2019: 190-191). The objet petit a is not a real object. Knowing that it can never fill this void, the subject tries to fill it with other objects. The place where I should be, the unfillable void, begins to be filled with partial objects.

On the one hand, the subject tries to return to that wholeness; on the other hand, it tries to fill that void with its own representation by sending objects to that void, which is the reason for its existence. So what is desire? The answer to this question is the subject's longing for the lack left by the break from wholeness. Although this is void, Lacan calls it an objet petit a because of its peculiarity. According to him, the only object of desire is objet petit a. Objet petit a causes desire, and desire is the result of the relationship established not with the object but with the lack of it (Evans, 2019: 41). Like the broken unity between mother and child, humans have lost their unity with Mother Nature, but the desire to return to that unity is constant. We can argue that the impulse that leads Martin into the wilderness is based on her desire to return to the broken unity between nature and humans. The void created by the rupture of unity with nature is the desire for incompleteness. The only object of desire is the objet petit a, which means bear for Martin.

Beyond this, khōra might be suitable for understanding Martin's situation after the attack. In overcoming the distinction between nature and culture and the traditional dichotomies that have prevailed since Aristotle, khōra, 'something beyond the existing,' which Plato presents in the Timaeus dialogue in contrast to previous dualistic approaches, carries a potential full of ambiguities which new meanings can constantly emerge. With khōra, Plato not only opened a third door against the bipolarity of the philosophy of ideas but also confronted us with three different epistemes with the addition of the third species. On the one hand, there is a world of absolute and unchanging concepts, which can only be grasped by reason outside of the senses; on the other hand, there is the world of opinion, which is subject to becoming and decay, grasped by the senses, and constantly changing; and on the other hand, there is the world of khōra, which can be grasped not by reason and sense, but by mixed reasoning, and can be accepted by persuasion. Concept, conviction, and persuasion thus correspond not only to epistemologically prominent concepts as a triadic system but also to a cosmic level that confronts duality on the ontological and cosmogonic levels and offers a third way. Khōra can thus be seen as a new philosophical opening that adds a new level to Plato's philosophy and allows the bipolar world to be cracked (Doru, 2020: 5-6). Khōra's most important characteristic is its indeterminacy and indefinability, just like nature itself. Nature is beyond the grasp of literature and science; it can neither be felt nor understood. Just like

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khōra, "neither this, nor that, or, that khōra says this and that" (Doru, 2020: 8).

What Plato expresses in the Timaeus designates by the name of khōra seems to defy that 'logic of noncontradiction of the philosophers' of which Vernant speaks, that logic 'of binarity, of the yes or no'. Hence, it might derive from that 'logic other than the logic of the logos' (Derrida, 1995: 89). Derrida saw in khōra the possibility of undermining the polarity between myth and true thought (logos), arguing that it cannot be understood either mythically or rationally. Its indeterminate presence implies that there is an option outside this polarity (Karaman, 2019: 160). Khōra is the boundary concept between the bipolar world and the structural model of logic different from the logic of logos (Derrida, 1995: 89), the nurturer and protector of all things (Krell, 1975: 413). The Indigenous people, who live in harmony with the immanent, all-encompassing nature, and Martin, a civilized human who places him/herself in a separate and superior position to all other living beings, evaluate the bear-human encounter from different perspectives. Martin, now a Medka to the locals, has been stigmatized and has become a part of the wild nature of the whole: "You were already matukha before the bear; now you are a Medka, half-woman and half-bear. Do you know what that means? This means your dreams are the bear's dreams and your own. You must not leave us again. You must stay here because we need you" (Martin, 2022: 93).

From Martin's point of view, however, this attack was merely a tragic accident that turned her into an object of research in the civilized world from which she came and marked her for the rest of her life. However, Martin's desire is to eliminate the old dichotomy from the beginning. Her transformation into Medka, which challenges the human-animal dichotomy, also implies the possibility of a third state for Martin. For the animal, it is first and foremost a fictional being in the sense that it is what human is not, a creature or pseudo-creature that is precisely what human is not, and a species that is the exact opposite of the ideally constructed human reality (Simondon, 2019: 47-48). Heidegger, for example, argues that humans are not animals at all, that humans and animals are actually two different forms of being, and that the distinction between them is purely ontological. However, after Martin encounters the bear, she questions the distinction that Heidegger considers ontological:

> But our bodies were commingled, there was that incomprehensible us, that us which I confusedly sense comes from a very distant place, from a before situated far outside of our limited existences. I turn these ideas over in my head. Why did we choose each other? What truly do I share with this wild creature, and since when? (Martin, 2022: 68)

Martin is behaving in a way that is consistent with her obsessive relationship with the border since childhood, and she transgresses it once again. Whitehead says in another context that she does not know where to stand in nature, where boundaries are always shattered (1955: 50). We start with Deleuze and Guattari's statement that when one crosses the border, one crosses a threshold that can change its order (1993: 60, 62). Martin crosses a threshold that can change the order of herself and the bear as soon as she crosses the border.

This is also beyond the recognizable world, which I argue is the world of khōra, beyond the polarity of meaning (metaphorical or literal). This is where 'hybridization' occurs.

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> For it was I he sought; and it was for him that I appeared. It is hard to leave sense unmade. To decide: I do not know everything about this encounter; I shall let the assumed desiderata of the bears' world alone; (…)The bear and I speak of liminality, and even if this is terrifying, no one can change that (Martin, 2022: 87).

