

SUPERSPECIES:  
BEARS AND WOLVES IN CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS'S SHORT ANIMAL STORIES

Thesis submitted to the College of  
Graduate Studies and Research  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts  
in the Department of English  
University of Saskatchewan  
Saskatoon

By  
K. S. A. Brazier-Tompkins

PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Postgraduate degree from the University of Saskatchewan, I agree that the Libraries of this University may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for copying of this thesis in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor or professors who supervised my thesis work or, in their absence, by the Head of the Department or the Dean of the College in which my thesis work was done. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis or parts thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of Saskatchewan in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my thesis.

Requests for permission to copy or to make other uses of materials in this thesis/dissertation in whole or part should be addressed to:

Head of the Department of English  
University of Saskatchewan  
320 Arts Building  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 5A5  
Canada

OR

Dean  
College of Graduate Studies and Research  
University of Saskatchewan  
107 Administration Place  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 5A2  
Canada

## ABSTRACT

Bears and wolves are large mammalian predators who fill similar biological niches and have acquired similar cultural significance throughout Western history. Although superficial similarities exist between them in Charles G. D. Roberts's short animal stories, Roberts uses anthropomorphism to differentiate between these two species. This thesis uses a historical-cultural approach to provide the context for determining what was known or believed about these animals during Roberts's life and what contemporaneous theories were likely to have influenced Roberts's writing. The present literary analysis of bears and wolves in Roberts's stories shows that the species are primarily differentiated through the degree of anthropomorphism attributed to their individual members. Roberts anthropomorphizes bears more than his other species, and this contributes to the bears' representation of the positive potential of animality. By contrast, Roberts minimizes anthropomorphization of wolves, who represent the negative potential of animality. In Roberts's work, humans who live in the wilderness must become either bear-like or wolf-like. Those who embrace bears' positive animal potential are those who belong in the natural world, while those who practice the wolves' negative animal potential are denied a place in the natural order. Humans ultimately prove themselves to be superior animals through their use of technology, but must also demonstrate positive qualities, such as morality, in order to show that they belong in nature. Roberts's binary of animality speaks to a conflict that continues today, between the desire to accept the animality that is part of human nature and simultaneously to deny the baser aspects of that animality.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Kevin Flynn, whose feedback and support over the past year have been both indefatigable and invaluable. I would also like to thank my other committee members, Drs. Lindsey Banco, William Bartley, Janet M<sup>c</sup>Vittie, and Lisa Vargo, for all the work they have done to forward the timely completion of this thesis. Many thanks are also due to my family, to my mother, my aunt, my grandfather, and my grandmother, for cultivating my early love of literature and animals and for facilitating my early academic success. Nature and nurture could not have worked in better harmony.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Permission to Use.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Abbreviations.....	v
Introduction.....	1
1. We and the Bears are Kin.....	12
2. “Wolf! Wolf!”: The Lupine Invasion of Roberts’s Home Territory.....	34
3. Bear or Wolf: Choosing an Inner Animal.....	58
Conclusion.....	82
Works Cited.....	88
Appendix.....	94

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- B. The Backwoodsmen.* Toronto: MacMillan, 1909.
- BW. Babes of the Wild.* Toronto: Cassell, 1912.
- CW. Children of the Wild.* 1913. Toronto: MacMillan, 1929.
- EE. Earth's Enigmas.* 1895. Toronto: Copp, Clarke, 1903.
- EW. Eyes of the Wilderness.* Toronto: MacMillan, 1933.
- FF. The Feet of the Furtive.* [1912?] Toronto: Ryerson, 1947.
- FF1. Forest Folk.* Ed. Ethel Hume Bennett. Toronto: Ryerson, 1949.
- HC. Hoof and Claw.* Toronto: Macmillan, 1914.
- HS. The Haunters of the Silences: A Book of Animal Life.* 1907. NY: Grosset and Dunlap, 1910.
- HW. The House in the Water: A Book of Animal Stories.* Boston: L. C. Page & Co., 1908.
- KB. King of Beasts and Other Stories.* Ed. Joseph Gold. Toronto: Ryerson, 1967.
- KE. Kings in Exile.* 1909. Toronto: Ryerson, 1964.
- KW. Kindred of the Wild.* 1902. Toronto: Exile, 2001.
- LB. The Last Barrier and Other Stories.* 1958. New Canadian Library 7. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970.
- LBF. The Ledge on Bald Face.* London: Ward, Lock, & Co., 1918.
- LW. The Lure of the Wild: The Last Three Animal Stories by Sir Charles G. D. Roberts.* Ed. John Coldwell Adams. Ottawa: Borealis, 1980.
- MK. More Kindred of the Wild.* London: Ward, Lock, 1911[?].
- MS. More Animal Stories.* 1922. Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1931.
- NU. Neighbours Unknown.* 1909. Toronto: MacMillan, 1911.
- ST. The Secret Trails.* London: Ward, Lock, & Co., 1916.
- SAS. Selected Animal Stories. Canadian Critical Edition.* Ed. Terry Whalen. Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1962.
- TB. Thirteen Bears.* Ed. Ethel Hume Bennett. Toronto: Ryerson, 1947.
- VB. Vagrants of the Barren and Other Stories.* Ed. Martin Ware. Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1992.
- TTW. They That Walk in the Wild.* Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1924.
- “Two Stories.” “Two Stories by Charles G. D. Roberts.” Introd. Derek F. Crawley. *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 4.1 (1975): 60-81.
- TWW. They Who Walk in the Wilds.* 1924. Toronto: MacMillan, 1925.

*WT. The Watchers of the Trails: A Book of Animal Life.* Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1904.

*WW. Wisdom of the Wilderness.* 1923. Toronto: MacMillan, 1928.

## INTRODUCTION

Roberts' animal stories constitute, as far as I can ascertain, the only sustained attempt to use the materials of the Canadian Wilderness for the purpose of expressing a coherent view of the world that man inhabits. Roberts has created a Canadian mythology, in which animals, rather than gods, play out a systematic drama of conflict and resolution.

– Joseph Gold, “A Precious Speck of Life” 23

In his 1902 article “The Animal Story of To-Day,” Sir Charles G. D. Roberts defined the animal story as, “at its highest point of development... a psychological romance constructed on a framework of natural science” (212). This definition has been cited ever since, sometimes with the caveat that modern animal stories differ significantly from the version popular in the first part of the twentieth century. Roberts was early in his career as a writer of animal stories when he composed that definition, and at that time he believed that the further evolution of the animal story was unlikely: “Sympathetic exploration,” he writes, “may advance [the animal story’s] boundaries to a degree which we hardly dare to dream; but such expansion cannot be called evolution. There would seem to be no further evolution possible, unless based upon a hypothesis that animals have souls” (“Animal” 213). He viewed his animal stories, as well as those of his contemporary Ernest Thompson Seton and a handful of less well known authors, as the end of the line, the best of the work that began with Æsop’s fables and “Reynard the Fox” and evolved over time into *The Jungle Book* and *Black Beauty* before terminating at Seton and Roberts’s realistic short wild animal stories.

Because Roberts viewed animal stories as points on an evolutionary scale, he saw no need to differentiate “types” of animal story; for him, “Reynard the Fox” and *Black Beauty* were much the same thing, but stood at different points in the animal story’s evolution. Indeed, these traditions of animal stories do share the common characteristic of “downplaying the ferocity of animals, [focusing] on traits that resembled those of admirable humans” (Mighetto 12). The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century nature writers could be distinguished from the Æsopian tradition of animal stories, however, by the nature writers’ cultivation of a “deep sympathy for individual animals,” and they often used their stories as a conduit for sharing their desires to protect those animals from human harm (Mighetto 12). The same may also be said of Anna Sewell and Margaret Marshall Saunders, the authors of *Black Beauty* and *Beautiful Joe*, but,

unlike these writers, the turn-of-the-century nature writers in most cases insisted “that their portrayals were true to life” (Mighetto 12), or at were at least plausible renderings of plausible events in the lives of real animals, portrayed as realistically as possible upon the page.

Modern critics have tended to shy away from Roberts’s evolutionary method of classification, with its connotations of hierarchy and progress, and have used the distinctions between earlier animal stories and the type advanced by Roberts to add qualifiers, so that what Roberts viewed as the pinnacle of the animal story is now called the realistic short wild animal story, or the short realist wild animal story. These qualifying terms cannot be applied to Roberts’s animal stories with universal accuracy: *Red Fox* is a novel, not a short story; “The Dog that Saved the Bridge” (*ST* 39-56)<sup>1</sup> concerns the lives of no wild animals; and although none of Roberts’s non-humans exchange four-legged locomotion for two-legged or express themselves in English, several of Roberts’s stories employ highly fantastical plotlines, such as that of the battle between a polar bear and a narwhal in “A Duel in the Deep” (*HS* 140-52). The chapters that follow focus solely upon Roberts’s short animal stories, regardless of their verisimilitude, and are inclusive of both stories of wild animals and the stories of captive and/or domesticated animals. So although the term “short animal story” can be used broadly to refer to any story about animals that is not excessively lengthy, the term is used here to indicate an animal story short enough to be included as one of a number of stories in a single volume and which falls within the category as defined by Roberts, as “psychological romance constructed on a framework of natural science.”

Part of the reason Roberts’s definition of the short animal story has gone largely undisputed is Roberts’s position as progenitor – or co-progenitor – of the genre. There has been much debate in the past over whether it was Roberts or Ernest Thompson Seton who wrote the first short animal story and so invented the genre, and this debate springs from discord over what, precisely, constitutes an animal story, a question that continues to be asked in spite of Roberts’s attempts to define the term. “Do Seek Their Meat From God” (*LB* 1-6) has been called Roberts’s first short animal story and was originally published in *Harper’s* late in 1892, although other short stories with first publication dates starting at 1886 with “Bear vs. Birch-Bark”

---

<sup>1</sup> See the List of Abbreviations page for complete list of abbreviated book titles.

(Adams, “Preliminary” 229) have since been accepted by many as part of the genre.<sup>2</sup> Seton’s first undisputed short animal story is his well-known “Lobo, King of the Currumpaw,” first published in 1894 (Poirier 305). Some critics, however, believe that Seton’s 1886 “A Carberry Deer Hunt,” or perhaps his 1884 “The Prairie Chicken,” is not a scientific work but rather a fact-based tale and so constitutes the first of the short animal stories, and if this is the case, then it is Seton who founded the genre. Most modern critics bypass this debate by acknowledging that both Seton and Roberts played vital roles in the development of the short animal story, while some have answered, more broadly, that Canadians created the short animal story. Roberts and Seton were both born in 1860, Roberts in Canada, Seton in England, and Seton moved to Canada six years later (Morely 11). Because Seton grew up and worked in Canada, it can be said that, whatever the intricacies of the short animal story’s creation, the genre itself is a Canadian invention. Although American writers quickly adopted it, it remains known, at least in Canada, as a distinctly Canadian genre, a “genuinely Canadian product” (Seifert 41).

Roberts was arguably the most prolific composer of this product, producing scores upon scores of short animal stories. Most critics estimate that Roberts published between 200 and 250 separate animal stories. Because there is debate over precisely how many of Roberts’s stories constitute proper animal stories, these numbers cannot be readily narrowed to an exact figure, and the matter is further complicated by the fact that several chapters of *Red Fox* were first published in periodicals as independent stories. This thesis acknowledges 191 short animal stories by Roberts. Because humans are also animals and are often treated as such in Roberts’s work, no stories are excluded solely on the basis of human presence. “King of Beasts” (*KB* 154-79), for example, remains part of the tally, despite the fact that the protagonist is human and the only other significant animal character is absent throughout most of the tale. As the title suggests, the human is portrayed as one of the beasts, albeit a superior one. The chapters of *Red Fox* originally published in periodicals are excluded from the count, as are the lengthy tale “Jim, the Backwoods Police Dog” (*LBF* 97-255) and the stories told in one of Roberts’s earliest collections, *Around the Camp Fire*. This latter text is set up as a story of a canoeing-camping expedition, within which the characters tell stories of their own, swapping exaggerated sportsmen’s tales by firelight. Although many of the stories within the larger story were

---

<sup>2</sup> “Bear vs. Birch-Bark” (*AC* 15-26) has, along with the other stories in *Around the Campfire*, been excluded from this project’s tally of Roberts’s short animal stories.

originally published singly, including “Bear vs. Birch-Bark,” they are elided in this work to create one overarching story involving loosely connected incidents, rather than discrete short stories. Furthermore, as Alec Lucas points out in his introduction to *The Last Barrier and Other Stories*, “[a]lthough animals do appear... [*Around the Campfire* consists of] little more than a collection of sportsmen’s anecdotes, rather than nature stories” (v). These stories have are presented as “yarns” within the text itself (see AC 4), and so have little need for factual realism.

What remain are 191 relatively short stories about animals, some with significant human involvement, some with none whatsoever. The following pages examine the roles played by bears and wolves within Roberts’s short animal stories, with specific emphasis upon predaceous and moral behaviours. Of Roberts’s 191 animal stories, more than 80 include a minimum of a single mention of a bear within the text, with 70 stories in which at least one bear appears as a character and 21 in which a bear is the protagonist.<sup>3</sup> These numbers are much higher than they are for any other animal in Roberts’s work. Even moose, another of his favourite subject species, play significant roles only 14 times (Adams 7), and are rarely peripheral characters. Wolves, large predators who might be expected to make frequent appearances in stories about animals in the Canadian wilderness, appear as characters in just twenty-three stories, three of which include or discuss exclusively wolf-dog hybrids.

The discrepancy between the number of Roberts’s bear stories and the number of his wolf stories is glaring, given the biological similarities between bears and wolves and the similar cultural significance they have acquired throughout Western history. Both are large mammalian predators who inhabit similar ecosystems – in fact, they often co-inhabit the same ecosystems – and occupy similar biological niches today. Both represent threats to human life by virtue of their killing capabilities. Both were hunted vehemently in Europe for centuries, both extirpated from England prior to the sixteenth century (Grambo 138; Brunner 141). Both were Anglo-Saxon beasts associated with battle (Rowland 103-4; Grambo 95), both Biblical ravagers of flocks (Wood 89, 117), and both classified as vermin by Anglo-American colonists (Coleman 93). And yet, despite their long and similar histories with human beings, they experience very different treatments, both in Roberts’s work and in Anglo-Canadian and -American culture.

---

<sup>3</sup> See the appendix for the full tally of included stories. The table notes stories in which bears and/or wolves play roles as primary or secondary characters.

Roberts remains an important part of the Canadian literary culture today, as a Confederation poet and the “Father of Canadian Poetry,” but, despite this, his animal stories have not received much scholarly attention. There are fewer than 30 published scholarly works that focus upon Roberts’s short animal stories for even a few paragraphs, and even articles and monographs specifically about the nature writers sometimes mention Roberts only in passing. Of the score or so of articles that explore Roberts’s short animal stories at length, many are comparative studies between Roberts’s work and that of another nature writer, or between his animal stories and his work in another genre. To date, there have been no comparative studies of Roberts’s treatments of different species or individual animals in his short animal stories. Given the prominent place Roberts holds in Canadian literature, this critical lacuna is surprising. By exploring Roberts’s representations of wolves and bears, two apex predators with similar natural histories and cultural significance, the following chapters begin to fill this gap.

One cannot explore representations of animals in literature, however, without first acquiring some knowledge of how they are represented in the history and the culture from which that literature emerged. Roberts’s career as an animal story writer spans half a century and half a dozen important changes in the way Anglo-Canadian and -American people treat and perceive animals. He lived through predator control campaigns, the rise and fall of the “wolfer” (the professional wolf hunter), and the extinction of several subspecies of wolves. He lived through Teddy Roosevelt, big game hunter and “conservationist president” whose refusal to kill a bear cub – or a tethered sow, as some stories claim – provided the inspiration for the teddy bear. He lived through the shift of national parks from game preserves to wildlife sanctuaries and the opening up of the arctic through the use of aeroplanes. And, through it all, he continued to write animal stories.

Roberts was born in New Brunswick in 1860, when North America’s predator extermination campaigns were already well underway. The first bounty on North American wolves was established in 1630 (Turbak 24); between 1793 and 1900, wolf bounty acts were passed in Upper Canada, Newfoundland, Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia (Busch 114). By the time the bounties were repealed – and this did not occur until the 1960s and 1970s in some cases (Busch 116) – wolves were gone from most of the continental United States and much of Canada. Wolves were extirpated from New Brunswick by 1880, and from Nova Scotia by 1900 (Busch 124); the rather flexible time frame that Roberts provides is

one roughly 50 years previous to the (undetermined) date in which his story takes place. This information is supplied by startled woodsmen who, hearing the eerie call of the hunting wolf pack or seeing grey shapes and glowing eyes among the trees, admit with surprise that “strange as it may seem, there are wolves around this winter. For the last fifty years or so, as you know, they’ve been unheard of in this part of the country; but now they’ve come back” (“The Moose That Knocked At the Door,” *MK* 221-64 [245]).

The war against wolves continued even in America’s national parks, where park wardens were instrumental in ridding the protected spaces of dangerous animals. Although bears were also dangerous and also ate meat, they were often excluded from deliberate targeting in this war. In Yellowstone National Park, bears received legal protection in 1886, and bear feeding stations became extremely popular with tourists, although the enlisted men at nearby soldier stations retained their orders to kill wolves, coyotes, and cougars (Schullery and Whittlesey 25). Wolves – and most other large predators – were felt to threaten the existence of valued and exploited game animals such as elk and deer (Jones 66); the 1916 National Park Service Act, while couched in terms of conservation, allowed for the destruction of certain species that were “detrimental to the use of a park, monument or reservation” (“National” n.p.), thus allowing predator control to continue. It was not until 1933 (seven years after the last viable wolf population in the park had been eliminated) that Yellowstone National Park revised its policy against predators, stating that native species should not be killed because they kill and eat other species (Jones 38). Despite this, wolves continue to be killed, both legally and illegally, and at least 30 wolves were poached in Yellowstone National Park in the first 10 years following their reintroduction to the area in 1995.

Bears, by contrast, enjoyed a more ambiguous status in North America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Recent studies have opened up the world of the polar bear to North American minds, but very little was known about them at the beginning of the twentieth century, and even less before then. That Roberts was unable to find much information about them is evident by the much higher frequency of factual errors in his stories of Canada’s north. It is clear from his writing that Roberts has applied his store of black bear knowledge to polar bears, resulting in erroneous statements to the effect that most polar bears hibernate (only pregnant sows do [Stirling 85]), and that winter is the lean time for them (in fact, they are more likely to starve as a result of summer thaws [Stirling 110]). Grizzly and black bears were better known,

and authors often contrasted the two. The author of the 1912 zoological article “A Bear’s Claw,” for example, writes that “[t]he most terrible monster among the wild animals of this continent is the grizzly bear,” and that “[t]he most amusingly ludicrous and one of the most human and understandable is the black bear” (3). Black bears are the only species to inhabit Roberts’s native territory, and comprise almost 90 percent of bear references in his short stories. The other species represented there are the polar bear, the grizzly bear, and the Himalayan bear, in decreasing order of frequency. Grizzlies were extirpated from much of the United States between 1870 and 1930 (Shepard and Sanders 202), but black bears were never seriously threatened in North America. This is no doubt due in part to the sheer abundance of the animals, but also to human perceptions of them.

American black bears are omnivorous and will hunt for their food, but they are much smaller and less apt to attack human beings than grizzlies, and this dichotomy was readily apparent by the nineteenth century. George Ord dubbed the grizzly bear *Ursus horribilis*, or “horrible/terrifying bear,” in 1815, and Edward Harris called it *Ursus ferox* in 1843, meaning “wild/ferocious bear” (Gelo 145). The grizzly was an animal to be feared. As Stephen Herrero points out, however,

Most people don’t fear black bears as they do grizzlies. There are few if any accounts by pioneers and explorers depicting ferocious black bears that have withstood extensive wounds and attacked the hunter. Even though black bears lived in most areas where the pioneers settled, this bear rightfully never became the topic of fearsome legend. (92)

Roberts’s contemporaries support an image of the black bear as a relatively harmless animal. Joaquin Miller, who published *True Bear Stories* in 1900, describes the black bear as “a kingly fellow, every inch a king; a curious, monkish, music-loving Robin Hood of his somber woods – a silent monk, who knows a great more than he tells” (29). The article “A Bear’s Claw” reports that the black bear, that “Happy Hooligan of the woods,” is “a good-natured, lazy, greedy, inquisitive and timid creature” (3) who “prefers to avoid trouble when it is at all possible” (20).

This is where Roberts deviates most strongly from his contemporaries’ opinions of different species of animal. Few of Roberts’s bears are strictly benign. While it is true that many of them do not harm other animals in his stories, the reader is almost always aware of their potential to do so. In “Fisherman’s Luck” (*EW* 236-45), for example, the confrontation between an unarmed man and a black bear ends peacefully, but the story’s tension accrues from both the

human character and the reader's awareness of the animal's latent power. Many of Roberts's bears are accomplished predators. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a predaceous animal as one that "preys on other animals; that subsists by the capture of living prey; predatory, raptorial" (n.p.); accordingly, predaceous behaviour is defined in these chapters as actions undertaken in an attempt to secure and kill another animal in order to consume that animal. This definition excludes reactions to perceived or actual threats against offspring, as well as aggressive actions that are clearly not food-related. Even with these exclusions, however, all of Roberts's polar and grizzly bears, and roughly half of his black bears, engage in predaceous behaviour in the stories in which they appear as characters. That predaceous behaviour is directed toward human beings in two of Roberts's polar bear stories, all three of his grizzly bear stories, and seven (twelve percent) of those of his stories in which black bears appear as characters. Setting aside the larger and more predatory grizzly and polar bears, this behaviour is hardly what one expects from that "Happy Hooligan of the woods," the black bear.

In some ways, the predatory aspect makes Roberts's bears more realistic than the bears depicted by his contemporaries. Black bears do kill animals, including, in rare instances, human beings. No statistics are available prior to 1900; there are, however, reliable records of 23 kills by black bears (and about twice that many for grizzlies) between 1900 and 1980 (Herrero 105). Of the 20 kills about which there is sufficient information to make a judgement, predation appears to have been the chief motive in 18 of them (Herrero 105), and half of those were adult men (Herrero 106), who hardly constitute the "small game [no larger] than field-mice and such small fry" (18) that "A Bear's Claw" claims make up the meat portion of a black bear's diet. Still, 23 kills in 80 years makes human deaths by black bears extremely rare. All of Roberts's stories of black bear attacks on people, however, are clearly unsuccessful efforts at predation.

Predation is an area where Roberts's factual accuracy goes astray. In Roberts's stories, the number of animals with the audacity to consider a human to be prey is small indeed. Although a few other animals do at times consider killing and eating a person, only the wolf, the bear, the panther, the tiger, the lynx, and the shark are guilty of making the attempt, and only the first three do so in more than one story. And in all of the stories Roberts wrote about the struggle for life among the wild creatures, the only animals to successfully complete such attacks are the wolf and the shark. This statistic has no historical backing. Although there has been the occasional report of wild wolves killing (and eating) humans in North America, the first reliably

proved case of this in North American history occurred in northern Saskatchewan in 2005 (“Ontario Man” n.p.). Roberts’s wolves display predaceous behaviours directed toward human beings in fully nine of the twenty-three stories in which they make appearances as characters. The fact that Roberts’s wolves are portrayed as a greater threat to human life than bears are indicates that the predatory bear in Roberts’s work is less an attempt at zoological accuracy than it is a literary device.

As a literary device, predaceous behaviour makes an excellent point of comparison between wolves and bears in Roberts’s work. To limit the scope of this study to predaceous behaviour alone, however, is to limit the complexity of Roberts’s imagined wilderness world. Predation, in Roberts, is intimately related to anthropomorphic characteristics in his animals. Admittedly, anthropomorphism is a clumsy concept, and not one readily defined, despite the frequency with which the term is employed. It was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that it came to denote the bestowal of human qualities or traits upon non-human animals (Midgley 125), a definition that seems crisp and concise until one begins to wonder what traits, if any, can be called uniquely human qualities. Taken to an implausible extreme, such a definition would prevent humans and other animals from sharing many, if not most, qualities without the aid of anthropomorphization. Anthropomorphism was cause for real concern among the nature writers of the early twentieth century: excessive use of it could lead to charges of “nature faking,” the blending of fact and fiction in their stories to create such a hodgepodge of truth and tall tale that “only a real woodsman [could] separate them” (Burroughs 117).

The line between plausible animal psychology and anthropomorphism is a thin and shifting one. Any animal story that is written in any part from an animal’s perspective necessarily posits basic cognition and the non-human animal’s position as subject rather than object, and both subjectivity and specifically the cognition that is a part of it have recently been understood as aspects of anthropomorphism. Because these aspects are to a degree inherent to Roberts’s vision of the short animal story and to all of his animal story output save the few in which the point of view remains fixed with a human protagonist, this thesis uses a narrower definition of anthropomorphism than what is commonly implied by the term. Subjectivity “refers to the *meaningfulness* of experience and action of sentient life and it implicates the *authorship* of action” (Crist 29). It may help to contrast this definition with one of mechanomorphism, the rendering of “behavior in a language that likens animals to machines,” whether intentionally or

unintentionally, the consequence of which is that animals “appear mindless” (Crist 85). In Roberts’s work, mindfulness, meaningfulness, and authorship are assumed, and because Roberts promoted his stories as fiction rather than asserting that “[e]very smallest incident recorded [in this book] is as true as careful and accurate observation can make it... minutely true to fact” (xiv-xv) as fellow nature writer William J. Long does, the sceptics of his generation were inclined to accept the subjectivity of the animals as integral to the stories rather than as acts of blatant anthropomorphism or humanizing (see Clark 773), deliberate attempts to make non-human animals seem more human. This viewpoint is retained in the following pages, and so basic reasoning skills (such as the deduction that if one’s prey has disappeared down a hole, it has not ceased to exist but is merely hiding out of sight) and basic emotions or emotive descriptions (such as cruelty, or the receipt of pleasure from the knowledge of another’s pain) are granted as the inevitable result of a product based on animal psychology and natural science. For the purposes of this thesis, anthropomorphism in Roberts’s animal stories shall be defined as the description of physical attributes or actions that are not naturally present in the real animal (such as a “bear hug”), and/or the description of complex reasoning and/or emotions that must be inferred from other inferences (such as a sense of shame, inferred from an inference regarding the animal’s knowledge of the wrongness of its actions). The following chapters focus on one of the more complex concepts that encompasses both cognition and emotion: morality. In their book exploring the concept of morality in non-human animals, Marc Bekoff and Jessica Pierce define the term as “a suite of interrelated other-regarding behaviors that cultivate and regulate interactions within social groups” (7). This is most likely an adequate definition for real animals but, working within the scope of anthropomorphism within literature, one must add that these may interrelated other-regarding behaviours or thoughts and must either be rooted in or defy human values or taboos, such as those of property rights or cannibalism. The pages that follow explore the significance of predatory behaviour, morality, and general anthropomorphization in the bears and wolves in Roberts’s animal stories. Chapter one examines the roles these aspects play in both making bears more humanlike and in making humans more animal-like, while chapter two examines how these same aspects turn Roberts’s wolves into anti-human(e) animals. The third and final chapter synthesizes the arguments made in the pages that precede it by exploring how wolves and bears act as opposing representations of possible manifestations of a

human “inner animal,” and discusses how the people in Roberts’s stories behave in manners characteristic of either Roberts’s wolves or bears, but not both.

