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Pasados sacrificados, futuros perdidos: inanimación subjetiva, zonas de sacrificio y Wild Geese *de Martha Ostenso (Canada, 1925)*

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OUTLINE

AUTHOR'S NOTES

This paper is adapted from an in-progress dissertation chapter; this paper contributes to the ongoing thought process behind my research.

TEXT

Introduction

1 This paper contributes an answer to the question posed by Margery Fee: "how does literature claim land?"[1] It does so by analyzing Martha Ostenso's *Wild Geese* (1925) from an eco-geological perspective that leads us to consider what are known as "sacrifice zones" and Canada's ongoing ecocide, a process that has namely led to what has been termed "lost futures"[2] for many communities such as the Indigenous ones addressed here. I have coined the term "eco-geological" to refine conventional notions of "nature" by emphasizing the interplay between ecological systems and geological formations in shaping human and non-human interactions. This perspective

recognizes geology not as inert or merely a backdrop to human activity but as an active agent in the formation of social, cultural, and environmental dynamics. Drawing from Jane Bennett's "thing-power" [3] and Elizabeth Povinelli's theorization of "geontologies," [4] the eco-geological lens foregrounds how geological elements – such as the land in *Wild Geese* – mediate power structures, cultural identities, and modes of dispossession. This perspective entails examining interrelated ecological, geographical, and geological components, and how they manifest through nonhuman and human entities, digging into literature's construction of the environment while keeping in mind "the extent of [human] transformations [on] environments" [5] through such narratives.

2 Ostenso's work contributes to Canada's ecocidal and genocidal dispossession by creating a subjective inanimacy in its characters and the land. Subjective inanimacy is a literary act of inanimizing peoples, things, or even histories that had (or continue to have) recognized forms of agency in non-colonial/decolonial contexts. Inspired in part by Terry Goldie's classic study *Fear and Temptation* (1989), [6] this concept can partly be seen in the settler dehumanizing process of Indigenous peoples, or the subduing of eco-geologies to extractive capitalism. "Inanimizing" shapes the human and nonhuman into "nonliving" to produce discursively and physically exploitable *things*; thereby under*mining* such elements as Indigenous life, action, and histories – or those of ecological spaces.

3 Though Ostenso drew inspiration from her time in Manitoba, she left the novel's location unmarked. This choice, coupled with a portrayal of "the pioneering farmer as a figure confronted by an implacable natural world", [7] creates a sense of mutual emptiness between land and settlers. However, most analyses do not consider how this affects Indigenous subjectivity, [8] as Indigenous presence is conflated with the "inanimate" land throughout the novel. Contemporary ecocritical readings of *Wild Geese*, such as Deborah Keahy's consideration of the role of place in the novel, [9] have attempted to rectify this, though not to the extent I propose. [10] Examining how colonial meanings of possession are created through characters that become the very matter they desire, I unsettle the misconception that the [Indigenous] land and the settlers are mutually empty. Such misconceptions have been addressed in Canadian literary studies,

and I push them further by demonstrating how Ostenso's text contains the seeds of its own unraveling, portraying matter as something that re/creates itself in a quest for meaning.

> The way *Wild Geese* works towards a project of dispossession can be illuminated by Terry Goldie's *Fear and Temptation*. Explicating how Indigenous relations to nature were constructed in literature, Goldie asserts that: [i]t [is] possible to divide much of the semiosis of [White] society […] [between] the natural earth and the artful world. The [Native] is often used to present the possibility of nature in human form. In the same way, the [Native's] closeness to nature is used to justify an emphasis on the [Native] as the land. In the one, nature becomes human, in the other, human becomes nature. Elements of each of the standard commodities in which the [Native] participates are valorized […] through their emphatically natural genesis. [11]