Although the price is high, Martin becomes what she has been searching for all her life; she crosses the line and becomes a being that moves between the human and animal worlds, a being that is neither human nor animal, both human and animal. After the attack, when she is wounded, she says the following: 'The sounds I hear are enhanced, I hear like an animal, I am that wild animal' (Martin, 2022). She is now universal or spontaneous and does not depend on any particular culture or norm. She belongs to nature, and she is nature itself.

In everyday Greek usage, the word khōra meant the countryside outside the Greek polis, region, area, land, cultivated fields, and in politics, a territory under the administration of a state but not incorporated into that state (Vernant&Naguet, 1990). It was Plato who first gave it a philosophical meaning. Khōra is the name of the place that contains all singularities but is not itself recognized as a singularity. The question to be asked is what khōra is, that is, the nature of place or space, as it is commonly conceptualized. Martin's body is transformed from an attack into an unidentifiable place: 'I picture myself with screws sticking out of my face and a metal jaw screwed onto it; I see myself mechanized, robotified, dehumanized' (Martin, 2022: 57).

> (…) my body has become a place of convergence. It is this iconoclastic truth that must be accepted and digested. (…) Closing means accepting that everything left inside is now a part of me, but from now on nothing more. My body has become a territory where Western surgeons parley with Siberian bears. Or rather, where they try to establish communication. The relationships being spun within the little country my body has become are fragile, delicate. It's a volcanic country, landslides can happen at any moment. Our work, hers and mine, and that of the indefinable thing the bear has left deep in my core, consists from now on of "maintaining the lines of communication". (Martin, 2022: 63)

Her body also becomes khōra, a space of encounter between the savage and the modern, the animate and the inanimate, an indefinable place without boundaries. Julia Kristeva, drawing on the psychoanalytic ideas of Melanie Klein and Jacques Lacan, calls the relational space between the mother's body and the child's body khōra. It can be said that the mother, proposed as a metaphor in Plato, is directly defined as khōra in Kristeva's thought. Khōra is the indeterminate ground of the child's pre-verbal relationship with the mother's body, only through the images it has acquired and the movement of its impulses. In short, the presence of khōra as a maternal body is ambiguous: it is both nourishing and destructive and threatening in its openness to the possibility of returning to it through denying ourselves. In a sense, like 'Atlantis' in the Timaeus, we will never be able to return to it because it is submerged, but this does not prevent us from speaking of it through different names and stories (see Klein, 1975 & Kristeva, 1984). Following Kristeva, who calls the relational space between the mother's body and the child's body khōra, we can also call the relational space between mother nature and the human being khōra. Defined as the indeterminate ground of the child's relationship with the mother's body through the movement of pre-verbal images and impulses, khōra can similarly

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be defined as the ground of the human's relationship with Mother Nature through pre-verbal, animalistic aspects, namely images and impulses. Emotions, the remnants of a universe without words, can be interpreted as the reason for Martin's curiosity and attraction to the wild. Martin, who enters the indefinable space with her half-human, half-bear being, is like a child who has left her mother's womb but still has a part of herself attached to it, and she regains the part of herself that she has always sought and always felt was missing. Medka, like khōra, as an indeterminate and indeterminable boundary between being and becoming, corresponds to both being and becoming, being both this and that, and to neither being nor becoming, being neither this nor that; in terms of matter and space, it corresponds to both matter and space and to neither matter nor space. Indeed, khōra, expressed in Plato as a problematic and twilight species, is seen by Derrida as representing all that is hidden, but more here than here (2008: 51).

The distinction between the black notebook and the field notebook, which is a symbolic extension of Martin's duality as she turns into an uncanny being, is also erased after the attack:

> I imagine that, since the bear, the black book has seeped into the colored notebooks; I think there will be no more black books; I think: It doesn't matter. There will be one single story, speaking with many voices, the one we are weaving together, they and I, about all that moves through us and that makes us what we are. (Martin, 2022: 118)

> A single story expresses the realization that she does not need to think from different paradigms to make sense of herself and the world in which she lives. 'One single story, speaking with many voices' or 'uncertainty: a promise of life' (Martin, 2022: 115) is similar to the idea of khōra. The book is an expression of a story with many voices.

Conclusion

Although Martin's obsessive interest in the bear led to an attack, Martin saw it as a means of understanding her relationship with nature and crowned her experience with this text. 'In the Eye of the Wild' presents new and alternative ways of understanding the human relationship with nature and tries to understand these ways through a transdisciplinary method. It also shows that the bear attack is not a simple wild animal attack; the bear, its bite, and Martin's transformation into Medka at the end of the attack bring about the collapse of the old boundaries between nature and culture, which Martin also problematizes as an anthropologist. In Martin's case, the objet petit a, which represents the unattainable object of desire that fills a void, is associated with the bear. In this study, the bear symbolizes the desire to return to unity with nature, which has been lost in civilization.

Khōra, as presented by Plato in the Timaeus dialogue, is used in the study as a representation of a third way beyond nature-culture distinctions, as it expresses a space beyond existing categories, a space that challenges traditional binaries. Moreover, Martin's physical and mental transformation is compatible with this uncanny space. Martin's transformation into Medka challenges the human-animal dichotomy and suggests a third state is possible. Overall, Martin's experience, including the bear attack, is portrayed as a catalyst for breaking boundaries between nature and culture, human and animal, and different aspects of her identity. This analysis interweaves psychological, philosophical, and ecological perspectives to provide a rich exploration of Martin's journey.

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Endnotes

Some samples are the film "In to the Wild" (D. Sean Penn), My Octopus Teacher (D. Pippa Ehrlich, James Reed), Grizzly Man (D. Werner Herzog).

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