As can be seen from Roberts’s short animal stories, depictions of animals in literature and broader cultural conceptions of them are similar, each feeding and fed by the other. In Roberts’s work, a sympathetic opinion toward bears is encouraged through the heightened employment of anthropomorphism and through other modes of expressing similarity between bears and human beings. Even the predatory aspect of bears is mirrored by an equal predatory urge in the people in Roberts’s stories. Wolves, however, are portrayed unsympathetically, with little anthropomorphization, little mentation, and the repeated violation of some the most viscerally felt human moral codes, such as the taboo against cannibalism. These two species are skilfully separated across an emotional divide, as Roberts reinforces negative opinions of one species while undermining the negatives and bolstering the positives of the other. The following chapters explore animal stories written during a time when there was both a push to conserve wild spaces and to destroy predators. An examination of Roberts’s treatments of wolves and bears in his short animal stories facilitates the understanding of how contemporary animal literature also influences cultural drives to protect or destroy wildlife and the spaces they inhabit.

## CHAPTER ONE

## WE AND THE BEARS ARE KIN

And so, as advancing civilization drew an ever-widening line between man and animals, and men became more and more engrossed in the interests of their own kind, the personalities of the wild creatures which they had once known so well were obscured to them, and the creatures themselves came to be regarded, for the purposes of literature, as types or symbols merely...

– Roberts, “The Animal Story of Today” 210

The bears in Roberts’s short animal stories are so plentiful and display such individuality that they are difficult animals to classify in his work. In general, Roberts’s lynx are fierce but rather stupid, his weasels are bloodthirsty, and his caribou bulls are lordly and courageous, but his bears can be any of those things in a given story. They can be benevolent or malevolent, tame or wild, savage or curious or timid. This chapter will explore two main aspects of Roberts’s bears in order to understand their importance in the “Canadian mythology” (Gold 23) he has created with his animal world: (1) his portrayal of bears as predatory animals, and (2) his anthropomorphization of the species. Predaceous behaviour in Roberts’s bears is significant for both historical and literary lines of examination. From the historical perspective, consistent predatory impulses and actions firmly position these depictions in opposition to other popular and scientific portrayals of bears at the turn of the twentieth century; from the literary perspective, ursine predation achieves significance as one of the main means by which conflict is introduced into the stories in which bears play more than nominal roles. Bears were habitually anthropomorphized in nineteenth- and twentieth-century North America, so Roberts’s anthropomorphization of them represents no historical deviation; it does, however, represent a literary deviation from his professed desire to “make these stories accord, as far as the facts of natural history are concerned, with the latest scientific information” (“Prefatory Note,” *HS* v-vii [vi]), and also it represents a departure from his depictions of the other animals in his short stories. This chapter will explore Roberts’s representations of bears as humanlike animals in nature, as creatures anthropomorphized both physically and mentally through the portrayals of childlike cubs and the infusion of moral codes and the direct competition – and comparison – between bears and people. This anthropomorphization in turn illuminates the predaceous

behaviour of the bears, which marks them clearly as rivals for resources and threats to life, setting the species up as a kind of wilderness human which Roberts's backwoodsmen must both embrace and challenge in order to establish themselves as the superior species.

The charge of anthropomorphism can be levelled against the entire breadth of Roberts's short animal stories, although Roberts did have better success excising the human qualities from the animals in his stories than did most of his contemporaries. Nevertheless, Roberts balances his animal stories on the thin line between realistic fantasy and anthropomorphism, and there are times when he lands on the far side of that line, a perhaps inevitable outcome when a nature writer believes that "within their varying limitations, animals can and do reason. As far, at least, as the mental intelligence is concerned, the gulf dividing the lowest of the human species from the highest of the animals has in these latter days been reduced to a very narrow psychological fissure" (Roberts, "Animal" 212). The degree of anthropomorphism with which Roberts is charged varies with the mental capacity each critic is willing to allow the average animal, but Roberts's bears are humanized beyond all the other species in his short animal stories. This humanizing occurs through three main means: (1) physical description, (2) the mirroring of human and bear actions within a story, and (3) ursine adherence to a consistent code of morality. Most of Roberts's bears also show a remarkable capacity for abstract reasoning, surpassed only by the capabilities he attributes to the human mind, and his bears tend to possess more individualized personalities than are granted to other non-human species in his work. Indirectly commenting on both, Roberts writes in "The Truce" (WT 267-87) that "[w]hen, once in a long time, a hunter or trapper gets the worst of it in his contest with the wild kindreds, in the majority of cases it is because he had fancied he knew all about bears. The bear is strong in individuality and delights to set at nought the traditions of his kind" (273).

This individuality may be anthropomorphic, as most sparks of individuality require the presence of something other than instinct in an animal. An instinct is, by definition, inherited and common to the majority of a species, thus negating individuality in a creature that is motivated primarily by instinct. Whether or not individuality in an animal can be classified as anthropomorphic, a good deal of any anthropomorphism present in representations of the bear can be attributed to ursine likeness to humans. Members of the bear family are described as humanlike in Roberts no less than in the works of other twentieth-century authors: Joaquin Miller, for example, depicts them as gentlemen "in dress as well as address" (37), and calls the

cubs “little black boys” (48). Like human beings, bears have dextrous forepaws, have frontally aligned eyes, walk on the flats of their feet, and can walk on their hind legs alone. Bernd Brunner comments that “[o]nce he had killed and skinned the animal and had seen how slim and light-colored its body was under its fur, the hunter would certainly have recognized how much the bear resembled him” (1). The physical characteristics shared by people and bears are readily apparent. Given this, it is surprising that, despite his anthropomorphization of their other characteristics, Roberts pays scant attention to the physical similarities between adult bears and humans. The focus of his physical description rests on young bears, particularly black bears, and these descriptions are strikingly similar to his portrayals of young human children – and strikingly dissimilar from his portrayals of other young animals.

Roberts generally describes other young animals, like their adult counterparts, with objective precision. In “In Panoply of Spears” (*KW* 110-23), for example, Roberts introduces the reader to a baby porcupine. This youngster receives little anthropomorphic treatment. There is only a cursory report of the newborn and its activities, and the entire physical description of the animal consists of just a few lines: “It was an astonishingly big baby – the biggest, in proportion to the size of its parents, of all the babies of the wild. In fact it was almost as big as an average bear cub. It was covered with long, dark brown, silky fur, under which the future panoply of spear-points was already beginning to make way through the tender skin” (121). It is the porcupine’s parents who bear the brunt of what humanizing language Roberts uses here, for the mother “was very properly proud [of her offspring] and assiduous in her devotion. And the big father, though seemingly quite indifferent, kept his place contentedly in the den instead of going off sourly by himself to another lair...” (121). The baby porcupine receives so little attention – despite its pivotal role in the story – that even when a weasel sneaks in and kills it, little fuss is made about the death: “Like a snake, [the weasel] slipped in, and found the furry baby all alone. There was a strong, squeaking cry, a moment’s struggle; and then the weasel drank eagerly at the blood of his easy prey” (121). Even an infant protagonist, such as the trembling moose calf born in the opening paragraphs of “The King of Mamozekel” (*VB* 73-93), receives a rather analytical description. Roberts writes that the calf is

uncouth, to be sure, in any eyes but those of his kind – with his high humped fore-shoulders, his long, lugubrious, over-hanging snout, his big ears set low on his big head, his little eyes crowded back toward his ears, his long, big-knuckled legs, and the

spindling, lank diminutiveness of his hindquarters. A grotesque figure, indeed, and lacking altogether in that pathetic, infantile winsomeness which makes even little pigs attractive. (73-74)

The “king” of the Mamozekel, the calf who is to become the lord of all the moose in his land, receives limited anthropomorphization as an infant. Ill-fated newborn porcupines and lordly moose calves are both faithfully described in physical terms, but what these descriptions lack are activities: Roberts provides portraits of the infants rather than dynamic “action shots.” These animals exist, learn, and grow, but they neither engage in rambunctious play nor go about the business of life with enthusiasm or zest. They may die or grow relatively quickly to adulthood, where the majority of their adventures will occur, but they may not complete their stories as living young. This makes bear cubs different from the ordinary run of Roberts’s infant animals. Roberts not only grants his bear cubs long periods of infancy, but he also writes stories, such as “Teddy Bear’s Bee Tree” (*CW* 134-54), in which the infant protagonists neither die nor reach adulthood. Bear cubs like this one are anthropomorphized to a far greater extent than Roberts’s other animal infants, but Roberts does not limit his anthropomorphization to his ursine protagonists; even minor characters, such as the cubs in “The Spotted Stranger” (*FF* 321-42) and “The Brothers of the Yoke” (*ST* 212-33), are subject to the same degree of humanizing.

Whether they arrive in their stories as protagonists or fleeting characters, Roberts’s bear cubs sometimes appear to be nothing other than human children in furry coats. In “The Spotted Stranger,” for example, the cub is described as a

small, glossy-black, chubby animal, who was stripping and gulping down the juicy [blueberries] with loud gulps of satisfaction. Sometimes, as if unable to absorb them fast enough by any other process, he would sit up on his plump little haunches, grasp the whole top of a loaded bush in his forearms, and fairly wallow his face in it till the purple juices daubed him to the very ears. (337-38)

Shorn of its context, there is very little to indicate that the above scene describes a bear cub rather than a child. Indeed, Roberts bestows this innocent enthusiasm for life only upon bear cubs and young human children. The cub in “The Spotted Stranger” embraces greed so wholeheartedly that it becomes delightful, and the girl in “Good For Evil” (*EW* 91-102) chases after a butterfly with the same abandon. In this story, the girl

jump[ed] up from her seat on the steps and clap[ped] her hands as she caught sight of the half-open gate. She ran down to the gate, swung it wide, and stepped forth doubtfully into the fascinating outer world. A gay black-and-yellow butterfly came zigzagging by, swerved, and headed down the steep slope. With a cry of delight the little girl ran, stumbling in her eagerness, across the road, and started dancing down the perilous slope with her eyes fixed upon the butterfly.

As if he had been hurled from a catapult, Nep [the dog] dashed to head her off. But already she was within a few feet of the brink [of the riverbank]. He burst into a torrent of barks and yelps, in a desperate effort to warn her of her peril. She stopped short, stared with starting eyes at the great black beast rushing towards her, then turned and fled back up the slope with shrieks of terror. (93)

Like the bear cub, the girl is enthralled by the beauty of nature, and never sees the danger that is also part of the natural world. In “Good For Evil,” a dog warns the girl away from the unseen hazard; the cub in “The Spotted Stranger” receives no such warning, dying swiftly at the jaws of a leopard who has escaped from a circus. The bear cub’s focus is as singular as the girl’s and, less lucky than she, his obliviousness to his surroundings proves fatal. Engrossed in his “riotous feasting” (338), the “merry cub” (339) dies, quite literally, before he knows what has hit him. Thereafter he is demoted to a corpse over whom his mother “sniff[s] and whimper[s]” (341). In death, the cub remains amorphous, only tenuously connected to his species. Further physical descriptions of him are as “a limp little body” (339), “the form of [the bear’s] dead little one” (341), and “the black body of the cub” (341), phrases that emphasize his slightness and helplessness. His body is flaccid in death, without rigour or resistance. The description of him as a cub (rather than a bear cub or a young bear) replaces “little” and marks him as small and weak, in the same way that “calf” denotes more diminutiveness and weakness than “bull calf.” The emphasis on his smallness and frailty marks him first as a child and only second as a bear.

This particular cub never sees his death coming. His initial pleasure with life mirrors that of the girl in “Good For Evil,” but one must look elsewhere for a mirroring of her terror. The bear cub in “The Brothers of the Yoke” (*ST* 212-33) meets an end similar to the one in “The Spotted Stranger,” but his killer makes no attempt at stealth, thus giving the cub an opportunity to react to the threat. The scene is described in detail:

Late that afternoon, as [the oxen] burst out, through thick bushes, into a little grassy glade, they surprised a bear-cub playing with a big yellow fungus, which he boxed and cuffed about – carefully, so as not to break his plaything – as a kitten boxes a ball. To Buck [the ox], of course, the playful cub was only another dog, which might be expected to come yapping and snapping at his heels. With an indignant snort he charged it.

The cub, at that ominous sound, looked up in astonishment. But when he saw the terrible red form dashing down upon him across the grass, he gave a squeal of terror and fled for the shelter of the trees. He was too young, however, for any great speed or agility, and he had none of the dog's artfulness in dodging. Before he could gain cover he was overtaken. Buck's massive front caught him on his haunches, smashing him into the ground. He gave one agonized squall, and then the life was crushed out of him. (225-26)

The parallels are easy to draw. Both girl and cub are absorbed by an object; both are startled by the approach of a threatening animal. They react to the threat in a similar manner: they stop what they are doing, take a good look at the threat, give voice to their fear, and flee in the direction of safety. The bear cub does not display an "intuitive apprehension of peril" ("The King of Mamozekel" *VB* 82), as some of Roberts's other young animals do when danger is near. He is, in fact, very human in his reaction, showing neither intuitive knowledge of the danger nor any learned or instinctual animalistic survival skills, such as a sudden desire to climb a tree, beyond the panicked sprint that is also part of the girl's reaction. The cub in "The Spotted Stranger" is made humanlike through the description of his physical attributes and his actions; the cub in "The Brothers of the Yoke" achieves the same resemblance through the descriptions of his behaviour, both in his play and in his reactions to danger. Like human children, these bear cubs depend upon their parents for everything. They have no resources upon which to draw when they find themselves in perilous situations. Unlike deer fawns, who can hide odourless in the grass until their legs are strong enough to carry them away from danger, or partridge chicks, who scatter and hide when they sense a threat, bear cubs must depend upon others to protect them and show them how to escape difficult situations. A mother bear does this for one of her cubs in "When the Blueberries Are Ripe" (*HW* 151-61), first finding a place where her offspring can crawl out of the crevice into which he has fallen and then demonstrating what he must do in order reach safety. Human children find themselves in similar situations in Roberts's animal stories. A boy in "Teddy Bear's Bee Tree" (*CW* 134-54), for example, needs his uncle to tell him

where to run when they are attacked by angry bees, and how to draw out the poison of their stings; a child in “Do Seek Their Meat From God” (*LB* 1-6) cries in an abandoned shack while panthers prowl outside, and depends upon his father to defend him from their attacks.

There is one other striking similarity between bear cubs and human children. In Roberts’s stories, most mother bears have only a single cub, like human mothers. Fully two thirds of all of Roberts’s bear cubs are single cubs, a statistic that clashes with known bear litter sizes, for while a black bear sow may indeed give birth to only a single cub, she is more likely to have between two and five (Van Wormer 51). Even for an amateur naturalist, counting the number of cubs that a sow has with her is not a difficult feat, and it seems likely that Roberts would know, at least of black bears, that a single cub is not common unless one or more others have been killed – and indeed, both twins perish in two of Roberts’s stories, and one of a pair of cubs is killed in a third. Roberts’s contemporary, Ernest Thompson Seton, was well aware that bears usually have multiple young, and bestows not one but three siblings upon his protagonist in his 1899 book *The Biography of a Grizzly*, although all subsequently die. Joaquin Miller writes of multiple cubs in a litter, and the 1912 article “A Bear’s Claw” also indicates a knowledge of multiple young. Roberts had good knowledge of black bears. He was aware, for example, that not all black bears den in the winter, a fact that even today is not common knowledge.<sup>4</sup> Given Roberts’s familiarity with black bears, it is very probable that he knew that most of them have litters that include at least two cubs, and so it is significant that he often chooses to pair a bear mother with only a single cub. This aligns female bears physiologically (and their cubs behaviourally) with humans, and permits greater mirroring of both ursine and human maternal figures and ursine and human offspring in Roberts’s stories, an aspect of anthropomorphization that shall be examined in greater detail later in the chapter.

Beyond the high occurrence of mothers with single cubs in Roberts’s work, physical similarities between adult bears and humans are minimized. The bears in Roberts’s stories rarely stand on their hind legs. They do not use their forepaws like hands, nor are their physical forms usually compared to those of human beings. Instead, Roberts makes connections between ursine and human personalities and behavioural characteristics. In his novel *The Heart of the Ancient Wood*, he states explicitly that “the bear is [by] far the most human of all the furry wood-folk, the

---

<sup>4</sup> Roberts claimed that these non-hibernating bears were old males who had not gained enough weight to enable them to hibernate; a scientific consensus has not yet been reached (Domico 11).

most versatile and largely tolerant, the least enslaved by its surroundings. It has an ample sense of humour, also, that most humane of gifts” (12). The bears in Roberts’s work are not bipedal people with fur coats, but they are forest people nonetheless. Humans are the one species that exceeds bears in the capacity for abstract reasoning, although there are individuals of other species who may match the capabilities of the bears. Most of Roberts’s animals, however, show more rudimentary reasoning skill. To the mother lynx in “In the Year of No Rabbits” (*MK* 83-103), for example, a black bear sniffing around near her den must necessarily be in search of her kittens. She considers no other options. Bears routinely surpass this level of thinking, and although the bear in “In the Year of No Rabbits” at first behaves instinctively and bolts when the lynx attacks him,

his panic gradually [gives] way to indignation, till at last the latter conquer[s]. Then he turn[s] and beg[ins] slowly retracing his steps. He would find his insolent assailant and do her up. But when he reach[es] the knoll, he change[s] his mind once more. After all, was it worth while going out of his way to find her? (91)

Within a few sentences, the bear perceives that the lynx has wronged him by her attack, decides to return and exact his revenge, and then, upon further reflection, decides that his grievance is not serious enough to be worth the probable expenditure of time and energy. Roberts’s animal stories are populated with many intelligent animals, but it is a rare specimen who embarks on a course of action and then changes its mind without the prompt of some form of external stimulus. This degree of mentation – the conscious weighing of options – generally belongs to humankind alone, in Roberts’s animal stories no less than in life.

Because bears are anthropomorphized to such a great extent in Roberts’s animal stories, the stories in which bears and humans interact are of special significance, for it is here that the reader can note not only the expressed similarities between bears and humans, but also the expressed differences. The bear-human relationship can be explored through every anthropomorphic aspect of Roberts’s stories, of course, but can be most thoroughly analyzed through Roberts’s mirroring stories, such as “The Baby and the Bear” (*CW* 256-71) and “On the Roof of the World” (*NU* 3-13). In these stories, the actions of the bears mirror the actions of the humans, and vice versa. There are no consistent “first actors” in these stories; perspective shifts from one character to another without regard for species so that neither species initiates all of the actions. Mirroring usually manifests in physical actions rather than mental processes, but these

mirrored actions inevitably evolve not from comparable physiologies but from similar thoughts and types of behaviour. One of the best examples of mirroring stories will serve both to explicate further and to highlight one major shared characteristic, consistent throughout his animal stories, between humans and bears: resourcefulness.

“The Baby and the Bear” (CW 256-71) begins as a story told to a child by his uncle. Like the younger characters in Uncle Andy’s tale, the Babe, the child in the subplot, finds himself adrift on a raft and headed toward the rapids. His shrieks summon his uncle, who pushes out his canoe and saves both nephew and raft from the whitecaps. The main plot, Uncle Andy’s story, concerns two pairs of mirroring characters: (1) a child and a bear cub, and (2) a human mother and a bear mother. The youngsters – human and ursine – are both swept downstream in a flood, and the bear cub abandons his floating log in favour of the baby’s more stable raft, bringing the two together. The story follows both their paths and those of their respective mothers, who pursue parallel courses in their efforts to reach their young. The two youngsters are initially compared physically, but the similarities in this quarter are few: “One was about five years old and the other about five months. One was all pink and white, and ruddy tan, and fluffy gold, and the other all glossy black. One, in fact, was a baby, and the other was a bear” (260). Both baby and bear expect that the other shall presently attack, but each is distracted by the roughening of the water and backs away from the edge of the raft until they collide at its centre. At this point, their terror of the unruly water subsumes their terror of each other, and the two cling to each other, finding mutual comfort in the contact. Only when the turbulence subsides does Roberts make note of differences deeper than their physical aspects:

Here it was that the baby showed herself of the dominant breed. The bear was still uneasy and afraid of her. But she, for her part, had no more dread of him whatever. Through all her panic she had been dimly conscious that he had been in the attitude of seeking her protection. Now she was quite ready to give it – quite ready to take possession of him, in fact, as really a sort of glorified Teddy Bear come to life; and she felt her authority complete. (264)

Baby and bear are separated not by their physical differences – which are expressed as mere variations in colouring, age, and gender – but by dominance, a state stimulated by the baby’s more developed reasoning skills and reinforced by both her authoritative manner and the cub’s willing submission to this manner. The baby has more mental resources upon which to draw, and

this gives her the confidence to assume the dominant role in spite of the vulnerability of her position (as “baby”) with regard to her companion (as “bear”). The baby, after all, was also in the “attitude” of seeking protection during the rough water: she clung to the cub just as surely as he clung to her, finding him the safest thing in her environment. Unlike the bear, however, the baby retains enough presence of mind to notice her companion’s fear. With this advantage, rendered to her by superior cognition, she dissolves their uneasy equality in favour of a dominant-subordinate relationship. Once this hierarchical difference is established, Roberts is content to continue to mirror their actions, as each falls asleep against the other.

The mothers of the two children are likewise mirrored. Each avoids swimming after her imperilled youngster, the human mother because she realizes that she cannot swim and the bear mother because she knows that she can run parallel to the river faster than she could swim through it. Each uses her reason to chase after her baby in the manner that will get her to her child most quickly. Here human and ursine resourcefulness shows itself as differing only in degree, and the human mother begins with a significant advantage in both resourcefulness and available resources. Rather than following the bear mother’s course and chasing directly after her baby, the human mother wades through the flood to the neighbouring farm, “where, as she knew, a boat was kept” (266). Her neighbour is at the farm, and she commandeers both his boat and his strong hands to propel it. Her neighbour “ben[ds] to the oars with a will which convince[s] even that frantic and vehement mother that nothing better could be demanded of him” (267). By virtue of the social contracts of her species, the woman is able to enlist the aid of someone better able to reach her goal than she. The bear has no such recourse. She is alone in her endeavour. She makes better progress on foot than the woman would have but, by utilizing a neighbour and a boat, the human mother reaches the youngsters first. As the more successful mother, she may claim both of the children as her prize, a possibility that incites the frantic bear mother to even greater rage and fear. The bear mother, without the resources available her human counterpart, is not able to reach the raft in time to protect her offspring.

This story has a happy ending for both humans and bears, courtesy of the neighbour’s objection to carrying off the baby’s new “Teddy Bear”: “to *my* mind,” he admonishes the girl’s mother, “*mothers* has *rights*. That there b’ar’s a mother, an’ she’s got felin’s, like you, an’ she’s come after her young un, like you – an’ I wasn’t a-goin’ to see her robbed of him” (271). If the similarities between bears and humans were not evident before this statement, they certainly are

after it. The neighbour elides the differences between bear mothers and human mothers (and, by extension, between bear cubs and human children), placing his emphasis squarely on their mutual motherhood, the area in which their similarities are strongest. As far as the neighbour is concerned, mothers have rights and feelings, and the species to which those mothers belong is irrelevant. To take the cub from his mother would be an immoral act, a deliberately hurtful violation of the bear mother's rights (as well as her cub's) and an act of robbery, if not outright abduction. Differentiation does occur between the bear family and the human family, but an essential sameness underlies those differences. It is a sameness of moral code, of emotion, and of action. The youngsters in this story follow the same path – physically and emotionally – and their mothers follow behind them. Because the neighbour refuses to abduct the cub, he allows the mirroring to reach its logical conclusion, with the bear mother climbing onto the raft to rescue her cub just as the baby's mother has done earlier. The differences between bears and humans in this story give the humans primacy: the baby takes command of the raft, and the human mother uses the resources that are available to her in order to achieve her goal before the bear mother does. The bears are resourceful – the cub recognizes the raft as a place of refuge from the flood, and the bear mother knows how to use the terrain to reach her goal as quickly as possible – but their resourcefulness is exceeded by the resourcefulness of the humans against which they are measured in this story. Resourcefulness is a shared characteristic, of which the different species possess differing quantities. There is, however, one comparative element present in both this story and Roberts's other bear stories that is human in origin: morality.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the concept of morality as a human invention was a matter of some debate. In 1894, C. Lloyd Morgan wrote the principle that would become known as Morgan's Canon, which stated that “[i]n no case may we interpret an action as the outcome of the exercise of a higher psychical faculty, if it can be interpreted as the outcome of the exercise of [a faculty] which stands lower in the psychological scale” (Morgan 53). Because a given behaviour will always permit some explanation that “stands lower in the psychological scale” than morality does, adherence to this rule effectively eliminates the possibility of morality in animals. Thirteen years later, however, Ernest Thompson Seton composed “The Natural History of the Ten Commandments,” in which he claims that “the Ten Commandments are not arbitrary laws given to man, but are fundamental laws of all creation” (24). The article goes into detail about animal adherence to each of the “lower” or physically-rooted commandments, and

suggests that animals possess, at the very least, glimmers of the spirit that “had its highest development in man,” and thus also suggests organic roots for the four spiritually-based commandments (33), those against worshipping other gods before God, worshipping idols, and taking God’s name in vain, and keeping the holiness of the Sabbath. Along a similar vein, animals were prosecuted for crimes such as murder (of human beings) from the ninth century until the early twentieth century (Evans 286), although such trials often occurred because of fears of demon possession (Evans 165) rather than out of a true desire punish animals for immoral acts. Roberts does not write clearly stated moral principles into his work, but, nevertheless, morality is a central tenet of many of his stories, stories which one reviewer describes as “objective, tales of moral and physical courage” (“Review” 235). Robert H. M<sup>ac</sup>Donald comments in “The Revolt Against Instinct” that “[t]he higher the animal [in Roberts and Seton’s works], the more clearly developed the moral system. The better the animal – the more successful, or superior specimen – the more moral the animal. Thus superior animals fight fair, but the weak, the cowards, and the mean may well resort to dirty tricks” (24). He goes on to point out that “[t]here are good animals and bad animals, and we, as readers, are always expected to be on the side of morality” (24). It should be noted here that not all of Roberts’s stories revolve around moral issues. Sometimes, indeed, morality does not enter into the stories at all, or makes only a token appearance. And where moral issues do surface, few species are designated as “bad” species or “good” species. Even an individual animal may display both moral and immoral actions in the same story, as the protagonist does in “The Bear That Thought He Was a Dog” (*HC* 1-25), driving off the bear who has killed his master’s cow and then, although at first guiltily, eating the cow himself.

Most of Roberts’s “higher” animals, such as eagles, ospreys, and moose, exhibit some sort of moral code when the occasion calls for it, and even some mammalian predators do, as well. It is unusual, however, for Roberts to imbue the majority of a carnivorous, mammalian species with such a discriminating sense of morality. His martens, weasels, lynx, and foxes are more often than not rather base creatures. Mustela the marten of “Mustela of the Lone Hand” (*MS* 22-36) is possessed of a “ferocious spirit [that] knew neither gallantry, chivalry, nor mercy” (29), and neither does the protagonist of “Gray Lynx’s Last Hunting” (*NU* 237-51) enjoy any of these fine attributes, for “concern for [his mate’s] sufferings never entered into his savage heart. She was of importance to him only if they should find some big game... which they could bring

down more surely and more quickly by acting in combination” (246-47). Bears, however, are both large, predatory mammals in Roberts’s work and also generally moral creatures in it. The protagonist in “The Bear That Thought He Was a Dog” attacks a bear because he views the (abandoned) heifer as his master’s property; the cow-killing bear fights back because he sees the other bear’s approach as “interference with his lawful kill” (17). Both bears in this instance believe themselves to be in the right: they are holding to the same moral ground from two different perspectives, each motivated by a desire to protect property.