4 In the literary logic of colonialism, if Indigenous people are nature, and nature is full of resources to be emptied out of, then the Indigenous population is empty and can be overlooked as their lives and resources are mined, as Cherie Demaline's novel *The Marrow Thieves* (2017) makes plain. [12] The paradox of the subjective inanimacy is thus revived, as settlers must also acknowledge the existence – even if inanimate – of Indigenous populations. Indigenous peoples may have been construed as inert (i.e. non-modern, nonhuman, etc.) but they were never inanimate, which is why they posed a threat. It is no surprise, then, that Indigenous resurgence practices encourage the formation of "a new politics in which many identities and strategies for making real change are fused together in a movement to challenge white society's control over Onkwehonwe [original people] and [their] lands." [13] The attribution of meaning to land is one that was weaponized and recognized as a reason "for impotence, for defensiveness destructive of communication, […] the ultimate protection for changelessness," [14] despite the dynamism of the colonial system that introduced such a view.

5 In this context, this article examines how sacrifice zones emblematize a discourse about the land that emerged from a narrativization of human/nonhuman relations. *Wild Geese* reflects this discourse; reframing land and its inhabitants – human and

nonhuman – as dispossessed resources, perpetuating colonial ideologies that render certain lives and spaces expendable in the service of settler-capitalism. Here, "lost futures" are those of Indigenous peoples living near what became known as sacrifice zones, since those (non) futures necessitate the mining of Indigenous bodies and futures. An eco-conscious approach of the inanimate reveals a further contradiction of the Canadian project that reduces life to what Povinelli refers to as Non-life. To overcome this contradiction, we must recognize the value of (non) life beyond subjectivity. I do so by analyzing the characterization of *Wild Geese*'s antagonist Caleb Gare, before examining his relation to the land and the novel's Indigenous characters, John and Malcolm, culminating in an analysis of subjective inanimacy's full realization in the novel.

Caleb Gare: Subjective Inanimacy and Patriarchy

6 The concept of sacrifice zones, as distinct from imperialism, is central to understanding the relational dynamics explored in this analysis. While imperialism involves the outright domination and extraction of resources by a colonial power, sacrifice zones emerge as spaces that are constructed within the logic of disposability, where both human and nonhuman entities are rendered expendable in the service of capitalist or colonial advancement. This distinction highlights the layered processes of subjective inanimacy, whereby agency is systematically stripped from beings or environments, allowing them to be framed as inert commodities. Attributing inanimacy, however, paradoxically requires the attributor to possess and recognize their own subjectivity, an act that reveals a form of lack or absence in the self. This tension, situated at the intersection of literature, history, and eco-geology, serves as the theoretical foundation for the discussion that follows.

7 For the sake of clarity, a brief synopsis of Martha Ostenso's *Wild Geese* is in order, with a focus on the points I will be developing below. The novel centers on the Gare family, who live on a remote farm in Manitoba, dominated by Patriarch Caleb Gare. Caleb's authoritarian control over his family – particularly his daughter Judith – and his obsession with land ownership reveal a relentless

desire for power and self-preservation. As Judith dreams of escaping her father's authority and embracing a freer life, Caleb's manipulations unravel the family's relationships with themselves and the world they seek to settle. His grip even extends beyond his family, as he exploits everyone's economic dependence on him, ensuring his dominance over the landscape and its inhabitants. The Prairie landscape emerges as both a backdrop and a character in its own right – unyielding, vast, and indifferent, reflecting the characters' struggles. These themes of abuse, manipulation, and power (over human and nonhuman entities) lead to the novel's culmination in Caleb's demise at the hands of the feminized and fetishized land he harmed throughout the novel.

8 While the Gares are the central element driving the plot, *Wild Geese* more specifically follows the story of Lind Archer as she boards with the Gares in Manitoba. Described as "a spiritual counterpart of the land,"[15] Caleb's patriarchal violence is nonetheless compared to that of the land in its unpredictable harshness and is demonstrated through his blackmailing of his wife, Amelia. However, his conservatism is met with opposition from his daughter Judith, who is defined as having a "vivid and terrible"[16] strength and a sexuality as "some fabled animal – a centauress"[17] that contrasts Lind's delicacy. The novel showcases the overlapping of realistic and unrealistic elements through the association of Judith with fabled animals and Caleb with spiritual and animistic terms – paralleling how the realities of eco-geologies in Canada are warped to benefit settler imaginations.

