

TRACKING THE REAL THING:
REPRESENTATION, RELATIONSHIP, AND MASCULINITY IN THE ANIMAL STORIES
OF EURO-CANADIAN MEN

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ABSTRACT

Animal stories by Euro-Canadian men have had a disproportionate influence on the development of the mode, and engage with representations of animals from within the dominant androcentric, anthropocentric discourse of Western cultures. Dominant representations influence public and personal opinions, and these in turn influence both personal actions and governmental policy, which affect wild and domestic animals on individual as well as systemic levels. Animal stories by Euro-Canadian men work within preconceived conceptualizations of animals, as informed by the work of prominent Europeans such as René Descartes and Charles Darwin, and either reinforce those conceptualizations or work against the predominant Western understanding of animals, and can have lasting effects on both cultural and environmental landscapes. Analyses of the primary texts problematize definition and categorization and identify common themes and narrative strategies in texts' representations of animals and human-animal relationships. The eleven stories examined here use expressions of Western masculinity and femininity as a means of creating identification with their protagonist species. These stories support hegemonic masculinity and prototypically masculine values such as virility and dominance, values that reinforce gendered stereotypes and male dominance in Western culture and that Other femininity and non-binary identities. In large part, these stories perpetuate the status quo and naturalize cultural understandings of masculinity and femininity as biologically based, and in so doing promote emotional bonding through suggestions of shared cultural experience. Stories have the power to change perceptions of entire species, and even to alter human behaviour toward nonhuman animals on a cultural level. Canadian animal stories as a mode have received little critical attention, and future research into this area may provide insights into authors' contributions to Canadian literature, women and minority writers' responses to the hegemonic discourse, and the influence of animal representation on readers.

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Introduction

Animals are not texts that we produce; they are living beings. We must be careful not to dismiss them as we speak and write about them.

- Bergman, "Making Animals" B15-16

I.1 Animals in Canadian Literature

"What a pity it was such a trivial genre!" Fred Cogswell wrote of the animal story in 1984 (13). Apparently, no one had informed John Burroughs of the animal story's inconsequentiality. Burroughs instigated what became known as the nature faker controversy, a literary battle waged primarily between 1903 and 1907 (Lutts, "Controversy" 127) in which such notable personages as Theodore Roosevelt and Burroughs sparred with Charles G. D. Roberts, Ernest Thompson Seton, Jack London, and others over how animal story writers were depicting animals. The heart of this controversy was the nature of animals and animal representation. Do animals think? Can they feel? Can they learn? Were the writers of these stories reporting natural history *accurately*, or were they allowing fancy to run away with their accounts? Burroughs complained that too much "literature" was being added to these stories, and writers were valuing their descriptions of animal behaviour "more for the literary effects we can get out of them than for themselves" ("Real and Sham" 130). "Realism is truth," Roosevelt avowed, and "giving these books to the children for the purpose of teaching them the facts of natural history – why, it's an outrage" (Clark 166). He believed that "[i]f the child mind is fed with stories that are false to nature, the children will go to the haunts of the animal only to meet with disappointment. The result will be disbelief, and the death of interest. The men who misinterpret nature and replace fact with fiction, undo the work of those who in the love of nature interpret it aright" (171). Animal story writers bristled: Roberts resented being labelled a nature faker (Roberts, "Charles G. D. Roberts" 182); London wagged his finger, writing, "[n]o, no, Mr. Burroughs; you can't disprove that animals reason by proving that they possess instincts" (London, "Other Animals" 202); and Seton composed "The Fate of Little

Mucky,” a fable clearly directed at Burroughs.¹ Writers on both sides of the argument believed that animal stories were important because of how they depicted animals and because of the possible effects of those depictions on their readership. The issues that the nature faker controversy raised – e.g., the role of anthropomorphism, the struggle to represent animals *as animals*, the ethics of representing animals in any form – remain current concerns.

Animal stories have populated Canadian literary history. Originating in Canada, the short realistic wild animal story is considered a Canadian literary invention (Parker 30; Keith, “Beginnings” 75; Watson 8).² Animal stories use animals in a fashion different from fables, which Jacques Derrida describes as “an anthropomorphic taming, . . . [a]lways a discourse *of* man, on man, indeed on the animality of man, but for and in man” (37). By contrast, Martina Seifert writes, the newly established animal story “was based on accurate observation and scientific research and portrayed unsentimentally and with psychological insight the struggle for survival of animals in the Canadian wilderness” (41). Lionel Stevenson argues that it combined a “humanitarian desire to understand the animals’ point of view [with] scientific interest in their psychology” (166), a development that Stevenson believed beneficial to humanitarian, scientific, and literary fields (170). Roberts and Seton are credited with the origin of the realistic wild animal story in the late nineteenth century; Seton’s “The Life of a Prairie Chicken” (1883) and Roberts’ “Do Seek Their Meat From God” (1892) are the two texts most frequently cited as the origin point.³ Variants of this style of animal story have populated the Canadian imagination and canon ever since, from Fred Bodsworth’s *Last of the Curlews* (1954) to Marian Engel’s *Bear* (1976). Given the controversy over what constitutes the first realistic wild animal story, however, Chapter One begins by questioning what constitutes such a story in the first place.

Definitions of animal stories typically focus on realistic wild animal stories and often employ the word “genre,” a misleading term that suggests that animal stories can be boxed into a particular set of literary conventions. In truth, however, animal stories cross conventional genres: they may be fiction or nonfiction; novels or short stories; fantasy, science fiction, realistic fiction,

¹ The fable’s moral is that “[n]otoriety is a poisonous substitute for fame” (“Fate” 154).

² Many critics have made statements about the role of animal stories as a distinct Canadian invention (e.g., Atwood 87; Cogswell 9; Davey 327-28; Lutts, “Wild Animal Story” 1; Townsend 123).

³ Alec Lucas, for example, cites both as the “twofold beginning” of the realistic wild animal story (“Nature” 398).

or horror; comedy, tragedy, romance, or satire. Even realistic wild animal stories transgress conventional genres: Seton claimed that the short stories in *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1898) were true stories, Roberts published a full length fictional animal biography titled *Red Fox* (1905), and the tragic end that Seton claims is inevitable in the lives of wild animals (and thus also wild animal stories) is absent from *Red Fox* and even some of Seton's stories, such as "Why the Chickadee Goes Crazy Once a Year" (1901) and "Badlands Billy: The Wolf That Won" (1905). Mikhail Bakhtin asserts that literary theory works well in all genres except the novel, because except for the novel all genres "preserve their rigidity and canonic quality in all classical development" (73). Even the more narrowly defined realistic wild animal stories, however, do not adhere to traditional conceptions of genres, and instead skip across and through these nets of generic classification. Animal stories might, then, be more properly termed modes of writing, not so much in that they are "pre-generic," as Northrop Frye defined modes (Duff 98), but in that they transgress genres, sharing a common manner, method, or mood rather than a common genre, as Chapter One explores in its discussion of *onceness* and *alwaysness* and as it and Chapter Two examine with regard to the representation of animals as animals.

Realistic animal stories emerged from the nature writers of the nineteenth century, whose numbers include John Muir, William H. Long, Roosevelt, Thomas McIlwraith, Henry David Thoreau, and others. It is tempting to locate Roberts, Seton, and others of their era among Jack London, Henry Williamson, Mabel Osgood Wright, and other British and American animal story writers, but early Canadian animal story writers wrote in a different milieu. Canadian writers possessed two things that their American and British contemporaries did not: immersion in a country that was pushing for its own distinct national literature (Roper 263), and, as Roy Daniells puts it, "the top half of the American continent" (201). Fiction in Canadian writing was a recent development, and scant until the 1890s (Roper 260). What distinguished Canadian fiction from the American and British fiction was Canadian writers' "experience of place, and, to a lesser degree, their experience of time," Roper et al. note (285). Daniells writes that "[i]n ways that are not always rationally clear and through channels of expression often far from logically explicit Canadian feeling about the terrain of Canada made itself powerfully felt. Then, as now, the geological, geographical, topographic, and lyric features of the Canadian landscape were the fundamental facts of Canadian experience" (201). Of course Canadians writing around the turn of the twentieth century could not help being immersed in the literature across the border and even

across the ocean: however, they focused particularly on Canadian landscape. The vast majority of Roberts' more than two hundred short animal stories, for example, are set explicitly within Canada, even using place names to locate the stories. Roberts even used the Canadian setting of these stories to defend them from criticism, explaining that Theodore Roosevelt "probably labors under a mistake," basing his criticism of Roberts' work on an assumption that Roberts was writing of the American subspecies of lynx and wolf when Roberts was actually writing about the subspecies that he identified as *Felis canadensis* and the Canadian Eastern (or cloudy) wolf ("Charles G. D. Roberts" 181-82).

Canadian animal stories – and narratives about animals more generally – also have the power to influence Canadian legislation on federal, provincial, and municipal levels. In his examination of early biological surveys of northern Canada, John Sandlos explains that early sportsmen's and naturalists' work and recommendations were critical to the development of wildlife policy for that region (409). Bodsworth's *Last of the Curlews* and Farley Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf* (1963) have been credited with influencing popular perceptions about conservation and wolves, respectively (Kirk and Pearce; Klinghammer 85), which in turn can affect governmental policy. Wolf cull programs such as those recently implemented in British Columbia and Alberta have proven controversial, but have proceeded despite opposition (Parr and Paquet). Trophy hunting of grizzly bears in British Columbia, however, was banned as of November 30, 2017 as a direct result of citizens' disapproval of the practice (Johnson and Lindsay). Public opinion can and does influence Canadian legislation, and Canadian animal stories may well influence public opinion.

Although it routinely receives mentions in surveys of Canadian literature because of its reported status as a Canadian invention, the animal story's impact on literary, scientific, and humanitarian fields remains largely unstudied. Joseph Gold points out that "[t]he animal story has not been deemed worthy of consideration as literature," and speculates that the reason for this is that "[f]ew people really believe that stories about animals could be anything more than tales of adventure for children" (Introduction x). This tendency to position animal stories within the realm of children's literature or crossover literature puts animal stories at a scholarly disadvantage. It has only been in the last quarter of the twentieth century that the status of children's literature has begun to rise "within the literary polysystem" (Shavit ix), "polysystem" referring here to the socio-cultural, historical, and literary framework from which each text originates. In addition, as Brian

Luke maintains in his 2007 study *Brutal: Manhood and the Exploitation of Animals*, anthropocentric Western cultures hold the belief “that nonhuman nature is of less intrinsic value than human beings,” and the idea “that animals are ‘subhuman’ renders strong sympathies for nonhumans inappropriate” (164).⁴ These two qualities may at least partially explain why animals are “unserious” subjects in popular media (Baker 193),⁵ as well as materially and culturally marginalized (Armstrong 143). Writing in the 1940s, E. K. Brown describes animal stories as continuing “to hold a high place in the rather isolated and minor kind of literature to which they belong; but there is no doubt that in our time they are more talked of than opened except by youthful readers” (4), in a sweeping statement that highlights both the trivializing of the mode and its association with children’s literature. Chapter Two addresses some potential impacts of the conflation of children’s and animal literature and whether extant themes can separate children’s literature from more general literature in realist animal stories.

Where Canadian animal stories have received critical attention, much of it has been focused on what separates Canadian animal stories from British and/or American animal stories. Margaret Atwood’s chapter on animals in *Survival* is perhaps the most illustrious of these. In *Survival*, she writes that “American animal stories are quest stories – with the Holy Grail being a death – usually successful from the hunter’s point of view, though not from the animal’s; as such they are a comment on the general imperialism of the American cast of mind” (88). While American and

⁴ This idea that strong sympathies are inappropriate is less true of domesticated animals than wild animals or those otherwise classed as undesirable. In Western cultures, domesticated animals often live in close contact with humans and become part of the family sphere, as David Wood notes in his response to some of Derrida’s theories (130), and they appeal to a popular, masculinized theory of domestication in which, as Donna Haraway puts it, “[m]an took the (free) wolf and made the (servant) dog and so made civilization possible” (28). This theory privileges humans’ powerful positions as the moulders of species, with direct control over these animals’ actions. Stronger sentiment for domestic animals is, therefore, more acceptable than that for other classifications of animals. Nevertheless, sentiment for even companion animals is often judged “too strong,” as is evidenced by theories about human-animal attachments that explain animals as (inadequate) surrogates for human companionship; a history in which a (usually female) person could be named a witch on the basis of her choosing to “consort” with animals; and a frequent subtext that money spent on domestic animals is money better spent on humans (Irvine 6-7, 19).

⁵ In his discussion of animal representations in media, Steve Baker writes that “there is agreement on animals’ ‘unseriousness,’ in which more serious media “only succumb to the animal either as light relief from serious news or when animals themselves figure in it (usually either as ‘bad’ animals or as badly mistreated animals)” (193).

British animal stories are focused, in different ways, on people, “Canadian ones are about animals *being* killed, as felt emotionally from inside the fur and feathers” (Atwood 89). Other critics have echoed this judgement: George Woodcock, for example, used Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) and George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* (1945) to illustrate his belief that “British animal stories have always been thinly disguised fables, acted out by men in animal skins to illuminate essentially human problems,” and William Faulkner’s “The Bear” (1942) and Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) to typify his understanding of American animal stories as “stories of antagonism and confrontation, man pitting himself against the animal who becomes the symbol of all that is hostile and unreachable in nature” (26). As Woodcock argues, however, Canadian animal stories “are really about animals, and they are about animals with whom we are invited to empathize” (26).

Atwood speculates that this invitation to empathize arises from the stories’ depictions of the animals as victims (88-89), and Woodcock suggests that Canadians, living with the legacy of colonialism, are also victims in many ways (26). This reasoning does not, however, take the readership of the texts into account. Animal stories were popular, particularly in their heyday in the early to mid-twentieth century, but also in later iterations in works such as Mowat’s *Never Cry Wolf* and Kenneth Oppel’s *Silverwing* (1998), and the readership for all of these stories is international. John Coldwell Adams identifies kinship, not victimization, as the primary focus of Roberts’ and Seton’s work, and asserts that “[i]t cannot be said that Roberts and Seton were exploring the Canadian psyche; and, since their largest reading public was in the United States, where their stories were published, it is obviously not a distinctively Canadian reaction if the majority of their readers identified with the victimized animals” (5). The same can be said of other Canadian animal story writers and their work. Seton’s *Wild Animals I Have Known* sold two thousand copies within three weeks and sold out nine printings within eighteen months (J. C. Adams 3; Dunlap, *Saving* 22); the books in Oppel’s *Silverwing* series have collectively sold over one million copies (“Kenneth”). Canada’s population is such that the largest readership for the more popular texts, at least, must of necessity be international, and this means that the depictions of animals in these stories must appeal to a much broader readership than Canadians alone. It is possible that Canadian animal stories tend to portray their animal characters as victims and that this bears a relationship to colonialism, but if so, this effect of colonialism finds favour beyond Canadian borders, and is characteristic of more animal stories than the Canadian alone. In *H Is*

for *Hawk* (2014), Helen MacDonald laments the paucity of animal stories with “happy endings”: she lists the deaths of animals in *Tarka the Otter* (British, 1927), *Watership Down* (British, 1972), *Ring of Bright Water* (Scottish, 1960), *The Yearling* (American, 1938), *Old Yeller* (American, 1956), *The Red Pony* (American, 1937), and others, and recalls how, as a child, she felt an “awful dread as the number of pages shrank in each new animal book I read. I knew what would happen. And it happened every time” (172). The animals died, usually as victims of human interference and violence. Accordingly, Chapters Three and Four focus on representations of animals in realist wild animal stories, addressing questions regarding how Euro-Canadian men rehabilitate the reputations of their protagonist species where their stories feature predatory or frightening animals and how conservationist wild animal stories written by Euro-Canadian men represent animals, respectively.

Much has been made of the waning popularity of animal stories, although again this is typically in reference to the short, realistic wild animal story that dominated Roberts’ and Seton’s prose. Animal stories burst onto the literary scene in the late nineteenth century and became immediately popular (J. C. Adams 3), with Seton’s, Roberts’, and W. A. Fraser’s work ranking among the most-read Canadian books of their era (Altmeyer 100). This was the first time Canadian writers had attracted “the attention of the whole English-reading world,” and the mode was extremely popular through to about 1914 (Woodcock 25; Dunlap, *Saving* 22). Critics tend to compose elegiac prose about the mode, much as one might about an endangered or extinct species. Of nature writing, including animal stories, Alec Lucas writes that its time “has long passed. Perhaps the literary vein has been worked out. Perhaps people tired of learning that animals and men are alike and learned from two world wars that they are too much alike” (“Nature” 404). Martina Seifert points to the gradual disappearance of Roberts’ stories from print since the 1930s as evidence of declining interest in animal stories generally (42).⁶ Writing of animal stories more globally, Susan McHugh comments that none of the primary texts in her critical work *Animal*

⁶ Roberts’ work has not disappeared from circulation entirely. Kindle has recently re-released several of his volumes of animal stories as e-books; Roberts’ work is still anthologized in volumes such as Robert Weaver and Margaret Atwood’s *The Oxford Book of Canadian Short Stories in English* (1988) and Anne Simpson’s *An Orange Peel from Portugal: Christmas Stories From the Maritimes and Newfoundland* (2003); and recent releases such as Exile Editions’ iteration of *Kindred of the Wild* (2001) and Tecumseh’s critical edition *Selected Animal Stories* (2005) ensure that at least some of Roberts’ stories remain in print.

Stories: Narrating Across Species Lines has a secure place in the literary canon, noting that even Virginia Woolf's *Flush* (1933) "hangs warily on the fringes of the literary tradition" (20, 15).