There are times, of course, when bears jump to hasty conclusions about what is their property and what constitutes the violation of their rights as possessors of that property. This is no doubt partly due to the fact that Roberts’s bears have lower levels of abstract reasoning than do most of his humans, although those humans also make their own share of errors. Roberts’s bears will defend anything that they believe to be theirs, whether or not the facts corroborate these assumptions. The polar bear in “A Duel in the Deep” (*HS* 140-52), for instance, attacks a narwhal because it seems to him that the creature is “poaching on his fishing-grounds” (145). The bear himself is a new arrival in the area, but he claims the fish and the stretch of water in which he is swimming as his and his alone. Tellingly, he begrudges any other creature a share of the fish, despite the fact that there are far more fish than even he can eat. The “exhaustless fertility” (143) of the salmon means that there is food for all. Because the bear perceives all of the fish and this fishing area as exclusively his, however, he is willing to risk his life and expend huge amounts of energy to protect fish and the feeding area from other predators. Before he even discovers what species the other predator in the water is, he resolves that, “[w]hatever it was, he was going to drive it off or kill it. He would share *his* salmon with no one” (145, emphasis added). This conviction leads to a bloody underwater battle, and while the bear does emerge as the victor, he pays for his exclusionary practices with some horrific wounds. A cost-benefit analysis would have shown him that it would have been better to allow the narwhal a share of the fish and the fishing grounds – it was not as though the bear could catch or eat all of the salmon, anyway – than to engage the narwhal in an exhausting battle, which could have killed the bear or rendered him incapable of hunting at all. The above-mentioned black bear in “In the Year of No Rabbits” (*MK* 83-103) engages in just such an analysis, and he decides not to risk a fight. For that bear, however, property is not involved. The lynx is competing with him for neither food nor land, and so he has less to be gained – or lost – from a confrontation with her. The polar bear, by

contrast, has conceptualized property in both the form of territory and food, and he aggresses instantly when he perceives an infringement on that property.

A similar situation occurs in “Fishers of the Air” (*MS 7-21*). In this story, two ospreys catch a fish that is too large for them to carry away, and they are forced to consume it on the shore. They leave the fish and fly to the safety of a nearby tree when a passing woodsman startles them, and a black bear arrives and claims the fish before they feel safe to return to it. The ospreys harass the bear, and one successfully snatches the (now much lighter) trout and carries it off to their nest. For the bear, this is an insult “not to be borne. The fish had been left upon the beach, and he regarded it as his. To be robbed of his prey was the most intolerable of affronts; and there is no beast more tenacious than the bear in avenging any wrong to his personal dignity” (19). Bursting with wrath, the bear follows the ospreys to their nest, where he spots them feeding their young with “*his* fish, as the bear told himself, raging at their insolent self-confidence” (20). The ospreys have stolen from him and, “intent upon his vengeance,” he climbs toward the nest (21). The birds’ nestlings are saved unexpectedly by the return of the woodsman, who is so impressed by the ospreys’ attempts to defend their young that he shoots and kills the bear. Inadvertently, of course, the woodsman has been the cause of this entire misunderstanding. The bear never notices the ospreys waiting for the man to pass out of sight, and could not have known that the fish he saw was the birds’ “rightful” catch; he sees only a fish on the shore. It is carrion, food for anyone who wants it, and he is the first carrion-eater on the scene. The instant he spots it, he considers it his. He does not know that the fish is the ospreys’ and even if he somehow did, he would not have known that they had not abandoned it. When the ospreys attempt to claim his prize, he views them as thieves. To the ospreys, of course, the bear is the thief, their second that day. Each side believes that it holds the moral right. The reader knows the truth of the case only because s/he has been privy to a preceding event, the ospreys’ successful fishing expedition. Armed with this knowledge, the reader recognizes the bear as the story’s villain. As for the bear, he considers his attempt to kill and eat the ospreys’ nestlings to be a just reward for the theft of his property and the insult to his pride. He wants to take what is theirs just as surely as they took what was his, and he is prevented from making the perceived wrong right only by interference from a third party.

The concept of property rights is, at its core, a very basic form of morality. The view that “human rights are, above all, moral rights” (Stammers 492) is so basic, in fact, that some

scholars, such as Joseph Chan, list the right to protect personal property alongside prohibitions against murder and torture when providing examples of “minimum standards of human morality” (42). This sense of morality, when joined by cognition, creates desires for justice and concepts of law in Roberts’s bears, and motive and perspective matter a great deal when one studies how Roberts’s bears function as moral creatures. As predators, they kill to eat. As predators, one of the roles that they play in Roberts’s stories is therefore that of the antagonist, come to claim a life. Where this occurs, most of the bears are given a reason for their depredations. The sow in “When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots” (KW 104-09) hunts livestock because there is a famine and “[b]efore all else in life it was important to her that [her] two tumbling little ones in the den should not go hungry” (106); by the same token, the boar bear who hunts a human child in “The Cabin Door” (ST 234-55) has flanks that “fairly [cling] together from emptiness” (241), for “this [is] the hungry season, the season of few roots and no fruits, few grubs and little honey” (238). Most of Roberts’s bears adhere to a moral code or, if they break it, they do so out of necessity – although even the prospect of starvation is not a strong enough impetus for the bear in “In the Moose Yard” (TTW 227-49) to cannibalize the flesh of one already dead. Violence perpetrated by bears is usually rationalized as stemming from extreme hunger or the protection of what is theirs, including their cubs and their property.

Bears and morality – and natural justice – often intersect at the point of property rights, but, as has been made clear in “Fishers of the Air,” they are by no means the only of Roberts’s animal species to conceive of objects as possessions. Disputes over property rights are by far the most common moralistic disagreements handled in Roberts’s stories, probably because so many of the stories revolve around animals in search of food, over which the potential for property disputes is virtually limitless. Nevertheless, bears are aggressive in property disputes only when they believe themselves to have been wronged. The cognitive component here is extremely important. As the individual in “The Fishers of the Air” demonstrates, whether the bears are *in fact* in the right is less important than whether they *perceive* that they are in the right. Perceiving themselves the possessors of certain objects or properties, they defend those objects and properties and seek retribution when their rights as possessors have been challenged. When they have what they believe to be theirs by right, whether that is property or vengeance, they desist, seeking no further profit. In “Fisherman’s Luck” (EW 236-45), for example, a man spooks a bear into abandoning eight fish that the animal has caught. The bear, however, returns to the fish

“which were his lawful spoil. The creatures of the wild have a keen sense of proprietary rights” (243). Conquering his initial impulse to bolt for safety, when he sees a man appropriating his catch, “his anger, the righteous anger of one whose rights are being infringed upon, surge[s] up within him. The man was stealing his fish. He forg[ets] his fears – although not, altogether, his prudence –” and approaches (243). The story concludes peacefully only because the man, Bedloe, acknowledges his theft and cedes the catch back to the bear:

Bedloe reflected that, after all, he himself as a poacher – a thief in fact. He felt himself in the wrong, under the circumstances; though if he had had his gun with him he probably would not have been so sensitive to the rights of the case. He snatched one of the suckers from the string and threw it so that it fell almost at the bear’s feet. The bear stopped and took a bite out of it. But he was not to be put off with one sucker, when they were all his by the law of the woods. He continued his deliberate advance.

Somewhat hastily now, Bedloe tore the rest of the suckers from the string and threw them in his rival’s path, swiftly...

The bear... gathered the fish into a pile with his great paw, hesitated a moment with his eyes on his adversary, then squatted down and fell to his interrupted meal. (244-45)

Once he has regained his property, the bear is content. Like most of Roberts’s bears, he is satisfied to recover what he considers his, whether that is his food or his dignity. He does not demand the fish that Bedloe has caught for himself and is attempting to hide. All he wants are the fish that are his. It can be argued that, with their extremely discriminating conception of property rights, bears have a finer sense of right and wrong than do the other nonhuman animals in Roberts’s stories. Because morality and justice were at the turn of the twentieth century considered to be primarily the province of humankind, this places bears directly below people in a hierarchical view of the natural world. That position is attained primarily through the anthropomorphization of ursine cognition and emotion, aspects of Roberts’s depictions of bears that have been discussed previously. Bears and humans are physically similar, as is emphasized in Roberts’s treatments of bear cubs, but their position in the wilderness hierarchy comes from similarities in other arenas. These bears display prudence, thoughtfulness, anger resulting from perceived insolence, dignity and the desire to avenge wronged dignity, and they act as moral agents in their world, even when their understanding of situations is faulty. All of this is

anthropomorphization, some of it blatant, some of it subtle, and it places Roberts's bears high in any animal hierarchy.

As close as bears reach toward humans, however, they can never quite attain human status. They are never completely human, and are never as convincingly powerful as humans, and this gap between the human and the (other) animal is never more clearly demonstrated in Roberts's work than when one hunts the other. The mirroring story "On the Roof of the World" (*NU* 3-13) provides an example. This tale begins with the description of a polar bear stalking his quarry, a group of seals near one of their breathing holes in the ice. The scene then shifts to an igloo, where an Inuit man is preparing for his hunt. For weapons, he takes a long knife, "an old Hudson Bay Company's musket" for emergencies, and "a spear of spliced bone, with a steel head securely lashed to it" (7). Already it is clear that the man has more resources available than the bear; he can add to his stock of weapons as he wishes, selecting his manner and method of killing through his choice of one or more of a number of weapons. The bear has only what he always carries with him: camouflage, stealth, power, and teeth. While the man cannot equal the bear's natural resources, he can augment his own to equal or exceed the bear's innate advantages.

Having selected his weaponry, the man sets out for the seals' air hole, following "exactly the bear's tactics" (7), until he comes within sight of his prey. At this juncture, man and bear form two points of a triangle, with each roughly equidistant from the seals and hidden from the seals and each other by a ridge of ice. When they finally attack, the bear is the one who makes the kill, for while the man must wait for his eyes to adjust to the darkness after the auroras have passed, the bear's keener night vision allows him to outdistance the man and take his prey. When the northern lights return, the man sees the bear and hurls his spear at the animal, "[b]ut in that same second the bear lift[s] his paw to ward off the blow" (12). The man's weapon of choice is no more than equal to the bear's speed and power, and the bear charges forward to kill the man. At this point, the man raises his emergency weapon, the musket, and a single shot kills the bear. This story places man and bear in direct competition, and although the bear draws first blood, killing the intended prey, the man wins the day. The man lives and the bear dies because, despite the bear's resourcefulness, his advantages are static while the man's are dynamic and, theoretically, limitless. If the man's knife breaks, he can make another. If the bear's tooth breaks, he must go without. Here the man's spear fails; by swiftly replacing this weapon with another, he

emerges from the confrontation alive. In this story as in others, a human being is pitted against a bear and emerges as the successful animal because, although both creatures are intelligent and resourceful, the human being is more intelligent and more resourceful. The Inuit hunter's use of technology is one resource upon which the bear cannot capitalize, and the bear loses his seal and his life.

Predatory behaviour such as that expressed in "On the Roof of the World" is common in the bears in Roberts's stories. This behaviour is directed toward human beings in 12 of the 39 stories in which it occurs, and these stories include some of the most frightening tales in Roberts's oeuvre. In "The Window in the Shack" (*HW* 203-25), a hungry bear prowls outside while a woman with an infant watches her distant homestead go up in flames; in "The Trailers" (*ST* 256-73), a man tracks two livestock-killing bears and discovers that he has become the quarry; and in "The Cabin Door" (*ST* 234-55), a young girl seeks refuge from a hungry bear in an abandoned cabin that proves to be all too temporary a shelter. Such a heavy emphasis on predation, and particularly predation on human beings, is a surprising characteristic to find in a species anthropomorphized to the extent that Roberts's bears are. The fact that bears are ultimately unable to kill a human being in Roberts's work does not, moreover, indicate that Roberts considers these animals to be failures as predators. On the contrary, although less anthropomorphized on the whole than non-predatory bears, predatory specimens remain wary and clever, and often display a great capacity for learning. These bears are effective, intelligent predators who are defeated in due course by the one animal Roberts considers to be an even more effective, intelligent predator: the human. In "The Window in the Shack," a man arrives in time to chase off the bear. In "The Cabin Door," the quick-thinking girl eventually sets the cabin alight, both summoning help and keeping off the bear. In "The Trailers," the hunted man provokes the bears into a reckless attack by pretending weakness, and then kills the chief instigator of the attack. The people in these stories emerge triumphant through various means, but always because they are ultimately superior in some skill, more resourceful in some area than their ursine antagonists. The woman knows that if she can only keep the bear at bay, help will come for her. The girl keeps her wits about her and remembers that bears are afraid of fire; she uses technology and her store of knowledge to overcome a stronger foe. The man also uses his wits, deceiving his clever stalkers into revealing themselves when he is in an advantageous

position, and then killing the bolder of the two with his gun. In each instance, the humans prove themselves to be more resourceful than the bears who hunt them.

At first, the representations of the predatory bear and the anthropomorphized bear seem to clash. They can be reconciled, however, through the roles that humans play in Roberts's short animal stories. In Roberts's stories, his human hunters are also his ultimate predators. His recurrent use of backwoodsmen as wise teachers (to the young) and as victors in the wilderness's Darwinian struggles strongly indicates his favour for the people who learn to know the wilderness better than the beasts do. The human characters he uses in multiple stories, such as Uncle Andy, Long Jackson, and Tom Brannigan, move silently through the forests. When they put their lips to a birch bark moose call, they fool both wary bull moose and stealthy, predatory bears. Their senses are acute, their knowledge vast. When Brannigan goes hunting in "Brannigan's Mary" (*ST* 109-43) and hears the sound of splashing, "[h]is trained ears [interpret] the sound at once" (109). Uncle Andy can hear an animal calling and confidently say what has made the noise and why it has done so ("A Little Alien in the Wilderness," *CW* 189-212, 190-92). The most successful human characters in Roberts's stories are always expert woodsmen, and expert woodsmen are also invariably the most successful animals in the woods.

To become the most successful species, humans must become like the bear and yet simultaneously remain apart from the bear. This relationship is exemplified best by "The Cave of the Bear" (*TWW* 168-91), in which a man, lost and freezing in the wilderness, gets down on his belly and drinks a bear's nourishing milk to save his own life. When Bob M<sup>c</sup>Laggan stumbles across the bear's winter den, his first thought is to kill her; he is near death, and to him the bear's body signifies "food, strength, salvation!" (182). Her death would allow him to continue to survive, but its benefits would be fleeting. In the harsh weather, a dead bear would begin to freeze almost immediately, and M<sup>c</sup>Laggan would only be able to make one or two meals out of her and to use her den as shelter. His plan to kill her evaporates when he accidentally touches "the silken, furry head of the suckling cub" (183), at which point he forms an instant attachment to the infant. Instead of shooting the mother bear and dooming the cub to death, "he thrust[s] his face down into the mother's fur, beside the youngster's head. His eager lips [find] and [close] upon the object of their quest, and in a second more he [is] drawing warm life into his shrunken veins" (184). M<sup>c</sup>Laggan drinks the bear's milk and partakes of the life and security she offers, and when she rouses to a semi-conscious state, she adopts him as her own and licks his head

until his hat falls off (184-85). When he emerges from the den to face his human rescuers, he tells them, “I’m a bear by adoption and grace” (191), and defends his adopted mother against a man who would have killed her. Like Romulus and Remus, who were suckled by a she-wolf and grew up to found the beacon of civilization that was Rome, M<sup>c</sup>Laggan draws his life from the bear, and she, for her part, provides him with everything she gives to her own cub – security, food, shelter, and warmth (183) – “without requiring that [he] at the same time return to barbarism” (Roberts, “Animal” 213). Taking what the bear mother has to offer allows the man to survive in the wilderness. Her den shelters him; her life nourishes him; her acceptance redeems him. When he emerges from that den, he does so as a backwoodsman, a bear by adoption and grace, who has accepted the bear within himself and made the cub his little brother.

For Roberts, there were few identifying characteristics to separate a human being from another animal; one is divided from the other only by a “very narrow psychological fissure” (Roberts, “Animal” 212). Some of his collections of stories, such as *Kindred of the Wild*, bear titles that suggest a fellowship not just among other animals, but among humankind and all other animals. Roberts’s fellow nature writer Ernest Thompson Seton summarized this viewpoint when he wrote, “we and the beasts are kin. Man has nothing that the animals have not at least a vestige of, the animals have nothing that man does not in some degree share” (“Wild” 11-12). By accepting the bear, and by having her accept him, M<sup>c</sup>Laggan becomes part of the natural world and defends that world from those who have not been similarly enlightened. It is important to note, however, that he does not become bear-like at the expense of his humanity.

Many at the turn of the twentieth century considered that the theories in Darwin’s 1859 edition of *On the Origin of Species* “deprived man of his primacy in the natural order, and even, as it appeared to some, of his immortal soul” (Morley 345). *On the Origin of Species* became the focal point for a movement that placed humankind within a vast animal family, and it is evident that although Roberts embraced that animal family, he did not cede human primacy. He has integrated his backwoodsmen into the wild as superior and predatory animals, men who have been “touched by the bear,” as it were. Without a challenge by a strong adversary, however, the men’s prowess would signify little, because they would not have an opportunity to fight for sovereignty. Animality does not automatically debase humans in Roberts’s stories. In the forest, the strongest and the best are the kings of their kind, and adult bears are among the strongest animals in North America. Their similarity to human beings makes bears best suited for

confrontations with them. If people are animals, and animals are part of nature, and nature is “red in tooth and claw” (Tennyson n.p.), then people must bare their teeth and test their mettle against the best of the wild beasts before they can establish themselves as the superlative species. Joseph Gold, in his introduction to *King of Beasts*, puts it succinctly: “Man is shown here to be a part of the animal world, attaining his humanity only by his supremacy as an animal” (xvii). The predatory species that most often attack human beings in Roberts’s work are panthers, wolves, and bears. Because Roberts’s anthropomorphization of bears as a whole is so extensive, however, Roberts has created a species that is like his humans and yet is not human, thus establishing bears as the yardstick against which human supremacy is measured. In Roberts’s short stories, bears are made humanlike and humans are made bearlike, vanquishing their rivals best when they have embraced the animal within themselves and learned to live in nature. Bears are the challengers, the runners-up, because they have been compared to people throughout Western history, and because Roberts has accentuated their humanlike characteristics in his stories, anthropomorphizing them through mirroring, physical description, and the establishment of a finely developed moral sense. None of these is in isolation sufficient to sustain the contention that bears are anthropomorphized to a greater degree than the other species in Roberts’s work; together, however, they create a cumulative effect that cannot be denied.

Bears in Roberts’s short animal stories are both predators and prey, as indeed are the real bears upon which these stories are based. Appearing in more than a third of all of his animal stories, bears occur variously as monsters, hunters, children, and mothers, and display all the basic facets of personality that make up humanity. Roberts’s bears are different both from bears as people understand them today and from bears as his contemporaries present them. They are by turns fearsome and loveable, the pinnacle of evolution and anthropomorphization among all of Roberts’s “forest folk” save humankind. One short step below human beings on Roberts’s hierarchical ladder of evolution clings the bear, the wilderness human, who begins life like a human child and grows up to challenge human supremacy in the forest that is its home. Roberts’s representations of the bear are both a celebration of nature and a caution against it. Nature is good, though red in tooth and claw, but without the balancing effects of civilization, people are just naked bears in the forest. Roberts’s representations of the bear are intimately related to his representations of the human, each illuminating the other. In Roberts’s animal world, human beings are the best of the best, but their achievements mean little if there is no other power great

enough to rival them. Bears are this power, anthropomorphized through physical and mental comparison to human beings and their adherence to a moral code, and made into rivals by their (shared) predatory power and competition for prey. They may not be resourceful enough to win their confrontations with human beings, but the competition pushes both species to reach new heights of excellence. In order to achieve an ideal natural state, the people in Roberts's stories must go out into the woodland and become like bears, drawing on their reserves of resourcefulness in order to compete successfully. Only when they have returned "to the old kinship of earth" without relinquishing the civilization that gives them the extra edge of resourcefulness – and thereby returning to barbarism (Roberts, "Animal" 213) – can human beings fulfill their potential as the ultimate animal.

## CHAPTER TWO

## “WOLF! WOLF!”: THE LUPINE INVASION OF ROBERTS’S HOME TERRITORY

These earliest observers of animal life were compelled by the necessities of the case to observe truly, if not deeply. Pitting their wits against those of their four-foot rivals, they had to know their antagonists, and respect them, in order to overcome them. But it was only the most salient characteristics of each species that concerned the practical observer. It was simple to remember that the tiger was cruel, the fox cunning, the wolf rapacious.

– Roberts, “The Animal Story of To-Day” 210

Of the nearly 200 short animal stories that that Roberts wrote, wolves appear in only 23.<sup>5</sup> This is a surprisingly low number, given that wolves are large, predatory mammals native to Roberts’s homeland of New Brunswick, which was the setting for a significant number of his stories. It is true that wolves had been extirpated from his home province by the time Roberts was 20 (Busch 124), and certainly it is possible that he never saw a wolf outside of a zoo or a circus, but it is clear from the comments made by characters in several of his stories – e.g. “I reckon [these wolves] ain’t much like them Roosian wolves we read about, eh, dad?” (“The Homeward Trail,” *WT* 351-61 [359]) – that Roberts had read or heard enough about them to develop a strong impression of them. It is also clear that that impression was negative. Robert H. MacDonald writes that, in his works about animals, Roberts “lets his sympathies show: there are some species who exhibit only the worst” (25). MacDonald cites the lynx as his example of a species portrayed negatively, yet the father in “The Homeward Trail” prevents his son from shooting at a lynx, saying “Oh, what’s the good o’ killin’ the beast Christmas times!” (356); when the boy expresses his disappointment in not being able to shoot a wolf in order to bring his mother “a nice wolf-skin for Christmas!” (361), however, his father offers no rebuke. Not even the spirit of Christmas can inspire a closed season for Roberts’s wolves. This chapter explores Roberts’s negative portrayals of wolves in his short animal stories through two main aspects of the lupine characters. Predation is, of course, a very important part of a wolf’s nature, whether literal or literary, and Roberts focuses almost single-mindedly on that predatory facet, often couching it in terms of invasion or theft. Before the predatory focus can be adequately understood, however, it is necessary to explore anthropomorphism, or the lack of it, in Roberts’s

---

<sup>5</sup> One of these stories, “Mixed Breed” (*TTW* 149-72), is in truth about a dog; because the protagonist carries a strong strain of wolf in him, however, it is possible to class this story with Roberts’s wolf-dog hybrid stories.

wolves. This can be accomplished through the examination of factors contributing to anthropomorphic qualities in other animals, and bears in particular, such as the possession of a moral code, high intelligence, and even the presence of juvenile members of the species. These two factors – minimal anthropomorphization and invasive (and immoral) predation – set wolves up as both physical and behavioural threats to Roberts’s anthropomorphized natural world. Anthropomorphic qualities are normalized in Roberts’s animal stories, and desensitization to a base line of anthropomorphic language is virtually inevitable for the reader of those stories. In such a milieu, more significance may be attached to the quantity of anthropomorphism attached to an animal or behaviour than to the mere presence of anthropomorphism in a story. The danger that the minimally anthropomorphized wolves pose to Roberts’s animal world allows him to align human beings with rather than against nature in his stories. An external threat (wolves) permits the integration of humans with the rest of nature, a joining that would otherwise be a forced and uncomfortable fit.

Roberts’s animal stories are vulnerable to charges of anthropomorphism by virtue of their status as animal stories, as “psychological romance[s]” (Roberts, “Animal” 212) about animals. Even today, there are those who maintain that animals lack any form of higher mental function; according to this view, they have no “psychology” upon which one may base a story. Ironically, those who believe this to be the case may be those who have the fewest misgivings about Roberts’s stories. John Burroughs, Roberts’s contemporary and a vehement disparager of the animal story in general, found that there is “much to admire and commend, and but little to take exception to” (115) in Roberts’s volume *Kindred of the Wild*; Burroughs believed that

all the animals whose lives are portrayed [in the book]... are simply human beings disguised as animals; they think, feel, plan, suffer, as we do; in fact, exhibit almost the entire human psychology. But in other respects they follow closely the facts of natural history, and the reader is not deceived; he knows where he stands. (116)

Those whose views are more moderate may, in fact, be the ones to balk when they perceive that Roberts is departing from the possible in animal psychology: in his introduction to *The Lure of the Wild*, John Coldwell Adams comments that “There are times, however, when the reader may reasonably suspect that Roberts has strayed beyond the limits [of realistic animal psychology]” (4). It is generally accepted that Roberts wrote well about animals, although he sometimes strayed too far across the line between animal psychology and undiluted anthropomorphism.

Studies of Roberts have not, however, considered the possibility that certain species are more apt than others to be anthropomorphized in Roberts's work, or that the manifestation of positive or negative aspects is as significant as the presence of anthropomorphic content.

The abundance of ursine anthropomorphization has been made clear in the previous chapter, and one might expect that Roberts would treat the wolves in his stories in a similar manner. After all, like bears, wolves exhibit many characteristics that are similar to those displayed by human beings. Like bears and humans, they are large, predatory mammals and, like humans, they live in social units. As "the most intelligent and social wild animal[s] in the northern hemisphere," wolves are "like us in many ways" (Grooms 23). In theory, then, Roberts's wolves should be subject to a level of anthropomorphization similar to what is seen in his bears. In reality, however, lupine anthropomorphization is minimized. Wolves rarely display loyalty, affection, morality, reason, or intelligence in general – all of which are indicators of well-developed mental faculties. Because people consider great mental prowess to be mainly the province of humanity, other animals who exhibit these traits in stories are often considered to be anthropomorphized characters. Given the paucity of higher mental abilities displayed by the wolves in Roberts's stories, these animals as a group form one of the least anthropomorphized species in Roberts's work, and almost certainly the least anthropomorphized large predator.

On occasion, however, Roberts conceives of a lupine character capable of such advanced traits as reason and morality. When such an individual makes his appearance, Roberts portrays him as an exceptional and superior specimen of his species.<sup>6</sup> This seems unremarkable at first glance, as Roberts's stories often feature animals of superior strength and ability, what Fred Cogswell refers to as specimens of the "superanimal" (33) variety. Superanimals are the royalty of their kind, and Roberts typically describes events in their lives from birth or shortly thereafter until they are killed or, as often happens, they emerge as the victors of particularly climactic encounters after they have come into their full strength. Such animals "are not ordinary animals, but superior animals, distinguished by their size, skill, wisdom and moral sense. These animals have all learned to cope with a hostile environment; they endure. They are the leaders of their kind" (M<sup>ac</sup>Donald 19). It is apparent, moreover, that Roberts fashions these animals with deliberate intent: in his prefatory note to *Red Fox*, he describes his protagonist as "fairly

---

<sup>6</sup> No female wolf appears in Roberts's work, although two of his "wolfish dogs" are female and a female wolf is mentioned (but not met) in "Wild Motherhood" (KW 28-36). For a more in-depth examination of the role of the female in Roberts's work, see Misao Dean's "Political Science: Realism in Roberts's Animal Stories."

typical... in spite of the fact that he is stronger and cleverer than the average run of foxes. This fact does not detract from his authenticity as a type of his kind. He simply represents the best, in physical and mental development, of which the tribe of the foxes has shown itself capable” (v).