9 The creation of subjective meaning in the act of separation from the eco-geologies is central to *Wild Geese*. Subjective inanimacy imposes a framework of meaning on the world, reducing entities that already possess intrinsic significance to passive objects within a human-centric order. This approach stands in contrast to Jane Bennett's theorizing, which seeks to give "voice to thing-power" and acknowledges the "active role of nonhuman materials in public life."[18] In *Wild Geese*, subjective inanimacy is expressed through acts that deny agency to the nonhuman environment, embedding it within systems of domination and control. Early in the novel, this is exemplified through Lind's encounter with Amelia's relation to the land and her family:

> There must be some reason for Amelia's endurance. Was it a hope of compensation of some kind? The children? No, there was not enough affection among them – after the precious flame had been sucked into the very earth upon which and by which they lived – to make the sacrifice worthwhile.[19]

10 Lind's reflection on Amelia's endurance emphasizes the relational nature of her existence, particularly how it is defined by sacrifice. While her children may have been a source of meaning, this potential is negated as they are described in terms that align them with the environment – "the precious flame" suggests both vitality and its extinguishment by the land. This alignment places the children in an ecological, almost mystical, framework that mirrors the loss of agency attributed to Amelia herself. However, the key distinction lies in how sacrifice operates for Amelia: her identity is structured by expectations of loss and subordination, both in her role as a mother and as a wife. Her hope that the children might "sacrifice all their youth for her [to live]"[20] reveals her desperation, as their sacrifice would counterbalance her own erasure. By contrast, the description of her children in environmental terms underscores their potential vitality, tethering them to cycles of life and renewal that Amelia is denied. Ostenso's use of inanimate and natural metaphors for both the children and Amelia illustrates the broader project of subjective inanimacy – justifying not only familial exploitation but also colonial and patriarchal control over land and life alike.

11 This is subjective inanimacy – the perceived unrelatedness of what is "unalive" which creates the very meaning of the lived experiences around us. Metaphorically demonstrated in the nonhuman throughout the text, an inciteful conversation between Mark Jordan to Lind also exposes the roots of subjective inanimacy. As Mark tells Lind about his travels around the Prairies and to the north, he diverts into reveries about the environment he encountered:

> The austerity of nature reduces the outward expression in life, simply, I think, because there is not such an abundance of natural objects for the spirit to react to. We are, after all, only the mirror of our environment. Life here at Oeland, even, may seem a negation but it's only a reflection from so few exterior natural objects that it has the semblance of negation. These people are thrown inward upon

> themselves, their passions stored up, they are intensified figures of life with no outward expression – no releasing gesture. [21]

12 In other words, "matter and meaning are not separate" [22] and believing something to be true does not make it so. [23] Phenomena exist only as part of the world's ongoing intra-activity, its dynamic and contingent differentiation into specific relationalities. This is on display in Mark's words, although he speaks less from a position of the settlers' subjectivity, and rather perceives his agency (and that of those around him) as limited associating with the land.

The Possibility of a Non-Oppositional *Wild Geese*

13 Deborah Keahey's analysis of *Wild Geese* construes "place" as mere geography, thus enabling a view of Caleb Gare as someone obsessed with "knowing [his] place" [24] only in his awareness of his surroundings, not of his relation to them. Through subjective inanimacy, place can be extended to include geology and conceptions of land. Caleb can be interpreted in two ways in this regard: as someone who controls inert land, and as one who is (without realizing it) formed from that same land, believing himself an active life-bringing antithesis. In the former case, Caleb is close to being one of the sacrificed, as his "very lifeforce is given over to the crops; he surrenders his power to them, and his energies are employed to support the growth and reproduction of the fields' plant populations." [25] In fact, his bodily and economic investment is societal; he is not working for any environment, but sacrificing himself, others, and eco-geological spaces for what could be considered an agricultural (and ideological) apparatus of the Canadian Prairies. This is described in passages that designate Caleb as "absorbed with the process of growth on the land he owned, lending to it his own spirit like physical nourishment." [26] In actuality, what does not put the settler in a sacrificed position is his ownership over the land.