Animals have a more secure place in Canadian literature. While there is debate about what constitutes the Canadian canon, or whether there should even be such a thing as a canon, few would dispute that works such as Bodsworth's *Last of the Curlews* and Engel's *Bear* are canonical texts in Canadian literature, and popular and prize-winning works such as Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* (2001) and André Alexis' *Fifteen Dogs* (2015) continue the tradition. Even *The Winter of the Fisher* (1971), Cameron Langford's sole – and posthumously published – work, was included in Macmillan's Laurentian Library series. However, it is certainly the case that Roberts and Seton's era of short, realistic wild animal stories is over, and that animal stories are generally overlooked in scholarly criticism. Moreover, anthologies have included less fiction by animal story writers in the latter part of the twentieth century. In Robert Lecker's tabulation of inclusion rates for authors in anthologies of Canadian literature containing fiction (running from 1922-1992), anthologies included work by Mowat five of a possible twelve times in the 1960s, but only three of nineteen times in the 1970s and one of thirteen times in the 1980s (143). Of the other animal story writers listed, Engel was last anthologized in the 1980s, Bodsworth and Franklin Russell in the 1970s, Roderick Haig-Brown and Seton in the 1960s, Arthur Heming in the 1930s, and Margaret Marshall Saunders and Fraser not since the 1920s (143-48). On Lecker's chart, Roberts retains his popularity, anthologized in each decade recorded and in an average of 52% of the anthologies across the decades, which Lecker speculates is due to his having become the representative "Animal-Story Writer" in anthologies (121). There are other possible reasons for this decline than the decline of the popularity of animal stories. Factors such as the difficulties inherent in selecting excerpts from novels, copyright permissions, and space considerations in light of newer work may also be influential. In terms of course offerings, Paul Martin's *Sanctioned Ignorance: The Politics of Knowledge Production and the Teaching of Literatures in Canada* provides appendices that list inclusions of texts taught in English and Comparative Literature Courses on Canadian Literature across twenty-eight Canadian universities in the 1997-98 and 2007-08 academic years. Beyond compilations of stories that include animal stories, these appendices show continued inclusion of Roberts' and Seton's animal stories, although in low numbers, and otherwise preferences for animal stories originally published in the 1950s or later, including Bodsworth's *Last of the Curlews*, Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf*, Engel's *Bear*, Thomas King's *One Good Story, That One*

(1993), Barbara Gowdy's *The White Bone* (1998), and Martel's *Life of Pi*.⁷ These inclusion rates also show higher rates of animal stories by women and Indigenous authors than Lecker's earlier analysis of anthologized work. Lecker's and Martin's work shows that although the popularity of individual animal stories fluctuates, the mode nevertheless remains alive in Canadian literature.

Animal stories, Canadian and otherwise, present animals to human consciousness. This may be particularly important in an increasingly urban world, in which many people have little to no day-to-day contact with any nonhuman animals. This role of "showing" readers an animal with which they might not be familiar is a longstanding one in Canadian literature; readers of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century animal stories would have been largely unaware "of the existence of creatures like snow-owls, fishers, wolverines and snowshoe rabbits," for example (Gold, Introduction xi). These stories offered then, and continue to offer now, new ways of perceiving the natural world, from insights into nonhuman animal mentation to assertions about the role of animals in the world. Many of these stories challenge traditional dominionistic perceptions of animals, claiming that animals' worth is not wholly derived from their usefulness to humans. Thomas R. Dunlap notes that early animal stories were some of the first to address "the place of predators in the world[, and in] them we see some of the first pleading for the despised 'varmints'" (*Saving* 19). They were important tools in supporting the humane treatment of nonhuman animals (Dunlap, *Saving* 19). They regularly grant subjecthood to those typically treated as objects.⁸ In short, they present animals to their readers' sight, or consciousness, and they simultaneously present new ways of seeing animals.

The focus on scientific accuracy in animal stories does not make those stories immune to social constructions. In fact, their representations of animal psychology may make them more vulnerable to inadvertent social constructions than conscious fabulation. Misao Dean's examination of masculine norms in Roberts' work reveals a pervasive celebration of values of masculinity that are "endemic to his historical period" ("Political Science" 302); Roberts attributes these qualities of human masculinity to nonhuman animals even as he attempts to undermine other social constructions. Like many animal story writers, Roberts wrote against an influential perception of nonhuman animals as lacking souls, cognition, and even emotion. Burroughs' work

⁷ Engel's *Bear* was the most frequent occurrence, listed three times in each academic year.

⁸ Cary Wolfe discusses objectification of animals in legislation in "In the Shadow of Wittgenstein's Lion" (6-7).

provides some idea of the values and beliefs that many animal story writers resist. For example, he wrote that “the lower animals” are immersed in a “plane of sense,” while humans begin with this foundation but are emancipated from it by their immersion in the higher plane of spirit (“Do Animals” 161-62). He equated animal intelligence to “sense perception and sense memory,” and believed that animals perform learned tricks not out of intelligence but out of “force of habit” (“Do Animals” 166). He did not question that humans are animals, but adjusted the parameters of that animality so that the traditional ontological hierarchy of God-man-animal remained fixed and rigid: “The animal man, while retaining much of his animality, has evolved from it higher faculties and attributes, while our four-footed kindred have not thus progressed” (Burroughs, “Do Animals” 170). Animal stories typically dispute some or all aspects of these sentiments, and in their disputation – or reinforcement – of prevailing opinion, they act to influence politics and culture.

Culture always inflects writing, and Canadian culture is intimately bound up in concepts of wilderness and nature, of which animals are part and parcel. Canadian shirts bear the images of wild animals; Canadian currency displays beavers, caribou, loons, and polar bears; wildlife artwork and galleries are popular; the tourism industry promotes Canada’s wild spaces; and Canadians consistently express concern about “the environment” (Litteljohn 10). Central and western Canada have only become industrialized within the last 150 years (Litteljohn 10). Wilderness is embedded in Canadian history and arts, and constitutes an integral part of Canadian identity (Litteljohn 19; Hessing 285); Northrop Frye goes so far as to declare that “[t]here would be nothing distinctive in Canadian culture at all if there were not some feeling” for the uniquely ungraspable immensity of Canada’s geography, and that “[t]o feel ‘Canadian’ was to feel part of a no-man’s-land with huge rivers, lakes, and islands that very few Canadians had ever seen” (10, 222). These wilderness spaces are spaces of animality, literally and figuratively. That which is animal is the wild or uncivilized part of the human (Irvine 41; Huggan and Tiffin 134; Porter 9), and even domestic animals carry the seeds of wildness within them: they may become feral, yield to the ancestral instincts of wild forebears, or elude the constraints that humans seek to place upon them. Stories such as Seton’s “The Pacing Mustang” (1898), London’s *The Call of the Wild* (1903), Roberts’ “Mixed Breed” (1924), and Mazo de la Roche’s “Cat’s Cruise” (1933) play with these concepts of wilderness and civilization, wildness and domestication. As such, while wild animals are the category most often thought of when the term “wilderness” is used, Canadian literature of domestic animals often depicts some form of wildness within them, and so they, too,

snag a small corner of the blanket covering of the term. Barney Nelson writes that domesticated animals carry a “hidden ‘wildness’” within them (6), which appears not only in reversions to “wild” behaviours and traits but also in the ability of domestic animals to “elude the mind’s appropriations,” as Don McKay defines wilderness (21). Thus, if Canadian identity is wrapped up in the idea of wilderness, it is equally wrapped up in the idea of animals.

Physical and social landscapes are interwoven (Tighem 16), and not even scientific rigour is capable of separating what an animal actually is from the social construction of animality (Irvine 71). In order to address these social constructions, it is necessary to discuss some of the major historical and theoretical perspectives that have influenced Canadian writers’ understandings of animals and interacted with the making and development of Canadian animal stories.

I.2 Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on Animals and Human-Animal Relationships

Nature and culture have been divided from each other, as though neither affects the other, but they are intricately bound up in each other in animal stories perhaps even more than in life. Ian Bogost points out that “[w]hen we talk about being ‘brought up,’ we usually refer to culturing a way of relating to other living beings – human beings, of course, but also animals, and perhaps even the natural environment. This process involves ethical imperatives, directives about what to believe about and how to act upon the world” (142). Linda Vance divides these ethical imperatives into three broad ideological positions:

- (1) humans have a right to exploit animals, and therefore either minimal or no obligations toward them;
- (2) humans have a right to exploit animals, but only to the extent that such exploitation will provide the greatest (human) benefit in the long run;
- and (3) humans have no right to exploit animals or to dominate nature, since we are merely a component part of nature, and to ignore that fact will lead us to our doom. (167)

These positions, and their attendant ways of relating to the world and the creatures in it, have profound – and intertwined – effects on both nature and culture.

Because of their focus on realistic depictions of nonhuman animals – verisimilitude is often used as a criterion of to judge animal stories (Dean, “Political Science” 303) – animal stories both reflect and participate in dialogue about these positions. For instance, what one person believes to be realistic, another may believe to be fanciful, in accordance with that person’s position regarding

the capacity of nonhuman animals to think, feel, and act in the world. The nature faker controversy stemmed from disputes about what constituted a realistic representation of an animal. For Burroughs, Roberts' animals are "simply human beings disguised as animals" ("Real and Sham" 131), and his stories are, therefore, nearly fables. Beyond the emotion and cognition that Roberts attributes to animals, however, the stories "follow closely the facts of natural history," Burroughs writes, and readers know not to take the animals' psychology or sentiment seriously ("Real and Sham" 131). Burroughs reserves his umbrage for those, like Seton, who would try to convince their readers that their stories are not fiction but fact: "No pleasure to the reader, no moral inculcated," he writes, "can justify the dissemination of false notions of nature, or of anything else, and the writer who seeks to palm off his own silly inventions as real observations is bound sooner or later to come to grief" ("Real and Sham" 137). With this opening salvo, Burroughs sparked a battle over the nature of the animal mind that ran the gamut from defending plot details to engaging in name-calling. This controversy divided nature writers (with animal story writers among them) into two groups: one group believed that instinct governed animals, the other that at least some species of animals also had the capacity to think and reason. This continues to be an area of dialogue in animal stories.

The nature faker controversy died away – Burroughs penned "Chipmunk Thoughts" in 1913, in which he washes his hands of the issue, claiming that "the vexed question of the animal mind" "shall trouble me no more" (211) – but the underlying issues of what animals and their capabilities are have not. These issues are grounded in centuries of Western theory and ideology about animals and human-animal relationships, of which two main contributors are discussed here: René Descartes and Charles Darwin. In terms of modern Western theory, the Christian Bible provides a base point, in which "God created humankind in his image" and granted humans dominion over "every living thing that moves upon the earth" and through the air and in the sea (*New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Gen. 1:26-29). Thirteenth-century priest St. Thomas Aquinas was instrumental in developing a theory that more firmly separated humans from animals. He argued that animals did not have the capacity to reason, and that the part of the soul that reasoned was the only part that survived the death of the body, thus, in Leslie Irvine's words, relieving "Christians of having to treat animals with kindness, because they would not meet the creatures they had exploited in the afterlife" (39). By this reasoning, animals were not merely nonhuman but *subhuman*, and the division between humans and nonhuman animals began to affect definitions of

social class and to be a source of great anxiety as people struggled to control “the animal” within the human (Irvine 41).

The division between humans and animals was thus firmly established by the time sixteenth-century philosopher René Descartes added his arguments, but his contributions were so influential, and remain so pervasive even today, that the denial of consciousness, mentation, and/or emotion to any nonhuman animal is often called Cartesian. Descartes theorized that the body and the soul (or mind) were entirely separate entities (48); while the body was a divisible object, the soul – the seat of reason – was wholly indivisible. This distinction was critical to the division of humans and animals. Descartes argued that animals were without reason, and considered them to be mechanical in nature (47-48). Animals “have no mental powers whatsoever,” he wrote, and it “is nature which acts in them, according to the disposition of their organs; just as we can see that a clock consisting only of ropes and springs can count the hours and measure time more accurately than we can in spite of all our *wisdom*” (48). Valerie Allen notes that, in Cartesian dualism, the “division between *res cogitans* (mind) and *res extensa* (body),” mechanizes matter, so that “[w]hat occupies space (*res extensa*) cannot think and what thinks (*res cogitans*) cannot occupy space and therefore cannot be measured. Consciousness and extension thus become logical opposites” (67). Descartes divided body and soul utterly. In so doing, as John Berger explains, “he bequeathed the body to the laws of physics and mechanics, and, since animals were soulless, the animal was reduced to the model of a machine” (264). Descartes argued not that animals did not experience pain, but that, because he reasoned that they lacked mentation and thus self-conscious awareness, they were only reacting to stimuli (Descartes 47-48). Cartesian philosophy denied reason to animals, and the form that that denial took justified many cruelties, both casual and in the name of science, such as vivisection without anesthetic (Fudge 99). As Erica Fudge explains it, the mind/body division allows for the use of animals as human stand-ins in experiments, but “the absolute difference between the human and the animal mind . . . means that the testing can remain in place without problematizing human status, or human actions” (101). The Cartesian belief that humans and animals are alike physically but utterly different mentally is one that has persisted into the twenty-first century (Fudge 100), and has had profound implications for the treatment of animals in Western cultures.

In the mid- to late-nineteenth century, however, a tide of Darwinian theory crashed into the cliff of Cartesian philosophy. The nature faker controversy is a literary testament to the friction

between these two competing perspectives. As with Descartes' theories, Darwin's theory of evolution predates the man to whom it became attached, dating back nearly two thousand years (Preece 265). In addition, when in the eighteenth century John Ray and Charles Linnaeus developed taxonomical systems based on physical similarities, "scientists in several disciplines began to discuss versions of evolutionary theory in the form of a 'Great Chain of Being'" that resulted in the beginnings of a shift to a more holistic – and caring – worldview than that afforded by Cartesian dualism (Irvine 48-49). Nevertheless, Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *Descent of Man* (1871) brought ample evidence for and increased understanding of the process of evolution.

The early animal stories were, in large part, a response to Darwinian theory. Writing of wild animal stories in particular, Ralph H. Lutts notes that the texts "were an important expression of cultural responses to Darwinism" ("Wild Animal Story" 9). When, for instance, Roberts wrote about his belief "that the actions of animals are governed not only by instinct, but also, in varying degree, by processes essentially akin to those of human reason" ("Prefatory" vii), he was expressing an eminently Darwinian sentiment. Animal stories that present animals as sentient, emotional beings – and most animal stories do this – align with Darwinian beliefs about nonhuman animals and, therefore, against Cartesian ones. Darwin believed that "there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties" and that "the lower animals, like man, manifestly feel pleasure and pain, happiness and misery" (18, 20). According to Darwin, animals are capable of thought, reason, and emotion, all of which Cartesian doctrine denies. Today, large segments of Western cultures accept Darwin's theory of evolution and the concept of kinship with other animals that devolves from it, but scientific confirmation and general acceptance of the theory of evolution did not come until the twentieth century (Preece 266). Animal stories, and the early animal stories especially, formed a rejection of established Cartesian ways of thinking and an embrace of Darwinian concepts of kinship.

Darwin did not, however, eliminate the concept of difference between humans and nonhuman animals. As Rod Preece points out, Darwinism "could be used either to elevate the status of animals or to demean other species" (267). Darwin, and many animal story writers, used Darwinian theory to emphasize the similarities – the kinship – between humans and nonhuman animals, but it is also possible to use Darwinian theory to elevate humans above nonhumans because "humans were so much more 'evolved,' so much more 'advanced' – indeed, so much

‘fitter’ – than other species” (Preece 267). The same logic permitted the stratification of humans, with some “less evolved” and therefore more animal-like than others (Preece 267), along similar argumentative lines as earlier conflicts about the presence of “the animal” in humans. This new framework of kinship merely provided an additional “conceptual basis for identifying ‘lower races’ [of humans] with ‘higher animal species’” (Johnson 340). Even Darwin supported this in some of his work, writing that “ancient races stand somewhat nearer than modern races in the long line of descent to their remote animal-like progenitors” (13), and that humankind is the most dominant animal on Earth, whose “immense superiority [man owes] to his intellectual faculties, his social habits, which lead him to aid and defend his fellows, and to his corporeal structure” (81). The chief distinction that Darwin identified between humans and nonhumans was of morality, or conscience: employing the Principle of Parsimony here, Darwin defined a moral being as “one who is capable of comparing his past and future actions or motives, and of approving or disapproving them,” and concluded that there was no evidence to support the presence of this capability in nonhuman animals (51-52, 40). Despite identifying this as a point of difference, however, Darwin also believed that nonhuman animals had emotions and possessed a fundamental similitude in their “mental faculties,” including the ability to reason (20, 18, 25). In terms of cognitive ability, Darwin believed that the difference between humans and nonhumans was one of degree rather than kind (63), a critical distinction between Darwinian and Cartesian theory.

Darwin and Descartes had a profound influence on Western conceptualizations of animals and human-animal relationships, and animal stories inevitably respond to key components of their theories, deliberately or unconsciously, by reinforcing and/or undermining ideas about animals’ capacities to think, feel, plan, and act. For Descartes, the main distinguishing factors between humans and animals were consciousness and response-ability, the ability to respond rather than simply to react (Descartes 46-47). The “lineage of Western philosophers” for whom Descartes stands as flagbearer believes that only that which is human has the possibility of response (Haraway 77). In *When Species Meet*, Donna Haraway contends that this belief positions animals “on the other side of an unbridgeable gap, a gap that reassures the Human of his excellence by the very ontological impoverishment of a lifeworld that cannot be its own end or know its own condition” (77). In his hierarchical understanding of evolution, Darwin also affirms this gap, although for him it is not a bottomless abyss but a separation due to elevation, with Caucasian men standing at the pinnacle of elevation and thus distinguished from nonhuman animals by the degree

of cognitive capacity rather than the fact of cognitive capacity. Animal stories, by their nature, create a “lifeworld” for their animal characters, and in so doing they answer implicit questions about the relative poverty or richness of nonhuman animal experience in comparison with human experience. Do animals think and reflect? Suffer? Respond?⁹ The ways in which animal stories present their animal characters offer responses to these questions and others, providing a perspective that, most often, emphasizes similarity and kinship over difference.