When Roberts fashions a superanimal out of a wolf, however, the “tribe” of the wolves can offer up but little to augment an average wolf and turn him into a king. Roberts’s average wolf does not possess that fine sense of morality that so many of his other wild creatures demonstrate. A dog feels shame when he behaves badly;<sup>7</sup> a bear believes that he has been cheated of his rightful meal;<sup>8</sup> an arctic fox exacts vengeance when a wolverine raids his cache of food;<sup>9</sup> by contrast, the average wolf possesses little of the discrimination that must necessarily be present in a creature in order for that individual to arrive at emotions such as guilt and acts born of vengeance. An ordinary, run-of-the-mill bear knows (or believes that he knows) when another has stolen his meal; the average wolf sees the thief as another meal.<sup>10</sup> If Michel Poirier is correct in his surmise that Roberts does not “ascribe to animals a moral perfection that they do not possess” (406), then wolves loiter at the low ebb of innate morality with dragonfly larvae and weasels. This is not a surprising position for wolves to occupy in Roberts’s early animal stories, given his Christian upbringing (his father was an Anglican priest) and wolves’ position in Christian literature as “symbol[s] of a fierce and treacherous enemy” (Wood 86), “murderers and possibly agents of the devil” (Grooms 20). What is surprising is that wolves continue to occupy this moral niche in Roberts’s work throughout his writing, despite his departure from a strictly Christian outlook (see Cogswell 22-23). This may be partly explained through M<sup>ac</sup>Donald’s comment that, in Roberts’s work, “[t]he higher the animal, the more clearly developed the moral system. The better the animal – the more successful, or superior specimen – the more moral the animal. Thus superior animals fight fair, but the weak, the cowards, and the mean may well resort to dirty tricks” (24). In “The Fight at the Wallow” (*HW* 251-69), for example, a caribou bull meets a challenger during the mating season. The protagonist is a white-coloured animal with “wide-spreading” antlers (252); his challenger is “of a darker hue than the lord of the wallow, and of much slimmer build, – altogether less formidable in appearance,” and has narrow antlers (256). The “rules” of a traditional caribou fight “demand that the prowess of a caribou

---

<sup>7</sup> See “Mixed Breed” (*ITW* 149-72).

<sup>8</sup> See chapter one; also see “Fishers of the Air” (*MS* 7-21).

<sup>9</sup> See “A Master of Supply” (*VB* 8-16).

<sup>10</sup> See “Wolf! Wolf!” (*EW* 176-86).

bull shall be determined by his pushing power” (258); the two must lock antlers and victory comes to the one with the most strength and the best footing. The white bull attempts to engage his challenger in this (lawful) type of combat, but the darker bull evades the contact, dodging aside and striking the white bull’s flank. The protagonist is “[a]mazed at this departure from the usual caribou tactics” (257) and finally counters not by adopting his adversary’s methods but by outsmarting the darker bull and managing to lock antlers with him. After this, the fight is effectively over. The dark bull has no chance of winning in traditional combat, and barely escapes with his life. The white bull is the moral animal. He is larger, stronger, and more intelligent than his opponent, and he fights fairly. As M<sup>ac</sup>Donald notes, there is a connection between the animal’s physical superiority and his moral superiority, with one acting as a visible indicator of the other. In comparison with his opponent, the dark bull is an immoral animal. He is the challenger, a weaker, slenderer, narrow-antlered animal who fights like a coward, refusing to meet the other bull in head-to-head combat. Wolves do offer head-to-head combat, but they do not offer single combat. Because they typically hunt in packs, it may be perceived that they are “ganging up” upon their prey, and are thus mean and immoral creatures. Their immorality places them within the realm of anthropomorphization, but the humanlike characteristic that they embody is an intrinsically negative one, a repugnant human quality that human beings should shun. The pack mentality of average wolves virtually guarantees that they will remain base creatures, inherently immoral in their anthropomorphization and therefore always suspect. For most wolves, the mere fact that they hunt in packs precludes them from being on the side of the right and the righteous.

Morality is, however, an integral aspect of a superanimal’s character, although it is often difficult to determine where morality ends and intelligence begins in lupine individuals. It is notable that lupine superanimals spend significant periods of time without packs, despite the superlative qualities that should make them natural leaders,<sup>11</sup> and that in the event that they begin with or acquire packs as the story progresses, they are, without exception, forcibly separated from those packs before the stories conclude. Separation from the pack, either mentally (through a difference of opinion) or physically, provides lupine superanimals with at least a minimal opportunity to display what morals they possess. Thus the protagonist in “Lone Wolf” (*KE* 239-

---

<sup>11</sup> See “The Gray Master” (*KE* 107-36) and “The Passing of the Black Whelps” (*WT* 323-48) for examples of leadership and potential for leadership in lupine superanimals.

67), as a superior specimen among wolves, makes an exception to the rule of lupine immorality. Unlike other members of his species, he “experience[s] a qualm of conscience, so to speak, about the sheep he had killed. It occur[s] to him that if sheep [belong] to men, there might be trouble ahead” (251). “Conscience” is defined, in part, as “[t]he internal acknowledgement or recognition of the moral quality of one’s motives and actions; the sense of right and wrong as regards things for which one is responsible; the faculty or principle which pronounces upon the moral quality of one’s actions or motives, approving the right and condemning the wrong” (n.p.). While Lone Wolf’s concern for the possibility of trouble ahead points to some degree of self-interest involved in his reflections (as well as intelligence and foresight), the use of *conscience* to describe his contemplations suggests that he also has a degree of concern for the morality of his actions. Most superior wolves have some hazy idea about things that belong to human beings; were this not so, they would simply be too unintelligent and too easily caught to be superanimals. Lone Wolf is the only one of these whose conscience makes an explicit appearance, however; others merely attempt to be discreet about their depredations. Curiously, the superanimal variety of wolf is the only kind of wolf that displays a knowledge of property rights, rights of which many average animals of other species are well aware. The average wolf, however, is permitted only the justification of its own hunger for its actions, and sometimes even this is denied, as is the case in “The Invaders” (*FF* 71-94), in which a hybridized wolf pack<sup>12</sup> pursues two moose in spite of the fact that the wolves “were not hungry” (82). Lupine aggression would be justified in several of Roberts’s stories had the wolves been as capable of discerning their own property rights as Roberts’s bears are. “The Glutton of the Great Snow” (*HW* 162-90) and “Wolf! Wolf!” (*EW* 176-86) form two parallel examples. In the former, a trapper comes upon a fleeing moose foundering in deep snow and kills him. Realizing that wolves are hunting the moose, the trapper exhibits the fruits of his own highly developed brain and acknowledges that “it was rash for one man, without his gun, to rob a wolf-pack of its kill!” (178). But this does not prevent him from doing so. He takes what meat he can and retreats before the wolves arrive. When the wolves find their quarry already slain, they consider that “their own hunting [had been] insolently crossed” (179), but this is a territorial dispute, not a theft. They do not seem to perceive that meat has been taken from the carcass. When their hated enemy the wolverine arrives and ruins the meat by

---

<sup>12</sup> Hybridized wolf packs are the subject of both this story and “The Passing of the Black Whelps” (*WT* 323-48). In both cases, the packs are composed of wolf leaders, their dog mates, and a number of grown offspring.

ejecting the contents of her malodorous scent glands over the carcass, the wolves make an attempt to reach and kill her, but this attempt is little different from their meeting a few pages earlier, at which point the wolves stole the wolverine's prey. The wolverine considers her act one of vengeance (she, like the trapper, has a clear grasp of property rights, even when she flouts them); no further glimpse of the thought processes of the wolves is provided, however, and so there is no indication that they have a conception of property rights or are attempting to revenge themselves for any infringements of those rights.

"Wolf! Wolf!" begins similarly, with a man who kills a doe as she flees from the wolves. Unlike the trapper, however, Sim Purdie hauls the entire carcass onto his shoulders and makes off with it, dismissing the wrathful Eastern wolves. He senses "their hate, their fury at being thus balked of their kill when it was almost in their teeth," and drives them off with shouts and threatening gestures (177-78). As with the pack in "The Glutton of the Great Snow," the anger these wolves display is, according to Purdie, due to being prevented from making their kill, and here probably also from being denied access to the carcass. At only a single point in this tale is a wolf's perspective directly provided, when the pack leader perceives that the quarry (Purdie and his burden of deer) is about to escape, and Purdie does not project feelings of rage over property violations onto the animals. He does not, in fact, acknowledge that his actions constitute theft until he discovers that the wolf hunt has continued, and that he is on the menu. The wolves are so ravenous that they will eat anything they can, including the doe they have hunted, the man who is piggybacking her home for supper, and whichever pack mates Purdie manages to injure or kill. When Purdie kills an attacking wolf, the rest of the pack stops to feast on the unfortunate animal's remains, a "cannibalistic repast" which Purdie knew "would not do more than whet their appetites and make them the more ravenous" (182). Purdie is finally forced to drop the deer carcass near his cabin door, and the pack swarms it in a fantastical feeding frenzy: "Even in the few moments which Purdie had allowed them [to feed] they had got away with most of the carcass" (185). The wolves do not seem to care what they eat, as long as it is meat. They eat a pack member because he is dead. They eat the doe as soon as she stays still long enough to be eaten. They do not eat Purdie because he defends himself, first with his axe and, after he arrives at the cabin where he has left it, with his gun. Their aggression is not couched in terms of property rights or revenge for the violation of those rights. The anthropomorphization present in this encounter comes in the form of the breaking of a fundamental human taboo.

As noted in the previous chapter, a knowledge of property rights is relatively basic, as far as the expression of moral concepts is concerned. Roberts's average wolves give little indication that they understand notions of right and wrong or attempt to adhere to any sort of morally uplifting characteristic. Even in their cannibalism, they give no indication that they are aware of the wrongness of their actions; for them, it is just what is done. His lupine superanimals, however, have a much greater grasp of property rights and they also demonstrate a greater degree of other virtuous traits. They are, for instance, more loyal than their average counterparts, who do not hesitate to consume their wounded pack mates. Although they bestow their loyalty upon men in "Lone Wolf" (*KE* 239-67), and upon a dog in "The Passing of the Black Whelps" (*WT* 323-48), lupine superanimals do exhibit quantities of this trait that are demonstrably greater than those displayed by average specimens. In "Lone Wolf," it is loyalty that leads the protagonist back into captivity; in "The Passing of the Black Whelps," loyalty is key to the destruction of the dark wolf's mate and pack. In "Wild Motherhood" (*KW* 28-36), the only story in which a wolf exhibits loyalty to another member of his own species, the animal is shot, and his death condemns his injured mate and their unborn pups to starvation. This story is an exception in many ways, not least because it is the only one of Roberts's stories in which a wild wolf exists without a pack. Still, the wolf in this story exhibits an incredible improvement upon the loyalty and morality displayed by the average run of wolves. Instead of going out to secure meat to bring back to a pack mate who has lost a paw (as the female wolf in "Wild Motherhood" has), the average wolf would kill the injured animal and so secure meat for himself. With the exception of the individual in "Wild Motherhood," average wolves fail to cannibalize injured or dead pack mates only because there were no survivors of an altercation, because surviving pack members were not present when an injury occurred, or because the survivors were routed in their attack and fled the scene.

In one instance, the intent to cannibalize is expressed but the act is not completed. In "The Passing of the Black Whelps," the dark wolf is injured and, as his original pack closes in upon him, he throws himself off a cliff and into a river rather than face the alternative of being "eaten by his fellows ere they continued their chase of the leaping buck" (328). Only by virtue of his unusual intelligence – signified by "that greater breadth of skull between the eyes which betokens the stronger intelligence, the more individualized resourcefulness" (327) – is the dark wolf saved from his erstwhile companions. Cannibalism is so ingrained in Roberts's conception

of wolves that humans fighting off a pack of wolves or fleeing from them make use of this knowledge in order to gain themselves a few more precious seconds. Sim Purdie in “Wolf! Wolf!” gains a slight lead on the pack after he kills one of its members, as the wolves throw “themselves upon the body of their slain comrade and ravenously [tear] it to pieces” (181); similarly, Job Thatch manages to distract most of the score of wolves attacking him when he shoots the foremost of their number, as “[m]ost of the others, too ravenous to think of anything but the mad craving in their bellies, stopped to feast on the meat thus provided for them” (“With His Back To the Wall” *FF* 140-64, 160).

By contrast, Roberts’s lupine superanimals never cannibalize their pack mates. There are no scenes in “The Gray Master” (*KE* 107-36) where the superanimal has the opportunity to eat injured or dead wolves, unless he created the circumstances himself in his early days of freedom, during the time when he “found, fought, thrashed, and finally adopted, a little pack of his small, Eastern kin” (109). One may presume that he must have refrained from eating the thrashed animals if enough members were left for him to adopt the pack as his own. Lone Wolf, in his story of the same name (*KE* 239-67), likewise has no opportunity to eat or spare members of his own species. Removed from his mother at birth and his siblings at weaning, Lone Wolf never again meets another wolf. He does, however, form an amicable relationship with his human master, Toomey, and later transfers that relationship to a man named Timmins. His first meeting with Timmins gives Lone Wolf the advantage. At this point in the story, he is at large in the wilderness, while Timmins is half-buried under a pile of rubble and just regaining consciousness after a landslide. Were Lone Wolf to feel the need to eat a semi-familiar face, this would be the perfect opportunity. Instead, he considers that “[h]e felt that he was expected to do something, but he knew not what. He liked the voice – it was something like Toomey’s. He liked the smell of Timmins’ homespun shirt – it, too, was something like Toomey’s. He became suddenly anxious to please this stranger” (260), for although “[h]e had enjoyed his liberty... he was beginning to find it lonely” (261). Despite the difference in species, these thoughts are hardly those of a ravaging killer.

The dark wolf of “The Passing of the Black Whelps” (*WT* 323-48) has the most definitive say on the matter of lupine superanimals and cannibalism, however, because his opportunity to eat one of his own comes in the story proper and the target is a bonafide pack member, even if she is a dog. In the latter stages of his story, the dark wolf’s pack consists of the dog who is his

mate and their six grown offspring. When the pack crosses the trail of a man, the dark wolf and dog are “overruled,” with the result that the pack then hunts the man down (341). The dog, at the sight and sound of the man, reverts to her old allegiance, becoming “no longer a wolf, but a dog; and there was her master – not her old master, but such a one as he had been. At his side, and fighting his foes, was her place” (345). When she confronts her savage offspring, however, “the young wolves [go] wild with rage at this defection and defiance, and [rush] in at once. They [spring] first upon the bitch” (345), and this rouses the wrath of their father, the dark wolf, who leaps (too late) to aid his mate. Instead of joining his offspring in the attack and procuring himself a meal courtesy of his mate, he pits himself against overwhelming odds in an effort to save the dog. Ironically, it is not she but rather the younger wolves<sup>13</sup> whom he sees “as dogs, and hate[s] them with a deadly hate” (346). Together, dog, dark wolf, and axe-wielding woodsman together manage to destroy the six hybrids, and as the dark wolf confronts the man “across a heap of mangled black bodies,” the woodsman sees “fear, hate, and grief in the green gleam of his eyes” before he turns and runs (347). Roberts does not clarify what, precisely, the dark wolf is grieving for, but it is most likely that it stems from the loss of his mate, the dog he did his utmost to protect. He kills his offspring to save his mate, he eats neither the dead hybrids nor the dog, and he experiences grief. These are neither the actions nor the emotions of a cannibal.

As superanimals, the dark wolf, Lone Wolf, and the Gray Master have a moral edge over their ordinary lupine counterparts. None cannibalize other pack mates in Roberts’s stories and, furthermore, both the dark wolf and Lone Wolf make attempts to defend animals to whom they have grown attached, non-lupine pack mates, as it were. Ordinary wolves, who do not share in the superlative characteristics that set their “cousins” apart, are proven to have no concept of this taboo. This is unexpected, given that no other species in Roberts’s animal world ever consumes the flesh of its own kind, not even the lynx or oft-bloodthirsty weasel. The opportunity to cannibalize is not provided for most of Roberts’s animals, and herbivorous species would of course be incapable of it, but, significantly, bears have just such an opportunity in two of Roberts’s stories. In “The Bear That Thought He Was a Dog” (*HC* 1-25), the captive-reared Woof defeats a rival bear and thus has the opportunity to kill and eat him. This is not a course of action that occurs to him. More explicitly, in “In the Moose Yard” (*TTW* 227-49), a “famished bear” (243) comes upon the carcass of another member of his species. The bear “sniff[s]

---

<sup>13</sup> The dark wolf and the dog’s offspring are referred to throughout the story as wolves, not hybrids or wolf-dogs.

ravenously at the mangled body of his kinsman, but being no cannibal, turn[s] away in disappointment and disgust” (243). The bear in this story is no king among his own kind but only a starving and average specimen of the species, nor does he have any known connection to the individual who has died. His turning away from the carcass here represents an expression of a moral code by an average member of a species.

In the forests of North America, both bears and wolves do occasionally cannibalize others of their species. Although it is believed that cannibalism is rare in most bear populations, there are nevertheless some documented instances of bear predation upon other adult and juvenile bears of the same species (Rogers 201-03). Similarly, cannibalism has also been reliably documented in wolves, occurring mostly during times of stress to the lupine population (Rausch 258). Roberts wrote during the height of North American predator control campaigns, and it is likely that he would have heard and read reports and stories of wolf populations under stress. If by chance he did not, he would certainly in his research have had access to an edition of Edward Topsell’s 1658 *The History of Four-Footed Beasts and Serpents and Insects*, as well as J. G. Wood’s 1867 *Bible Animals* and William T. Hornaday’s 1904 *The American Natural History*, all of which stress cannibalism in wolves. Hornaday’s *Minds and Manners of Wild Animals* would also have been available for his perusal. This text states, among other things, that “the gray wolf of North America (like his congener in the Old World) is the most degenerate and unmoral mammal species on earth. He murders his wounded pack-mates, he is a greedy cannibal, he will attack his wife and chew her unmercifully” (223) and that “[i]n captivity, wolves are the meanest brutes on earth, and in a wild state they are no better. As a rule, the stronger ones are ever ready to kill the weaker ones, and eat them, too” (283). Cannibalism is an integral part of Roberts’s portrayals of ordinary wolves. As the basest of the morally base, Roberts’s wolves consistently violate one of humanity’s most viscerally felt taboos. They will eat anything that can be eaten, and this includes a wolf’s pack mates and possibly even his own mother in the case of the dark wolf’s hybrid offspring. This appears to complement the established opinion of wolves from around the turn of the twentieth century. J. G. Wood writes that

There is no animal which a herd [*sic*] of wolves will not attack, and very few which they will not ultimately secure. Strength avails nothing against the numbers of these savage foes, which give no moment of rest, but incessantly assail their antagonist, dashing by instinct at those parts of the body which can be least protected, and lacerating with their

peculiar short, snapping bite. Should several of their number be killed or disabled, it makes no difference to the wolves, except that a minute or two are wasted in devouring their slain or wounded brethren, and they only return to the attack the more excited by the taste of blood. (88)

When Anglo-Canadian and -American colonists began to establish themselves in North America, they labelled a whole host of animals, from cougars and wolves to robins and squirrel, as vermin, (Coleman 93). What separated wolves from the rest of their pesky cohort was their predilection for cannibalism, for although classified as vermin with foxes (smaller canids) and cougars (large predators), only wolves ate their own. Bears, cougars, and foxes were all vermin and all hunted with varying degrees of zeal, but they are respectable characters in Roberts's stories, even when they play adversarial roles. The cougars in Roberts's first short animal story, "Do Seek Their Meat From God" (*LB* 1-6), for example, are killed while they are hunting a human child. The ingenious final plot twist, however, comes with the discovery of the cougar kittens who starved to death because their parents failed to kill another parent's child. Average wolves receive no such dollop of sympathy from Roberts or most readers. These animals are the breakers of one of humanity's most universal taboos. This violation of a human taboo creates a relationship between humans and wolves in Roberts's stories, shifting the lupine position from merely a concrete example of moral depravity to a concrete example of human depravity. They are what humans should not be, but could be. In his own words, Roberts's animal story "helps us to return to nature, without requiring that we at the same time return to barbarism. It leads us back to the old kinship of earth, without asking us to relinquish, by way of toll, any part of the wisdom of the ages, any fine essential of the 'large result of time'" ("Animal" 213). If Roberts's bears are wilderness humans, guides on the journey toward a kinship with the earth, then his wolves are anti-human(e), a warning against the descent into barbarity.

Although lupine superanimals may be above the moral dregs of wilderness life, they are not invincible, and the wolves around them know no law that relates to morality or justice. Those animals respect strength, and respond to their leaders' iron wills,<sup>14</sup> but they are merciless when they sense weakness. In "The Passing of the Black Whelps" (*WT* 323-48), for example, cannibalism is one of the primary tenets of the dark wolf's original pack. The dark wolf, superior specimen that he is, knows "the stern law of the pack – the instant and inevitable doom of its hurt

---

<sup>14</sup> See the lead wolf's commands in "Little Bull of the Barrens" (*NU* 195-209).

member. The average gray wolf knows how to accept the inevitable” (328). What saves the dark wolf is the fact that he is *not* the average grey wolf, and his colour is only a marker of his difference. As a superanimal, he possesses a greater degree of intelligence and strength than the rest of his pack. These characteristics, however, although sufficient to save him from the teeth of that pack, are not enhanced enough to allow him to control his own offspring, hybrid animals who function as monster creations, embodying the worst of both wolf and dog.

Part of the danger that wolves represent can be seen in their relationships with dogs and hybrids. Wolves are invariably a bad influence upon the more moral and civilized species that is the dog, degrading the quality of the animal both from within (as part of a dog’s bloodline) and from without (as the lure back to the wilderness). When dogs become killers, it is because of their wolfish ancestry. The bitch in “The Invaders” (*FF* 71-94) is a “long-jawed, wolfish-looking mongrel” who takes to the woodland with a wolf as her mate because she has always “had a dim craving” for “the wild life” (78); the sheep-killing mongrel dog in “The Passing of the Black Whelps” is of undetermined ancestry, but her dangerous make-up is indicated by Roberts’s repeated allusion to her as a “long-jawed bitch”; the protagonist in “Mixed Breed” (*TTW* 149-72) is a mongrel whose mother carried “a strong strain of the wolf quite near the surface” (153), and it is this lupine strain that battles with the part of him that is dog and wins often enough to make him a sheep-killer. Wolves make wolves of dogs, provided that one begins with a discernable measure of wolf blood in the dogs. In the post-Darwinian, progress-oriented era in which Roberts lived and wrote, where wolves were considered unquestionably the ancestors of modern dogs (Darwin 210), this reversion can be considered a descent from the (current) pinnacle of evolution that is the modern dog back to the wild “type” whence it sprang. The decline of man’s best friend back to ravaging killer follows Darwin’s observation that domestic varieties of animals “certainly do occasionally revert in some of their characters to [physical and behavioural] ancestral forms” (11). By mixing their bloodlines, the dark wolf and the wolfish dog create monster offspring, animals “larger and more savage than either of their parents,” who form the majority of a pack “which, for strength, ferocity, and craft, no like number of full-blooded wolves in all Canada could have matched” (340). Despite the dark wolf’s own strength and intelligence, he is physically overmatched by his own progeny, a situation that eventually results in the destruction of his entire pack. Significantly, he is also mentally overmatched by the dog who becomes his mate, for it is her “highly developed brain” which guides, “for the most part,

the destinies of the pack” (340). Female superiority in any arena is extremely rare in Roberts’s work. Misao Dean contends that “female animals appear only in the context of their reproductive functions [in Roberts’s work], as ‘mate’ or mother of the protagonist, actors in the struggle for existence only when procuring food for their (male) young” (308). To credit a female with any sort of superiority over an adult male is, then, a very important action. The only possible reason for the bitch’s superiority here is that she is a dog, albeit a wolfish, sheep-killing one. Dogs in Roberts’s work are generally intelligent and moral, devolving only when they revert back to ancestral lupine characteristics. So the dark wolf, in spite of the fact that he is a superanimal and therefore should represent the best of what wolves as a species have to offer, carries insufficient quantities of superlative traits to match his mate’s intellect or to save him from the savage nature of his own offspring.

This insufficiency of quality persists in Roberts’s lupine superanimals. As the best of the best, superanimals often emerge triumphant from conflicts, and their stories end there, before the inevitable downfall and death that must be the end of any animal. The little calf in “The King of Mamozekel” (*VB* 73-93) grows up into a strong bull moose and overcomes his fear of bears in time to save his “herd” from injury; the human protagonist in “King of Beasts” (*KB* 154-79) fashions a weapon and slays the tiger who hunts him; the eagle in “Lord of the Air” (*KW* 11-27) escapes from captivity and finds his way home. Not a single lupine superanimal escapes one of Roberts’s stories so lightly, and his average wolves are fortunate if they survive beyond their stories’ conclusions. Average wolves function much like unnamed enemy foot soldiers in action films; they exist to fill the screen and to litter the battlefield at the close of the fight scenes. The superanimal variety of wolf fares a little better, but lacks sufficient quantities of superior characteristics to allow him to escape unscathed. The Gray Master and Lone Wolf are the two lupine superanimals featured in *Kings in Exile*, each in his respective story, but their rule depends in large part upon their circumstances, not upon their own innate superiority. In “The Gray Master” (107-36), the protagonist is admittedly intelligent, but is not a native inhabitant of eastern Canada, the setting for the story. Brought from the Klondike as a puppy, the wolf had escaped into the eastern wilds and become the leader of a pack of his “Eastern kin” (109). Roberts consistently refers to eastern wolves as “cloudy wolves,” which he describes as much smaller and less aggressive than the timber wolves that live farther west and north. The Gray Master rules over the wolves in the east not because he is the best of them but precisely because

he is not one of them. He is an entirely different subspecies, “CANIS OCCIDENTALIS” (123), “a great Alaskan timber-wolf” (109) whose larger size and greater intelligence may make him merely an average wolf among his own kind. Although Roberts writes that “[t]he intelligence lying behind the wide-arched skull of the Gray Master was equal to more intricate and less obvious conclusions” than a conception that human outrage should be avoided (113), the wolf demonstrates this intelligence only by restraining himself and his pack from attacking either adult humans or children, by vanishing deep into the woods when hunters come for him, and by having a good knowledge of how to avoid traps. These skills eventually prove inadequate, however, for at length the wolf is trapped and dies in captivity.