14 Caleb's farming is a transformative experience that enables "a transcendent power in this blue field of flax that lifted a man above the petty artifices of birth, life, and death. It was more exacting, even

than an invisible God. It demanded not only the good in him but the evil and the indifference." [27] Such a passage perpetuates John Locke's Indigenous-killing and ecocidal notion that whoever *cultivates* the land owns it, [28] and René Descartes's view of the spirituality of material such as the land. [29] Caleb's farming practices can be analyzed through Donald Hall's theorization of the "muscular Christian body," which frames white masculinity as grounded in physical labor and moral superiority, often expressed through dominance over nature. This ideal ties the male body social, national, and religious hierarchies, where autonomy and strength are central. Caleb embodies this ideal in his relationship with the land, asserting control over it as a means of affirming his identity. Yet, Caleb's autonomy is paradoxical – his dominance over the land binds him to its relentless demands, undermining the very independence he seeks to maintain. The farmer is not simply a "male body [that] appears as a metaphor for social, national, and religious bodies," [30] it is an active rejection of the ties that a body has to physical elements, wherein the land becomes the very thing that allows transcendence from itself. Rather than living through intra-actions, where "it is the action between (and not in-between) that matters," [31] Caleb views his labor as a form of transcendence, equating his mastery over the land with a spiritual escape from the physical and moral constraints of life. Yet, this vision of transcendence relies on a rigid separation between himself and the land, an interaction where the land is reduced to an inanimate object of use. From this perspective, Caleb's attempt to transcend the land through dominance and control is fundamentally flawed. Rather than acknowledging the interdependence between himself and the land, Caleb rejects intra-action, situating himself as superior to it. My reading highlights the consequences of this rejection: Caleb's eventual death at the hands of the land reflects the failure of his asymmetrical worldview, where attributing inanimate qualities to the environment ultimately severs the mutuality required to sustain life.

15 While demonstrating a form of intra-action, Caleb still exists and operates in a manner that encourages inanimacy. This is evident in one description of Caleb:

> His tremendous shoulders and massive head, which loomed forward from the rest of his body like a rough projection of rock from the edge of a cliff, gave him a towering appearance. When attention was

> directed to the lower half of his body, he seemed visibly to dwindle. He had harsh gray hair [...], a weedy, tobacco-stained mustache, and [...] black brows that straggled together across the bridge of a heavy, bony nose. [32]

16 Ostenso establishes the land as something that cannot exist separately from the male farmer. In this perspective, the land must be counterbalanced and tamed by settlers – most clearly evidenced in Caleb's description as a man-nature farmer and by the revenge nature takes on him at the novel's climax. As his grasp on those he deems inanimate (his family, the farm, the people who live in his community) slips, so too does his grasp on the land, leading to his gruesome death being caused by the marsh "tugging at his feet [...] the strength of the earth was irresistible [and] drew him deeper." [33] Caleb's profound misunderstanding of the "radical asymmetries in the relationship of human beings to the earth and cosmos" [34] establishes how the land will be understood in relation to whether someone is deemed to belong on it according to the text and the characters within it. In his attempt to master *Terra Nullius* (or *Indigena Nullius*), Caleb sows the seeds for his own destruction, as he becomes one with that which he exploited.