I.3 Taking Animals Seriously: The Issues, Impact, and Importance of Representing Animals in Literature

Animal stories participate in conversations about animal cognition, emotion, and behaviour, but they also, of necessity, participate in a dialogue of animal representation. This, in and of itself, can be a theoretical rabbit hole, in that many animal stories represent the subjective experience of nonhuman animals. Because humans cannot escape human experience (Allen 63), representations of animals in these stories in many cases present as subjects nonhuman animals whose subjectivity is fundamentally unknowable, after the fashion of Thomas Nagel’s “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?” In her response to it, Laura Brown writes that Nagel’s essay “provides a paradigm for the importance of the subjective character of experience – in that we know both that it exists and that it is inconceivable” (10). As Brown argues, the inconceivability of the nonhuman perspective has positioned the animal as the Other, or animal-as-Other, in twentieth- and twenty-first-century Western critical discourse (11). She asserts that all efforts “to gain access to animals ‘on their own terms’ or to ‘the animal as other’ [raise] the basic representational paradox that continues to challenge modern critical approaches to the animal: that all such efforts emanate from the realm of human language and culture” (23). Because of this limitation, even literature that focuses on nonhuman perspectives is intrinsically anthropocentric, because it stems from human thoughts, human language, and human cultural understandings. Humans cannot escape their own humanity and thus cannot write an animal’s perspective from anything other than a human’s perspective.

⁹ These questions have been raised and addressed by Burroughs, Jeremy Bentham, and Derrida, respectively, whose work in these areas has become of critical importance in both theory about animals and the animal rights movement.

By this logic, however, no perspective other than the autobiographical has any possible legitimacy as a *conceivable* perspective. The subjectivity of any character is mediated through language and usually through text, whether that character is human or animal. If a human cannot conceive of an animal perspective, then the same logic must conclude that a man cannot conceive of a woman's perspective, a child an adult's, or a Canadian a Venezuelan's. Because the subjectivity of any being other than one's self is unknowable, any perspective other than one's own rests on suppositions about degrees of likeness. Nagel supposes that "bats have experience," i.e., that there is something that it is like to be a bat, and further that bat physiology is sufficiently different to "create difficulties for [humans to imagine] what it is like to be a bat" (438). The inconceivable gap that he identifies between the experience of a bat and the experience of the human attempting to imagine the bat's experience is only an extreme example of conceptualizing the experience of (an)Other, which is ultimately impossible to realize through human language. Lawrence Buell expresses the magnitude of encoding to which such a written text is subject, writing that texts consist of language and writing, and therefore are "heavily mediated refractions of the palpable world" (33). All of this refraction and encoding occurs even before one attempts to represent the experience of something other than oneself, whether Chinese astronaut or horseshoe crab. The rabbit hole leads endlessly away: all linguistic expression is mediated, and thus all representation is mediated. Language can gesture toward the real, but cannot encompass it. Animal story writers further complicate this by using language to gesture toward a real that cannot be known. They adopt "the ventriloquist's burden" – Richard Horwitz's phrase that Lauren Corman adopts and expands upon – a term laden with colonial connotations, such as the "white man's burden," which Chapter Three explores, to speak on behalf of animals whose voices, perceptions, and cognitions humans can never truly conceptualize.

Nonetheless, animal stories create representations of animals and animal experience. They typically engage with standard elements of storytelling, such as plot, setting, and character, and in their development of individual animal characters they represent the experiences of individual animals and, therefore, depict animals as individuals. For animal rights activists such as Donna Haraway and Élisabeth de Fontenay, this sort of individualization "is a philosophical tool used to fight against Cartesianism and the reduction of animals to brutes and of brutes to matter," because the use of the lumped and lumpen term "animal" to refer to all sensate creatures that are not human "tacitly involve[s] a massive denial of animal individuality" (Hoquet 75, 74). Joshua Russell

suggests that narratives that tell the stories of animals are significant because they open the individuality of animals to human consciousness; he tells a personal story of a hawk being hit by a car and how his friend's response – “Who knew hawks were so stupid?” – reveals both a denial of responsibility and an inability to imagine the hawk as an individual (167). When people write the stories of animals, those characters become individuals and thus, by implication, suggest that nonhuman animals are individuals, each with its own story.

Even stories that expressly attempt to speak for “the animal,” however, risk losing nonhuman animal individuality and silencing subjectivity in the appeal to the category of animal.¹⁰ An individual animal character can and often does stand in as a representative of its species or of animals generally, and its status as an emblem can subsume its status as an individual. The need to shed the concept of species or animality in order to focus on the individual is why Derrida is so adamant about describing his cat specifically in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*: “The cat that looks at me naked and that is *truly a little cat*, this cat I am talking about, which is also female, isn't Montaigne's cat either” (6). *This* cat, Derrida writes, is the individual about whom I am writing, not the category of cat or the cat as symbol.

Despite representing individual animals in the form of characters, however, animal stories often deliberately use those characters to make statements about entire species, classes of animals, or animals broadly – just as stories about individual humans often do. In his introduction to *Red Fox*, for example, Roberts writes that the protagonist's experiences and characteristics are “fairly typical” and that he is a superlative representative of his kind (v). Thus, while animal stories of necessity focus on individual animal characters, those characters are often also representative of their species specifically or of nonhuman animals generally, and so animal stories are subject to the same risks of deindividuation and general categorization as other forms of literature that include or discuss animals.

Nevertheless, animal stories do speak for animals. This advocacy may be deliberate or a by-product of storytelling, and it may open dialogue about “the animal question” or press a species into a cookie-cutter mould, but in their representation of animal perspectives, these texts offer a way of looking at animals that at least knocks the traditional Western anthropocentric perspective askew. By privileging the animal perspective – fundamentally unknowable though it may be –

¹⁰ In “Beyond Just-So Stories: Narrative, Animals, and Ethics,” Linda Vance explores this concept of silencing animals through narrative (166-71).

these stories tilt anthropocentric perspectives sideways to try to see through the assumed mask of the nonhuman. In a prefatory note, Roberts explains that his “effort is to interpret [animals]; to present them, in their actions and their motives, from their own view-point rather than from ours; and so, if it may be, to help a little toward a wider, more tender and more imaginative perception of their essential kinship with ourselves” (“Author’s” v-vi). It is clearly impossible for a human to present a nonhuman animal from its own point of view. As Nagel points out, it is a very different thing to acknowledge that an animal possesses experience – or its own point of view – than it is to try to occupy that point of view, and the latter is a fundamentally futile endeavour (438). However, Roberts is expressing this idea of using nonhuman perspectives as part of a motive to change and broaden human perceptions. His statement about nonhuman perspectives exemplifies Christoph Irmischer’s belief that some nature writers have questioned “the adequacy of the human point of view as a ‘central focalizing device’ in representations of nature, doubting that humans should consider themselves exempt from, or superior to, the ‘rhythms’ of nature” (95). Roberts undoubtedly views humans (or at least white men) as the most superior species, as Chapter One outlines, and his masculinist values are indelibly etched into his animal stories and animal protagonists, but he nevertheless articulates the desire to use his animal stories as vehicles to express the response-ability of the animal Other – which, in Roberts’ estimation, is very like the human in its essence. This sort of storytelling, which attempts to conceive of animal perceptions and identify both likeness and dissimilarity, challenges “critical models of Canadian identity [that] have remained stubbornly anthropocentric rather than ecocentric, focused not on the environment, that is, but on its human inhabitants” (Irmischer 95).

Because animal stories attempt to represent inconceivable nonhuman perspectives, they are, perforce, limited. They are inevitably culturally inflected and constrained by the limitations of a language that has been designed specifically to express human perception and human concepts. They tend to focus on large vertebrates, animals whose experience is likely closer to that of humans than, say, that of starfish or June bugs. Even the word “animal” is ambiguous, signifying such a vast array of shapes and types of relationships as to render the term a gross overgeneralization (Hoquet 69). Animals themselves are bound up in human cultural and personal perceptions. Moreover, as Vance argues, “the point of most human narrative . . . is to illuminate the *human* experience,” regardless of the number of animals that populate the texts, and narratives

about animals, therefore, “tend to be human centered, or to exist for human edification” (165). Erica Fudge summarizes the dilemma inherent in writing about animals:

Our language creates and gives meaning to our world, and animals become subsumed into that world because we lack another language with which to represent them. The choice, as I see it, is a simple one: we acknowledge the limitations of our own perspective, but simultaneously accept that what we can achieve with those limitations is important and worthwhile, even if it is only the best that we can do. Or we acknowledge the limitations and from that perspective give up the attempt to discuss animals, and thus exclude from our world those beings that, in great part, have always been used to imagine what it is that we humans are. We would, by our refusal, undercut our own sense of our difference from the other beings in the world, something that has always lain at the heart of our self-perception. (159)

It is clear what choice Fudge believes to be correct, and animal story writers have made the same one: to work within the limitations of human language, perceptions, and cultural encoding to represent animals. Animals are the *sine qua non* of animal stories, and while animal story writers may not think of animal representation in Fudge’s terms, they too have chosen to represent animals in some way, to craft with human language that which is beyond human language’s capacity to represent. The limitations of human language and perspective may be unacknowledged, or frustrating, or challenging, but these writers nevertheless conceive something that, at the very least, is a marker of the inconceivable nonhuman animal perspective.¹¹

The risks and limitations inherent in writing about animals also extend into the academic sphere. It is easy for scholarly criticism to marginalize the animals being represented, for critiques of text, method, and meaning to absent the animals in the animal stories. Aaron Gross points out that attention given to animals often becomes “a route to illumine aspects of humanity (which can make the animals themselves seem beside the point). The problem arises when this is the *only* way animals are discussed” (15). Charles Bergman writes about his experience at a conference on animals and representation, expressing his disquiet at “the fact that most of the speakers were willing, almost glibly, to dismiss the animal as animal. . . . [F]or the most part, the participants talked almost exclusively about what representations of animals mean to us,” ignoring aspects such

¹¹ For an example of a discussion of the challenges of crafting the perception of the nonhuman Other, see Kenneth Oppel’s “Why I Wrote *Silverwing*.”

as how these representations affect real animals and the ethics of animal representation (“Academic Animals” 143). In Bergman’s estimation, “[t]he actual animals seemed almost an embarrassment, a disturbance to the symbolic field” (“Academic Animals” 143). There is a great temptation for humanities scholars to explain that animals are “fundamentally unknowable” and retreat to more comfortable subjects such as symbolism and significance for humans, much as scientists treated animals as Cartesian automatons and so avoided the animals themselves by focusing on things such as genetically-engineered fixed action patterns (Bergman, “Academic Animals” 143). Treatment of Virginia Woolf’s *Flush*, an imaginative biography of Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s dog, is symptomatic of this tendency. What scholarly attention it has received, minimal in comparison with most of her other novels, has attributed the significance of *Flush* to its “expression of the (exclusively) human conditions of modernity” (McHugh 15). It has dismissed the canine protagonist and the real-life counterpart on whom he was based in favour of comparing, for example, the treatment of women to the treatment of dogs in nineteenth-century England. This sort of dismissal undoubtedly has roots in the tendency to dismiss animals as “unserious” subjects (Baker 193; McHugh 22). It is mind-bogglingly easy to whisk the animal out of an animal text to focus on what that text has to say about people. Thus, it is important to keep in mind, as Bergman notes, that “[a]nimals are not texts that we produce; they are living beings. We must be careful not to dismiss them as we speak and write about them” (“Making Animals” B16). It is not possible to speak *as* anything other than a human, and oneself at that, but it may be possible, Buell argues, “to speak in cognizance of human beings as ecologically or environmentally embedded” (7-8), whether in scholarship or in story.

Representations of animals do often affect people in addition to animals, however. The use of animal terms as pejoratives, for example, perpetuates negative sentiments about both the human individuals and groups so labelled and also the animals whose terminology is being so used. Typically, that which is animal is juxtaposed with that which is human; animals have traditionally been defined as organisms capable of voluntary movement that are not human (Hoquet 73-74). Berger suggests that, being both like and unlike humans, animals have been both excluded from the category of “human” and thought to intercede “between man and their origin” (260-61). This logic has facilitated the transformation of the words “human” and “animal” into what Gold calls “labels earned by the quality of behaviour so that a writer may humanize an animal world or animalize a human one” (“Precious Speck” 26). Used to refer to people, the names of

animals become epithets. Bitch, dog, sow, cow, animal, brute, beast, pussy, louse, snake, and others, often paired with accentuating adjectives (e.g., filthy cow, two-timing snake) and showing a misogynistic tendency toward negative female terms, are pejorative and reductive. Even animal epithets often given in admiration (e.g., buck, stud, beast), although tending to emphasize (masculine) qualities of virility and power, objectify their subjects, reducing their multidimensionality to a single characteristic whose approbation relies on a quality made dubious by its connection to the animal. This metaphorical use of animals and animal terms is common: in *Animal Stories: Narrating Across Species Lines*, Susan McHugh relates an anecdote from her undergraduate days, in which a professor asserts that animals appear “as significant figures in English literature only strictly in terms of metaphor” (7). It also demonstrates pejoration against women, non-Caucasians, and people of lower socio-economic status, revealing white, and masculinist linguistic coding. For this reason a murderer is considered “an animal” (Klinghammer 80), having transgressed the moral and legal codes of civilization. Many texts include references that suggest that non-Caucasian ethnicities are closer to animals than Caucasians;¹² and Melody Hessing writes that ecofeminists see “the oppression of women and degradation of the natural world” as interconnected through the dominant patriarchal discourse (286). Narratives that reinscribe white, masculinist values in terminology and story in these ways reinforce culturally coded discourse that privileges affluent Caucasian males at the expense of other groups.

Referencing Thomas King’s *Green Grass, Running Water*, Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin write that stories “have a profoundly material impact on land, people, animals, and on the fabric of others’ lives” (167), and animal stories in particular are sites of dialogue that both reflect and influence human perceptions about animals, nature, ethics, and human-animal relationships and ways of being in the world. Cary Wolfe points out that, in terms of animal-human relationships, the issue of ethics has centred on cognition and, in the modern and postmodern periods, on language (Introduction xv). If animals have no language, they have no subjectivity and therefore no possibility of response. Because response is necessary for an ethical relationship, with that conclusion philosophers have traditionally absolved humans of ethical obligation to or for animals (Wolfe, Introduction xv-xvi). However, a new surge of interest in animals has galvanized parts of the scholarly community in recent decades and, with it, a revival of interest in

¹² For example, Darwin does this in *Descent of Man* (13).

animal ethics. As McHugh points out, stories may be “key points of ethical negotiation across artistic and scientific models of species and social life” (14), and animal stories have been negotiating relationship, ethics, and responsibility since their inception. In his introduction to Saunders’ *Beautiful Joe* (1893), for example, Hezekiah Butterworth comments that “[t]he story speaks not for the dog alone, but for the whole animal kingdom. Through it we enter the animal world, and are made to see as animals see, and to feel as animals feel. The sympathetic sight of the author, in this interpretation, is ethically the strong feature of the book” (v). Seton explains that “[s]ince, then, the animals are creatures with wants and feelings differing in degree only from our own, they surely have their rights. This fact, now beginning to be recognized by the Caucasian world, was first proclaimed by Moses and was emphasized by the Buddhist over two thousand years ago” (“Note” 11-12), a statement that asserts animals’ subjectivity and looks to religious icons to legitimate its stance. Mowat describes his own *Never Cry Wolf* (1963) as “a plea for understanding, and preservation, of an extraordinarily highly evolved and attractive animal which was, and is, being harried into extinction by the murderous enmity and proclivities of man” (Preface vi-vii). These are only three examples of many in which introductory notes speak specifically to ethics and to human responsibility, marking these texts as loci of opinion and argumentation about animals and human relationships with them. McHugh’s thesis that Roberts’ judgement of animal psychology “reflects broader social desires for animal stories not simply to convey the truth of humans or of animals, but also to value non-utilitarian human-animal relationships” is an equally valid assessment of the majority of animal stories (213).

Because both animal stories and more philosophical and theoretical discourses about animals focus on details of animal mentation, terminology indicative of the fact and representation of animal mindfulness persists throughout the following chapters. The concepts of sentience, anthropomorphism, and subjectivity, in particular, are useful tools for exploring both standard Western cultural understandings of animality and animal story writer’s depictions of nonhuman animals. Sentience, which includes experiential sensations such as perception and feeling in addition to the capacity to be conscious or experience subjectivity, is a subject of ongoing debate in animal studies, although the belief of nonhuman animal sentience is becoming increasingly prevalent (Bekoff). The 2012 Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness, for example, asserts, in part, that “the weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Nonhuman animals, including all mammals

and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates” (Low). The debate about nonhuman animal sentience includes concerns about representations of animal subjectivity and anthropomorphism in literature. Sentience is the quality of being a conscious entity, a being rather than a thing. Charges of anthropomorphism, the ascription of human traits to nonhuman animals or deities, in animal literature typically take issue with representations of animals as possessing attributes of subjectivity or sentience, because many consider these qualities to be uniquely human. These terms are interwoven in animal studies, and animal literary studies in particular, and the chapters that follow will explore aspects of them in more detail.

Animal stories are a thread on the web of human-animal relationships. They intersect with representation, with its concomitant problems of how to conceive of the nonhuman mind and respect the integrity of the nonhuman Other while creating a simulation of that Other. They intersect with anthropocentrism and the ethics of ignoring the animal in favour of the metaphor, and with theories about animal cognition, language, and subjectivity. They reflect, respond to, and even attempt to influence policies, cultural conceptions, and individual perceptions about real animals that impact individual animals and entire species. Their contributions to dialogue about “the question of the animal” should not be underestimated.