The protagonist in “Lone Wolf” (*KE* 239-67), by contrast, lives his entire life as a captive animal, reaching freedom only briefly and returning by choice to human society. As he grows up, he becomes “quite the cleverest and most distinguished performing wolf who had ever adorned a [circus] show” (241), but his performing talents are not lupine in origin. His performances for the crowds are done in obedience to his tamer, Toomey, and Roberts makes it clear that this obedience is not a lupine trait, writing that “[i]n all save his willing subjection to Toomey’s mastery, he was a true wolf, of the savage and gigantic breed of the Northwestern timber” (242). James Polk inadvertently reinforces this notion when he comments in “Lives of the Hunted” that “in ‘The Grey [*sic*] Master’ Roberts shows that *for a true wolf* death is more honourable than pacing a cage as a spectacle for unfeeling people” (55, emphasis added). Lone Wolf’s obedience, and the performing talents that spring from them, are an aberration in his make-up, without which he would be “a true wolf.” Nor does Lone Wolf’s intelligence, size, or training ever save his life, for when the building in which he is caged is enveloped by fire, he follows “the wise little bear” who has discovered a way to escape (246). Trusting “the sagacity of the bear” (247) may be an indicator of intelligence, but the bear’s intelligence here is greater, because it requires no leadership. Later, as a free animal, Lone Wolf becomes an accomplished hunter, but neither can this be attributed to his great intelligence or size, for “it was as if long-buried memories had sprung all at once to life, – memories, indeed, not of his own but of his ancestors’ . . .” (251). And, in the end, he returns willingly to captivity, signalling his renewed docility by killing a domestic bull in defence of his new master. Lone Wolf may be a king, but he is a king without subjects. Nowhere in this story does he meet another member of his own species beyond the three siblings sold early in the tale, and he willingly makes a subject of himself, lying down at the feet of a

man. Even herbivorous superanimals, like the moose in “The King of Mamozekel” (VB 73-93), must prove themselves in battles against their own kind, their own fears, or generally “against the odds,” but Lone Wolf’s kingship is founded upon his (aberrant) willingness to follow others, a contradiction if ever there was one.

Despite his docility, both he and the Gray Master are too dangerous to be allowed to roam freely. Upon “capturing” Lone Wolf, Timmins considers that “nothing could be more lamb-like than the animal’s present demeanor, but Timmins remembered the fate of Joe Anderson’s powerful dog, and had his doubts” (262). The story concludes with the return of Lone Wolf to his previous master, Toomey. As for the Gray Master, his sparing of a human child throws the nearest settlement into confusion. The French population believes him to be a werewolf and desires to placate him: “Let him take a few sheep, or a steer, now and then, and remember that *they*, at least, were not troubling him” (112). The angst that has been growing in the English quarter is squashed by the act, and they conclude that he is “only a big rascal of a wolf, anyway, scared to touch a white man’s child, and certainly nothing for a lot of grown men to organize about” (112). This does not prevent a man from trapping him and donating him to a zoo, however, in the belief that he is “far too dangerous to be left at liberty” (123). Of the seven other “kings” in *Kings in Exile* who spend time in captivity, a seal, an eagle, and a panther all escape and end their stories alive and free. The panther is clearly a threat to human life, a fact reflected by the number of panthers who hunt human beings in Roberts’s stories, but when this individual returns to the wild, he does so without repercussions. Captive-reared wolves such as Lone Wolf and the Grey Master, however, whether or not they pose a threat to Roberts’s natural world, continue to threaten the human world, as it is manifested in both human beings and their livestock.

Lone Wolf, the Gray Master, and the dark wolf in “The Passing of the Black Whelps” are all superanimals, however dubious their claim to the title may be, and, as superanimals, they are highlighted as individuals in Roberts’s work. With the exception, again, of the lone wolf in “Wild Motherhood” (KW 28-36), and of the white spirit wolf in Roberts’s most supernatural animal story, “The White Wolf” (HC 66-84), these are the only wolves to have that distinction. In the remaining stories in which wolves appear as members of packs, each pack forms a deindividualized unit. Thus, Roberts’s average wolves not only lack many of the characteristics that contribute to anthropomorphization – high intelligence and morality being the central two in

Roberts's work – but they also lack individual personalities. Roberts is extremely reluctant to ascribe personalities to these animals, and in “The Passing of the Black Whelps,” he goes so far as to comment that the wolf-dog hybrids differ “more widely, one from another, than would the like number of full-blooded wolves” (340), suggesting that they receive what (little) individuality they have from the dog blood that flows in their veins and that, by extension, full-blooded average wolves function more like automatons. Even these hybrids, however, lack individuating characteristics. A single colour pattern is ascribed to all of them, gender is not indicated (although it is reasonable to assume that all are male), and in only one instance does Roberts split their number. This splitting is done neatly in half, as “[t]hree of the young wolves even went so far as to besiege a solitary cabin, where a woman and some trembling children awaited the return of the man” (341) – presumably, the remaining three siblings stayed home. In no instance, however, is one individual hybrid singled out from the others. Roberts treats his wolf packs in the same way.

In most instances, whether the wolves appear in realistic pack sizes of between four and seven members (Busch 49) or in ravening hordes, they function *en masse*, so that when Blue Fox sees wolves chasing him in “A Master of Supply” (VB 8-16), he perceives the pack as a single “greyish patch”; “[i]t was on his trail, that patch of death” (15). The leader of the pack is usually marked as separate from the rest, but only insofar as he represents the pack's thinking organ; he is the head responsible for the actions of the body. A mated pair is recognized in only three stories – “Wild Motherhood” (KW 28-36), “The Passing of the Black Whelps,” and “The Invaders” (FF 71-94) – and in the first case, the female appears for only a paragraph, while in the remaining two stories, the bitches are dogs, not wolves. Granted, it is more difficult to differentiate among wolves than it is to focus a story upon a single solitary animal or a couple of animals of different species, but Roberts makes little effort to round out the characters of his average wolves. Thus, except for the leaders and the mongrel dogs who run with them, there is little opportunity for anthropomorphization among wolves. With the exceptions of lupine superanimals, Roberts's wolves resist individuation and individualism, and so resist any anthropomorphism more potent than statements about the group's collective mood or feeling. Lacking many anthropomorphic qualities, wolves are alienated from Roberts's anthropomorphized natural world.

It is perhaps a symptom of this anthropomorphic lack that there are no wolf puppies

scampering about the pages of Roberts's stories, a fact that forms a sharp contrast to his many descriptions of and stories about bear cubs. Any puppies born in Roberts's stories grow to adulthood within a paragraph. By far the most detailed description of them is given in "Lone Wolf" (*KE* 239-67):

The four little sprawlers, helpless and hungrily whimpering, were given into the care of a foster-mother, a sorrowing brown spaniel bitch who had just been robbed of her own puppies.

When old enough to be weaned, the two brothers and the sister, sturdy and sleek as any wolf cubs of the hills, were sold to a dealer in wild animals, who carried them off to Hamburg. But "Lone Wolf," as Toomey, the trainer, had already named him, stayed with the circus. He was the biggest, the most intelligent, and the teachable cub of the whole litter, and Toomey, who had an unerring eye for quality in a beast, expected to make him a star performer among wolves. (239-40)

Lone Wolf's three siblings are given about the same amount of space as their spaniel foster-mother, and all pass out of the story within the first two pages of text. Lone Wolf receives a little more attention, but there is no mention of any of the activities in which he might or might not have engaged during his youth, or even of his colouring. There is, in fact, less description of the wolf pups than there is of the baby porcupine during the brief paragraph of its life in "In Panoply of Spears" (*KW* 110-23). When next Lone Wolf is described, it is with a short, transitional piece designed for the purpose of bringing him into adulthood: "'Lone Wolf!' It seemed a somewhat imaginative name for the prison-born whelp, but as he grew out of cub-hood his character and his stature alike seemed to justify it" (241). Other descriptions of wolf pups are far less detailed, and the passage describing the dark wolf's offspring is typical: "In due course the long-jawed bitch bore a litter of six sturdy whelps, which thrived amazingly. As they grew up they showed almost all wolf, harking back to the type – save that in colour they were nearly black, with a touch of tan in the gray of their under parts." ("The Passing of the Black Whelps" 339). Wolf puppies are endearing little creatures. In 1921, during the period in which official Yellowstone National Park policy actively encouraged the eradication of wolves, park ranger Henry Anderson brought ten wolf pups to Mammoth Hot Springs in Yellowstone after he had killed the mother (Jones 33-34). They were quite popular with visitors to the park, although they were soon destroyed (Jones 34). It is difficult to portray roly-poly bundles of fuzz as anything other than, at

the worst, mischievous and over-enthusiastic. They are also very easy to humanize. These two qualities are likely the impetus behind the swift growth of Roberts's wolf puppies, and possibly why he never mentions the presence of young wolves (e.g. puppies, adolescents, yearlings) in his wolf packs. Average wolves in Roberts's work are ravaging killers. Puppies of any persuasion are not.

It is understandable that a greater percentage of Roberts's wolves than bears are portrayed in a predaceous manner. Wolves, after all, are carnivores; bears are omnivores, and therefore consume sizeable quantities of insects and vegetable matter, neither of which lend themselves to portrayals as sympathetic victims. There are, however, significant differences between wolf predation and bear predation. In the first place, bears never instigate attacks upon wolves in Roberts's work. Bears kill wolves in "Ah-Wook, Lord of the Floes" (*TTW* 175-96), "The Bear Woke Up" (*EW* 36-50), "The Invaders" (*FF* 71-94), and "With His Back To the Wall" (*FF* 140-64), but in the first case the bear acts in defence of his kill, and in the remaining three stories the aggression is in response to attacks launched by the wolf packs. Bears are able to resist the wolves mainly because of their great strength, and also in part through aid they receive – once from a dog, and once from a man. In Roberts's stories, wolves never emerge from bear hunts as victors, although in reality wolves do on occasion kill black and grizzly bear cubs and adult black bears (Busch 65-67). Bear aggression toward wolves in Roberts's stories occurs in response to attack or theft, and the bears continue to respond aggressively until the wolves are dead or cease to attack. Bears are not unique in that they kill wolves in Roberts's stories, but they are second only to human beings in the sheer number of wolves they kill.

There are also differences between bears and wolves in both their relationships with the land and their relationships with their prey. Polar, grizzly, and black bears all hunt in their native habitats; they belong in the land in which they live, and the animals they hunt are not panicked by their presence – on the contrary, prey species may even muster enough courage to counter-attack in their own defence or in defence of their young or their mates, or even, on occasion, just because they dislike the proceedings.<sup>15</sup> Sometimes bears are the quarry and other animals – wolves, humans, and even oxen – are the hunters. This is not the case with wolves. The only animals who dare to hunt wolves in Roberts's stories are people. Although many wolves die in these stories, their deaths are usually losses incurred during their own hunting activities.

---

<sup>15</sup> See "Bill" (*TTW* 117-46).

Roberts's wolves are violent and unrelenting predators, behaving in a predaceous manner in all but one of the stories in which they appear as characters.<sup>16</sup> And while Roberts does incorporate wild wolves into stories where the setting is an arctic, prairie, or undetermined location, and their prey reacts accordingly to a familiar threat, more than half of the stories in which Roberts includes wolves have the animals suddenly appearing in the east, escaping from passing circuses, or sweeping down from their northern strongholds to terrorize the New Brunswick wilds.

Where wolves, wolfish dogs, and wolf-dog hybrids appear in the eastern wilderness, they come as ravaging killers who sweep across the land like a wildfire, leaving death and devastation in their wake. Roberts's description of lupine incursions into the east is especially telling in "In the Moose Yard" (*TTW* 227-49), in which he writes:

And now, ravaging down across [the snow] from their famine-stricken north, came the wolves. Not for nearly fifty years had those fierce and crafty slayers been seen in New Brunswick. They came not in great packs, as in lands where they expect to hunt great game, but rather in small bands of four or five, or at most eight or ten, scattering over a wide range of country, and disdaining no quarry however humble. Before them, on every side, spread panic. (245)

Roberts's wolves appear in the east as alien invaders, and Roberts writes panic into his eastern animals because they no longer know this danger. Wolves are a foreign threat, virulent and deadly, and not natural at all but an invasive species after half a century of absence. This unknown element generates terror in even the most powerful of the eastern animals. In "The Invaders" (*FF* 71-94), for example, two moose sense the new menace in the forest and

In the eyes of the pair there was a questioning fear, a certain wildness as of panic. . . . The sense of some vague, uncomprehended peril, approaching but still impalpable, was in the air. From the wonder and fear and amazement of other and feebler kindreds of the wild, it had come by some obscure telepathy to trouble the nerves of the great, imperturbable moose. (72-73)

Where wolves appear in stories of eastern Canadian wildlife, they come as invaders, as an alien, destructive force that has no fear and shows no mercy. Even Roberts's wily foxes and the birds of the air flee before the ravaging packs. Wolves, and the wolfish dogs and savage hybrids that may run with them, drive away everything before them.

---

<sup>16</sup> The exception is a minor character in the form of a captive wolf in "King of the Flaming Hoops" (*KE* 27-68).

This is significant, because the wolf comeback serves strictly as a literary device for Roberts. There was no coming back for the wolves during Roberts's lifetime. During the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth, North Americans engaged in a frenzy of wolf extermination. Barry Lopez writes that

A lot of people didn't just kill wolves; they tortured them. They set wolves on fire and tore their jaws out and cut their Achilles tendons and turned dogs loose on them. They poisoned them with strychnine, arsenic, and cyanide, on such a scale that *millions* of other animals... were killed incidentally in the process. In the thick of the wolf fever they even poisoned themselves, and burned down their own property[,] torching the woods to get rid of wolf havens. (139)

New Brunswick's wolves were gone by 1880 (Busch 124), and they have not yet returned. So Roberts deliberately invents – and recycles several times – the scenario of “foreign” wolves invading his home soil. It is likely that he chose eastern Canada because it was the territory most familiar to him, but there were many animals inhabiting the New Brunswick wilds at that time about which he could have written – and often he did. His stories of the arctic, which sometimes include wolves, prove that he could and did set his stories elsewhere, and it would have been a simple enough matter to continue to write about wolves in those settings. Alternatively, Roberts could also have written about wolves in New Brunswick but placed his time frame fifty years in the past, before wolves were extirpated from the area. His introduction of wolves as invaders is deliberate. By reiterating this basic story line, Roberts is able to cast wolves as villains by default. They do not belong in the land, and therefore have no rights to the land or the prey that resides within it; furthermore, they take food from the mouths of those who do have those rights, as these “ravenous new claimants” take a share of the already-scarce game from both human beings and the other animals in the forests (“With His Back To the Wall,” *FF* 140-64, 141).

Wolves are extremely dangerous animals in Roberts's stories, despite the scorn with which they are often treated. Their superanimals are not permitted to remain alive and free, as the superanimals of other species often are. Although the dark wolf of “The Passing of the Black Whelps” (*WT* 323-48) survives, his entire pack is destroyed, and he escapes aged, wounded, and probably doomed; the protagonist of “The Gray Master” (*KE* 107-36) is (re-)captured; and Lone Wolf (*KE* 239-67) tastes freedom only briefly before he, too, is led back into captivity. These are animals too dangerous to remain free. Wolfish dogs, wolf-dog hybrids, and pureblood wolves are

all capable of sweeping through a forest and destroying everything before them, decimating the populations of game animals, slaughtering far more than they require to satiate their hunger. In “Little Bull of the Barrens” (*NU* 195-209), seven wolves arrive in silence to terrorize a herd of musk oxen, killing at least four before the herd rallies and disperses them. Four oxen are far more than they need for sustenance, especially since this attack comes immediately after the wolves have left the bloody bones of a man they had been trailing for some time previously. Roberts describes the killing of a human being as “a victory which would make that pack for the future tenfold more dangerous. They had dared and vanquished man. But what was one man and a little bag of dry pemmican to such hunger as theirs?” (206). And this is the essence of the danger that the wolves represent. They are, above all else, a threat to human beings, both from without (as a physical danger) and from within (as symbolic of the bestial aspects of human nature). They are, in fact, one of only two species to successfully kill (and eat) a human in Roberts’s short animal stories.<sup>17</sup> If wolves are a threat to “the one master animal” that is the human (“The Passing of the Black Whelps” 340), then they must also be a threat to everything lower down in Roberts’s hierarchical vision of nature. And, as “the master animal,” it falls to human beings to put a stop to lupine ravages.

With the exception of “Little Bull of the Barrens,” conflicts between humans and wolves in Roberts’s work end badly for the wolves. Wolves attack people in nearly half of the stories in which wolves are characters; in nine of those stories, either all the wolves are killed in the attack, or the remainder flee, panic-stricken. In such stories, the humans are cast both as victims of the assault and also as avenging heroes. In “In the Deep of the Snow” (*B* 78-107), for example, a man rescues his young daughter from a pack of wolves. This can be portrayed as a laudable feat in itself, but the man confronts the pack in the belief that he is defending a beleaguered fox, or at most “some half-starved old Indian” (102). The act is altruistic, and, through the curious vagaries of fate, his altruism is repaid with the life of his daughter. Other animals may kill wolves in their own defence or in defence of their kin, but humans kill both to defend themselves and to defend others, even those they would otherwise have killed themselves. In “The Invaders” (*FF* 71-94), the paths of hunting wolves and two fleeing moose cross with those of two human hunters in the forest. Despite the fact that both men and wolves are hunting moose, the English sportsman, “[r]aging at the sight” of the wolves pulling down the bull, “rush[es] forward to [the bull’s]

---

<sup>17</sup> A shark kills an unnamed man in “The Prowlers” (*HS* 92-107).

defence” (91). The men and wolves are at first placed on equivalent footing here; the men are, as stated, hunting for sport, and the wolves are hunting for no known purpose, for they are “not hungry” (82). What puts the men on the side of the right is the empathy they feel for the moose who come within range of their rifle sights. The Englishman sees “only the splendid beast’s distress, and lower[s] the gun involuntarily” (89). Moved by the bull’s bravery, the men put aside their desire for a trophy and come to the besieged animals’ aid. Between them, men and bull moose kill every pack member except for the (now abjectly submissive) dog, who is adopted by the New Brunswickan guide. Contact with humans has recalled her to her “ancient allegiance” (92), just as it does with the wolfish dogs in other stories.

Bears in Roberts’s stories live in comparative harmony with their surroundings. While they may challenge the supremacy of those humans who enter their domain, they pose no threat to the ecosystems they inhabit. They are “wilderness humans” and serve no more as villains in nature than do the actual people Roberts places in natural settings. Because “advancing civilization [has drawn] an ever-widening line between man and animals, and men [have become] more and more engrossed in the interests of their own kind” (Roberts, “Animal” 210), however, the consistent presence of humans in the forest can be viewed as an invasion. The surest way to place humans alongside (although a step above) other animals is to unite them against a common foe: in this case, wolves. Like bears, humans become the wolves’ intended prey; the difference here is that wolves are, ironically, unnatural, both more recent invaders than humans (at least in eastern Canada, where most of the stories are set) and more destructive than the humans in Roberts’s stories, killing everything that they can rather than what is by rights their share. Wolves are further alienated from Roberts’s humanized natural world through the paucity of anthropomorphization in their characters: for the most part, they lack the sympathetic qualities that Roberts’s other animals possess, including morality and intelligence. Where anthropomorphism occurs, it is as a manifestation of negative traits, such as that of cannibalism, and even the anthropomorphic aspects of lupine cannibalism can be disputed, since the wolves do not acknowledge their wrongdoing. It is the reader who supplies the outrage and aversion to the practice. By defending themselves and other animals from the wolves, the human species is able to assume a role as the protector of the animal kingdom against a threat that is both physically and behaviourally alien. Wolves are far from omnipresent in Roberts’s stories, but where they exist, they exist mainly as a foil for both the rest of the natural world and human

beings. The dehumanized, denaturalized presence of the wolf in Roberts's stories provides an antagonist against which humans can stand with the rest of the natural world. Without the wolves or another similarly vilified species to fulfill this role, humans must necessarily stand against apart from the rest of Roberts's natural world, achieving not communion and community with the land, but only a temporary delusion of oneness. Unity with the rest of the natural world can be accomplished only because there are bigger, badder dangers to that world than human beings. All differences are forgotten when wolves are on the prowl.

## CHAPTER THREE

## BEAR OR WOLF: CHOOSING AN INNER ANIMAL

The chase is among the best of all national pastimes; it cultivates that vigorous manliness for the lack of which in a nation, as in an individual, the possession of no other qualities can possibly atone.

– Theodore Roosevelt, *Wilderness Hunter* xiii

Sport in every form and kind is horrible, from the rich man's hare-coursing to the poor man's rabbit-coursing. All show the 'tiger' that lives in our natures, and which nothing but a higher civilisation will eradicate.

– Henry S. Salt, *Animal Rights* 78

Roberts's treatments of wolves and bears in his short animal stories are often dissimilar, sometimes lacking points of comparison at all. Similarities between wolves and bears are painted in broad strokes: Roberts stresses the predatory aspects of both species, an unusual approach among nature writers; the degrees of anthropomorphism bestowed to them are highly divergent; and both have significant interactions with human beings in Roberts's work, while species such as ospreys, weasels, and beavers encounter them briefly, from a distance, or not at all. Within these broad strokes, however, lie the finer details of disparity. Bear anthropomorphization occurs in large part through the highlighting or creation of similarities between bear cubs and human children, as well as through the mirroring of bear and human actions. Wolf anthropomorphization is minimized and usually negative where it does occur, with limited mirroring actions and extremely abbreviated juvenile stages. Almost all of Roberts's bears demonstrate some knowledge of a moral code; moral wolves, however, are confined to the superlative specimens of their species. Lupine predaceous behaviour is portrayed negatively, often with the wolves playing the part of an invasive species or preying upon their own family. Ursine predaceous behaviour, however, while occasionally disturbing or frightening, is natural, the animals' power respected more than feared.

The number of differences between Roberts's portrayals of these animals initially suggests that they would make poor points of comparison in his work, but the contrasting representations of these two species are in themselves significant. In Roberts's work, both are large, mammalian predators, outwardly very similar in their utilization of wild spaces. This basic fact was not simply assumed at the turn of the twentieth century. Most of the nature writers of

that time focused on the beneficence of the creatures of the wild, stressing cooperation, altruism, and kindness, and if “it appeared impossible to mitigate the ferocity of carnivores, some nature writers simply omitted them from their studies” (Mighetto 20). Seton wrote of the compassion, love, and loyalty shown by wolves to each other; John Muir and Joaquin Miller emphasized the gentleness, timidity, and playfulness of bears. Roberts could conceivably have transformed his wilderness storyscapes into lands where wolves killed only the sick and the weak and bears rolled in fat and munched on berries and toadstools instead of meat. Instead, he has recorded – and even at times emphasized – the predaceous aspects of not only the oft scourge-like wolf but also of one of his preferred subjects, the bear. Why is it, then, that two species representing Roberts’s unusually predatory wilderness world should be portrayed so differently in both their predaceous behaviour and the other facets of their characters? The following pages answer this question by examining the symbolic values of bear and wolf as they are understood in combination with and opposition to each other, and by re-examining the role of the human being in Roberts’s work. Roberts wrote at a time when the longstanding fear and denial of a “beastly” aspect to human nature was coming into direct contact with acceptance of evolution and the desire to maintain a place at the pinnacle of a hierarchical animal world. This uneasy conflict between the desire to embrace an animal nature and the fear of that nature has resulted, in Roberts’s work, in two species whose symbolic values represent opposite extremes of what can be called *the animal*. The bear symbolizes the best of animal nature, the potential for good in that nature, against which human beings should measure themselves; the wolf symbolizes the worst of animal nature, the potential for the misuse of animal power, and should be avoided or destroyed. This chapter considers points of connection in the aggressive behaviours of ursine, lupine, and human characters, arguing that the species-related fluctuations of anthropomorphism in Roberts’s work have created a binary of the positive potential of the animal and the negative potential of the animal, potentials manifested in his bear and wolf. Roberts desired a return to “the old kinship of earth” (Roberts, “Animal” 213), and the people in his stories must embrace their own animal nature if they are to accomplish this kinship, but an unmitigated acceptance of animality entails an equal acceptance of the negative qualities associated with animality. Thus, the animal is split into bear and wolf, positive and negative potentials, and both Roberts’s readers and his human characters are left to choose between them.

As characters, Roberts's wolves and bears always remain representations, avatars of their species as humans understand them, and representations are inescapably flavoured by the minds that create them. Any animal in literature is, of course, not the animal itself, but an image of the animal as interpreted through the composer, and then again through the reader. The composition of this animal is inevitably influenced by one's experience of it in life, literature, and culturally transmitted knowledge. A diligent researcher strongly trained in classical and Biblical literature, Roberts would have had the symbolic values of a host of animals ingrained in him, and he should also have been aware of symbolic resonance in his work. He writes in "The Animal Story of To-Day" that, for early humans, "it was only the most salient characteristics of each species that concerned the practical observer. It was simple to remember that the tiger was cruel, the fox cunning, the wolf rapacious" (210), and he continues on to comment that animals in the new type of animal story, the short realistic wild animal story that Roberts did so much to shape, function as far more than flat symbols. While this is undoubtedly true, the wolf in his stories continues to be rapacious and his fox continues to be cunning. As representations of real animals, the characters in his animal stories are intrinsically symbolic.

What is it, then, that they symbolize? What do they *do* in Roberts's stories except play out the plots for which they have been designed? The preceding chapters have focused on the bear as a form of wilderness human, both as an ideal to which human beings should aspire and as a challenge to human supremacy, and on the wolf as a dehumanized villain whose nature as invading antagonist allows humans to ally themselves with the rest of the natural world in a way that would not be possible without a common external threat to both humankind and the wilderness world. This chapter focuses on the representation of the beast in these animals and in human beings in Roberts's stories, but it cannot do so without again considering the wider context of Roberts's cultural milieu and the nature writers' roles in it. Long before *On the Origin of Species* was published, Descartes had infiltrated his conception of the animal as "a soulless machine" (Baker 12), incising the human/animal relationship into a strict binary. What Descartes did in the mind, nineteenth-century industrialization proceeded to do in practice, alienating huge numbers of people from the natural world through urbanization and the actual use of animals as machines, and then as "raw material" to be processed in factories (Berger 264-65). Between them, Descartes and the Industrial Revolution debased both wild and domesticated animals to near worthlessness, except as resources and tools for human exploitation. It was into this

intellectual climate that Darwinism and its flag-bearer, the theory of evolution, arrived, reducing humans from an exalted position as spiritual beings separate from and hierarchically far above the animals to mere beasts whose position in the (animal) world was suddenly uncertain. Animals had become tools, animated machines, and Darwinism made people animals. Mighetto writes that the result was a general “malaise” at the end of the nineteenth century, as despondent intellectuals bemoaned that “human history... has been governed solely by the struggle for existence” (10). From this climate, the nature writers emerged. They used their stories to emphasize the kinship between human beings and (other) animals. By anthropomorphizing those other animals, imbuing them with human values and human morals, they could lift previously base creatures and in turn lift themselves. According to Mighetto, “[e]steem for man, it seemed, could be restored through his association with ‘virtuous’ animals” (12).