Wild Geese and the Indigenous Palimpsest

17 This final section fully addresses how the Indigenous characters of *Wild Geese* are represented and framed in a way that mirrors and reinforces the theoretical concepts I develop throughout this article. Malcolm is a Cree-Scots character who, despite his mixed heritage, maintains a traditional Indigenous lifestyle that keeps him separate from white Canadian society, and his retreat into the wilderness suggests that he leaves the area to make way for homesteading. By pushing half of her Indigenous characters past the margins of the text, Ostenso perpetuates a colonial logic of Indigenous erasure to legitimize settler claims to the land. However, the text sets the stage for resistance, as contemporary Indigenous critics might interpret Malcolm's connection to the wilderness as a symbolic assertion of sovereignty and resilience. This dual reading highlights the tension

between Ostenso's literary project and the possibilities for Indigenous resurgence.

18 Such dynamics of emerging political identities can be seen through the other Indigenous character in *Wild Geese*: the mostly silent John Tobacco, a Cree mail carrier. Ostenso problematizes his existence through his implied complicity in the settler presence. This is evident when Lind and Mark "went to old John Tobacco and got an outfit of doeskin and feathers for Mark, and a costume for Lind ornate with beads and feathers"[35] for the harvest dance. John enables the couple's plan to dress up in attire that has been reduced to a costume for those who wish to impersonate a "dying" culture. Indicative of John's support for the perpetuation of a romanticized image of Indigenous culture, the scene has a sense of loss as it signifies the marginalized Cree man giving away the clothing of his past to a couple who represent the future of "civilization." Furthermore, the above "complicity" intersects with the muddled notions of inanimacy and subjectivity I raise. By enabling Lind and Mark's appropriation of Indigenous clothing, John Tobacco becomes a vehicle for settler narratives that portray Indigenous cultures as static and consumable. Tobacco is both present and marginalized, his agency constrained within the colonial framework that renders his culture as an artifact rather than a living entity. His role evokes the paradox of inanimacy, where Indigenous people are recognized (as culture-bearers) and erased (as active agents). Thus, Tobacco's actions highlight the tension between forced participation in settler projects and the imposed inanimacy that silences resistance and reconfigures subjectivity into a colonial construct.

19 This raises concerns about the power dynamics between settlers and Indigenous peoples, and how the former appropriate aspects of the latter's culture to validate their own presence. Transferring clothing from the Indigenous proprietors to settlers mirrors the dispossession of land. This act also suggests a form of approval from Tobacco, as his actions tacitly endorse the settler duo and their continued presence in the region. Through "[the] lovers' symbolic indigenization under the approving eye of John Tobacco,"[36] the couple claims the land, as their inculturation represents a declaration of their natural belonging to the territory. By virtue of their new "Indigenous"-like status, the couple transcends the classification of settler in the same power-

driven sense as Caleb is regarded as a settler-invader. Furthermore, in line with Stephanie Nohelani Teves' essay "Indigeneity and Performance" (2021), the costumes emancipate Lind and Mark from the conventions of the community, [37] and Tobacco's blessing affords the couple the opportunity to live in amity upon Indigenous land.

20 Turning to a more focused examination of how *Wild Geese* contributes to dispossession in both planetary and literary contexts, I want to approach this through Patrick Wolfe's idea that "the primary motive for [Indigenous] elimination [...] [is] access to territory. Territoriality is settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element." [38] While this may appear contradictory to the arguments thus far presented, which assert that the land is assimilated into the settler rather than obliterated, a passage from *Wild Geese* illustrates how this dynamic functions:

> While he was raptly considering the tender field of flax – now in blue flower – [his wife] Amelia did not exist to him. [...] Caleb would stand for long moments outside the fence beside the flax. Then he would turn quickly to see that no one was looking. He would creep between the wires and run his hand across the flowering, gentle tops of the growth. A stealthy caress – more intimate than any he had ever given. [39]

21 Caleb's sole focus on his flax crop as the means to demonstrate his success reveals his unrelenting obsession with power and greed. His daily inspection of the fields covertly manifests his desire, but his preoccupation highlights his fixation with the physical manifestation of his achievements as a farmer, and not any sentimental attachment to the crop or the land itself.