I.4 Discussion of Texts

Each of the chapters that follow responds to a question about animal stories, using a combination of historical and cultural contexts, zoological data, and close readings of eleven primary texts, focusing specifically on work by Anglophone Euro-Canadian men that features mammals or birds. Canadian animal stories follow and respond to dominant philosophical and scientific thought surrounding animals, and this has, until very recently, been the province of men of European descent, including Descartes and Darwin. While Western cultures conventionally view women as intrinsically closer to nature than men – and therefore to animals, as components of nature – as Hessing argues, “[w]ilderness areas have been traditionally portrayed as an arena of male activity” (287, 283). It is, for European settlers and their descendants, a masculine space. Professions in areas such as hunting, trapping, forestry, and sciences involving field work have been and continue to be dominated by men (Catalyst; Dionne-Simard). Writing of Roberts’ work, Dean comments that “[a]ll realistic works rely on the evocation of cultural codes which are

ideological: they construct the real rather than reflect it. . . . *What* [stories] choose to signify as ‘real’ is as important an area of analysis as *how* they signify it” (“Political Science” 304, emphasis added). Roberts’ depictions, therefore, are “inflected with assumptions about human personality and masculinity as norm which are endemic to his historical period,” and the “return to nature” that he promises in his essay “The Animal Story” (146) “is promised to the male reader who by its means is offered a subject position of competence and mastery directly linked to his biological heritage as white male human being, crown and end product of evolution” (Dean, “Political Science” 302, 306). Roberts’ status as an affluent white male influences his expression of and perceptions about animals, colouring his conceptualization of animals and animal perspectives with his own androcentric and ethnocentric biases. These biases are slowly changing; the percentage of women entering the life sciences, for example, has risen from 23.2% in 1991 to 42.5% in 2011 (Dionne-Simard), which would indicate that field work in disciplines such as zoology and botany is fast reaching gender parity and that the wilderness is no longer seen as a space for exclusively male activity. As of 2015, however, women comprised just 14.2% of the work force in the occupations of hunting, trapping, and fishing in Canada, which indicates that there are still some spheres of human interaction with wilderness spaces that continue to adhere to traditional Western perceptions of masculine actors in those spaces.

White male authors, because of their privileged position in the canon, have a disproportionately large influence on the representation of animals. John Rowe Townsend, for example, dismisses Saunders’ work as a “riot of anthropomorphism” and credits “the serious Canadian contribution to the animal story” to Roberts and Seton (123). In his exploration of the canon-making space of Canadian anthologies, Lecker asserts that “women writers were systematically excluded from the canon,” although women’s inclusion rates have risen in recent decades (129-32). What Euro-Canadian men, as a group, have to say about animals through their animal stories has set the standard for the mode. The stories of Seton, Roberts, Haig-Brown, Bodsworth, and others tend to promote Western masculinist ideals. Their protagonists are almost exclusively male, with females appearing in the texts typically in the roles of mothers or mates.¹³ Success in battle, physical strength, fortitude, independence, endurance, and bravery are celebrated virtues, while qualities of caring, nurturing, and parent-offspring relationships are frequently

¹³ Dean identifies this gender-skewed presentation of the natural world with biographic conventions in “Political Science: Realism in Roberts’s Animal Stories.”

secondary or absent, as in Roberts' "King of Beasts" (1911) and Langford's *The Winter of the Fisher*. Stories that feature animals that live in groups or colonies, such as prairie dogs, rats, horses, wolves, or caribou, are scarce, and where they do appear, emphasis is typically on the internal dominance hierarchy and a protagonist's position at or struggle to reach the top. In many biography-type stories, in fact, the young protagonist finds himself orphaned early, Bambi-style, and without a nurturing parental relationship at all. Moreover, animal stories by Euro-Canadian men frequently posit the natural world as a site of successive conflicts, in which the (male) protagonists must win and hold territory, mates, and food. These stories regularly position their nonhuman protagonists as victors in the fight for survival, even sometimes in stories whose focus is more on conservation and ecological balance. Nature in these stories is very much "red in tooth and claw." Canadian animal stories may make their animals into victims, but if they do, they often first make them into victors who at the very least are able to pass their superior genes on to the next generation before they die. These male-dominated stories perpetuate masculinist ideals – physical strength and sexual prowess in males, females' (secondary) roles as mates and mothers, etc. – that are not necessarily in keeping with the ideologies and themes of work by other authors. Nevertheless, animal stories by Roberts, Seton, Mowat, Bodsworth, and others are typically considered representative of Canadian animal stories, sometimes to the exclusion of work by women and minority writers.

One result of the pervasiveness of the masculinist vision of the world as a series of competitions is that it sets up human-animal relationships to be more competitive than cooperative. There are other results, such as celebrating intra-species fighting and pushing females into the passive role of awaiting the victor, but in terms of how the texts represent humans as relating to animals (and vice versa), the competitive tenor of the protagonists' lives extends into human-animal interactions. In Roberts' "King of Beasts," for example, the human protagonist "faces off" against increasingly dangerous animals until he emerges the victor, while the fisher in Langford's *The Winter of the Fisher* goes to war with a trapper, and even in Mowat's more ecologically driven *Never Cry Wolf* the human narrator's reaction to being frightened is to fly into a rage and wish to do harm. This competitive aspect, regardless of whether the animal or the human emerges triumphant, reinforces the idea that an interspecies hierarchy is both natural and necessary, and tends to position humans at the top of the hierarchical – and evolutionary – ladder in the tiered system that competition creates rather than promoting, for example, an interconnected community

of relationship. Not all human-animal relationships in animal stories by Euro-Canadian men are based on this type of head-to-head conflict – the central plot point in Oppel’s *Silverwing*, for instance, is the protagonist’s struggle to find his way to his colony’s hibernaculum – but “winner-take-all” power struggles, in which animals prove their superiority by vanquishing rivals for food, mates, or territory, are certainly integral to a large percentage of those stories.

Studies of animal literature might take many directions: work on animal stories by Canadian women or Indigenous authors, for example, would provide more exposure to discursive models outside the dominant Eurocentric male discourse represented in the texts examined here, and may offer complex treatments of gendering, Othering, sites of conflict with the dominant discourse, and interactions with or discourse primarily based on traditions other than the European. Animal stories from outside the dominant Euro-Canadian male discourse may also offer other visions of human-animal relationships. For example, de la Roche and Roberts have both written stories about female cats separated from their owners. In de la Roche’s “The Ninth Life” (1933), the cat swims to the mainland and works her way home, delivering kittens along the way and laboriously bringing them home; the kittens are later drowned. In Roberts’ “Tabitha Blue, or The Indiscretions of a Persian Cat” (1933), however, the cat takes an unfortunate trip downriver on a fallen tree and then begins an affair with a bobcat; she is found by her owners, who speculate excitedly about the possibility of mixed-species kittens. For Roberts’ cat, separation from her humans is an adventure that leads her to a large, strong mate; for de la Roche’s, separation is terrifying, and her efforts to reunite with her people ultimately doom her offspring. At first glance, both stories appear to reinforce stereotypical gendering, with Roberts’ story focused on the cat’s powerful mate and de la Roche’s on the pregnant mother. In “The Ninth Life,” however, the protagonist offers little in the way of nurturing motherhood; her pregnancy endangers her in the cold water, her labour endangers her on the land, and her instincts prod her to bring each of the kittens to her home in spite of her exhaustion, thus putting further strain on her already depleted physical reserves. Here, the emphasis is not on the cat’s nurturing nature or the fact of her motherhood but on the cat herself; her pregnancy, labour, and maternal instincts all constitute threats to her survival. “The Ninth Life” undercuts stereotypical depictions of animal motherhood by treating the stages of motherhood as threatening rather than intrinsically rewarding to the protagonist. This particular story also raises and works against a conceptualization of female characters as comprised primarily of their relationships to males, in that the cat is represented first

as an individual and only second as a mother; her motherhood is, in fact, the biggest threat to her wellbeing that the story presents. For Tabitha Blue, however, her identity as an individual becomes compromised by her affiliation with the bobcat and her potential for motherhood; while her owners are initially thrilled to find Tabitha, they quickly lose interest in her as an individual and fall into discussion about the kittens that she might have. Her identity is wrapped up in who her mate is and who her kittens might be in ways in which de la Roche's protagonist is not. Many works by Canadian women are animal stories or include animals in critical ways. These include but not limited to: Saunders' *Beautiful Joe*, Nellie McClung's "The Ungrateful Pigeons" (1912), Lucy Maud Montgomery's "Aunt Cynthia's Persian Cat" (1920), de la Roche's *Portrait of a Dog* (1930), Louise Rorke's *Lefty* (1931), P. K. Page's "Unless the Eye Catch Fire" (1939), Sheila Burnford's *The Incredible Journey* (1961), Marian Engel's *Bear* (1976), Colleen Archer's "The Dog Who Wanted to Die" (1984), Candace Jane Dorsey's "The Black Dog" (1988), and Barbara Gowdy's *The White Bone* (1998). These texts and others are, for the most part, underrepresented in scholarship, and all are deserving of additional study.

Extant animal-based Indigenous literature includes titles such as E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake)'s "We-hro's Sacrifice" (1913), Peter Blue Cloud (Aroniawenrate)'s *Elderberry Flute Song: Contemporary Coyote Stories* (1982), stories in Thomas King's *One Good Story, That One*, Eden Robinson's "Dogs in Winter" (1996), Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen* (1998), oral tradition CD *How Fox Got His Legs Crossed* (2009, translated by Mary Siemens and Rosa Mantla), Diane Jacobson's *My Life with the Salmon* (2011), and Harold Johnson's *Corvus* (2015). Like de la Roche with "The Ninth Life," Indigenous authors may also work outside or against the Eurocentric, masculinist discourse in stories that work with or within mythologies and/or ideologies that challenge human/animal divisions and offer more holistic interpretations of relationship. For example, as Daniel Heath Justice explains, those rooted in Indigenous traditions may understand kinship as "not about something that *is* in itself so much as something that we *do* – actively, thoughtfully, respectfully" (148), and animal stories based on this concept of relationship may, therefore, represent kinship concepts differently. Kinship as Justice describes it here is not biological fact but lived action, so that kinship follows from the acts and attitudes that enact it in a self-sustaining system of relationship. Male Euro-Canadian animal story writers have called upon human-animal kinship as a reason to stop poaching or otherwise cruel acts or simply to be more understanding of animals (e.g., Roberts' "The Aigrette"; Seton's "Redruff"), but these

calls are typically predicated on human obligation to or responsibility for animals as the result of humans' simultaneous kinship with and superiority to nonhuman animals, as Chapter Four discusses. These stories begin with the premise that "we and the beasts are kin" (Seton, "Note" 11), and argue for changes to human behaviour because of extant kinship. In Justice's model, kinship only exists through acts that affirm and reinforce it. Shifts in perspective such as this one are small, but can have profound impacts on animal representation in texts and human-animal relationships.

The fox in Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen* provides a case in point. In the segments of the story of Ayash related in the novel, she is the fox-woman, a maternal figure who gifts the hero Ayash with the tools he needs to succeed in his quest (e.g., Highway 227; Ray and Stevens 115). She is simultaneously human, animal, and divinity, and just as she is Mother to the Son in the story of Ayash (Highway 277), so she becomes a mother figure and guide to *Kiss of the Fur Queen's* protagonists, Gabriel and Jeremiah. Highway has altered the common order of the story to provide Ayash with his gifts prior to the beginning of his journey, a decision that corresponds with Jeremiah and Gabriel's innate talents in music and dance, respectively, tools with which they are gifted at or even prior to their births and which prove vital to their mediation of Western culture. The Fur Queen is a fox-woman, "a torch-singing fox with fur so white it hurt the eyes," "missile-like tits, ice-blond meringue hair," and a "bushy tail, like a boa" (231). The Fur Queen as a fox has, unlike Ayash, appeared directly throughout the novel. Her presence marks many of the transition points in characters' lives, such as when Gabriel and Jeremiah brawl, when Abraham and Gabriel die, when Gabriel moves to the city, and when Jeremiah lies freezing in the snow. The strong female voices in the novel also signify her: the white fur that is her emblem drapes Ann-Adele Ghost rider, Amanda Clear Sky, Lola van Beethoven, and the unnamed Indigenous woman who screams at the bouncer "You can't do this to me. . . . This is my land, you know that? My land!" (299, 252, 99, 105). The Fur Queen's vulpine aspects act more strongly in the novel as it progresses; the fox is first merely the fur on the Fur Queen's crown and cape, then an image in a picture, but she is in the later stages of the novel a speaking, acting creature who converses with Jeremiah, who stands in front of the white-bearded Christian God's mouth and sings counterpoint to his dictatorial speech when Jeremiah finally remembers his sexual abuse in residential school and when Gabriel dreams his own abuse (9, 74, 286-87, 297). Critical to the novel, the fox claims the kinship ties of motherhood, which Gabriel and Jeremiah are initially

unable to recognize. Ayash's story, as alluded to in the novel, marks the help provided to culturally and geographically lost boys (and later men) by a female power consistently presented with the features of a fox, and their eventual return to her in defiance of the exile imposed by a damaging male power. In *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, Highway uses the story of Ayash to weave the feminine divine into the Okimasis brothers' lives, always present and eventually found. The kinship ties that the Fur Queen and fox-woman claim in the novel affect both their physical appearance (i.e., they are not "pure" foxes) and their roles in Gabriel and Jeremiah's lives. Moreover, this shapeshifting human-animal character, common in Indigenous narratives, differs from representations of animals that Eurocentric authors (and critics) would consider "realistic." It may be necessary to reconsider what constitutes a realistic animal story – or even an animal story generally – with regard to Indigenous narratives, because the extant definitions of what makes an animal story (and by extension what makes an animal) make no allowances for the polymorphous nature of many animal (or animal-based) characters in Indigenous narratives.

Beyond introductory explanations of the mode and some comparative studies of the work of two or three prominent authors, there is little extant work on Canadian animal stories. In working with stories that belong to Euro-Canadian men and originate from Western perceptions about animals and human-animal relationships, this study begins to establish a sort of baseline of how authors represent animals from within the Eurocentric, masculinist sphere that is so influential and pervasive in Western cultures. As a reference point for additional analysis by others, it is valuable to study texts that are part of the tradition of masculinist animal stories that began with Seton and Roberts and that continues to be influenced by and sometimes to explicitly challenge that tradition. Future studies of animal stories by women and Indigenous peoples may expand upon this study and challenge the perspectives and ideologies delineated here.

Like their authors, the narratives examined in the following chapters are geographically diverse: the authors range from British Columbia to Nova Scotia and the texts' settings from the

Canadian high arctic to South America.¹⁴ Chronologically, the narratives were published between the 1880s and the 2010s, spanning the time between the inception of the realistic wild animal story and contemporary work, and both the world-famous (e.g., Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf*) and the obscure (e.g., Ben Gadd's *Raven's End*) are numbered among these. In terms of genre, the texts include fiction and fictionalized autobiography that takes the form of novels and short stories, representing a variety of genres that work within the frame of realistic depictions of real-life animals. Each narrative focuses on a different protagonist species – the species of the main animal character(s) of a text – except insofar as humans play a role, frequently central and/or pivotal, in each of the stories. Not all animal stories fit neatly into the realistic wild animal story mode that Seton and Roberts pioneered – Seton's "The Prairie Chicken" (1883) itself does not – and so this analysis also examines texts that offer representation of other styles of animal stories. Each of these stories, however, contains animals that are represented as animals: although animals may be represented symbolically, allegorically, fantastically to some degree, each of these stories nevertheless presents at least some of its animals as representative of their real-life counterparts, adhering to what is known of the animals' physiology and behaviour wherever possible. In various ways, the stories examined here all address issues of animal representation, and they do so, implicitly or explicitly, by comparing and contrasting their protagonist species to humans.

The analysis of these stories focuses on the masculinist roots and contemporary iterations of wild animal stories in Canada. The questions addressed here may serve as case studies or reference points for studies of animal stories elsewhere, particularly those stories influenced by Western cultural traditions, and future studies of animal stories by women and Indigenous peoples – and recent immigrants – in Canada will be able to expand upon and challenge these perspectives. Canada is considered the origin point for the realistic wild animal story, but other countries have embraced the form. This study looks specifically at Canadian animal stories from their inception point, exploring their development over the decades. The stories themselves are not insular; they

¹⁴ Geographic representation is often difficult to pinpoint. Opper, for example, was born in British Columbia but raised primarily in Nova Scotia. Seton and Martel were both born outside of Canada: Seton moved to Canada in childhood and Martel, born abroad to French-Canadian parents, lived variously in Canada and abroad before returning to Canada in early adulthood. Still others, notably Seton and Roberts, spent much of their adulthood in the United States. Nevertheless, despite the often-convoluted twists of their geographic identities, these authors are all accepted as Canadian and each can be considered to represent one or two provinces.

do not wrap themselves in the maple leaf and refuse to reach beyond Canada's coastlines. Although most are set at least partially in Canada, Roberts' "King of Beasts" and Martel's *Beatrice and Virgil* are set entirely on foreign soil, and Opper's *Silverwing* and Langford's *The Winter of the Fisher* provide no exact geographic location and could easily have been set in the northern United States. Popular beyond Canada's borders and stretching out geographically as well, these stories have become globalized, as it were. Drawing on Western (masculinist) philosophical roots in Descartes and Darwin (among others), animal stories by Euro-Canadian men engage with concerns – do animals think? Can we know what they think? What is the difference between humans and nonhuman animals? – that have become part of the dominant discourse in Western cultures. Many writers who do not reside wholly in that tradition, such as Marian Engel, Tomson Highway, and Thomas King, deliberately push back against these discourses. In addition to gaining a deeper understanding of the animal stories of Euro-Canadian men, then, beginning with this work also facilitates understanding of the work of authors who are engaging with but not necessarily adopting the androcentric, anthropocentric Western frame used by Euro-Canadian male writers.