These perceptual shifts did not, of course, occur as smoothly as they have been presented here, but the motivation for raising the status of animals – and solidifying human status among those animals – had reached considerable proportions by the end of the nineteenth century. If Roberts’s bears are not wholly virtuous, well, neither are Roberts’s humans. If Roberts’s bears are not, as some of his contemporaries claimed, “good-natured, lazy, greedy, inquisitive and timid creature[s]” (“A Bear’s Claw” 3) who “[prefer] to avoid trouble when it is at all possible” (“A Bear’s Claw” 20), neither can it be said that his humans meet these criteria. The idea here is not to imply that Roberts’s bears and humans are exact equivalents or that his bears are furry humans in disguise, but rather to clarify that, despite the pedestal on which they have been (for the most part) placed, they are animals with strengths and weaknesses, virtues and flaws. And so are Roberts’s people. In most twentieth-century Anglo-Canadian and -American literature, bears are not hunters. The fact that they are hunters in Roberts’s stories may be due to Roberts’s desire to depict real animals as they truly are, but the preponderance of hunting bears in his stories suggests that their hunting also carries symbolic meaning. Roberts’s bears are hunters at least in part because Roberts’s men are hunters. Roberts wrote at a time when the ability to kill animals on a grand scale was a thing to be celebrated. Theodore Roosevelt, the man known as the conservationist president, wrote popular books that read, at times, as litanies of slaughter, for “[a]lmost invariably, [Roosevelt’s] most sensitive nature prose was followed by his desire to kill an animal” (Mighetto 33). Hunting was a manly man’s pursuit. Even the voices crying for the

conservation of animals did so in order that they could continue to be hunted. As William T. Hornaday puts it,

Man, the arch destroyer and the most predatory and merciless of all animal species except the wolves, has rendered a great service to all the birds that live or nest upon the ground. His relentless pursuit and destruction of the savage-tempered, strong-jawed fur-bearing animals is in part the salvation of the ground birds of today and yesterday. If the teeth and claws had been permitted to multiply unchecked down to the present time, with man's warfare on the upland game proceeding as it has done, scores upon scores of species long ere this would have been exterminated. (*Vanishing* 73)

That is, when humans cannot continue to kill vast numbers of creatures without exterminating them, the obvious answer is to kill off all of their other predators, for when only a few individual predators remain, they kill relatively few animals, "and for this we may well be thankful" (Hornaday, *Vanishing* 73). So, with hunting as a socially approved form of violence, Roberts's manliest men, the backwoodsmen who can read the forest like any other wild creature, are also killers. It is an expression of strength. It is also an expression of the animal.

That expression, approved of if not celebrated in Roberts's stories, takes many forms. In "Wild Motherhood" (*KW* 28-36), the protagonist hunts meat for his ailing wife and child, and his surplus kill of a wolf occurs because the hide and bounty will buy the family a few luxuries (36); in "The Fight at the Wallow" (*HW* 251-69), the man hunts for a trophy; in "The Invaders" (*FF* 71-94), the hunters are stirred by pity and kill wolves to defend their intended prey; and in the posthumously published story "Poetic Justice" ("Two Stories" 64-70), an injured man and a dog defend themselves by killing three attacking wolves. The men in Roberts's stories kill for food, for sport, for justice, and for survival. Those kills are, of course, always violent, and at times they are extremely animalistic. The man in "Poetic Justice," for example, literally grapples with his assailant, and "as the wide murderous jaws reached for his throat, with all his force he drove his long blade between them, to the hilt. With a choked screech, cut short in utterance, the great furry body collapsed upon him, half smothering his face in a rush of blood as he wrenched the knife free" (69). The imagery is graphic, and one must consider that there are few things quite so up close and personal as ramming one's knife hand down a wolf's throat. This is an animal's struggle for survival, and the man survives because he can win in an animal against animal fight. His success here is not simply because he is human and has human advantages in the form of

complex thought and technology, but because he is the better animal. Once involved in the fight, thought vanishes and instinct takes precedence. The struggle that occurs before the man brings his knife to bear suggests that an injured and weaponless man would be doomed in combat with a single wolf. Despite the fact that the knife is a more primitive weapon than the usual gun, it remains an effective tool, and the man is able to use it to win the fight. This technology decides the outcome of the struggle, but its use is guided more by animal instinct than by rational thought. Similarly, the English sportsman in “The Invaders” wades directly into the fight after a few shots, “swinging his rifle like a club” (91). His technology helps him to win the fight, but its use is motivated not by reason (which would dictate shooting with the gun rather than clubbing with it) but by instinct. It is not exactly what Hornaday was commenting upon when he lamented that the urge to kill and eat animals, without regard for their beauty, “is precisely the viewpoint of the Cave-man and the savage, and it has come down from the Man-with-a-Club to the Man-with-a-Gun absolutely unchanged save for one thing: the latter sometimes is prompted to save today in order to slaughter tomorrow” (*Vanishing* 203), but the comparison is an interesting one. Placed alongside the Man-with-a-Gun, the Man-with-a-Club is an uncivilized creature, untutored and animalistic, whose instinct to kill and eat other animals has been passed up to the Man-with-a-Gun, whose metal appendage is clearly symbolic here of not only masculinity but also technology, civilization, progress. Roberts’s sportsman and guide are likewise bastions of civilization in the wilderness – there is something achingly rational about the careful outfitting of a hunting party and the hiring of a guide to ensure its success – but when they see the moose under attack, they fling aside thoughts of trophies and leap to defend the beleaguered prey, using their high-tech weaponry less effectively but more viscerally (and certainly more proximately) in this high-adrenaline, low-reason circumstance. That is animal instinct. The gun is the weapon of a rational man; there is nothing rational about picking it up and bashing heads with it. The most civilized of men, an English sport hunter with a guide, becomes in an instant a Man-with-a-Club, and his instincts are virtuous.

Roberts’s animal world is not teeming with animals whose instincts are virtuous. His predators do not, as a rule, have moral codes so ingrained that they act automatically according to what is (by human standards) right. What his fictional world does have, however, is an animal against whom human actions and reactions may be compared: the bear. In “When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots” (*KW* 104-09), a bear hunts a strayed cow and her newborn calf because she

is in desperate need of food for her cubs; in “The Bear That Thought He Was a Dog” (*HC* 1-25), a bear defends a dead heifer from another bear because he knows her, and because she belongs to the man he considers his master; in “The Bear’s Face” (*KE* 271-88), a grizzly ruthlessly hunts down a man for no good reason that the man can come up with; and in “The Bear Woke Up” (*EW* 36-50), bear and dog join forces to survive an attack by a ravenous pack of wolves. Hunting for family, hunting in defence of one unable to fight back, hunting for no known reason (which is what trophy hunting might look like from the perspective of the prey), and killing to save oneself: this variety of purposes for attempting to kill occurs only in Roberts’s humans and bears. Other predators kill for food, and sometimes to defend themselves, and in one instance wolves hunt even though they are not hungry. They do not aggress on behalf of animals more distantly related to them than their offspring. They do not make peace with strangers or their prey in order to survive dangerous circumstances, as occurs in “The Bear Woke Up” and also between a man and bear in “The Truce” (*WT* 267-87).

Bears and wolves are not straightforward symbols in Roberts’s work. It is not so simple an equation as “bears are good animals and wolves are bad animals.” Bears are aligned with humans – or humans are aligned with bears – by the methods outlined in chapter one, by anthropomorphization, by physical description and mirroring. In Roberts’s “return to nature” (“Animal” 213), his bears stand as markers of what humans ought to become like. They are not perfect animals, and they are not sanitized animals. They are, however, overall the most moral, intelligent, and strong non-humans in the forest, and their example points the way toward the human potential for supremacy in the forest. Skilled hunters (for the most part), moral centres (for the most part), and generally the defenders in aggressive encounters,<sup>18</sup> they are animals who demonstrate the best possibilities inherent in the condition of *animal*. To embrace the bear is to embrace all that potential for good in animal instinct, animal reason, animal action and reaction. Like the bear, Man-with-a-Rifle-as-Club is able to use his animality for good – for justice and survival. Far from turning a human being into a “base creature,” this type of animality makes a place for aggression within socially acceptable constructs and celebrates the presence of even the smallest of moral virtues. This type of animality makes the return to nature and the celebration of the animal within an extremely desirable course of action.

---

<sup>18</sup> See “Ah-wook, Lord of the Floes” (*TTW* 175-96), “The Brothers of the Yoke” (*ST* 212-33), and “In the Year of No Rabbits” (*MK* 83-103) for examples.

The animal side of a human being is not, however, an altogether positive thing. It is a prevalent concept that one must rise above one's animal nature in order to attain humanity. John Berger writes of "[w]hat man has to do in order to transcend the animal, to transcend the mechanical within himself" (264); the failure to "transcend" exists today in the way people use words such as "animal" and "beast" to refer to other people. The terms are never flattering, and are often outright condemnations. Mary Midgley comments that "the popular notion of lawless cruelty" underlies "such terms as 'brutal,' 'bestial,' 'bestly,' 'animal desires,' and so on," and that these terms are contrasted against "the nature of man" (*Beasts* 26). No one who refers to another person as an "animal" does so with the intent of conjuring up a downy-furred bunny nibbling on clover, or a chickadee fluffing its feathers against the cold. The animal is primitive and bestial, intense and dangerous. It is certainly not something that should be reinforced or emulated. It is an aspect of humanity that must be conquered, denied, or otherwise subjugated.

This contradicts some previous statements about the animal made in this chapter. The animal is virtuous; the animal is bestial. The animal is to be welcomed; the animal is to be denied. The animal is a contradictory subject. On the one hand, Roberts desired a "return to nature"; at the same time, however, he feared a "return to barbarism" (Roberts, "Animal" 213). He wished for his stories to lead people "back to the old kinship of earth," but refused "to relinquish, by way of toll, any part of the wisdom of the ages, any fine essential of the 'large result of time'" (Roberts, "Animal" 213). The defining difference between human beings and other animals is part of this "wisdom of the ages," the technology that people carry into the wilderness, whether its use is guided by rational and civilized thought or animal instinct. But there is danger in the retention of technology. It does separate human beings from animals in Roberts's work, but it can be guided by animality, and animality is not always good. The bear, as symbol, shows one kind of inner animal possible to human beings, the kind that is released in the renewal of kinship with other creatures. But there is another possible inner animal, one that does not live in harmony with the rest of the world, and that does not take only what it needs, and that does not maintain a balance between the desires of the self and the needs of the world. That is another kind of animal altogether, and it finds expression, in Roberts's work, through the wolf.

The wolf as symbol for "the arch type of ravin, the beast of waste and desolation" (Roosevelt, *Hunting* 179) is not, of course, a new creation. By the Middle Ages, the wolf had become known as the "Devil's dog," and European colonists carried this cultural legacy with

them to the new world (Feher-Elston xiii). According to Barry Lopez, “the wolf was a symbol reflecting two human alternatives at war: instinctual urges and rational behavior... Throughout history man has externalized his bestial nature, finding a scapegoat upon which he could heap his sins and whose sacrificial death would be his atonement” (226). Therefore,

The wolf became the symbol of what you wanted to kill – memories of man’s primitive origins in the wilderness, the remnant of his bestial nature which was all that held him back in America from building the greatest empire on the face of the earth. The wolf represented ‘a fierce, bloodsucking persecutor’ (as Roger Williams called him) of everything that was high-born in man. Theodore Roosevelt... spoke... of the threat to progress represented by the wolf. (Lopez 142)

The threat to progress. The threat, perhaps, of backsliding to some vision of “Primitive Man,” Hornaday’s Man-with-a-Club whose only use for the animals around him is as a food source. That use, it should be noted, is the use that one animal has for another. Non-human animals have no desire to preserve others “for their beauty or their interest to [themselves]” (Hornaday, *Vanishing* 203): they hunt to fill their bellies.

Lifting animals above the level of animated machines had ethical consequences. Was it right to kill other sentient creatures? Was it moral? Until the end of the nineteenth century, the killing of other animals had been a popular and almost universally sanctioned pastime in North America. Even conservationists conserved, at least in the beginning, in order that game animals would still exist to be killed in the future. Although not an initially popular movement, nineteenth- and twentieth-century humanitarianism challenged indifference to animals’ suffering as a result of contact with humans (Mighetto 44-47). If people are animals and people have rights, then other animals must also have rights.<sup>19</sup> So although it is clear that Roberts, like most of the people of his time, continued to sanction and even advocate hunting, distinctions were being drawn and judgements made among different *ways* of killing, and Roberts actively discouraged several types through his animal stories. It is possible to note parallels between the types of killing he disliked in humans and those which he ascribes to wolves.

Roberts had an aversion to commercial killing. Although he only wrote one animal story – “The Aigrette” (*ST* 95-108) – which directly focuses on this, the piece is masterfully sculpted to depict the plume-hunter as a monster, the egrets as pitiable victims, and the wearers of

---

<sup>19</sup> For more information on the formation of this premise, see Henry S. Salt’s introduction in *Animals’ Rights*.

aigrettes as either witless ninnies or else bald-faced hypocrites. Roberts also disliked poaching, although it was the manner of and reason for the poaching that concerned him, rather than the fact of poaching itself. Certainly Tom Brannigan is not censured when he decides that he wants fresh meat, although “no one knew better than Brannigan that it was against the law of New Brunswick to shoot a moose at this season, or a cow moose at any season” (“Brannigan’s Mary,” *ST* 109-43 [110]). What Brannigan wants is food, and although Hornaday might rebuke the concept of killing for food, Roberts does not. Other kinds of poaching, however, are dealt with more severely. The plume-hunter in “The Aigrette” is a poacher who knows well that “[t]he law of that country forbade the shooting of egrets in the nesting season, when alone they wore the plume which women crave” (102). Roberts depicts him as a monster who uses his intelligence to advance cruel and immoral actions, writing that the man “felt that he was evading the law successfully if he hacked the prize from the living bird and released it while it was still alive and able to fly. If the bird died agonizingly afterward, who was going to swear that he was the slayer?” (105).

While it is possible that the poacher is obeying the letter of the law while he uses the egrets’ unceasing devotion to their chicks to snare and mutilate them, he is certainly not obeying the spirit of it, and Roberts’s censure is severe. Deadfalls, traps that require an animal to pull a baited trigger in order for a propped weight of stone or logs to fall on it, are another of his particular peeves, and in “Teddy Bear’s Bee Tree” (*CW* 134-54), the “teddy bear” in question is alone because his mother and sister have been killed in one of these traps. In this instance, little overt condemnation is provided: Roberts writes that “[t]he mother and sister had got caught together in a dead-fall – a dreadful trap which crushed them both flat in an instant. Teddy Bear, some ten feet out of danger, had stared for two seconds in frozen horror, and then raced away like mad with his mother’s warning screech hoarse in his ears” (140-41). Here it is the survivor who shows the ramifications of the trap. The reader’s sympathies lie with Teddy Bear, whose name suggests that he is a cuddly little animal, a baby, and this heightens the pathos of his subsequent depression and loneliness and hunger, and his sudden change from a “sunny-tempered” little cub to a “peppery” one (141). Teddy Bear is a child who is made an orphan by the deadfall – and by the man who set the trap, although he never appears directly in the story. The story of “The White-Slashed Bull” (*HW* 124-50) is similar, beginning with the slow death of the infant protagonist’s mother under one of these traps, “sobbing her life out on the sweet spring

air” (124). Instead of the trap, it is backwoodsman Jabe Smith who ends her suffering, wrathful over the “evil work of the game poachers” (124).

The poachers themselves do not appear in these stories, a fact that highlights the poor sportsmanship that this type of technology permits. Deadfalls do not test the skills of the hunter, depending instead upon the actions of the prey to be successful. Since the trapper need not be nearby to activate them, they can cause very slow, cruel deaths. Furthermore, these types of kills show more bloodlust than need on the parts of the poachers, who may not return to the kill sites in time to save the meat and hides from spoiling or being scavenged by others. Technology serves a needlessly cruel purpose when it takes the form of these traps. Similar arguments may be made for other kinds of traps, although Roberts’s backwoodsmen tend not to use them, and so they appear only rarely. A general opinion can, however, be gleaned from “The Moonlight Trails” (KW 1-10), a story in which a boy learns how to snare rabbits. When he returns to his set snares, the boy discovers that a fox has raided one, and while the fox has left only some bloody snow and the rabbit’s torn head behind, the snares’ work is graphic and glaring:

The boy felt a spasm of indignation against the fox. Then, turning his gaze upon Andy’s capture, he was struck by the cruel marks of the noose under its jaws and behind its ears. He saw, for the first time, the half-open mouth, the small, jutting tongue, the expression of the dead eyes; and his face changed. He removed his own trophy from his shoulder and stared at it for some moments. Then two big tears rolled over his ruddy cheeks. With an angry exclamation he flung the dead rabbit down on the snow and ran to break up the snares.

“We won’t snare any more rabbits, Andy,” he cried... (10)

While the boy at first resents the fox’s depredation, he quickly realizes that it is no different – and perhaps more justified – than his own killing, which is ultimately unnecessary. The fox has left nothing but what he cannot eat, while the boy’s rabbit is described as a trophy rather than food. To begin with, the boy is moved by “[t]he wild spirit of adventure, the hunting zest of elemental man” (5); only when this is removed (here by his indignation over the fox’s theft) does he truly see what he has done, and then the killing fills him with remorse, and this newfound sympathy for the animals leads him to reject the technology that caused their suffering.

Finally, sport hunting falls into the grey area of ambivalence in Roberts’s animal stories. Roberts wrote many stories in which sport hunting is just a fact of the tale, and occasionally even

a celebrated fact: “The Invaders” (*FF* 71-94) makes a good example, as do “When the Cow Moose Calls” (*WT* 311-19), “The Homesickness of Kehonka” (*LB* 31-39), and “Answerers to the Call” (*HS* 70-83). Other stories, however, hint at something distinctly unfair about human hunting practices, a sense of human wrongdoing that can easily go unnoticed. By far the best example of this is Roberts’s “A Treason of Nature” (*KW* 65-72), in which a bull moose responds to what he believes is “the voice of his mate, calling him to the trysting-place” (68) but which is in fact a moose call used by human hunters. Although Roberts writes that the betrayer in question is nature (71), there remains a flavour of deception on the part of the hunters, who use technology to lure their prey in with the voice of his mate. A similar ambivalence about the hunters’ actions is present in stories such as “The Return of the Moose” (*HW* 224-33), “The Theft” (*NU* 105-25), and “When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots” (*KW* 104-09).

These types of killing tend to fall into a few related categories: poaching; surplus killing; and general cruelty in the killing, toward the victims and/or the survivors. Again, human predation is not always a bad thing in Roberts’s stories. Through it, humans have a chance to prove their strength and often also their woodcraft against other forest animals. In Roberts’s condemned types of killing, however, the hunter rarely proves strength or woodcraft, and sometimes not even cunning. The egrets will not abandon their nests; there is no sport in slaughtering them there. The deadfall kills indiscriminately and requires little skill to make, relying entirely upon the actions of the prey to be effective, and therefore the poacher proves nothing by it, whether it succeeds or fails. Similarly, the sport hunters in “A Treason of Nature,” while acting from their knowledge of the forest and of moose and making the kill “in person,” rely upon their prey’s actions to be successful, and draw the animal to his fate with a lure.

So what does this have to do with wolves? Wolf and human hunting methods are disparate. Humans use technology; wolves do not. But this does not make them incomparable. The Inuit hunter and the polar bear mirror each other in “On the Roof of the World” (*NU* 3-13),<sup>20</sup> despite the fact that the man has a range of tools at his disposal, while the bear has only the weapons of his body. Part of that mirroring comes because their motives are the same. They hunt for food, not for pleasure, and so they target the easiest available prey, challenging each other only when they meet as competitors for that food. Animals need not use the same hunting methods for them to be compared. Despite this, however, one might consider it difficult to

---

<sup>20</sup> See chapter one for details.

evaluate wolf hunting and human hunting in Roberts's work. After all, wolves do not poach. They do use unfair means to catch their prey. They do not slaughter for commercial profit or for sport. Except that, in Roberts's stories, they do.

The wolves in "Little Bull of the Barrens" (*NU* 195-209) are seven in number. Ravenous because their accustomed prey, the caribou, have not returned to the area, they dare to hunt a man. They do deviate in an attempt to kill a herd of musk oxen, but when their initial charge is balked, they return to the man's trail, discover him asleep, and kill him. The man and the food he carries with him are not sufficient to quiet their hunger, however, for "what was one man and a little bag of dry pemmican to such hunger as theirs?" (206). They return to the musk oxen, and now it is the oxen who are caught unawares, and they also pay the price for their lapse in vigilance. From out of the storm,

Straight into the gap in the rear of the herd [the wolves] hurled themselves, slashing on every side with the aim of spreading a panic. A young bull, just in the act of whirling furiously to confront the attack, was caught full on the flank, and went down coughing, his throat torn clean out. A young cow, with one wolf snapping at her side, but failing to gain a vital spot, and another on her back, biting for her neck through the matted mane, went mad with terror, and charged straight in among the calves at the centre of the herd, making a way for the whole pack.

In a second several of the calves, bawling frantically, were pulled down. The wolves, mad with blood and their late triumph over the man, were in a riot of slaughter. The herd was cleft and rent asunder to the heart. The victory seemed overwhelming. (207)

Only the herd leader's grit and determination turn the tide against the wolves, leaving four of the seven "trodden down with the dead or dying calves" (209). Nevertheless, the damage is done. The wolves have killed at least four oxen, and at least one of those is an adult animal. That adult, the young bull who falls first, would feed the entire pack for days. Instead of restraining themselves, however, they continue the attack, with the result that four of the pack die in the *mêlée*. The continuation of the attack after they have killed one prey animal removes the attack from the realm of sustenance hunting and into that of hunting for fun or to feed bloodlust, conclusions substantiated by Roberts's phrases "the aim of spreading a panic," "mad with blood," and "a riot of slaughter." The first term may be hunting tactics, but the second and third

most assuredly are not. *Mad with blood* could serve as at least a partial definition of bloodlust, and in hunting, “riot,” as both a verb and a noun, has been used since the sixteenth century to refer to animals hunting “anything other than their legitimate quarry” (n.p.). Here, clearly, the wolves have lost all control; they are running amok, running riot, with no intention of satiating their hunger but are rather lost in the thrill of the hunt and the thrall of their bloodlust. Nor are these wolves the only ones to lose sight of the goal (procuring food) and to hunt without need. Roberts explicitly states that the wolves in “The Invaders” (FF 71-94) are pursuing two strong moose in spite of the fact that they are “not hungry” (82). This is not hunting for food. This is not killing in order to survive. This is a *riot* of slaughter and a madness born of blood. It is a side of hunting in which humans also sometimes engage, although wanton killing has long been subdued by myriad laws wedged around the act of hunting wild animals. That is why, in Roberts’s work as in life, the sportsman hunts for trophies instead of – or as well as – food. Referring to sport hunting, Roosevelt writes that “chase is among the best of all national pastimes” (*Wilderness* xiv), and puts forward the notion that killing half the males of a species (presumably in any given year) is “a reasonable number of bulls, bucks, or rams” to be killed by humans for sport (448). Like the sport hunters of Roberts’s day, his wolves kill far beyond their needs in “Little Bull of the Barrens,” and hunt without any need in “The Invaders.” While this latter story represents only one of a number of stories about wolves, their physical satiation here is significant. Most of Roberts’s wolves are ravenous and undernourished, making it remarkable that they are able to kill virtually everything they target; these wolves, however, are full-fed, and they continue to hunt. Even satisfied, Roberts’s wolves continue to hunt. Even threatened with the extinction of his resource, the egret killer continues to hunt. For both Roberts’s antagonist humans and his wolves, physical satiation fails to cause a cessation of hunting activities. The aggression continues unchecked, despite the risk for both of wiping out the very creatures they need for survival, for sustenance, or for the money necessary for sustenance.

Wolves also fight “unfairly.” Although they do not use lures or set traps in Roberts’s stories, they attack with greater numbers than their targets, and also when the prey appears to be vulnerable. The number of wolves in one of Roberts’s wolf packs averages out to about eight individuals where numbers are known or can be estimated, although there are a few stories with lone wolves or very small groups. Pack hunting is a survival strategy for wolves, and it works very well, but it may offend human sensibilities, because killing an animal by swarming it cannot

be called fair in any way. A hunt by a fair-sized pack can be likened to a deadfall in that the wolves' prowess as hunters is not (in Roberts's work) tested by it; their strategy in stories such as "Wolf! Wolf!" (*EW* 176-86) and "With His Back To the Wall" (*FF* 140-64) appears to consist of throwing themselves at their prey until it is worn down and exhausted. Their choice of prey, moreover, seems to be whatever crosses their path, without regard to whether the adversary in question is a worthy one, such as the strong bulls, bucks, and rams "who are the legitimate objects of the chase" (Roosevelt, *Wilderness* 448). In "When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots" (*KW* 104-09), a bear attacks a cow and calf not because they are vulnerable, but because she needs the meat. The match between the bear mother and the cow mother is a fair one, and in the end it is the cow who triumphs, killing the bear. By contrast, an entire pack of wolves may chase grown moose of either sex,<sup>21</sup> whitetail does,<sup>22</sup> men,<sup>23</sup> or arctic foxes<sup>24</sup> without qualm; it is all the same to them. The three wolves in "Poetic Justice" ("Two Stories" 64-70) attack a man and dog only because both are injured (68-69). In this story, their initial hesitation comes from wariness of the man, "because man was always an unknown quantity to them, a mystery, and with resources which they could never comprehend" (69). Tellingly, Roberts provides the wolves in this story with a reason *not* to attack – the mysterious man – rather than reasons *to* attack. Attack is these wolves' default setting, and Roberts justifies their hesitation rather than their assault. When they judge the man "harmless" (69), hesitation vanishes and they attempt to capitalize upon his vulnerability, returning to default as aggressors. In "Little Bull of the Barrens," the pack trails a man for weeks before killing him. First they kill his dogs, one by one (196), rather than attacking the collective number; then, when they are "maddened by failure and ravenous from the view of food denied" (205), they sweep down upon the man and attack him while he sleeps. Men are extremely powerful animals in Roberts's stories, and are killed only twice in all of Roberts's animal stories, once by wolves and once by a shark in "The Prowlers" (*HS* 92-107). Rather than facing men on equal ground, the wolves attack when they perceive vulnerability. That may be good hunting tactics, but it is not good sportsmanship. Finally, and also demonstrating abysmally poor sportsmanship, Roberts's wolves are poachers, committing crimes perhaps worse than those of most of the human poachers of which Roberts writes because of the

---

<sup>21</sup> See "The Invaders" (*FF* 71-94).

<sup>22</sup> See "Wolf! Wolf!"

<sup>23</sup> See "Little Bull of the Barrens" (*NU* 195-209) and "Wolf! Wolf!"

<sup>24</sup> See "A Master of Supply" (*VB* 8-16).

sheer quantity of their victims. As has been discussed in detail in the preceding chapter, Roberts's wolves often enter their stories as invading forces, taking game without the property right to do so. They enter another's territory – and not even territory held by other wolves, but territory from which the entire species has previously been absent – and, unwelcome, claim a share of the fleshly resources available to that territory. That is alien invasion, sometimes by what appears to be a veritable army of trespassers. And that is poaching.

So wolves are poachers, trespassers, wanton killers, and bullies who prey in force upon the weak. As some of Roberts's stories demonstrate, these are aspects of the animal that human beings are also capable of showcasing. The bear as an animal is strong and dangerous, but those aspects are often turned toward an ultimate good, guided by morality, intelligence, and courage. The wolf as one of a pack of animals is also strong and dangerous but, without a moral compass or any great degree of intelligence, it becomes a veritable anarchist in the wilderness, overturning all forms of order in favour of violence, lawlessness, and chaos. Of course, there are individual wolves who are more moral than this statement implies, superanimals who prevent their more impulsive brethren from munching on stray human children<sup>25</sup> or who experience misgivings about perceived misdeeds,<sup>26</sup> just as there are some bears hungry and savage enough to terrorize women and children.<sup>27</sup> On the whole, however, these two species represent two sides of the animal, the positive potential of it and the negative potential of it. It is up to the humans in Roberts's stories to choose which potential they wish to fulfill.