22 Caleb's interaction with the flax field underscores the tension between his desire for possession and an unacknowledged longing for bodily pleasure. This duality reflects the muscular Christian ethos discussed earlier, wherein physical labor and mastery over the land are moralized as virtuous acts that reinforce settler identity. Caleb's "stealthy caress" of the flax blurs the boundary between possession and pleasure, revealing an intimate connection to the land that is both deeply personal and entirely self-serving. His fixation on the crop as a marker of his success reduces it to a symbol of his

dominance, yet the physical act of running his hand over the flowering tops exposes a sensual, almost reverential engagement. This reflects the broader settler-colonial dynamic wherein the land is simultaneously revered for its generative capacities and subjugated to human control.

23 The violence pervading the novel is inflicted upon those characters linked to the land. This hostility is directed towards Caleb himself, as he becomes increasingly isolated from his family, and towards his daughter Judith, who has an intimate connection with the land and understands "how knowing the bare earth was, as if it might have a heart and a mind hidden here in the woods."[40] Judith's complicity lies in the way she sexualizes the landscape and "makes love" to/on it, reinforcing another way she takes possession of the land while being taken by it. This dynamic reflects colonial constructions of land as a female, eroticized body ready to be claimed. As Indigenous feminist scholars like Leanne Betasamosake Simpson have noted,[41] such depictions perpetuate the settler project by framing land as an object of sexual conquest and erasing its inherent agency and relationality. I would argue that Judith's position is part of a larger reinforcement of bodily aggression that the novel further perpetuates against Indigenous peoples, who are rendered invisible in this notion of the land as something that has been conquered through its appropriation by the settlers. This is particularly evident in the portrayal of Malcolm, a minor character who is identified as "Scotch, with Cree blood two generations back, and had been Caleb Gare's hired man."[42] While the Scottish ancestry of Malcolm is highlighted as more genetically significant than his Cree heritage, his role as a helper on a settler farm underscores the novel's larger theme of erasing the Indigenous presence from the land.

24 The novel even reproduces the relation to the flax field Caleb demonstrates, but with Malcolm as the central figure:

> His eyes roved admiringly over the rich flax, and around northward to the acres of luxuriant tame hay and rye grass. Caleb Gare was a prosperous man. A mean man, he knew, but his children would live after him – his children would be established in comfort for the rest of their lives on this land – and he, Malcolm, was a wanderer, hearing ever a call in the wind, a summons to far lakes and lonely forests.[43]

25 The reader is thus a witness to the construction of inanimacy directed at the most prominent Native character, a framing that reflects settler narratives seeking to render Indigenous figures as passive relics of a vanishing past. Yet, this inanimacy operates not as a neutral depiction but as a colonial mechanism to undermine the subversive potential of nomadic movement, which inherently destabilizes settler claims to the land. Malcolm's rights to the land are revoked because of his connection to it. Similar to the mistreatment Caleb inflicts on the nature-loving Judith, he applies a comparable logic to Malcolm, who is doubly impacted as he is feminized by being described in similar terms as Judith. The novel's logic mandates that Natives be linked to the land of which they are being dispossessed, as they "are typically represented as unsettled, nomadic, rootless, etc., in settler-colonial discourse."[44] Malcolm is explicitly depicted as a paradox. He is a man who desires and embodies the very things that Caleb possesses. Yet, he cannot possibly have them because his embodiment of those qualities renders him perpetually excluded from the structures of ownership and power that Caleb represents. In a final act of dispossession, Caleb demonstrates how little Malcolm can own for himself by reducing him to the one thing that the farmer can fully control: the land.