I.5 Overview of Chapters

Chapter One addresses the question "what is an animal story?" To do this, this analysis breaks the question into parts: what is an animal, what is a story, and what is a story about animals? The four stories examined in this section test the boundaries of definition. The three variants of Seton's "The Prairie Chicken, or Sharptailed Grouse," occasionally cited as the first instance of a realistic wild animal story, call into question the distinction between a natural science essay and an animal story; Roberts' "King of Beasts" asks what the distinction is, if any, between what is human and what is animal; Roberts' "When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots" (1902) and Seton's "The Winnipeg Wolf" (1905) address the complexities of stories that include domestic animals or significant human involvement. These texts mark the beginning of the realistic wild animal story with early works by its co-creators, and the analysis of the question of the animal story provides insight into (1) the qualities that help to determine whether a text will be classified as an animal story, and (2) what the implications are of an animal story being categorized as such. This chapter explores the possibilities of definition of animal stories, and problematizes a mode whose very title

enforces an animal/human binary when the texts classified within it are so often invested in eroding that binary.

The first chapter's emphasis on definition – and redefinition – continues in the second chapter, which addresses the target audience of the animal story. It responds to the question, “do common themes exist that can help to separate children's literature from general literature in animal stories?” Although it is sometimes clear that a particular story or series is intended to reach adults, the majority of animal stories are classified as children's literature, sometimes with the accompanying critique that those stories are too realistic or brutal to be suitable for children. Steve Baker comments that “[r]eceived wisdom has it that the tendency to like, to care for and to identify with animals is essentially a childhood phenomenon, or, as it might often be more condescendingly expressed, a childish thing” (123). This translates into animal literature, as animal stories and children's stories often dovetail or merge. The relationship between the two is evident simply in the prevalence of animals within storybooks, from Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit* series to the numerous animals in fairy tales. However, not all animal stories are also children's literature, and the cultural association between children – and, thus, immaturity – and animals may have implications for the scholarly consideration of animal stories. This chapter analyzes three texts published within a fifteen-year span at the turn of the twenty-first century: Opper's *Silverwing*, Gadd's *Raven's End* (2001), and Martel's *Beatrice and Virgil* (2010). *Silverwing* is avowedly children's literature, *Raven's End* is potentially a crossover text accessible to both children and adults, and *Beatrice and Virgil* is adult literature. Using these texts, Chapter Two explores the possibility that violence, anthropomorphism, and the subjectification (or objectification) of animals are key factors influencing texts' perceived suitability as children's literature.

Using Opper's *Silverwing* again, in addition to Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf* and Langford's *The Winter of the Fisher*, Chapter Three moves away from the formal conventions of the animal story and into the animal as represented in and by the story, addressing the question “how do animal story writers rehabilitate the reputations of their stories' protagonist species?” This chapter examines the textual representations of the protagonist species (bat, wolf, and fisher, respectively) in light of historical and contemporaneous public perceptions of the species. It analyzes the narrative techniques that these texts use to create sympathetic representations of maligned and/or little-known protagonist species, and uses Matthew Cole and Kate Stewart's axes of subjectification/objectification and sensibility/non-sensibility to discuss the significance of this

sort of representation for the animals that these protagonist characters represent, as well as the significance of animal representation in literature more broadly.

Chapter Four builds on these strategies of representation but focuses specifically on avowedly conservationist literature, examining Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf* again in this context, as well as Roberts' "The Aigrette" (1916) and Bodsworth's *Last of the Curlews* to respond to the question "how do animal stories represent animals when they are attempting to promote biological and/or ecological conservation?" The protagonist species in each of these texts have been or currently are endangered in or extirpated from some or all of their range; Eskimo curlews, in particular, are likely extinct. Hunting plays a significant role in each of these texts, and while they range in subtlety from telling the story of the last member of a species in *Last of the Curlews* to the venomous indictment of the fashion of wearing birds and bird feathers in "The Aigrette," each provides commentary on the practice of killing animals in large numbers for sport, fashion, or the bounty on their heads. The Canadian government currently regulates all three of these – sport, fashion, and bounties – at the federal, provincial, or municipal levels, through such practices as hunting seasons, trapping seasons and ranges, and "bag" limits, as well as paying bounties in some areas. This chapter explains the significance of these particular texts to conservation in Canada and abroad, including their impact on human perceptions of the protagonist species, and uses Stephen Kellert's values of wildlife as a basis for examining some of the values that these texts attach to their protagonist species and exploring how those values increase the value of the protagonist species itself.

Taken together, these chapters discuss matters of definition and differentiation alongside animal stories' interactions with anthropocentric and masculinist Western cultures and theory, performing close readings of texts while remaining cognizant of the historical and cultural milieu from which the texts originated and of the impact that these stories can have on human perceptions of animals. Analyses of the primary texts problematize definition and categorization, and identify common themes and narrative strategies in their representations of animals and human-animal relationships. The two recurring primary texts provide continuity, as well as additional analysis as each chapter's focus highlights different aspects of the texts. Animal stories are often called upon as a defining feature of Canadian literature; these chapters explore their structure, definition, and impact upon Euro-Canadian culture and animals themselves, initiating a discussion about not just single texts or single authors, but about animal stories more broadly. While this discussion is

not comprehensive – because it does not include work by women or Indigenous authors, it contains only work told from the dominant discourse provided by Euro-Canadian men – it opens the door for further dialogue.

1 The Animal Story: The Problem of Definition

Human nature is fundamentally animal yet it is in negation of our animality that our self-definition is achieved.

- Marsden, "Bataille and the Poetic Fallacy of Animality" 37

In 1969, W. J. Keith attempted to generate subcategories within the animal story by subdividing Charles G. D. Roberts' animal stories into adventure tales, observations, and chronicles. The animal adventure story, he posited, is a tale about animals that includes enough traditional plot elements to generate a story with a discernible introduction, climax, and denouement, while the "representative chronicle" is an account of the adventures of a single animal and the "anecdote of observation" is more "sketch" than story and is an often-plotless presentation of a single event or scene ("Charles G. D. Roberts" 108, 110-11). His parsing indicates that a fixed, unspoken conceptualization of what an animal story is already existed. He does not provide parameters for inclusion or exclusion of texts within or from the broader category of "animal story," which suggests that such a division ought to be unproblematic. Even within the group of texts that Keith is addressing specifically in this article, however, the distinction between what constitutes an animal story and what does not is often blurred. "Animal story," as term and category, is complicated by definitions of animality and story. This chapter begins to address the complicating factors of the categorization, discussing in particular three questions whose answers are key to constructing a concrete, critical working definition of the term "animal story": (1) what constitutes a story? (2) what constitutes an animal? and (3) what constitutes a story about (wild) animals? Responding to Cartesian and Darwinian theories, animal stories written by Euro-Canadian men typically attempt to erode the boundary between the human and the animal, but they do so within a category of writing that depends for its definition upon an animal/human binary, and from within a tradition that privileges "masculine" reason over "feminine" emotion. Classificatory tools such as distinguishing between *once* stories and *always* stories or drawing a

dividing line between stories that are about animals versus those that include animals but are about people are useful for making determinations about the position of texts in relation to the mode, but the mode itself paradoxically attempts to deconstruct the very binary that its name upholds.

The animal story, as a term, has been in use since at least as early as 1902, by which time Roberts had published “The Animal Story” (1902) and Ernest Thompson Seton a collection of stories entitled *Lives of the Hunted* (1901) under the name Ernest Seton-Thompson.¹ In *Lives of the Hunted*, Seton explains that his “chief motive” in producing his animal stories “has been to stop the extermination of harmless wild animals; not for their sakes, but for ours, firmly believing that each of our native wild creatures is in itself a precious heritage that we have no right to destroy or put beyond the reach of our children” (12). By 1902, then, writers were describing as animal stories works that were written primarily about nonhuman animals, and that were often accompanied by an admitted social or political agenda. Since then, “the animal story” has become a classificatory descriptive, frequently paired with modifiers such as “realistic” or “autobiographical,” used to lump texts uncritically within a group of stories whose common link is “stories about animals,” at least insofar as stories about animals have been accepted as actually being *about* animals rather than using nonhuman animals as a means to make a statement about humans. The term has been used in primary texts, anthologies, and criticism. Occasionally, beginning with Roberts’ oft-cited explication of the animal story as “a psychological romance constructed on a framework of natural science” (“Animal” 144), authors have attempted to define the term, but these definitions are typically narrow in scope and rely too heavily on assumptions about what may be considered an animal story to be satisfactory.

The categorization of texts in such a way is a construct that, at present, primarily serves an organizational purpose, such as helping professors decide which texts to include in a given course or providing booksellers a guide for creating book displays. To try to *define* the category “animal story” is, however, less an attempt to solidify a boundary than it is a step toward insight into both the qualities that help to determine what will be classified as animal story and the presumptions that adhere to reading a text with a preconceived expectation about whether that text falls within this mode. Kari Weil notes that “our representations can have real effects in the world by shaping

¹ Roberts’ essay was originally published in *The Book Buyer* as “The Animal Story of To-day.” All of Seton’s publications are listed under “Seton, Ernest Thompson” in the Works Cited list. Alternative names under which he published are provided in the text proper.

how we understand other animals and thus how we might relate to them” and that animals also “affect the way we represent them or their literary surrogates” (60). One might add to this feedback of influences that the ways in which people understand the categorization of texts and the animals in them also affect people’s understanding of (1) how the animals are represented and (2) the significance of those representations. The category “animal story” already exists. Exploring aspects that contribute to its definition will help to generate insight into properties that contribute to exclusion from or inclusion in the category and to problematize the term itself. This problematization reveals some of the underlying ideological assumptions about human-animal relationships, what animals are, and even the status of nonhumans in Western cultures that affect what is included in the classification of animal stories and the relative importance that people assign to stories that are classified as such.

Seton and Roberts are the acknowledged co-origins of the realistic animal story (Dunlap, *Saving* 22), to which some attach the modifiers “short” and “wild.” Their work in this area has assured them a place in any comprehensive account of the history of Canadian literature. This chapter uses four of their short texts as its chief exemplars in its examination of the animal story: Seton’s “The Prairie Chicken, or Sharptailed Grouse” (1883) and “The Winnipeg Wolf” (1905) and Roberts’ “When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots” (1902) and “King of Beasts” (1911). Seton’s “The Prairie Chicken” and Roberts’ “King of Beasts,” in particular, are threshold-testing texts, pushing at different aspects of the boundaries of what might conceivably be called wild animal stories. Alec Lucas and Patricia Morley have identified “The Prairie Chicken” as the first short, realistic wild animal story (“Nature” 398; 346) while others, such as John Coldwell Adams, have left it off the list entirely. “The Prairie Chicken” is of particular note because of its marginal status as the first animal story; in fact, its status as a story is questionable, and some, such as Thomas R. Dunlap, have bypassed it to name “The King of Currumpaw: A Wolf Story” Seton’s first realistic animal story (*Saving* 22).² As for Roberts, in addition to being credited with co-founding the realistic animal story with Seton, he is often called one of the fathers of Canadian literature: Fred Cogswell noted that Roberts was “the first Canadian writer after Confederation to achieve and sustain an international reputation,” and was influential in the Canadian literary scene between 1880 and 1930 (6-7). Cogswell lauds him as “a master of a subgenre [the animal story]

² This story was later retitled “Lobo, King of the Currumpaw.”

which he himself invented and the popularity of which continued, thanks mainly to the quality of his own work, for nearly forty years” (9). Although “King of Beasts” is a story, some may not consider it an animal story. The external signals indicate that it is: the majority of Roberts’ short stories are animal stories, and it is included in *The Feet of the Furtive* (1911). This volume is a book of animal stories that signals its status as such to those familiar with Roberts’ tendency to stress the mystery of the wilderness and its inhabitants in the titles of such volumes, and “King of Beasts” is set without comment amid a series of stories that feature a swan, a chipmunk, a leopard, and other animals as protagonists. It seems clear that “King of Beasts” is intended to be another animal story among many, but the protagonist is human. This story overtly challenges the human/animal binary that is implicit in the animal story mode by focusing on a human protagonist *as an animal*. “When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots” and “The Winnipeg Wolf” are less contentious in terms of their categorization, but the amount of human involvement and the use of domestic and semi-tame animal characters adds additional complexity to defining the term “realistic wild animal story.” Individually and as a group, these stories test the edges of definition, challenging assumptions about what is story, what is animal, and what is story about animals.

1.1 The Story

The division Keith makes of Roberts’ stories according to types based primarily on the shape or degree of the stories’ narrative arcs reveals a preoccupation with form. In some ways, structure or form is ancillary to content, as it is the content, the “animal,” that modifies the form, the “stories,” to create a distinction between animal stories and other types of literature. The form may inflect the content – a romance and an adventure story will treat the same basic content very differently – but without animals, there is no animal story. Not every text about animals, however, constitutes an animal story. “The Prairie Chicken” has three variants, the earliest of which is the primary focus here. Mistitled by Lucas as “The Life of a Prairie Chicken,” this text and Roberts’ “Do Seek Their Meat From God” (1892) are what Lucas considers the twofold beginning of the animal story (“Nature” 398), although both texts deal significantly with human wants and desires and Seton’s leans heavily toward the nature essay or scientific anecdote; Keith, however, calls this text a “factual scientific article” (“Beginnings” 75). Evidently, some uncertainty exists surrounding the applicability of the term “story” to the animal story, and if a determination of “storyness” cannot definitively include a text within the category of animal story, it certainly has

exclusionary value. Extant definitions of “story” are ultimately unhelpful with regard to distinguishing between animal stories and natural science essays in particular, and quality of *onceness* (in contrast to *alwaysness*) may prove a critical factor in distinguishing between an animal story and a natural science essay, as Seton’s essay-style “The Prairie Chicken” demonstrates later in this chapter.

H. Porter Abbot explains that although most English speakers use “story” and “narrative” interchangeably, “**narrative** is the representation of events, consisting of *story* and *narrative discourse*, **story** is an *event* or sequence of events (the *action*), and **narrative discourse** is those events as represented” (16). Furthermore, every story contains just two necessary components: “the *events* and the *entities* involved in the events” (17). In other words, like a sentence, a story must have both a subject and verb. The subject must may act or be acted upon, and this, by itself, constitutes story. Something happens. That is the sole requirement. Narrative discourse mediates the story, and together these create narrative (17). This is an extremely inclusive definition, even if one includes Seymour Chatman’s qualifiers that a narrative must be internally coherent and have a plot (123, 126).

The fact remains, however, that there are texts about animals – texts that have both events and entities and that are coherent and have recognizable plot – that are not “stories” as people commonly conceive of stories. If the “story” were not a critical component of an animal story, credit for the first animal story would have been attributed to texts written centuries before Seton’s “The Prairie Chicken.” Medieval bestiaries, which explain “characteristics [of animals] drawn from direct observation, traditional lore, fable, and myth” (Clark and McMunn 2), might have claimed that title, for example, and early scientific texts about animals, such as selections from John Burroughs’ *The Ways of Nature* (1905) or even Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* (1859), would regularly be classified as animal stories were that the case. They are, after all, narratives about animals, and offer anecdotes of animal actions and reactions. But they are not, apparently, stories about animals; they are not listed in recitations of early animal story titles or included in animal story criticism. A distinction, however inchoate, exists between stories about animals and scientific literature about animals, the latter of which in texts such as R. D. Lawrence’s *In Praise of Wolves* (1986) and Bernd Heinrich’s *Mind of the Raven* (1999) include anecdotes, personal observations, and even second-hand retellings of stories to the point of privileging “story” over “fact.” As a text sometimes considered an animal story and sometimes considered expository

prose, Seton's "The Prairie Chicken" straddles that border, and a critical analysis of it reveals features that differentiate anecdote-based scientific literature from animal stories.

"The Prairie Chicken" has three variants, the earliest of which is the primary focus here. Seton published "The Prairie Chicken, or Sharptailed Grouse" in 1883. The later variants appear as "The Prairie Chicken" by Ernest E. T. Seton as part of the transactions of The Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba (1884) and as section "100a. *Pedococætes phasianellus campestris*. Prairie chicken" in *The Birds of Manitoba* (1891) by Ernest E. Thompson. Each variant is published as nonfiction, and the 1884 and 1891 variants contain sections with journal-type entries listed by date. The circumtextual frame around each variant points toward the nature essay or scientific report or article as the frame through which the text should be read. The variants appear in publications whose primary intent is to disseminate information rather than to entertain. The titles are descriptive of the subject matter and include, in the last variant, now-outdated binomial nomenclature to help identify the bird in question. These factors indicate that the three variants are scientific in nature and contain, at most, anecdotal observations about prairie chickens. Of the three, the 1883 variant is the most conversational in nature, using slightly less formal language than the others. All three variants contain most of the same information, with the exception that the last two contain some additional information that appears not to have been available to Seton in 1883 and that the 1884 variant contains additional anecdotal observations about prairie chickens from Seton's attempts to raise a brood of the birds from eggs, apparently in the time between the publications of the 1883 and 1884 variants. These variants have no plot, as the term is conventionally used: they consist of descriptions of prairie chickens, their behaviours and habits, and the potential for domesticating them. Rather than telling the story of specific prairie chickens, the texts discuss prairie chickens in broad terms. Such texts are not animal stories, but extant definitions of animal stories provide little that can definitively separate a story such as Seton's "Redruff, the Story of the Don Valley Partridge" (1898) from his prairie chicken texts.