“With His Back To the Wall” (*FF* 140-64), a story which features both aspects of the animal in the form of a black bear and wolves and which includes the initially more ambiguous animal figure of a man, provides an ideal illustration. The story begins in the famine-stricken wilds of what is most likely New Brunswick, with a famished old bear who has in his latter years both acquired a great taste for “flesh blood” and “lost the happy knack of hibernating” (141). He is, then, essentially carnivorous, a native predator to this landscape whose best hunting efforts yield barely enough sustenance to keep him alive. He already embodies the metaphorical meaning of the title: he has had his back pushed to the wall by the famine, and he must either feed or die. So he hunts and, upon catching the trail of a rabbit, he displays great skill in stalking

---

<sup>25</sup> See “The Gray Master” (*KE* 107-36). See also chapter two.

<sup>26</sup> See “Lone Wolf” (*KE* 239-67). See also chapter two.

<sup>27</sup> See “The Cabin Door” (*ST* 234-55) and “The Window in the Shack” (*HW* 203-25).

his prey. Despite his prowess, however, he is doomed to failure from the outset, because he is himself the quarry of an altogether greater menace.

The bear has known of their presence for some time. He has been daunted by their howls and “the hair [has risen] stiffly along his neck with dread and fierce aversion” when he crossed their “alien footprints” (142). They are poachers on the range, come to claim a share of game that is already far too scarce, for it was “when all the predatory beasts native to the range... were already in the grip of famine [that] there came a rush of ravenous new claimants upon the game. Sweeping down out of the north in packs came the great grey timber wolves, which for the last half-century had been no more than a tradition in this corner of the world” (141-42). By unfair means, they take food from the mouths of those for whom it was meant, and now the “pale-eyed, ravaging intruders” (142), those “insolent invaders” (145), are hunting the bear. There is little need to anthropomorphize these animals. They possess no qualities a human should desire, and the chief emotive note in their hunting cry is one of hate (144).

The bear, however, is a nobler animal, who hunts in order to procure food rather than to destroy a hated quarry. His courage – and the degree of anthropomorphization bestowed upon him – immediately become apparent as he stands erect and considers “holding his ground and giving battle” right then and there (145). Courage alone will not save him, however, as he discovers when he catches sight of the pack, for

What a horde they were! The sight decided him. He would be surrounded, and would have no chance to put up a fight. He turned once more and started at a long, rolling gallop for that upthrust of rock. If he could reach it, he could there find some vantage ground and fight a less uneven battle (145).

He must combine courage with his intelligence and resourcefulness in order to have a chance for survival. When he reaches the point of his last stand and puts his back literally against the wall, he commits himself fully to the battle in spite of the overwhelming numbers against him, rising up to fight on two feet like a man and curling his lips back to expose “yellow fangs” (146). He is simultaneously humanlike and completely animal in his presentation, embodying what might be considered the most salient physical characteristics of both. The man stands erect, is upright in stature and (theoretically) also of morals; the animal exposes not teeth but fangs, and fangs stained by the blood of past prey at that. In this bear, the reader can see not just a humanlike animal but also the animal side of humanity, and see it as that positive drive for life and even

justice. Although he is not human, the bear faces his pursuers like one, with his back against the rock face and his fore-paws lifted as he silently waits for the wolves to make the first move.

The ensuing battle occurs between two very different types of animal. One, “his eyes blazing, his jaws and shoulders streaming with blood not all his own” (159), stands as defender, fighting to live; he is the primal animal, utterly focused on survival and using his wit and strength to help him achieve it. The other is the annihilating force, almost elemental in its power, whose imperative is not survival but death. The wolves form a veritable sea of foes, an initial “horde” joined by “another and larger pack” (157), and they swamp the bear with their numbers; he is “literally overflowed by the wave of wolves” (159). So many are they that a score of them have been squeezed out of a place in the battle and merely prowl around the fringes (160). There is nothing remotely realistic about this depiction of wolf numbers<sup>28</sup> – or, indeed, about the fact of the battle at all – and nothing remotely fair about the battle’s unfolding. The bear is alone, at least initially without allies, and the wolves are legion. They are anarchy in motion, and they care nothing for the deaths of their members, save when the wounded and dead provide them with more meat upon which to feast. Of all the wolves, only the leader of the initial pack is individuated, and only as an animal gone wrong. Like the bear –and unlike his lupine kin – he cares to preserve his own life, but rather than having this serve to elevate the leader above the rest of his cohort, this instinct for self-preservation only highlights the corrupt dynamics of the pack. The leader leads by virtue of size and strength and intellect greater than those of his comrades, but, unlike the bear, he uses his intellect for cowardice, dropping away from the initial charge because “[h]e [knows] what must inevitably happen to the first in that encounter” (158). Because of his feint, it is his “nearest follower” who takes the blow meant for him and who is the first sacrifice for the cannibals “which could not force their way into the fight” (158). The leader has wit enough to deceive, using his natural gifts to put his own safety first – and this attempt at self-preservation, laudable in the solitary bear, becomes another sign of the diseased social values of wolves. The leader fails to lead; despite this, the bear soon dispatches him, striking, perhaps, a blow for justice.

It is in this story that wolves and bears are most clearly opposed. Although the two species do battle in several of Roberts’s other stories, it is never more patently in a win-or-die

---

<sup>28</sup> Wolf packs rarely number more than ten individuals; each pack is territorial and does not amalgamate for hunting purposes.

struggle for survival than it is here. As always, the wolves are the aggressors; they embody that aspect of animal in which aggression is automatic, a rote response to stimuli. In *Beasts and Man*, Mary Midgley proposes that “*man has always been unwilling to admit his own ferocity, and has tried to deflect attention from it by making animals out to be more ferocious than they are*” (30), and uses wolves as a case in point. This comment has limited applicability in a landscape in which humans are also animals, but it is certain that the answering ferocity of bear and man in response to lupine aggression is both overshadowed by that aggression and lauded as a weapon against it. In this story, as in others, the bear’s ferocity manifests in both defensive and offensive actions. First he hunts prey of his own, although he is unsuccessful on this occasion, and then he defends himself against other predators, as Roberts’s bears always do successfully unless the other predator is human. Because the wolf pack interrupts his hunt, however, this bear’s offensive ferocity is muted; he does not have the opportunity here to engage in any kind of struggle with his prey, and this places the emphasis securely on the defensive aspects of his savagery. His power is awesome. His aggression is a specific response to specific stimuli, and is specifically sanctioned by his circumstances. For the bear, aggression, a sign of the animal, exists within socially acceptable boundaries: food and defence. Lupine aggression, however, wipes out boundaries in the same way that the wolves attempt to wipe out every animal in their path. It destroys moral and social codes instead of reinforcing them.

But the wolves and the bear are not the only animals in this frozen landscape. There is also Job Thatch. He is a man of initially uncertain significance, both a hunter and a trapper in a forest that may or may not be his own natural habitat. The bear belongs in this landscape. The wolves clearly do not. The man stands between, potentially part of the landscape, and potentially a foreign body. As a trapper, he is presumably a commercial killer, like the plume hunter of “*The Aigrette*” (*ST* 95-108), and traps animals for their furs rather than for his own nutritional needs. As a hunter, however, he is “a better hunting animal than the best of [the four-footed hunters],” save that his sense of smell is less finely developed (147). He hunts no more than he needs to survive (148), and he is so proficient, in fact, that he would have weathered the famine none the worse for wear had he not had the misfortune to break his leg in the midst of it. At this point, Thatch and the bear begin to mirror each other in subtle ways. Like the bear, Thatch finds himself confronted by the formidable foe of his hunger, and he too “ha[s] his back to the wall” (153), in a metaphorical sense. The animal is alive in him, in his struggle to return to his cabin, in

the “something” that cries “a sharp warning in the depths of his brain” to wake him when he would have slipped into sleep and death (151). It is not entirely clear, however, what *kind* of animal it is that prowls in Thatch’s human brain. The mirroring with the bear continues, however, perhaps as a kind of foreshadowing, and it dawns on Thatch that there is “a special reason, outside the severity of the winter, for this unwonted scarcity of game” (154). It is the wolves who have taken the meat that should have been Thatch’s, and the alien presence outside his shelter turns Thatch into a native inhabitant of the forest, one among many starving because their meat has been taken away. They are the reason Thatch’s traps catch no game in his convalescence; despite the difference in their situations, the wolves have backed Job Thatch up against the wall as surely as they have driven the black bear to his own, more literal, wall. Thatch and the bear find themselves joined, unwittingly, by their common assailants, and when they finally meet, they must work together to fend off their foes. It is at this point that Thatch must choose definitively what kind of animal he is going to be.

When Thatch finally drags himself out of his lair in an effort keep himself alive on a wolf’s flesh, he spots the pack closing in on the old black bear. Upon seeing this, his first impulse is *not* to kill a wolf or two, as per his initial plan, a plan which, carried out, would have positioned him as an avenger of the ravaged forest, out to punish the invading horde. Rather, his desire is “to shoot the bear instantly, bear’s meat being good,” an impulse checked only by the knowledge that the wolves would prevent him from tasting so much as a morsel of the carcass (157). To kill the bear at this point would be both to procure a meal for the wolves and to throw his lot in with them, as a creature who desires another animal’s death as soon as he is aware of its existence. His sympathies shift, however, when he perceives that he is himself a potential meal for the wolves. After making this connection, he applauds the bear’s courage and strength, and urges him on from a ringside seat, as it were. His cries of encouragement draw the wolves, and man and bear battle the pack together, the bear with his natural weapons, Thatch with technological aid in the form of his rifle and axe. In the fray, the wolves are utterly bloodthirsty, attacking anything in their line of sight, including bear, man, and injured and dead pack mates. Now fully in sympathy with his “pard” (157), Thatch uses his weaponry to eliminate the faction that has been attacking him and, seeing that “the fierce old fighter would soon be downed” (161), takes up his rifle in the bear’s defence. It is this action that finally breaks the wolves’ assault. Daunted by the ferocity parting their furred sea from two sides, the wolves desist “sullenly,

lingering, as they went, to tear a mouthful or two from a dying comrade” (161), committing one last social, moral sacrilege before exiting stage right. And when the wolves are gone, Thatch and the bear stand before the reader alone together for the first time.

It is a climactic moment. The bear waits, “lift[ing] his gaunt and bleeding head [to stare] defiantly at Job Thatch. If this was another enemy – well, he was ready for another fight. Thatch slowly lift[s] his rifle” (162). The choice is Thatch’s. The bear has no hope of winning this fight, although he has no way of knowing this. He stands just as ready to defend himself against Job Thatch as he did against the wolves – and just as ready to let the confrontation pass. He is powerful, but not wantonly aggressive. Man and bear await Thatch’s decision. The potential for either the wolf or the bear is in him, but not both. He cannot be at once one and the other. With the rise of his rifle, he considers betraying their battle-born alliance to fill his belly. A wolf would, without a second thought. Wolves *have* in this story, and their willingness to turn on each other is an integral part of what makes them wolves in Roberts’s work. Before, Thatch spared the bear because he had no choice. This time, however, he chooses to spare. Although he knows that “[b]ear meat’s a sight better eatin’ than wolf,” in the end he lowers his weapon and

“[n]o, old pardner,” he continue[s], speaking aloud and directly towards the doubtful-looking beast, “that would be a low-down trick to play on ye, seein’ as how we’ve fought shoulder to shoulder, so to speak. An’ a right slick fight ye’ve put up! Here’s my best wishes, an’ may ye keep clear of my traps!” (162-63).

Thatch and the bear each choose to eat wolf, to consume and so destroy the wolf, and thus feed the bear.

The pathos of this final scene is difficult to ignore. In this outrageously fantastical story, two native species are brought together to defeat a horde of alien invaders, and after the enemy has been vanquished, the man decides that the animal left standing before him is far more a friend than a foe. Job Thatch could have exited the scene merely by lowering his gun, gathering up a few wolf carcasses, and trudging off. Other animal stories, such as “Wild Motherhood” (*KW* 28-36) and “When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots” (*KW* 104-09), end with such understated sentiments, leaving the reader to conjure emotion out of simply sketched imagery. Not so here. Here, the human protagonist speaks directly to the ursine protagonist in an act of blatant anthropomorphization that is scarce in Roberts’s work. Thatch reiterates his opinion of the bear as a “pardner,” and considers the trickery involved in shooting the animal now (implying the

bear's knowledge of their erstwhile alliance and a mutual trust). Finally, he offers a fond farewell. Anthropomorphization is critical here to the formation of sentiment. Without Thatch's words throughout this scene, what is a single battle in the story could have been turned into two independent battles, one between wolves and Thatch, the other between wolves and the bear. Without a battle alliance, Thatch would have had no connection to the bear and no reason to refrain from shooting him. He needs meat, after all, and the whole forest is his freezer: a surplus would keep him until his leg finishes mending. It is evident, therefore, that Roberts's need to affiliate the man and the bear supersedes his desire to "make [his] stories accord, as far as the facts of natural history are concerned, with the latest scientific information" ("Prefatory Note," *HS* v-vii [vi]), and to present plausible stories about real animals (as opposed to animals from fable or fantasy) to the public.

Accentuating this elision of the difference between Thatch and the bear is Thatch's decision not to use technology against the bear. As in the other confrontations between humans and other animals mentioned in this chapter, Thatch meets his attackers with that marker of civilization that demarcates a definitive difference between human beings and other animals in Roberts's work: technology. The use of technology by human beings marks a retention of the "wisdom of the ages," the "fine essential[s] of the 'large result of time'" that Roberts was so loath to relinquish as a toll for returning to "the old kinship of earth" (Roberts, "Animal" 213). When a man hangs on to his rifle, he retains his hold on the civilization from which he has come, even if his use of the rifle is mediated by animal instinct. The man in "Poetic Justice" ("Two Stories" 60-81) wins his battle with a knife, the hunter in "A Treason of Nature" (*KW* 65-72) draws his prey in with a moose call, and the sport hunter in "The Invaders" (*FF* 71-94) fights with a rifle used as a club. In each case, the defining mark of difference – and often the difference between humans succeeding and humans failing – is a piece of technology. In "Little Bull of the Barrens" (*NU* 195-209), the victim of the wolf attack is caught asleep. Like the man in "Poetic Justice," he seizes "[o]ne great hairy form... by the throat with both hands, as its fangs snapped within an inch of his face" (205), but because he has no weapon to hand, he is borne down from behind by a "wave of furred, fighting bodies, enormous and irresistible... blotting out everything, even to the desire of life" (206). Without technology, without the aid of the civilization from which he springs, the trapper is not a strong enough animal to defeat the wolves. Job Thatch, however, has two pieces of technology to hand. One is the axe, a deadly

weapon that is nevertheless one of desperation, for fighting in close spaces; the other is the more traditional rifle, a long-range weapon designed specifically for killing. Thatch does not hesitate to use these against the wolves on his behalf and the bear's, affirming and reinforcing the distance between himself and the wolf animal. Later, he decides not to use that same technology against the bear, a decision that at least partially elides the gap that Thatch's battle with the wolves has created. With the wolves, his use of technology differentiates him from them; with the bear, his *lack* of use of the technology aligns him with the animal. Thatch's subsequent speech and expression of kinship toward the bear completes this closure of this gap, and the two part ways as equals.

In "With His Back To the Wall," man and bear work together to break the wolves' sovereignty over the wilderness. It does not always happen this way. Sometimes it is a man and dog who vanquish the wolves, or a bear and dog, or a couple of men and moose. The composition of the opposing forces changes, but the wolves are always routed, killed, or otherwise foiled in the end. As adversaries, they help to make exciting battles and exciting stories, but they do not belong in Roberts's wilderness, with its tameable moose and moral bears. Even the lupine superanimals – the Gray Master, Lone Wolf, and the dark wolf of "The Passing of the Black Whelps" (WT 323-48) – must be banished, to death, to captivity, or to fugitive solitude, where their threat to humanity and nature is suitably diminished. Even at their best, the threat of their kind of animal is too strong to be tolerated.

As for ursine superanimals, it is difficult to definitively identify them. Roberts's average bear is brave and strong, moral and intelligent. There are few qualities left for an individual animal to acquire that would turn it into a superlative animal, better than all the rest of its kind. An average bear by definition cannot be a superanimal. An individual specimen may be more treacherous, foolish, or cruel, but traits such as intelligence cannot be heightened further unless they are to exceed the "varying limitations" of what is possible for them to achieve (Roberts, "Animal" 212). It may thus be possible to think of Roberts's bears to be a *superspecies* within his work because of their vast potential and varied possibility. Where wolves represent the threat of the animal to both nature itself and to human beings, bears represent the promise of the animal, its potential for greatness within the natural world and human beings. Time and time again, Roberts's backwoodsmen choose the bear: they choose to suckle beside a young cub rather than

to kill the sleeping mother bear;<sup>29</sup> they choose to fight alongside the bear and to honour the alliance thus engendered;<sup>30</sup> and they choose to fight for survival rather than conquest, to satisfy their needs instead of their bloodlust.<sup>31</sup> The wolf-men are those who poach and kill for pleasure and for profit, and they pass quietly through Roberts's stories, never recurring in subsequent tales, because, like the wolves, they do not belong. Like the wolves, they are a threat to the natural world, bringers of chaos instead of order. Although they wreak havoc while they are present, they quickly pass away. Those who remain are bear-men, men of wood-sense and integrity. As men, they battle the bear because they cannot achieve supremacy in the wilderness without challenging the strongest thing in it. As men, they learn from and acquire the traits of the bear because they cannot achieve supremacy in the wilderness without embracing the promise of the animal within, the constant drift toward good, restraint, order. These men recur and, recurring, belong in their landscape. Where they and the bear triumph, wolf-men and the wolf cannot thrive. Thus do men who have good intentions in their hearts become the guardians of the forests they once invaded.

---

<sup>29</sup> See "The Cave of the Bear" (*TWW* 168-91). See also chapter one.

<sup>30</sup> See "With His Back To the Wall" (*FF* 140-64).

<sup>31</sup> See "From The Teeth of the Tide" (*HW* 234-50), "The Moonlight Trails" (*KW* 1-10), and "Wild Motherhood" (*KW* 28-36).

## CONCLUSION

In the make-up of most normal human beings there is something always ready to respond to the call of the wilderness. Civilization, with all those characteristics which are a product of it, is but a veneer which has been slowly and laboriously applied upon the foundations of the primitive. Where the foundations are sound, it is good for soul and body alike to be kept mindful of them, to get back to them from time to time and be reassured as to their substance and their truth.

– Roberts, *Eyes of the Wilderness* 1

Bears and wolves have specialized functions in Roberts's work. The former are highly anthropomorphized, compared extensively to humanity in general and, more specifically, also to many of the human characters in his stories. They play a unique role in Roberts's animal stories, as not only the (non-human) species that appears most frequently in these stories, but also the strongest, smartest, and overall the most moral of all the non-human species in Roberts's work, in spite of – or even because of – their predaceous natures. They demonstrate what Roberts's "primitive" foundations of humanity can be and achieve. They are the best of all the forest creatures and, as a species, provide an illustration of the soundness that can be found in the human animal as it exists beneath and outside of civilization, a positive potential of animality that should be tapped as people return to both their own natures and to the natural world. Bears are one side of the argument about the animal, the side that elevates what is human by elevating what is animal (and so also human), and Roberts's human characters consistently align themselves with bears, even at times working to elide the gaps between the two species.

Wolves form the other side of this argument. They are base creatures, at times almost mechanical in their reactions, and they consistently oppose both bears and humans in Roberts's work. They are overwhelmingly predatory, and in only one instance do they occur in a story without initiating an attack on at least one other animal in that story. Even in this lone exception, "King of the Flaming Hoops" (*KE* 25-68), the briefly-mentioned circus wolf is part of an altercation and is "cruelly mauled," by an overexcited African lion (57). Although they appear in relatively few of Roberts's stories, where wolves do appear, they have an important function. As intensely aggressive and invasive predators whose persistent and unfair hunting practices have the ability to exhaust natural prey resources, wolves oppose the rest of the animals and so nature itself in Roberts's stories. Even lupine superanimals are too dangerous to remain alive and free in

these stories; despite his key role in preventing his pack from killing a human child, the Gray Master's biggest admirer, Arthur Kane, acknowledges that "such a dangerous and powerful creature could not be set free anywhere" (*KE* 107-36 [131]). Wolves oppose bears by the mere fact that they are rival predators, a fact cemented by repeated confrontations between the two species. In each of these confrontations, wolves are clearly the infringing and immoral party, because their numbers give them an overwhelming advantage,<sup>32</sup> because they are attempting to steal something that is the bear's property,<sup>33</sup> or simply because the wolves form a sharp contrast to the bear, whose motives for aggression are defensive and extend only to the desire to keep itself alive and its property secure.<sup>34</sup> By functioning as external and foreign threats, wolves align human beings with the natural animals of the wild, and by extension with nature itself, as has been elucidated in the previous chapter's analysis of "With His Back To the Wall" (*FF* 140-64). Several times wolves attack people without provocation, just as they attack bears, and people defend not only themselves against their attackers, but also other animals, such as bears, dogs, and moose. By unifying the rest of the natural world against them, wolves include human beings with the other wilderness animals in a way that would be difficult without a common external threat to draw the two together.

As has been demonstrated in the preceding chapters, human significance is inescapably tied to non-human animal significance in Roberts's stories. Immoral and unsporting hunters and trappers display many of the faults that likewise identify wolves as immoral and unsporting. Fairer backwoodsmen acquire ursine attributes – or bears acquire those of fair humans – even to the point of suckling at a mother bear's teats alongside her young cub in "The Cave of the Bear" (*TWW* 168-91) and addressing a bear as an equal in "With His Back to the Wall." What ultimately separates people from both wolves and bears is the human use of technology as a resource upon which they can draw in order to establish themselves as the superior species. Poachers use traps or snares to catch their victims, while wolves must rely on the onslaught of their numbers to overpower stronger foes. When people battle wolves – or bears, for that matter – they win through their use of technology, through the employment of rifles and knives and axes, traps and ropes and human-made dwellings, and even the judicious use of fire. A man loses to the wolves only once, in "Little Bull of the Barrens" (*NU* 195-209), and here only because the

---

<sup>32</sup> See "With His Back To the Wall" (*FF* 140-64).

<sup>33</sup> See "Ah-wook, Lord of the Floes" (*TTW* 175-96).

<sup>34</sup> See "The Bear Woke Up" (*EW* 36-50) and "The Invaders" (*FF* 71-94).

wolves return unexpectedly, catching the man asleep in the open and without a weapon near. Without technology, that physical trapping of civilization that is so easily carried into the wilderness, human beings are no more than equal to the wolves and bears who populate Roberts's storyscapes. With it, they have the means to reign over all the other animals in the forest. That technology, however, is neutral in nature and can be used for good or for ill, to build alliances or to forge enmities. Without exception, Roberts's backwoodsmen use their weapons to distance themselves from wolves, by demonstrating this major difference between them and by killing them. Even the human-friendly Lone Wolf is inevitably chained and returned to the circus from which he escaped ("Lone Wolf," *KE* 293-67). In several stories, however, human beings deliberately refrain from using technology against bears, thus eliding and diminishing the differences between the two species. This is most evident in "With His Back to the Wall," but a man also refrains from killing a mother bear and cub in "The Cave of the Bear," and again in "From the Teeth of the Tide" (*HW* 234-50), not because the individual in the latter story has lost his desire for their pelts, but because the bears have impressed him with their bravery and determination. Human-bear confrontations do not always end this way, because humans must challenge the strongest and best creatures in the forest if they are to attain a place at the top of a hierarchical vision of animal life; the intentional spurning of technology to preserve what is in fact a large and predatory competitor for resources, however, serves to dismiss both the competitive aspect of their relationship and the essential difference between the two species. Thus, through this decision not to use technology against the bears, and through anthropomorphization, Roberts aligns his backwoodsmen with bears and the positive potential of the animal.

Only a small percentage of all the Roberts scholarship examines his short animal stories to any extent. Of those few dozen articles, all but a few approach Roberts's animal stories as either exclusively children's literature or in a comparative format, comparing his stories with another genre in which he wrote, or with that of another writer of animal stories, usually Ernest Thompson Seton. These analyses are valid, but not sufficient to encompass the nearly two hundred short realistic wild animal stories that Roberts wrote over a fifty-year span. The foregoing chapters have compared two different species of animals as they appear in Roberts's work, examined the depictions of predaceous behaviour and the fluctuating levels of anthropomorphism in these animals as they mesh with and deviate from the accepted norms of

the early twentieth century, and explored human activity in Roberts's animal stories. There is no existing body of Roberts scholarship to call upon with regards to these aspects of his animal stories. These chapters are, therefore, not just another addition to the voluminous vaults of Roberts scholarship, but a new hue added to the Roberts scholar's palette, for the study of Roberts's work is far from complete if it dismisses his short animal stories.

This particular analysis of Roberts's animal stories has come to some conclusions that feature animals as they are significant to humans rather than animals as they are significant in and of themselves. Much ecocriticism considers the problem of anthropocentrism in scholarly work about non-human animals. It may be impossible to escape anthropocentrism completely; Thomas Nagel argues in "What Is It Like To Be A Bat?" that a human being (here the writer) can, after all, never truly *know* what it is like to be anything other than human, humans being capable only of *imagining* the state of being Other, with an imagination inherently limited by the resources of the human mind (439). All the observation and research in the world, all the accumulated knowledge of what it would be like to be something other than oneself, and all the powers of imagination cannot bridge the gap between There and Here, between what is the observer/writer's perspective and what is the observed/written's actuality.<sup>35</sup> So although Roberts wrote that the only way people "can come really to know [their humbler kindred]" is to "look at the perilous adventures of life through their eyes" ("Introductory," *EW* 1-6 [6]), it was inevitable that little human norms, values, opinions, and the like should seep in or be consciously incorporated into his stories. Thus, in Roberts's work, the bands of moose yarding for the winter are unfailingly led by a large male patriarch who cares for and protects his family;<sup>36</sup> thus cougars pair to form nuclear families;<sup>37</sup> thus human conceptions of morality pepper the souls of non-humans and play integral roles in the shaping of those animal characters. Additionally, as has been evident throughout these chapters, Roberts often cast human beings as central characters in his animal stories; in fact, there are only a few stories involving wolves in which the wolves do not come into direct contact with people. Given all this, to dismiss or ignore the human element in Roberts's animal world would have been to limit the scope of the texts and the significance of

---

<sup>35</sup> See Crist 58-61 for more information on the observer's There and the observed's Here.

<sup>36</sup> See "In the Moose Yard" (*ITW* 227-49), "The Moose and Rusty Jones" (*EW* 208-20), and "Wild Motherhood" (*KW* 28-36).

<sup>37</sup> See "Do Seek Their Meat From God" (*LB* 1-6) and "The Theft" (*NU* 105-25).

the wild animals, and to dismiss Roberts's conviction that humans are themselves animals and share an "essential kinship" ("Author's Note," *TTW* v-vi [vi]) with all other creatures.