Conclusion

26 Martha Ostenso fails to acknowledge Indigenous people and their political orders. However, her depiction suggests an awareness of a form of sovereignty embedded in their lands. This tension reflects the limits of her narrative's engagement with Indigenous presence and agency. Moving to Manitoba, she had written that "*Wild Geese*, lay there, waiting to be put into words".[45] This may be generously interpreted as Ostenso attributing agency to the land, suggesting it exists as something exterior to human action. However, the notion that the land is merely waiting to be lived on undermines such a reading, as it culturally discounts the land's inherent agency and relational vitality. This gave the novel the status of "writing that engaged with the power […] of the Canadian landscape […] [making it] central to the national literature."[46] That centrality invokes "grander narratives that overshadow how the novel's hyper-local social arrangements [such as Indigenous-land relations, for example]

exceed the settlers' schemes."[47] At best, it is a renewed contact with a sacred land otherwise represented as fallen, while insisting that behind such a reality, is a realm of larger (i.e. colonial) forces.

27 This essay traced *Wild Geese*'s perpetuation of subjective inanimacy, reducing both the land and Indigenous figures to passive objects within a settler-colonial framework. However, the analysis offered here highlights the potential for a decolonizing counter-reading, one that challenges these constructed silences and foregrounds the agency of the land and its Indigenous custodians. By reading the sexualized landscape as a decolonizing subject, a different narrative emerges – one where the land's vitality resists its reduction to inert matter. The sensuality of the Prairies, often depicted as an object of settler possession, can instead be interpreted as an assertion of its own dynamic power, refusing to conform to the extractive and patriarchal desires imposed upon it. Similarly, Indigenous characters such as Malcolm and John, though marginalized in the text, embody movements and actions that resist settler constructions of inanimacy. This counter-reading invites an interrogation of *Wild Geese* as a site of colonial tension, where even the textual reinforcement of dispossession reveals traces of the resistance it seeks to erase. By recognizing the sexualized landscape and marginalized Indigenous figures as active participants in these narratives, we begin to reframe subjective inanimacy not as an endpoint but as a contested space where decolonizing possibilities emerge. In this way, *Wild Geese* can be situated within a broader effort to critique and dismantle the colonial frameworks that underpin its literary and eco-geological representations.

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ABSTRACTS

English

This paper challenges the misconceptions *Wild Geese* perpetuates about settler relations to the land as being oppositional. Instead, *Wild Geese* participates in Canada's ecocidal project by constructing "subjective inanimacy" in its settler characters and the land, conflating Indigenous presence with the inanimate. I argue that Ostenso presents matter as self-generative in its quest for meaning. This analysis explores how colonial possession is narrated, as characters and storylines embody the matter they

desire, illustrating how narrative creation shapes environmental conceptions, driving ecocide and dispossession.

Français
Cet article remet en question les idées fausses que *Wild Geese* perpétue sur les relations coloniales avec la terre comme étant oppositionnelles. *Wild Geese* participe plutôt au projet écocidal canadien en construisant une « inanimité subjective » chez ses personnages colonisateurs et dans la terre, confondant la présence autochtone avec l'inanimé. Je soutiens qu'Ostenso présente la matière comme autogénératrice dans sa quête de sens. Cette analyse explore la manière dont la possession coloniale est racontée, à mesure que les personnages et les intrigues incarnent la matière qu'ils désirent, illustrant comment la création narrative façonne les conceptions environnementales, conduisant à l'écocide et à la dépossession.

Español
Este artículo desafía las ideas erróneas que *Wild Geese* perpetúa sobre las relaciones coloniales con la tierra como una oposición. En cambio, *Wild Geese* participa del proyecto ecocida de Canadá al construir una "inanimidad subjetiva" en sus personajes colonizadores y la tierra, confundiendo la presencia indígena con lo inanimado. Sostengo que Ostenso presenta la materia como autogenerativa en su búsqueda de significado. Este análisis explora cómo se narra la posesión colonial, a medida que los personajes y las historias encarnan la materia que desean, ilustrando cómo la creación narrativa da forma a las concepciones ambientales, impulsando el ecocidio y el despojo.

INDEX

Mots-clés
inanimité subjective, autochtonie, néo-matérialisme, littérature canadienne, éco-géologies

Keywords
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