All three variants contain similar information organized in a similar manner. The 1883 and 1884 variants are particularly close, with most passages from one corresponding to passages from the other, some almost exactly. One variant clearly forms the base text for the other, and, from the information added to the 1884 variant for which the 1883 variant confesses no data or contains

incomplete data,³ there is a high probability that the 1883 variant is an edition of the text not only published but also created earlier than the 1884 variant. A variety of differences are apparent, but a few specific examples illuminate the differences in register between the 1883 and 1884 variants: (1) from “[a]s the winter wanes” to “[a]bout the middle of April”; (2) from “with the fittest ones surviving” to “those who remain, the survival of the fittest”; and (3) from “scatter” to “disperse” (1883 var. 410; 1884 var. 18). These examples come from a single passage that has been subtly altered in both wording and punctuation but not in meaning. The first change increases the specificity of the time of the behaviour for greater accuracy; the second alters an allusion to Darwinian language to a specifically Darwinian phrase (Darwin 98) that would more obviously indicate Seton’s familiarity with Darwin’s theory of natural selection; and the third replaces one word with another of a more neutral, formal register. The 1883 variant’s lesser degree of empirical clarity indicates that it is the closest of the three to an animal story rather than expository prose.

Seton begins this variant with a description of the bird and alternate names used to identify it, taking care to provide field markings for chicks as well as adults of both sexes (47 lines). He then follows this with descriptions of behaviour (5 lines), the food prairie chickens consume at various times of the year (40 lines), their “Partridge Dance” and calls (31 lines), flight (4 lines), nesting (16 lines), the rearing of young (16 lines), general behaviour and interactions with farmers and hunters (26 lines), and winter habits (36 lines), ending with a section about the possibility of domesticating the birds (56 lines). This rudimentary method of sorting shows that about a fifth of the work is given over to the prairie chicken’s potential usefulness to people, excluding lines on damage to crops and the best time to hunt the birds, and that the rest can be categorized within a framework recognizable to anyone who consults modern bird identification guides. The National Audubon Society’s *Field Guide to North American Birds* (1996), for example, contains sections titled “Description,” “Voice,” “Habitat,” “Nesting,” and “Range” for the Greater Prairie-Chicken, as well as a paragraph of additional details, which includes descriptions of the courtship display Seton describes as the Partridge Dance (448-49). It is also notable that Seton’s *The Lives of Game Animals* (1909), organized along lines similar to *The Birds of Manitoba* (1891), has been considered a scientific work rather than a sequence of animal stories. A search for *The Lives of Game Animals* in academic libraries reveals that it is regularly shelved in the natural sciences

³ Cf. the tables of observations on the contents of the crops of prairie chickens, pages 14 and 407 respectively.

section alongside works such as R. F. Scharff's *Distribution and Origin of Life in America* (1911) and W. J. Yenne's *Wildlife of North America* (1987). The sections in *The Lives of Game Animals* are organized in a manner similar to that of "The Prairie Chicken" variants, although in a more exhaustive fashion and formatted in sections with headings such as "Description: Size, Weight, Colour, Freaks" "Range with Map," "Sociability," "Farmer vs. Fox," and "Young" ("Life XII – The Red-Fox," Vol. 1, Pt. 2, 467). Seton's *Birds of Manitoba*, which contains the 1891 variant of the text, similarly finds itself housed near volumes on natural science, such as Frank Shaw's *Birds of Canada* (1988) and L. L. Snyder's *A Classification of Ontario Birds* (1950). These indicators mark "The Prairie Chicken" variants as leaning toward the natural sciences. Moreover, the variants resemble natural science texts in both their content and the similarities between them and works that are typically classified as natural science texts, including some texts authored by Seton himself. None of this would indicate that any of the three variants might qualify as an animal story.

The crux of the problem of classification appears to be not what Roberts called the "framework of natural science" that is meant to structure and inform the story but the "psychological romance" aspect that, to Roberts, turned natural science into story. Readers expect even a fantastical story about animals to be supported by factual details about the animals described, from their eating habits to their physical capabilities to their perceptions of the world around them. Kenneth Oppel, for example, confined his descriptions of colours to grey-scale and qualities of brightness or dullness in his *Silverwing* series because the bats who are his protagonists do not see in colour (Oppel "Why I Wrote *Silverwing*"). His descriptions of the bats and their perceptions are meant to be accurate, even while the series' plot twists through a fanciful world of war between birds and beasts and tyrannical spectral bats attempting to enslave their smaller northern relatives. If authors do not use animal behaviour as it is understood as one of the parameters for their stories and instead have Toad and Frog dressed in waistcoats while sharing tea and crumpets, the stories, while not dismissed outright, become classified as fables, folklore, allegories, or generic children's literature. Amphibians do not drink tea, eat crumpets, or wear clothes. Even small children who have little or no personal experience with amphibians know this. As Steve Baker explains it,

Across the range of the critical literature on the talking-animal story, there recurs a fascinating and perplexing motif. It is the assertion that in these stories the animal,

and most particularly the *pictorial image of the animal*, does not signify ‘animal’ at all. . . . In the Rupert [the bear] literature, the motif takes the form of the widely-held view that the central character is not really a bear at all – merely an ordinary boy who happens to have a bear’s facial features. If that trace of animality signifies anything at all, it is the childhood *innocence* of the stories. (136)

In this passage, Baker points to the use of language as the defining feature of humanity, refused to the animal. There is merit to this line of thought, but there are other markers – such as wearing clothes, attending school, discussing philosophy, and other attributes recognized as uniquely human – that signal a movement away from the realistic frame that indicates an attempt to represent “real” animals rather than humans with animal faces, as it were.

In addition to grounding a text in natural science, Seton’s focus on the minutiae of observation in these stories accedes to the historic pairing of reason with masculinity, while emotionality/sentiment was (and is) considered a feminine characteristic. “Reason,” Isabel Karremann explains, “had been a gendered attribute since antiquity; in the early eighteenth century, rationality became an exclusively male prerogative, even synonymous with manliness” (109). This Augustan ideal of manliness eschews emotion in favour of the cold, hard facts (Karremann 111-12), assuming an objectivity that occurs in its pure form only rarely, if ever. The rejection of emotion in literature about animals has extended even into modern animal rights theory, where such notable activists as Peter Singer and Tom Regan “characterize emotion as an unreliable basis for ethical decision and claim to have made no appeal to emotion in their arguments for animal liberation” (Luke 210), maintaining a white male subordination of emotion to reason. The division between masculine reason and feminine emotion may partially explain John Burroughs’ and Theodore Roosevelt’s rather histrionic responses to the those they called the nature fakers, as the Introduction discusses in more detail; among other things, emotion was creeping into animal stories, diluting the pure, unsullied facts of animal behaviour with frivolous fancies about animal emotion and thought.

In this respect, Seton’s prairie chicken texts would easily have passed muster with Burroughs and Roosevelt: they are strongly scientific in nature. That natural science is what makes it *possible* to classify the prairie chicken texts as animal stories. Without that criterion, the text must be something else, a fable, an allegory, a something that, although not necessarily excluding the term “animal story” as part of its classification, nevertheless escapes the label. Art

Spiegelman's *Maus* (1986), a graphic novel about the Holocaust with most of its characters depicted as anthropomorphized mice, is not an animal story. Margaret Marshall Saunders' *Beautiful Joe* (1893), a story told by a first-person canine narrator, is. The issue with Seton's prairie chicken variants is not whether they contain natural science, but whether they contain *only* natural science. Karla Armbruster points out that although "accuracy can be important . . . it should not become a dominant concern" in fiction, because "literature will never be the best way to learn about animal lives or minds" (23). Realist fiction is more than the sum of its facts and, in the case of animal stories or other literature about animals, it is more than what information it conveys about animals. The story is as critical a component of an animal story as the animal itself.

A text may brim with qualities of natural science and still be an animal story if that text satisfies the requirements of "animal storyness," one of which is the use of natural science to validate the text as a realistic representation of one or more specific species, adhering at least nominally to biological characteristics ascribed to the species in question. Nevertheless, natural science is never the *purpose* of a story. Dunlap describes science, in animal stories, as the vehicle for a moral message (*Saving* 23), and though his evocation of literary terminology is likely accidental, it is apt. Science, or factual information about animals, may carry the story's message as the vehicle of a metaphor carries its tenor, or central idea. While a nature essay's purpose may be to disseminate information about animals, it is unlikely to be more than an aid for an animal story.

This is where the qualities of *onceness* and *alwaysness* become useful in distinguishing animal story from natural science essay. According to Douglas Hesse, texts that carry the quality of *onceness* tend to be read as short stories, while texts that carry the quality of *alwaysness* tend to be read as essays. *Always* stories relate an event that "we assume is typical and therefore representative" while *once* stories "are representative of nothing but themselves" (96). Hesse is writing here about the significance of tenses, of the "Kim's house stands along the main thoroughfare through the borough" versus "when Kim was twelve years old" variety, but the idea, with its division of uniqueness and representativeness, lends itself to a broader interpretation. Animal stories, although often touted as being true to a particular species rather than a particular individual, nevertheless focus on developing individual characters to help illustrate those points. Roberts probably expresses this best in his prefatory note to *Red Fox* (1905), where he comments that his protagonist is "typical" of foxes and "represents the best, in physical and mental

development, of which the tribe of foxes has shown itself capable” (v). Natural science information remains important, but is conveyed through a particular emphasis on one or more particular individuals. *Red Fox* is a *once* story, telling of actions that are specific to one fictitious representative of foxes as a species. The character and his actions are more important than the natural science informing them, although the natural science remains a necessary component of the novel.

In an *always* story, by contrast, individual characters and anecdotes highlight specific behaviours; the emphasis is on the natural science, the *alwaysness* that is animal behaviour rather than the *onceness* that is the individual performing the behaviour. Of the red fox in *The Lives of Game Animals*, for example, Seton notes that “the father [fox] takes an active interest in the young and helps to care for them” (525), and continues on to recount an example of a dog fox’s devotion to his mate and pups at a “Fur Ranch”: the “male Fox was seen digging as hard as he could, and the dirt was flying in all directions, and the Fox was panting like a race Horse” in his attempts to free his mate and pups after a caretaker inadvertently plugged the hole to a new den (526). Seton relates a specific incident – and he does it without once referencing the fox’s emotional state – but he relates it in order to illuminate a behaviour either characteristic of or anomalous to a species. Here, the character takes a subordinate position to the science. When he speaks of “the father” fox, he is speaking of male parent foxes in general, not one fox specifically, and although the text describes a specific incident – and creates some “once-like” suspense in the process – the incident exists in the text in order to delineate behaviour, to say “this is what foxes are like.” Where Robert’s *Red Fox* uses information about fox behaviour in order to tell a story, Seton’s chapter “Red-Fox” tells a story in order to illustrate fox behaviour. The former tells a story that concentrates on a series of events that occur in the life of an individual animal (*onceness*); the latter tells a story that concentrates on behaviours and characteristics of a species, with illustrative examples (*alwaysness*). Animal stories, then, rely in large part upon a nominalistic approach, in which scientific knowledge about species or large clusters of animals is significant only insofar as it informs the behaviour of certain individual animals who feature prominently in the stories.

The use of this criterion makes it clear that none of the variants of Seton’s prairie chicken texts qualify as animal stories. All three exhibit circumtextual, intertextual, and intratextual cues, such as the choice of publisher, that indicate that the texts’ main purpose is to enhance knowledge of prairie chickens rather than to tell a story about prairie chickens. Most importantly, however,

the contents of the variants themselves privilege *alwaysness* over *onceness*. The 1883 and 1891 variants contain no characterizations whatsoever of individual birds, instead offering generic depictions of prairie chickens as a group and occasionally subdividing them according to sex or age. The 1884 variant includes a journalistic recording of Seton's attempt to use a domestic hen to rear a clutch of prairie chickens, but isolates individual chicks only to quantify, for example, the number of deaths by a particular method (e.g., "[o]ne was drowned and two were killed by the hen trampling them" [15]). The 1884 variant does contain a biographical story in the form of these journal entries, following the chicks in detail for the first thirty-one days of their lives and sketching out their continued development afterwards in a manner that is, in its essence, similar to the early sections of biographical animal stories such as *Red Fox* or Seton's "Redruff." However, the encompassing generalization of the characters – the prairie chickens – confirms that these variants are *always* stories and therefore natural science essays rather than animal stories.

Although still somewhat subjective, this criterion of *onceness* as a quality necessary to an animal story is one that has been applied in a consistent, if unarticulated, manner, assisting in the categorization of Heinrich's *Mind of the Raven*, Lawrence's *In Praise of Wolves*, and Rebecca Grambo's *Bear* (2000) as natural science on the one hand and Fred Bodsworth's *Last of the Curlews* (1954), Farley Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf* (1963), and Marian Engel's *Bear* (1976) as animal story on the other. Thus, the qualities of the animals in the texts, as representatives of their species or as individuals whose behaviours are informed by knowledge of their species, are crucial to determining the "storyness" of these texts. In this way, the animal content and the textual form are inextricably linked. This interweaving of content and form avoids the problem inherent in Keith's system of classification without minimizing the importance of form or labelling everything that involves animal entities and actions as animal stories.

1.2 The Animal

The one thing that everyone should be able to agree on is that animal stories are about animals. What readers, critics, and even writers of animal stories typically consider as "animal," however, is that which has life and voluntary movement but is nonhuman, perpetuating a tradition of human/animal binary constructs. These constructs exclude that which is considered human from that which is called animal. As Laura Brown puts it, "[t]he modern understanding of the nonhuman being is often built on this opposition between anthropomorphism and alienation – on

the long Western tradition of human-animal dichotomization” (7). As Thierry Hoquet notes, “animal,” as a concept, unites “a diversity of living entities,” but the same term reveals – and enforces – biases: people “make spontaneous assumptions that the only animals who deserve our attention are more or less ‘like’ us, that is, superior vertebrates” (69). Paralleling this, the juxtaposition of animal with human makes the idea of “them” make sense only as far as they can be related to “us” (Hoquet 69). The animal is a concept that lumps a great many types of entities into a single category, and that category’s primary significance comes from its pairing with that which is not animal, that which is, specifically, human. Just as rationality is associated with masculinity in Western cultures, so is it also associated with humanity, the province of humans (or men) alone. Aristotle called humans “rational animals” to distinguish people from other animals; reason was the characteristic that separated people from other animals (McInerny and O’Callaghan). As the Introduction explains, the determination that animals could not think or reason was one of the primary ways through which humans differentiated themselves from animals. Offering this prized marker to animals had the potential to destroy both the human/nonhuman distinction and the vaunted masculine nature of the capacity itself. Many derogatory terms stem from this distinction between the human and the animal, revealing the disdain and fear with which animality is regarded: in English, for example, a person may behave like a brute, act like an animal, be a beast, or seem inhuman, and when one demonstrates unwonted cruelty, that person or the deeds performed are called inhumane (Fudge 60-61). Reference to humans through the use of words that signify the nonhuman animal announce the degeneration of human morals and the violation of human social norms (Baker 89). To be an animal, beyond a strictly evolutionary sense, is to have debased oneself or demonstrated deterioration from a superior state to an inferior one. This typically involves the reduction or elimination of reason.

Animal stories, then, are about nonhuman animals, and usually restricted to larger mammalian species, which tend to exhibit greater similarities to humans than, say, crustaceans. Some debate exists, however, over the division that separates humans from the rest of the biotic community, and animal story writers have a history of challenging this dividing line. Jacques Derrida articulates the problematic nature of the general use of the word “animal,” writing that

Animal is a word that men have given themselves the right to give. These humans are found giving it to themselves, this word, but as if they had received it as an inheritance. They have given themselves the word in order to corral a large number

of living beings within a single concept: ‘The Animal,’ they say. And they have given it to themselves, this word, at the same time according themselves, reserving for them, for humans, the right to the word, the naming noun [*nom*], the verb, the attribute, to a language of words, in short to the very thing that the others in question would be deprived of, those that are corralled within the grand territory of the beasts: The Animal. (32)

Here, Derrida critiques the term on the basis of its divisiveness, of its role in dividing human beings from other beings and labelling people as animals only as lip-service to the concept of evolution – and as a means for subjugating or demeaning certain groups of humans – while retaining an entrenched hierarchical perspective of world order that places humans not simply at the top of ecological and evolutionary pyramids but on another order of existence altogether, the levels of separation between humans, cats, robins, and earthworms as distinct as that between gods, demigods, humans, and animals. As Aaron Gross explains, the assertion that “humans are animals” is less a defiance of the human/animal binary than a challenge to “the idea that there is anything beyond animality (beyond the material world as known by science),” and “the animal” continues to signify that which is material while “the human” signifies that which contains something in excess of this material basis, whether that is soul or reason or language and culture (2-3). “The Animal” is a concept created by human beings and applied by human beings as an exclusionary tool, something used to apply to humans only in rhetorical (e.g., “the rational animal”) and derogatory terms (e.g., “that man is an animal”). To use it in the definition of stories about nonhuman beings is to apply millennia of conceptualized separation of that which is human from that which is animal, reaching back through Epipromethean-Islamic-Judeo-Christian history (Derrida 102) to a mode of writing that specializes in creating connections between humans and nonhuman animals even to the point of attempting to bridge or eliminate the conceptual gap between one and the other. In effect, then, the use of the term “animal story” reasserts a human/animal boundary that many stories so categorized attempt to undermine or supersede.