These pages have approached Roberts's stories from historical angles, both zoological and cultural. Although he lived into the 1940s, Roberts's foundational years were in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and he published most of his work originally before the end of 1914; with the exception of three titles, compilations of his short stories published after 1918 are reprints of old titles, new arrangements of old titles, or old titles with an additional one or two new stories. While there can be benefits to applying more modern literary theories to older literature, such an approach runs the risk of losing historical and cultural accuracy and significance, distorting the "environmental" impact upon Roberts's work. More contemporaneous theory is used here as historical and cultural background, as supporting documentation rather than the substance of the work, thus allowing Roberts's bears and wolves themselves to dominate the content of the preceding pages. These chapters have, of course, made use of some contemporary zoological knowledge about North American animals, at the same time attempting to determine what it is possible for an interested man of both a scholarly and rural background to have known or inferred about animals in the early twentieth century. This historical approach is vital for establishing which zoological facts are replications of scientific and quasi-scientific material that contains errors (such as placing the ursine breeding season in the autumn), and which are of literary significance (such as the number of offspring generally born to a black bear sow). It is also important for determining North American cultural tolerance for predators in general, and bears and wolves in particular, and for discovering important discrepancies between plotlines and reality, such as the recurring tale of lupine invasions into eastern Canada. The historical approach has established a solid factual foundation for the building of literary scholarship in these pages.

The preceding chapters have taken a close look at an area of Roberts's writing that has thus far received relatively little attention in academia. It has scratched the surface of Roberts's short animal stories and discovered an exploration into the concept of the animal, the definition of which was disputed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and which remains unresolved today. It has explored how, in Roberts's work, animals can function as representations of human animality in order to determine what animality is possible in the human psyche, and what animality is actually desired. Despite some dated concepts, Roberts's work retains its relevance

in a world where people continue to speak of animals without including themselves among the species represented by the term, commenting upon human power, human responsibility, and the moral and physical consequences of acting – as animals and as humans – in the world. In Roberts's animal world, intent is oftentimes the only difference between a moral act and an immoral one. Good intentions may be flagstones on the road to hell, but the roads are few and earthen in Roberts's storyscapes. In them, intent constitutes a choice between types of animal: bear or wolf, moral or immoral, virtuous or depraved. Whether or not one agrees with the choice of the avatars that represent this binary, or the plausibility of a true binary at all, Roberts uses his short animal stories to make a point that cannot be disputed: animality is part of every human being. Without direction, it will manifest as bear or wolf or something in between, but it will manifest, because animality is human.

## WORKS CITED

- Adams, John Coldwell. Introd. *The Lure of the Wild: The Last Three Animal Stories by Sir Charles G. D. Roberts*. Ottawa: Borealis, 1980. 1-9.
- . "A Preliminary Bibliography." *The Sir Charles G. D. Roberts Symposium*. Ed. Glenn Cleaver. Ottawa: U of Ottawa P, 1984. 221-49.
- Baker, Steve. *Picturing the Beast: Animals, Identity and Representation*. NY: Manchester UP, 1993.
- "A Bear's Claw: with Some Account of The Black Bear, his Wide Distribution, his Curious Variations of Color and his Unswerving Characteristics and Habits." [Winnipeg?: s.n.], 1912.
- Bekoff, Mark, and Jessica Pierce. *Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2009.
- Berger, John. "Why Look At Animals?" *Selected Essays*. Ed. Geoff Dryer. NY: Pantheon, 2001. 259-73.
- Brunner, Bernd. *Bears: A Brief History*. Trans. Lori Lantz. New Haven: Yale, 2007.
- Burroughs, John. "John Burroughs, from 'Real and Sham Natural History,' published in March 1903 in the *Nation*." Ed. David Mazel. *A Century of Early Eco-Criticism*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 2001. 114-20.
- Busch, Robert H. *The Wolf Almanac: A Celebration of Wolves and Their World*. Lyons: Guilford CT, 2007.
- Chan, Joseph. "An Alternative View." *Journal of Democracy* 8.2 (1997): 35-48. 1 Apr. 2010 <<http://muse.jhu.edu.cyber.usask.ca>>.
- Clark, Edward B. "Roosevelt on the Nature Fakirs." *Everybody's Magazine* 16 (June 1907): 770-4.
- Cogswell, Fred. *Charles G. D. Roberts and His Works*. Downsview ON: ECW, [1984?].
- Coleman, Jon T. *Vicious: Wolves and Men in America*. New Haven: Yale, 2004.
- "Conscience." Def. 4a. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2000. 31 Mar. 2010 <<http://www.oed.com.cyber.usask.ca/>>.
- Crist, Eileen. 1999. *Images of Animals: Anthropomorphism and Animal Mind*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2000.

- Darwin, Charles. 1859. *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection: or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life: and The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*. NY: [Modern Library], 1872.
- Dean, Misao. "Political Science: Realism in Roberts's Animal Stories." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 21.1 (1996): 1-16.
- Domico, Terry. *Bears of the World*. NY: Facts on File, 1988.
- Evans, E. P. 1906. *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals: The Lost History of Europe's Animal Trials*. Boston: Faber and Faber, 1987.
- Feher-Elston, Catherine. *Wolfsong: A Natural and Fabulous History of Wolves*. NY: Penguin Group, 2004.
- Gelo, Daniel J. "The Bear." *American Wildlife in Symbol and Story*. Ed. Angus K. Gillespie and Jay Mechling. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1987. 133-62.
- Gold, Joseph. Introd. *King of Beasts and Other Stories*. Toronto: Ryerson, 1967. ix-xx.
- . "The Precious Speck of Life." *Canadian Literature* 26 (Autumn 1965): 22-32.
- Grambo, Rebecca. *Wolf: Legend, Enemy, Icon*. Willowdale ON: Firefly, 2005.
- Grooms, Steve. *Return of the Wolf: Successes and Threats in the US and Canada*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Nova Vista: Singapore, 2005.
- Herrero, Stephen. *Bear Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance*. NY: Lyons and Burford, 1985.
- Hornaday, William T. *The American Natural History*. NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904.
- . *Minds and Manners of Wild Animals*. NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923.
- . *Our Vanishing Wildlife: Its Extermination and Preservation*. NY: New York Zoological Society, 1913.
- Jones, Karen R. *Wolf Mountains: A History of Wolves Along the Great Divide*. Calgary: U of Calgary P, 2002.
- Long, William J. *Northern Trails*. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1905.
- Lopez, Barry. 1978. *Of Wolves and Men*. Toronto: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004.
- Lucas, Alec. Introduction. *The Last Barrier and Other Stories*. By Charles G. D. Roberts. New Canadian Library 7. Toronto: McClelland, 1958. v-x.
- MacDonald, Robert H. "The Revolt Against Instinct: The Animal Stories of Seton and Roberts." *Canadian Literature* 84 (Spring 1980): 18-29.
- Midgley, Mary. *Animals and Why They Matter*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1984.

- . *Beasts and Man: The Roots of Human Nature*. NY: Routledge, 2002. 2 Mar. 2010.  
<<http://lib.myilibrary.com.cyber.usask.ca/browse/open.asp?id=6670&loc=>>.
- Mighetto, Lisa. *Wild Animals and American Environmental Ethics*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 1991.
- Miller, Joaquin. *True Bear Stories*. NY: Rand, McNally and Company, 1900.
- Morley, Patricia. "We and the Beasts are Kin: Attitudes Towards Nature in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Canadian Literature." *World Literature Written in English* 16.2 (Nov. 1977): 344-58.
- Morgan, C. Lloyd. *An Introduction to Comparative Psychology*. Ed. Havelock Ellis. London: Walter Scott, 1894.
- Nagel, Thomas. "What Is It Like To Be a Bat?" *The Philosophical Review* 84.3 (Oct. 1974): 435-50. 18 Feb. 2010 <<http://www.jstor.org>>.
- "National Park Service Act." 1996. New Mexico Center for Wildlife Law, University of New Mexico School of Law. 19 Oct. 2009 <<http://wildlifelaw.unm.edu/fedbook/npsact.html>>.
- "Ontario Man Killed in Wolf Attack, Coroner's Jury Finds: First Documented Case in North America of a Healthy Wolf Killing a Human in the Wild." 1 Nov. 2007. CBC News. 18 Sept. 2009 <<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/saskatchewan/story/2007/11/01/wolf-verdict.html>>.
- Poirier, Michel. "The Animal Story in Canadian Literature: E. Thompson Seton and Charles G. D. Roberts." *Queen's Quarterly* 34 (Jan.-Mar. 1927): 298-312; (Apr.-June 1927): 398-419.
- Polk, James. "Lives of the Hunted." *Canadian Literature* 53 (Summer 1972): 51-59.
- "Predaceous." Def. 2. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2000. 27 Jan. 2010  
<<http://www.oed.com.cyber.usask.ca/>>.
- Rauch, Robert A. "Some Aspects of the Population Ecology of Wolves, Alaska." *American Zoologist* 7 (1967): 253-65.
- "Review of *Earth's Enigmas*." *Nation* 62 (21 May 1896): 399. In *Charles G. D. Roberts: Selected Animal Stories*. Canadian Critical Edition. Ed. Terry Whalen. Ottawa: Tecumseh, 2005. 235.
- Roberts, Charles G. D. "The Animal Story of Today." *The Book Buyer* 24 (April 1902): 210-03.
- . *Around the Camp Fire*. Toronto: Musson Book Company, [1896?].

- . *The Backwoodsmen*. Toronto: MacMillan, 1909.
  - . *Children of the Wild*. 1913. Toronto: MacMillan, 1929.
  - . *Eyes of the Wilderness*. Toronto: MacMillan, 1933.
  - . *The Feet of the Furtive*. [1912?]. Toronto: Ryerson, 1947.
  - . *The Haunters of the Silences: A Book of Animal Life*. 1907. NY: Grosset and Dunlap, 1910.
  - . *The Heart of the Ancient Wood*. 1900. New Canadian Library 110. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974.
  - . *Hoof and Claw*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1914.
  - . *The House in the Water: A Book of Animal Stories*. Boston: L. C. Page & Co., 1908.
  - . *Kindred of the Wild*. 1902. Toronto: Exile, 2001.
  - . *King of Beasts and Other Stories*. Ed. Joseph Gold. Toronto: Ryerson, 1967.
  - . *Kings in Exile*. 1909. Toronto: Ryerson, 1964.
  - . *The Last Barrier and Other Stories*. 1958. New Canadian Library 7. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970.
  - . *The Ledge on Bald Face*. London: Ward, Lock, & Co., 1918.
  - . *More Animal Stories*. 1922. Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1931.
  - . *More Kindred of the Wild*. London: Ward, Lock, 1911[?].
  - . *Neighbours Unknown*. 1909. Toronto: MacMillan, 1911.
  - . *Red Fox: The Story of His Adventurous Career in the Ringwaak Wilds and His Final Triumph over the Enemies of His Kind*. 1905. Ed. John Schoenherr. Toronto: Ryerson, 1962.
  - . *The Secret Trails*. London: Ward, Lock, & Co., 1916.
  - . *They That Walk in the Wild*. Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1924.
  - . *They Who Walk in the Wilds*. 1924. Toronto: MacMillan, 1925.
  - . "Two Stories." *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 4.1 (1975): 60-81.
  - . *Vagrants of the Barren and Other Stories*. Ed. Martin Ware. Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1992.
  - . *The Watchers of the Trails*. Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1904.
- Rogers, L. L. "Effects of Food Supply, Predation, Cannibalism, Parasites, and Other Health Problems on Black Bear Populations." *Symposium in Natural Regulation of Wildlife Populations*. Ed. F. Bunnell, D. S. Eastman, and J. M. Peek. Moscow: U of Idaho, 1983.

- 194-211. 9 Nov. 2009. <<http://www.bearstudy.org/website/publications/research-papers/108-black-bear.html>>.
- Roosevelt, Theodore. 1893. *Hunting the Grisly and Other Sketches*. Middlesex: Echo, 2006. 3 Mar. 2010. <<http://books.google.ca>>.
- . *Wilderness Hunter: An Account of the Big Game of the United States and Its Chase With Horse, Hound, and Rifle*. n.l.: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1893. 5 Mar. 2010. <<http://books.google.ca>>.
- Rowland, Beryl. *Blind Beasts: Chaucer's Animal World*. Toronto: Kent State UP, 1971.
- Salt, Henry S. 1892. *Animals' Rights: Considered in Relation to Social Progress*. Clarks Summit PA: Society for Animal Rights, Inc, 1980.
- Schullery, Paul, and Lee H. Whittlesey. "Greater Yellowstone Carnivores: A History of Changing Attitudes." *Carnivores in Ecosystems: The Yellowstone Experience*. Ed. Clark, Curlee, Minta, and Kareiva. Michigan: Yale, 1999. 11-49.
- Seifert, Martina. "Canadian Animal Stories: Charles G. D. Roberts, 'Do Seek Their Meat From God' (1892)." *The Canadian Short Story: Interpretations*. Ed. Reingard M. Nischik. Rochester NY: Camden, 2007. 41-52.
- Seton, Ernest Thompson. 1899. *The Biography of a Grizzly*. NY: Century, 1923.
- . "A Carberry Deer Hunt." *Forest and Stream* 26 (3 June 1886): 366-68.
- . "The Natural History of the Ten Commandments." *Century* 73 (Nov. 1907): 24-33.
- . "The Prairie Chicken: Scientific Description of the Bird and Its Habits. Hints on Rearing and Domestication." *Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society*. Winnipeg: Manitoba Daily P, 1884.
- . *Wild Animals I Have Known*. 1898. Toronto: M<sup>c</sup>Clelland and Stewart, 1991.
- Shepard, Paul, and Barry Sanders. *The Sacred Paw: The Bear in Nature, Myth, and Literature*. NY: Viking, 1985.
- Smith, Douglas W., and Gary Ferguson. *Decade of the Wolf: Returning the Wild to Yellowstone*. Guilford CT: Lyons, 2006.
- Stammers, Neil. "A Critique of Social Approaches to Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly* 17.3 (1995): 488-508. 1 Apr. 2010 <<http://muse.jhu.edu.cyber.usask.ca>>.
- Stirling, Ian. *Polar Bears*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1988.

Tennyson, Alfred Lord. "In Memoriam, Sections 54-56 (1850)." 20 Nov. 2009. Ithaca College. 24 Nov. 2009 <<http://www.ithaca.edu/faculty/cduncan/311/tennyson.doc>>.

Topsell, Edward. 1658. *The History of Four-Footed Beasts and Serpents and Insects*. Vol. 1. Intro. Willy Ley. NY: Da Capo P, 1967.

Turbak, Gary. *Twilight Hunters: Wolves, Coyotes and Foxes*. Flagstaff AZ: Northland, 1987.

Van Wormer, Joe. *The World of the Black Bear*. Living World Books. Ed. John K. Terres. NY: J. B. Lippincott, 1966.

Wood, J. G. "Wolf" and "Bear." *Bible Animals*. Guelph ON: J. W. Lyon, 1877. 86-91, 113-20.

Table A1

## Roberts's Animal Stories and a Catalogue of Bear and Wolf Appearances Within Them

<b>Story Title</b>	<b>Book*</b>	<b>Occurrence of Bear or Wolf Species</b>	<b>Primary or Secondary Character Role(s)</b>
<b>Ah-Wook, Lord of the Floes/The King of the Floes</b>	TTW/TWW	Polar/Wolf	Secondary
<b>The Aigrette</b>	KB/ST		
<b>The Alien of the Wild</b>	WT	Black	Secondary
<b>Answerers to the Call</b>	HS	Black	Secondary
<b>The Antlers of the Caribou</b>	FF1/NU	Black	Secondary
<b>The Assault of Wings</b>	HC/ST		
<b>The Baby and the Bear</b>	CW	Black	Primary
<b>Back to the Water World</b>	KE	Black	Secondary
<b>The Barn on the Marsh</b>	EE		
<b>A Basket of Fish</b>	HC/ST	Black	Secondary
<b>The Battle in the Mist</b>	B		
<b>The Bear's Face</b>	KE	Grizzly	Secondary
<b>The Bear That Thought He Was a Dog</b>	HC/TB	Black	Primary Secondary
<b>The Bear Woke Up</b>	EW	Black/Wolf	Primary (bear) Secondary (wolf)
<b>Bill</b>	TTW/TWW	Black	Secondary
<b>The Black Boar of Lonesome Water</b>	ST	Black	Secondary
<b>The Black Fisherman</b>	SAS/TTW/WW		
<b>The Black Imps of the Pine-Top</b>	CW		
<b>Black Swamp</b>	NU/TB	Black	Primary
<b>The Boy and Hushwing</b>	KW		
<b>Brannigan's Mary</b>	HC/ST	Black	Secondary
<b>The Brothers of the Yoke</b>	ST/TB	Black	Secondary
<b>By the Winter Tide</b>	SAS/VB/WT		
<b>The Cabin Door</b>	HC/ST/TB	Black	Primary
<b>The Cabin in the Flood</b>	ST	Black	Secondary
<b>The Calling of the Lop-Horned Bull</b>	ST/TB	Black	Secondary
<b>The Cave of the Bear</b>	TTW/TWW	Black	Secondary
<b>The Citadel in the Grass</b>	SAS/WW		
<b>Cock-Crow</b>	LBF		
<b>Dagger Bill and the Water Babies</b>	CW		
<b>The Daring of Stripes Terror-Tail</b>	CW	Black	Secondary
<b>The Decoy</b>	WT		

<b>The Den of the Otter</b>	LW		
<b>A Digger of Tubes</b>	FF		
<b>The Dog That Saved the Bridge</b>	ST		
<b>Do Seek Their Meat From God</b>	EE/LB/SAS		
<b>A Duel in the Deep</b>	HS	Polar	Primary
<b>The Duel on the Trail</b>	KE	Black	Secondary
<b>The Eagle</b>	LBF		
<b>Eyes of the Wilderness</b>	EW		
<b>The Eyes in the Bush</b>	HC		
<b>The Feud</b>	FF/FF1	Black	Secondary
<b>The Fight at the Wallow</b>	HW	Black	Secondary
<b>Fire</b>	EW	Black	Secondary
<b>The Fisher in the Chutes</b>	HC/KB/ST		
<b>Fisherman's Luck</b>	EW	Black	Secondary
<b>Fishers of the Air</b>	MS/TB/WW	Black	Secondary
<b>The Freedom of the Black-faced Ram</b>	WT	Black	Secondary
<b>From Buck to Bear and Back</b>	B	Black	Secondary
<b>From the Teeth of the Tide</b>	HW	Black	Primary
<b>Gauntlet of Fire</b>	FF/KW/MK/TB	Black	Primary
<b>A Gentleman in Feathers</b>	TTW/TWW		
<b>The Glutton of the Great Snow</b>	HW	Wolf	Secondary
<b>Good For Evil</b>	EW		
<b>Gray Lynx's Last Hunting</b>	FF1/NU		
<b>The Gray Master</b>	KE	Wolf	Primary Secondary
<b>The Grip in Deep Hole</b>	B/SAS	Black	Secondary
<b>A Harassed Householder</b>	FF/MK		
<b>The Haunter of the Pine Gloom</b>	KW/LB/SAS		
<b>The Heron in the Reeds</b>	HS/LB		
<b>Horns and Antlers</b>	WT		
<b>The Homesickness of Kehonka</b>	KW/LB/SAS		
<b>The Homeward Trail</b>	WT	Wolf	Secondary
<b>How a Cat Played Robinson Crusoe</b>	NU		
<b>In a Summer Pool</b>	LW		
<b>In Panoply of Spears</b>	KW/LB/SAS		
<b>In the Deep of the Grass</b>	WT		
<b>In the Deep of the Silences</b>	HS/KB	Black	Primary
<b>In the Deep of the Snow</b>	B	Wolf	Secondary
<b>In the Moose Yard</b>	TTW/TWW	Black/Wolf	Secondary
<b>In the Unknown Dark</b>	HS		

<b>In the World of the Ghost-Lights</b>	FF/KB		
<b>In the Year of No Rabbits</b>	FF/MK	Black	S
<b>The Invaders</b>	FF/FF1	Black/Wolf	Primary (wolf) Secondary (wolf/bear)
<b>The Isle of Birds</b>	NU		
<b>The Iron Edge of Winter</b>	B/SAS		
<b>Ishmael of the Hemlocks</b>	FF/MK	Black	Secondary
<b>The Keepers of the Nest</b>	FF/FF1/MK/VB		
<b>The Keeper of the Water Gate</b>	VB/WT		
<b>The Kill</b>	WT		
<b>The King of Beasts</b>	FF/KB		
<b>The King of Mamozekel</b>	VB	Black	Secondary
<b>The King of the Flaming Hoops</b>	KE	Grizzly/ Black/ Wolf	Secondary
<b>The Kings of the Intervale</b>	WT		
<b>The Last Barrier</b>	HS/LB	Black	Secondary
<b>Last Bull</b>	KE		
<b>The Laugh in the Dark</b>	WT	Black	Secondary
<b>Leader of the Run</b>	FF/KB		
<b>The Ledge on Bald Face</b>	LBF/ST/TB/VB	Black	Secondary
<b>A Little Alien in the Wilderness</b>	CW	Black	Secondary
<b>Little Bull of the Barrens</b>	NU	Wolf	Secondary
<b>The Little Furry Ones that Slide Down Hill</b>	CW		
<b>The Little Homeless One</b>	MS/WW		
<b>The Little People of the Sycamore</b>	WT		
<b>Little Silk Wing</b>	CW/VB		
<b>The Little Sly One</b>	CW		
<b>Little Sword and the Inkmaker</b>	CW		
<b>The Little Tyrant of the Burrows</b>	HS/LB		
<b>The Little Villager and His Unfriendly Guests</b>	CW		
<b>The Little Wolf of the Air</b>	WT		
<b>The Little Wolf of the Pool</b>	SAS/VB/WT		
<b>Lone Clearing</b>	EW	Black	Secondary
<b>Lone Wolf</b>	KE	Himalayan/ Wolf	Primary (wolf) Secondary (bear/wolf)
<b>The Lord of the Air</b>	KW/LB/SAS		
<b>The Lord of the Glass House</b>	KE		
<b>MacPhairrson's Happy Family</b>	B		

<b>The Master of Golden Pool</b>	WT		
<b>A Master of Supply</b>	HC/FF1/VB	Wolf	Secondary
<b>Melindy and the Lynxes</b>	B		
<b>Melindy and the Spring Bear</b>	B	Black	Secondary
<b>Mishi/Mishi of the Timberline/The Quest of Mishi of the Timberline</b>	KB/MS/TTW/TW W	Grizzly	Secondary
<b>Mixed Breed</b>	TTW/TWW	Wolf	Primary
<b>The Monarch of Park Barren</b>	KE/TB	Black	Secondary
<b>The Moonlight Trails</b>	KW/LB/SAS		
<b>The Moose and Rusty Jones</b>	EW		
<b>The Moose that Knocked at the Door</b>	FF/MK	Wolf	Secondary
<b>The Morning of the Silver Frost/The Silver Frost</b>	LBF/WT		
<b>Mothers of the North</b>	KB/NU/TB/VB	Polar	Primary
<b>Mrs. Grammit and the Porcupines</b>	VB		
<b>Mrs. Grammit's Pig</b>	B	Black	Secondary
<b>Mustela of the Lone Hand</b>	KB/MS		
<b>The Nest of the Mallard</b>	B/FF1/SAS		
<b>The Odyssey of the Great White Owl</b>	LW/"Two Stories"		
<b>On the Big Lonely</b>	B		
<b>On the Night Trail</b>	HS	Wolf	Secondary
<b>On the Roof of the World</b>	KB/NU/TB	Polar	Primary
<b>The Passing of the Black Whelps</b>	WT	Wolf	Primary Secondary
<b>Poetic Justice</b>	"Two Stories"	Wolf	Secondary
<b>The Pool</b>	HC		
<b>The Prisoners of the Pitcher-Plant</b>	HS/LB		
<b>The Prowlers</b>	HS		
<b>Puck o' the Dusk</b>	FF/MK		
<b>Queen Bomba of the Honey Pots</b>	TTW/TWW/VB		
<b>Quills the Indifferent</b>	WW		
<b>Red Dandy and MacTavish</b>	FF		
<b>The Return of the Moose</b>	HW		
<b>The Return to the Trails</b>	WT	Black	Primary
<b>The Ringwaak Buck</b>	HS		
<b>The Rivals of Ringwaak</b>	WT		
<b>Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep</b>	CW		
<b>The Runners of the High Peaks</b>	HC	Grizzly/ Wolf	Secondary

<b>Savoury Meats</b>	KW		
<b>The Sentry of the Sedge-Flats</b>	KB/NU/SAS		
<b>The Shadows and John Hatch</b>	HC		
<b>The Snowhouse Baby</b>	CW	Polar	Primary
<b>Sonny and the Kid</b>	HW		
<b>The Spotted Stranger</b>	FF	Black	Primary
<b>Starnose of the Underways</b>	SAS/WW		
<b>Stony Lonesome</b>	LB		
<b>A Stranger to the Wild</b>	HS/SAS	Black	Secondary
<b>Strayed</b>	EE/SAS	Black	Secondary
<b>The Summons of the North</b>	HS	Polar	Primary
<b>The Sun-gazer</b>	FF1/KE/MS		
<b>Tabitha Blue, or the Indiscretions of a Persian Cat</b>	EW		
<b>Teddy Bear's Bee Tree</b>	CW	Black	Primary
<b>The Terror of the Air</b>	HS		
<b>The Terror of the Sea Caves</b>	HS		
<b>The Theft</b>	NU		
<b>The Tiger of the Sea</b>	FF1/MK/NU		
<b>A Torpedo in Feathers</b>	NU		
<b>The Trailers</b>	ST/TB	Black	Secondary
<b>The Trail of the Vanishing Herds</b>	HC/FF1	Wolf	Secondary
<b>A Treason of Nature</b>	KB/KW		
<b>The Tree-Top Aeronaut</b>	NU		
<b>The Truce</b>	WT	Black	Primary
<b>The Tunnel Runners</b>	NU		
<b>Under the Ice Roof</b>	HS/LB	Black	Primary
<b>Up a Tree</b>	HC		
<b>The Vagrants of the Barren</b>	B/FF1/VB		
<b>The Watchers of the Campfire</b>	KW		
<b>The Watchers in the Swamp</b>	FF1/WW		
<b>What He Saw When He Kept Still</b>	CW		
<b>When the Colonel Came to Gallagher's</b>	MK	Black	Primary
<b>When Judson Froze</b>	EW	Black	Secondary
<b>When the Blueberries Are Ripe</b>	HW	Black	Primary
<b>When the Cow Moose Calls</b>	WT		
<b>When the Logs Come Down</b>	HS		
<b>When the Moon is Over the Corn</b>	WT		
<b>When the Tide Came Over the Marshes</b>	HS		
<b>When the Truce of the Wild is</b>	HW		

<b>Done</b>			
<b>When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots</b>	KB/KW/SAS	Black	Secondary
<b>The White-slashed Bull</b>	HW	Black	Secondary
<b>The White Wolf</b>	HC	Wolf	Secondary
<b>Wild Adoption</b>	TTW/TWW	Black	Secondary
<b>Wild Motherhood</b>	KW	Wolf	Secondary
<b>The Window in the Shack</b>	HW	Black	Secondary
<b>The Winged Scourge of the Dark</b>	KB/MS/SAS		
<b>With His Back To the Wall</b>	FF/TB	Black/Wolf	Primary (bear) Secondary (wolf)
<b>Wolf! Wolf!</b>	EW	Wolf	Secondary
<b>Young Grumpy and the One-Eyed Gander</b>	CW		
<b>“The Young Ravens that Call Upon Him”</b>	EE/LB/SAS		

\* See List of Abbreviations page for full details.