Quite apart from the fact that readers regularly seek to identify with protagonists and so stories with animal protagonists are likely to lead to human readers’ identification or connection with nonhuman characters, this practice of using animal stories as a means to link humans and nonhumans became established early in the mode’s development. Works such as Saunders’ *Beautiful Joe* were expressly designed to provoke a sense of sympathy for and empathy with

mistreated nonhuman animals, in accordance with Western sensibilities of animal mistreatment in the late nineteenth century. Dedicated in part to the Massachusetts SPCA and published as the winner of a Humane Society literary competition, *Beautiful Joe* opens with Hezekiah Butterworth's introduction, in which he comments that the story allows people "to see as animals see, and to feel as animals feel" (v). Butterworth links the nonhuman animal perspective with the development of empathy, indicating some shared qualities and characteristics between humans and nonhumans, but he does not dispute humanity's place within the world – he also proposes that more books will teach readers "to live in sympathy with the animal world" (though not as *part* of that world), and that "[k]indness to the animal kingdom" is the first step toward becoming truly philanthropic (v-vi).

Other texts, however, do attempt to blur those defining lines. Seton, for example, asserts in *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1898) that "[w]e and the beasts are kin. Man has nothing that animals have not at least a vestige of, the animals have nothing that man does not in some degree share. Since, then, the animals are creatures with wants and feelings differing in degree only from our own, they surely have their rights" ("Note" 11-12). He ends this collection with an impassioned plea for animal rights, asking "[h]ave the wild things no moral or legal rights? What right has man to inflict such long and fearful agony on a fellow-creature, simply because that creature does not speak his language?" ("Redruff" 295). In addition, Seton proposes in "The Natural History of the Ten Commandments" that the Judeo-Christian Commandments are not arbitrary but rather fundamental to all manner of creatures, particularly the "higher and most successful animals" (26), thereby extending a branch of Western morality to nonhuman animals. Seton's aim in emphasizing the connection between humans and nonhumans is to inculcate an aversion to cruelty to animals, whether deliberate or accidental, but he does so by creating identification between readers and the nonhuman subjects of his work. Everything that makes up a human being is present in some degree in the make-up of nonhuman beings, he writes. That blend of shared traits and characteristics makes a trapped partridge not a creature but a *fellow-creature*, and certain kinship obligations and bonds follow from acknowledgement of another as like oneself, as kin; and the most fundamental tenets of a traditionalist Christian or Jewish person's system of morality are reflected in the actions of nonhuman animals (however strained those connections might be). Seton is espousing the New Testament proverb "[i]n everything do to others as you would have them do to you" here (*New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Matt. 7:12), and the

concept derives its originality from the inclusion of nonhuman life – or at least of larger vertebrates – as “Others,” separate not from humans but from oneself as discrete entities.

Roberts also recognized the links between humans and nonhumans in his animal stories. A sampling of the titles of his collections of short animal stories shows an interest in, among other things, the notion of human-animal kinship: *Kindred of the Wild* (1902), *More Kindred of the Wild* ([1911?]), *Neighbours Unknown* (1909), and, perhaps most compellingly, two editions of a short story collection that differ slightly in their particulars, titled *They That Walk in the Wild* (1924) and *They Who Walk in the Wilds* (1924). The personal pronouns used in these last two editions indicate a certain ambivalence on the part of author or publishers about the subjecthood of nonhumans. In the notes that accompany his volumes of stories, Roberts insists upon this idea of kinship, writing that he struggles to help others to realize animals’ “essential kinship” with humans (“Author’s” v-vi), and other similar sentiments. In *Red Fox*, most likely in response to charges of anthropomorphism levelled during the nature faker controversy, he states that

In so far as man is himself an animal, he is subject to and impelled by many emotions which he must share with not a few other members of the animal kingdom. Any full presentation of an individual animal of one of the more highly developed species must depict certain emotions not altogether unlike those which a human being might experience under like conditions. To do this is not by any means, as some hasty critics would have it, to ascribe human emotions to the lower animals. (vi)

Roberts’ hierarchical classification of species is evident here, as is his commitment to not only the conceptualization of humans as animals but also the related thesis that humans’ animality indicates shared mental traits. This is a commitment that he demonstrates repeatedly in his prefaces to his fiction, the fiction itself, and his comments upon his own work.

The most explicit and most frequently cited source of Roberts’ sentiments regarding animals and animal stories is “The Animal Story,” in which Roberts provides an account of the history of human-animal relations and proposes that nonhuman animals (or at least some of them) are able to perform more complex mental tasks than had heretofore been credited to them and have idiosyncrasies that mark them as individuals (143-44). “We have come,” he asserts, “face to face with personality, where we were blindly wont to predicate mere instinct and automatism,” and people have been compelled to break away from the fondly held idea of animal instinct as the force

behind nonhuman animal actions and to “accept the proposition 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” (144).⁴ He stops short of crediting animals with souls, and Roberts’ hierarchical view of human species suggests a personal schematic in which women, non-Caucasians, and intellectually challenged people rank closer to animal intelligence than cognitively able men of British descent. This is characteristic of Euro-Canadian animal stories by male authors, particularly those of Roberts’ era: Darwin’s theory of evolution did not change social classification based on ethnicity, but restructured it along new lines, so that Indigenous peoples, for example, were considered, as Sue Walsh puts it, “primitive, as kin to representatives of an earlier stage of human development, as childlike” and ultimately analogous to the “animal object” (140). By using an evolution-based sliding hierarchical scale, however, Roberts marks differences between humans and nonhumans as one of degree rather than kind and credits nonhuman animals with both reason and individuality, which were still radical notions at the turn of the twentieth century. Like his contemporaries and the animal story writers who came later, Roberts subscribes to theory of mind, as it is now called, with regard to animals. Theory of mind includes the idea that others have mental states and that those states may differ from one’s own. Roberts, Seton, and other animal story writers accepted that as a premise and used their animal stories to explore how, and to what degree, nonhuman animal mentation differs from – or corresponds with – human mentation.

Saunders, Seton, and Roberts all began their writing careers in the nineteenth century, but the practice of using animal stories as a means to create connections between humans and nonhumans remains prevalent, from Mowat’s *Never Cry Wolf* (1963) to Gadd’s *Raven’s End* (2001). However, it is difficult to narrow the gap, to alter that chasm of difference between human and nonhuman to a mere psychological fissure of degree and not of kind, when the very name used to identify such texts mandates the maintenance of the divide. These are stories about animals, and implicit in that statement is the conviction that people are *not* animals in any meaningful sense

⁴ Roberts links intelligence with psychological complexity here, apparently on the assumption that they are either the same or one is the necessary partner or offspring of the other. This supposes, for example, that an animal cannot experience the emotion of grief unless it has some understanding of what it has lost; without some level of cognitive awareness, things such as emotion and motivation are limited.

of the word. Such definitions of animal stories as have been attempted deal particularly with the issue of human characters in animal stories and use the involvement of human characters as a method of separating animal stories from non-animal stories. As has been noted, however, not every story admits to this method of parsing, no matter how complex the rules, and while the criterion of *once* versus *always* stories may rule out a text as an animal story, it cannot definitively rule a text *in*. Because a text must be both a story and about animals in order to qualify as an animal story, the definition of animality is integral to the classification of animal stories.

Humans cannot constitute animals in the definition of “animal” that rules animal stories, because were humans to be lumped in with moose, mice, and mussels, most extant stories would constitute animal stories. If humans were part of the “animal” that defines animal stories, Alistair MacLeod’s “In the Fall” (1976) for instance, would qualify without reservation despite its concern with the psychology of the narrator and his father rather than with the fate of the horse; it would simply be a concern with animal psychology. To have animal stories be about humans as well as nonhumans would be to negate a venue for literary exploration of the animal Other and to render the category functionally meaningless. To exclude humans from the term “animal” that shapes the animal story, however, is to perpetuate a human/animal binary that many writers use animal stories to attempt to undermine, and that is scientifically, philosophically, and theoretically problematic.

Much of the philosophical and theoretical thought underscoring the division between humans and nonhuman animals has based that division on the absolute alterity of the nonhuman Other. This was true of René Descartes when he designated nonhuman animals as automatons in *A Discourse on the Method* (1637). He reasoned that he had to be able to think in order to be, to exist in a crucial way, and that this existence had nothing to do with his body and everything to do with his mind, or soul. Recognizing no evidence that nonhuman animals could think, he determined that they do not think and thus do not exist as subjects. That which makes humans assert *I am* was missing from nonhumans, and so they *are not*. They might respond to stimuli, but they do not feel and they do not think, and so they cannot be an Other because there is no subject present to *be* an Other. Descartes represents an extreme view of animals, but this conception that humans are subjects and animals are not is ubiquitous in Western philosophy and thought. It is even present in grammatical choices of *who* versus *that*, where *who* refers only to humans and *that* refers to nonhuman animals and things (Keck and Angeli), grammatically separating humans from nonhuman animals and lumping nonhuman animals in with inanimate objects such as spinning

wheels and tea cozies. This is why the pronoun shift in Roberts' volumes *They That Walk in the Wild* and *They Who Walk in the Wilds* is so significant.

Even on the other extreme of philosophical thought about animals, the concept of nonhuman animals' absolute alterity remains prevalent. In *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, for example, Derrida challenges that Cartesian framework and asserts again and again that animals are subjects (e.g., 6, 11, 52, 73) but continues to work within an understanding that an animal, although subject and Other, is wholly unknowable, and thus completely cut off from that which is human. "[T]his being-there-before-me," he writes, "can allow itself to be looked at, no doubt, but also – something that philosophy perhaps forgets, perhaps being this calculated forgetting itself – it can look at me. It has its point of view regarding me. The point of view of the absolute other" (11). That which is being looked at is a being, one who can both be looked at and who can also look, and who has the capacity of response. That gaze indicates the presence of an Other, a subject, but, in the same moment as he calls the animal a being, a subject with a gaze and a face and a self, he also states that that self is completely different from a human Other. The gaze of the animal "offers to [Derrida's] sight the abyssal limit of the human: the inhuman or the ahuman, the ends of man" (12). Seeing the Other seeing him, or seeing the Other seeing him seeing the Other, Derrida concludes that this gaze of the animal Other is so totally separate from the human Other that it must be either inhuman or ahuman.

If the gaze of the animal Other is that of the absolute Other, however, and if the definition for this absolute Otherness involves the limit of that which is human, then the gaze of the human Other is not absolute: there is some means by which a human may approach the human Other and perhaps gain some understanding or knowledge of it. But if humans are animals, and biological evidence supports such a statement from an evolutionary standpoint, then, logically speaking, this cut-off of that which can be known to a degree (the human Other) and that which cannot be known at all (the animal Other) is faulty. If humans are animals, then animal alterity cannot be absolute, because one's own animality provides a basis for understanding at least part of the alterity of the animal Other, in the same manner as one's humanity presumably provides a basis for understanding the alterity of the human Other. If the human Other does not represent absolute alterity, then the animal Other, by extension, also cannot represent absolute alterity in Derrida's model as long as the one facing the Other, the I, contains something that is animal. Part of what makes MacLeod's "In the Fall" such an effective narrative is the interdependent relationship

between the horse and the man, described in such a way as to highlight the similarities between the two. This human-animal connection is critical to the emotional core of the story. The story assumes and asserts grounds for relationship between the man and the horse – and between the reader and the man and horse – and so rejects the nonhuman as an absolute Other.

Derrida writes that the question of the animal “comes down . . . to knowing not whether the animal speaks but whether one can know what *respond* means,” and “how to distinguish a response from a reaction,” and concludes from this line of thought that for Descartes, a reply from one bearing the name of animal is not possible (8), that the lack of possibility of response is what characterizes the Cartesian definition of the animal. Animal stories are necessarily anti-Cartesian in this respect. They are, in large part, engaged in the process of creating subjecthood for nonhuman characters, and those that include some aspects of the perspectives of nonhuman characters also determine which functions of those characters are reactions to stimuli and which are responsive to stimuli. They tend to emphasize the perspectives of the animal characters (Lutts, “Wild Animal Story” 1), and this tendency admits the subjectivity of nonhuman animals and thus the potential of nonhuman animals to respond. In many animal stories, in fact, the nonhuman animal characters *do* respond, with responses dependent upon the authors’ perceptions of the limitations of responsiveness in nonhumans and the degree of realism attempted in the works. With the occasional exception of an animal story that addresses nonhumans on a purely descriptive basis, without touching on nonhuman perspectives, emotions, or thoughts, animal stories implicitly position nonhumans as Others, as subjects whose difference is, while not totally accessible, nevertheless not absolute.

Within this context, almost all animal stories attempt to undermine the binary system that defines animals against humans on some level. Many go further than this largely unconscious deconstruction and deliberately mark the difference in “degree” rather than “kind” that is at the heart of the breakdown of this binary, as in Seton’s and Roberts’ emphasis of human-nonhuman kinship.⁵ Ralph H. Lutts writes that, as a group, animal stories both emphasize “the kinship between humans and other animals” and reflect “growing public interest in animal welfare, as well as nascent ideas about animal rights” (“Will the Real Wild Animals” 279). Roberts’ “King of

⁵ Anthropomorphism may also be indicative of the erasure of this boundary, but it may instead indicate the erasure that which is animal, leaving only humans in the skins of animals, as John Burroughs claimed that the early realistic animal stories did (“Real and Sham” 131).

Beasts” even goes so far as to represent a human as the animal protagonist, which is not to say that the character is described as an animal or as bestial, as is the case with Beauty in Jack London’s *White Fang* (1906), for example, but rather that Roberts has made an attempt to strip away layers of culture and other such traditional markers of humanity and to reveal “the human animal,” as it were.

“King of Beasts,” however, is a text that one may reasonably classify as an animal story. By virtue of its placement in *The Feet of the Furtive*, a book of animal stories that signals its status as such to those familiar with Roberts’ tendency to stress the mystery of the wilderness and its inhabitants in the titles of such volumes, set without comment amid a series of stories that feature indisputably nonhuman protagonists, it seems clear that “King of Beasts” is intended to be another animal story among many. The plot is simple: a shipwrecked man, Johns, arrives at a foreign wilderness land and uses his strength of intellect and body to collect and construct what he needs to survive, triumphing over each animal he encounters, until rescue arrives.

Although it does not read as an animal story on this surface level, the wording used to describe Johns’ predicament and his encounters with nonhuman animals reveals that he has indeed been positioned as an animal among animals. In the disorder and upheaval of shipwreck (Mentz 2), his character is stripped of cultural and physical markers of humanity, leaving him without so much as a knife or a shirt to differentiate him from the nonhumans he will meet; he is, in Roberts’ words, “as naked as the first man who came down out of the tree-tops to challenge the supremacy of his four-footed rivals” (175). In his early consideration that if he only had “a plank or a spar, a bit of railing to lay his hand on, or if he had retained some tiniest rag of a garment, the solitude would have been less monstrous” (167), Johns reveals not simply that he is alone, but that his nakedness and the absence of material worked by human hands isolate him both physically and mentally from humanity. Until he reaches shore and has the opportunity to search among “driftwood and wreckage” for useful objects, the choicest of which is a piece of wood with a spike on the end that will serve him as a club, Johns is materially and culturally naked, reborn, as it were, from the ocean’s waters onto unknown land.

Nor does this positioning of Johns as just beyond the tree-dwelling monkey end with the choice of a primitive club as a weapon. The sleeping platform that he weaves after he has sought out a reliable water source gives “him a reassuring animal sense of possession. He [has] a lair – something standing in for a home,” and from it he “clamber[s] to the ground and [goes] looking

for something to eat” (174). His actions are animalistic, not in the sense of a loss of culture or reason or intelligence or in the traditionally negative connotations of the term, but in the nature of his behaviour: alone in a strange land, Johns first seeks water, then a place of safety, then food. He sleeps in the trees, an act previously associated with something pre-human, and the seeking first of water, then of safety, and then of food are acts that any animal might have performed. Johns is a human animal in this text, a member of a species of animal.

Johns’ resources consist of those that are innate to him as a human animal, and ultimately his reason is the source of the triumphs that crown him “King of Beasts.” It is not a thing apart from his animal nature, but something perhaps more finely developed in the man than in the ocelot, leopard, buffalo, and tiger that he confronts in ascending order of threat potential. When the leopard discovers the man, for example, reason is clearly at play in the big cat’s decision not to attack: the man’s

[s]teady, commanding gaze [tells] him clearly enough that here was no trembling prey, but an adversary, ready for him and unafraid. How dangerous an adversary it might be, that pale-coloured being with the unswerving eyes, he was unable to judge. . . . He recognized, of course, that there *were* creatures more formidable than himself. . . . Could it be that this creature in the tree was also his master? (182-83)

The leopard sizes up the behaviour, posture, and vocalizations of a strange creature, recognizes his own ignorance, and decides that he does not want to quarrel with an unknown quantity. It is not instinct that leads the leopard to seek other prey but a conservative decision based on his own observations about the strength of the potential prey item before him. It is a basic risk-reward assessment. One might expect any predator with a low reproductive rate to be able to make a similar assessment, because receiving a debilitating injury from a fight lowers an animal’s fitness and reduces or eliminates that animal’s ability to contribute to the genetic pool of the next generation. It is an assessment that the man also makes in this story, as he also uses his reason to determine the best course of action for dealing with his challengers: the ocelot he treats as he might a domestic cat, of no concern to him; the bull buffalo he unnerves with staring and stillness; and the leopard he intimidates with an aggressive posture and a confident voice. The buffalo or leopard could have killed him, as he is not properly prepared for either one, but he bluffs them into retreating, recognizing that to engage them would likely leave him dead or with significant physical impairments, but that to cede space to them would lead to negative consequences in the

future in the supremely hierarchical world that Roberts has constructed. Johns has “faith in man as the master animal” (189), and he is representative of humans as a species in the same way that the leopard is a representative of his species: his only moniker is Johns, a pluralized form what has been one of the most common English names since the Middle Ages (“Johns”). As a representative of the (male) human animal at its most fundamental, Johns believes that he, “all solitary and naked and an alien in the land, was nevertheless lord of all these brutes, supreme so long as will and courage failed him not” (189).

It is with this mindset that he sets himself to do battle with the tiger, the acknowledged lord of the jungle in this story. The tiger attacks Johns in his tree, an inevitability in a tale in which two monarchs are attempting to rule a single realm, and Johns’ planning and newly-made spear are sufficient to kill the tiger. The fallen monarch, who appears only in the penultimate scene, cedes the disputed title of “king of beasts” to the man in Roberts’ vertical ranking of animals. With this kill, the man demonstrates his excellence, so that “[e]ven the elephant . . . would have avoided trespassing on the masterful tree-dweller’s range. But Johns’ luck was following him, and he was not to be put to the test of exercising for long the sovereignty which he had so swiftly established” (193). In a quick wrap-up, a schooner stops to take on fresh water and rescues Johns, and the display of the tiger’s carcass allows him to “carry his prestige with him to the polished decks of the schooner. It was a light luggage, but one precious in his eyes” (194). The highest measure of Johns’ success is to be recognized by other humans as someone resourceful enough to kill a tiger with only a self-fashioned spear, to be recognized as superior not only by the other animals in the land, but also by members of his own species. He is the king of beasts of the title because he has killed the reigning monarch, the tiger, and because the other animals, up to and including the sailors who appear at the end of the story, recognize Johns’ superiority because of that act. In this story, Johns, and the rest of humanity by extension, are both acknowledged as animals and possessed of the “animal mind” in question in an animal story. Johns achieves his kingship by deposing the former king, and it is the physical manner of his ascension that confirms his own animality; he has not been granted kingship of the animal kingdom by right as an inherently superior entity known as a human but as a successful challenger for the position among the animals, as a beast whose superior qualities have helped him become king of beasts.

This reading of “King of Beasts” offers a sample of how some animal story writers have integrated humans into their animal stories, using concepts such as evolution to link human and

nonhuman animal and mark that which is human as that which is also animal. “King of Beasts” is also an exemplar of such stories in that it champions the idea that humans are animals whose capabilities promote them to the position of alpha animals, superior to other animals because of some additional capacity, in this case tool-making and advanced critical insight. Robert H. MacDonald explains that Roberts and Seton in particular “reassured their readers, not so much that man was superior to animals, but that animals were superior in themselves, that they could reason, that they could and did educate their young, and that they possessed and obeyed laws of their own,” a line of thought that functioned as an “antidote to [the] Darwinian pessimism” that asked how, if humans “were descended from the apes, and if the apes were mere brutes,” people could be much more than “brute beast[s]” themselves (226). By elevating the status of nonhuman animals, in other words, animal story writers could elevate humans: if nonhumans could display traits such as courage, morality, patience, loyalty, and devotion to family, then these could also be human qualities. “King of Beasts” makes it clear that Johns is both an animal and superior to all other animals; in deposing the tiger, he installs himself as master of all other species represented in the story. He secures his masculinity – and his humanity – both through his physical prowess and his claim to superior rationality.

Catherine Bates writes that “hunting has come to signify heroic masculinity,” and Johns’ dominance in this story pushes this trope to the extreme. If, as Bates asserts, “the chasing and killing of elusive and dangerous wild animals demonstrated qualities such as strength, skill, endurance, patience, courage, and conquest,” then Johns’ ability to deal with each wild animal effectively with only rudimentary weapons and his ability to anticipate, analyze, and respond to new threats demonstrates these qualities in equal measure. He is not actively hunting, however; he is responding to challenges to his position in the wilderness hierarchy: the ocelot trespasses on his chosen bed and is scared away, the leopard evaluates his behaviour and decides that he is not prey, and the buffalo bull loses a staring contest. Only death, however, can depose the tiger, the acknowledged master of the jungle. Johns emerges victorious from this encounter, claiming the tiger’s mantle literally as well as symbolically, and displays the vanquished animal’s carcass as an object lesson for the other animals (193). Hunting typically involves stalking and attempting to kill animals that are not actively attempting to reciprocate the gesture, and this alone garners prestige. In “King of Beasts,” however, Johns goes beyond this standard predator-prey construction to engage in a battle for kingship, in which the tiger is both willing and able to kill

the man. Johns' success is a marker of supreme fitness in the hierarchical world of the jungle. "Hunting is about status" (Bates), and Johns' battle with the tiger earns him supreme status in "King of Beasts," for "[a]mong the wild kindreds no less than among men is prestige a potent influence. He had proved himself master of the monarch of the jungle, therefore he himself was monarch" ("King" 193). In this world in which dominance over other species is essential for personal safety, Johns has proven himself the master animal.

1.3 The (Wild) Animal Story

The differences between story and narrative and between human and animal are not the only difficulties at play in determining what properly constitutes an animal story, and a realistic wild animal story specifically. There can be little doubt that Seton's "The Winnipeg Wolf" and Roberts' "When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots" are realistic wild animal stories. However, these two texts also highlight two other potential complications in defining animal stories generally and realistic wild animal stories in particular: (1) a less-than-decisive division between "the wild" and "the domestic" and (2) a human presence and influence that is frequently critical to animal stories' plots, beyond attempts to conflate humanity and animality or to claim animality as an essential attribute of humanity, as Roberts does in "King of Beasts."

Most extant definitions of animal stories are really assertions about a particular characteristic supposed to be evident in the mode. Dunlap's definition emphasizes the importance of the animal's perspective (*Saving* 19), Patricia Morley's the psychological connectivity many animal stories create between human readers and nonhuman characters (346), and Gerald Lynch's the natural science aspects of a story (29). However, these characteristics are not necessarily true of "the animal story" as a unit, "the realistic wild animal story" as a sub-category within that unit, or even within the discourse of stories by Euro-Canadian men. Roberts' oeuvre, for example, contains exceptions to all three: *Red Fox* pays homage to Æsop with a section reminiscent of the fable of the fox and the grapes (52-56), "In the Deep of the Snow" (1902) frankly demonizes wolves, and "King of Beasts" is as much about antagonism and personal – human – triumph as any animal story written on either side of the forty-ninth parallel.

Alec Lucas' definition is the most comprehensive. He writes that

Stories about wild animals, like those about tame, may be either biographical tales, which present some episode or life history in simple narrative form, or short stories,

and all may be either “true” or fictitious. Yet they differ, for the story about the wild animal has a greater scientific bent. It tries to avoid humanizing tendencies, to “convey an accurate idea of the animal’s life and behaviour [and] its mental processes” from “the animal’s viewpoint” (Seton, *Famous Animal Stories*, p. iv). Man may enter, but only as “accessory or villain.” The animal must remain central, for the authors stress and pride themselves on the truthfulness of their animal psychology (Roberts, “The Animal Story,” *The Kindred of the Wild* (1902), pp. 15-29). (“Nature” 397-98)

According to this definition, an animal story may be about either wild or tame animals and may be either fiction or nonfiction. It must present some aspect of at least one animal’s life, and the animal and the animal’s viewpoint must be central to the story. Human activity in a wild animal story, in particular, must be marginal, or the human must function as an antagonist to the animal’s protagonist.

It is also clear from this definition, however, that humans are different from animals and should therefore not be central to the animal story, and it is just as clear that many stories that have been labelled animal stories do not fit all of these parameters. For example, remaining with Roberts’ fiction for the moment, the narrator in “The Moonlight Trails” (1902) describes the actions of the nonhuman animals but not their thoughts, although the thoughts and feelings of the central human character are available to the narrator. In one scene, for instance, the rabbits stop playing and sit “motionless, with ears one way. From one or another of the watch[ing rabbits] there had come some signal, swift, but to the rabbits instantly clear. No onlooker not of the cleft-nose, long-ear clan could have told in what the signal consisted, or what was its full significance. But whatever it was, in a moment the players were gone” (3). Some impression of the animals’ feelings exists, but the narrator is clearly an observer, external to the animals. Of the boy, however, much more is known. After setting snares for the rabbits, he felt “stirrings of a wild, predatory instinct. His skin tingled with a still excitement which he did not understand” (7).⁶ This story is as much one about the boy’s first experience with trapping as it is about rabbits or a rabbit being trapped. The boy is not merely an antagonist but a protagonist, if not *the* protagonist, of the story.

⁶ In this section of the story, the boy’s emotions revolve around the thrill of hunting; violence appears to mitigate the feminizing effects of emotionality, given violence’s position as not only masculine but hyper-masculine in Western cultures (Brod 21).

Yet this story is offered up as one animal story in a book of animal stories, of which many others also feature strong human characters. Similarly, human characters in texts such as Roderick Haig-Brown's *Panther* (1946) and Cameron Langford's *The Winter of the Fisher* (1971) play crucial roles, some of which are not solely or even primarily antagonistic. These stories include both human perspectives and subplots that revolve around people rather than the nonhuman animals who are at the heart of the texts. Ben Gadd's *Raven's End* (2001) contains talking ravens, including a protagonist who has been transformed from a human into a raven by trees, which gives one cause to wonder whether the protagonist should be classified as a human, a nonhuman animal, or a hybrid entity.

Despite these deviations from what seems to be a reasonable definition of animal stories, few would argue that the texts named above are animal stories. Yet they are animal stories that are in large part about the humans in those stories. It is possible that the use of the categorization "animal story" creates a bypass in readers' minds, so that the human activity in a given text takes a place of secondary importance to that of the nonhuman activity: i.e., this is an animal story, so it must be about animals, and humans are not animals. When opening the cover of a book titled *Red Fox*, the story automatically becomes about the fox; when told "this is an animal story," the focus of attention becomes that which a given reader considers "animal"; and, conversely, when reading a story not so categorized, nonhuman characters assume a position of lesser significance. Even Seton, who authored many stories that featured a first-person human narrator, commented that in an animal story "the real life of the animal is portrayed from the animal's viewpoint. The human being is excluded wholly or reduced to a faint accessory" (Thompson, qtd. in Keller 143).⁷ In general, the human mind's capacity for categorization and selective attention is adaptive. With regard to textual criticism, however, the human impulse to categorize can create preconceived hierarchies within texts: in such cases, animals in animal stories are more important than humans, while animals in stories categorized in other terms – science fiction, postmodernism, magic realism, etc. – assume a position of lesser importance.

Seton's "The Winnipeg Wolf" forms a case in point. Related by a first-person human narrator, ostensibly Seton himself, the story is a biography of the Winnipeg Wolf, also called le Garou, a long tale with a winding plot. Captured as a pup, the wolf becomes the property of an

⁷ Conveyed by Seton's niece, Gertrude Thompson, to W. Deacon. *Saturday Night Book Department*, 2 November 1926, Seton papers.

saloon keeper whose young son, Little Jim, makes a pet of him. Abused by men and attacked by dogs as sport, the young wolf quickly develops a hatred for dogs and for men who smell of alcohol, but he is “never known to harm a child” (116). After Jim falls ill and dies, the wolf escapes and begins a life of roaming the city and nearby countryside, killing any dogs who attack him. Eventually, he kills Fiddler Paul, a man who had abused both Jim and the wolf in the past and who was leading an otherwise obedient girl astray. After this, he is hunted down by a veritable army of men and dogs, killed, and stuffed to put on display (the taxidermied carcass is later destroyed in a fire). The wolf is certainly central to the story, but he is hardly the only critical character. There is the narrator, who initially relates his own first-hand sighting of the Winnipeg Wolf. There is Little Jim, the boy who loved the wolf. There is Jim’s father, who drove his son to seek the wolf’s protection and who nurtured the wolf’s viciousness by baiting him repeatedly with dogs while he was a pup. There is Fiddler Paul, the main antagonist of the story, who sought to elope with young Ninette and was vanquished: “Eet is le Garou,” her father decides after studying the tracks in the snow; “He hab save my leel girl from zat Paul. He always was good to children” (119). In the entire story, there is only one nonhuman of note: the wolf himself.⁸ Le Garou’s critical motivation was, the narrator claims, his love for Little Jim: he did not stay in Winnipeg to revenge himself on the men and dogs who made his youth a misery, because “[n]o animal will give up its whole life to seeking revenge; that evil kind of mind is found in man alone. The brute creation seeks for peace” (121). No, the storyteller tells the readers, the wolf stayed because he was chained by the strongest bond on earth, that of the love he bore for Jim and the love Jim bore for him (121-22).

This story does not fit extant definitions of realistic animal stories. Le Garou is the protagonist, to be sure, more Deadpool-style antihero than Superman-style hero but nevertheless the saviour of the story, a rescuer of children and faithful to his fallen friend. Certainly the plot is humanized – it bears the hallmarks of a Marvel superhero film – and human characters good, bad,

⁸ Even the Winnipeg Wolf’s name suggest a touch of the supernatural, rather than the mere animal. Le Garou appears to be an abbreviated form of *loup-garou*, or werewolf, a shapeshifter who can take the form of either a wolf or a man – or, in some iterations, a hybrid shape between the two. Moreover, the story concludes with a ghost-story-style claim: “to this day the sexton of St. Boniface Church avers that the tolling bell on Christmas Eve never fails to provoke that weird and melancholy Wolf-cry from the wooded graveyard a hundred steps away, where they laid his Little Jim, the only being on earth that ever met him with the touch of love” (122).

and incidental abound, defying Lucas' description of humans acting only as accessories of villains in realistic wild animal stories. The narrator is human: le Garou's perspective is inferred rather than experienced, a state at odds with Lucas and Dunlap's belief that realistic (wild) animal stories take the perspectives of their nonhuman protagonists. "The Winnipeg Wolf" speculates about le Garou's psychology but can prove nothing because the narrator is imposing his own beliefs about the wolf upon the story, even moralizing in the last paragraphs. It is, however, an animal story as this chapter has defined the term: it is a *once* story about a nonhuman protagonist, and the fact that the nonhuman animal is a protagonist suggests that he possesses subjectivity, that he is an animal Other regardless of the narrator's ability (or text's willingness) to access that subjectivity. These factors being present, the preponderance of human activity in the story and the degree to which humans are intertwined in the tale's plot are immaterial.

Like Seton's "The Winnipeg Wolf," Roberts' "When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots" also pushes the parameters of human involvement in wild animal stories. This story is much shorter and simpler than "The Winnipeg Wolf." A cow wanders into the forest and gives birth. A hungry sow bear attempts to kill the newborn calf, but the cow counterattacks and the bear dies, which condemns her young cubs to death. The final paragraph relates the rest: a farm hand returns the wounded cow and her calf to the farm, and a few weeks later the calf is slaughtered and shipped to a city market. On the surface, this adheres much more closely than "The Winnipeg Wolf" to extant definitions of realistic wild animal stories: the perspectives of nonhuman animals are provided; the narrator is not explicitly human; animal psychology is involved, particularly with regard to the mothers' motivations; and both protagonists are animals. Like "The Winnipeg Wolf," however, humans are also vital to this story. First, an important turn comes in the final paragraph, with the appearance of humans. The cow, after risking her life to save her calf, is returned to her designated place of domesticity, but the very thing she fought so hard for – the life of her calf – is sacrificed on the altar of human civilization, "the cool marble slabs of a city market" (99). What seemed to be a story about two animals driven into opposition by mutual maternal devotion becomes a much more ambiguous story that hints at the dangers of civilization (at least to nonhumans), the futility of the cow's actions, and the inevitable enmeshment of wild and domestic, nature and culture.

The conclusion, Richard Cavell writes, "is brilliant in its powerful undermining of the Romantic overtones with which it began, and in the way it brings out the urban theme that has

governed it from the outset. . . . The entire spectacle of the ‘natural’ struggle of the animals has been a drama staged by capital” (20). In fact, human presence is all through the story: “the bear is gaunt,” Cavell notes, “for the same reason that the cow stands out so starkly on the stump lots: their natural world has been deeply disrupted – defeatured – by the incursion of yet another animal, thus far invisible in the story” (19). “In this story,” he writes, “the violence of the animal world is the pale shadow of a much greater violence which is only hinted at in what is, nevertheless, a stunningly powerful concluding paragraph” (19). Thus, although humans feature directly in the story in only a minor way, the story’s plot revolves around the humans: the bear is starving and forced to prey on (domestic) animals because the place on which she relied for ground-nuts has become a farmer’s field (96), and the cow shows up starkly at least in part because she has given birth among the stump lots, which were created when people razed the trees (95). “The Winnipeg Wolf” is rife with humans; “When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots” is rife with the effects of humans. There is no escape from the influence of people in these stories – a fact that might be used as evidence for their classification as realistic wild animal stories, as there is no place on earth that bears no trace of humans.

Both of these stories also engage with concepts of the wild and the domestic. Can a wild animal story focus on domestic animals? How much domesticity is required before a realistic wild animal story becomes a realistic domestic animal story, or simply an animal story? One of the protagonists in “When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots” is a domestic cow whose very colours mark her as an alien to the wild.⁹ Le Garou in “The Winnipeg Wolf” is a wild species; however, the narrator himself asserts that le Garou is a “great wild Dog – for that is all a Wolf is” (115), and le Garou is at least semi-domesticated in the story, tamed to Jim’s hand like White Fang was to Scott’s in London’s *White Fang*. Is *White Fang* a dog story or a wild animal story? Which is “The Winnipeg Wolf”? I submit that *White Fang*, “The Winnipeg Wolf,” and “When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots” are all realistic wild animal stories: all include at least one character belonging to a wild (or, in *White Fang*’s case, hybrid) species, and all engage with conceptualizations of wilderness. Some realistic wild animal stories do this more simply, through representations of

⁹ Roberts addresses the issue of domestic animals in the wilderness in several stories, including “Alien of the Wild” (1904, in *Watchers of the Trails*), a story about a bull calf born into the wilderness.

wild animals alone, but these stories do so by, among other things, exploring the overlap between wilderness and domestication and exposing the fundamental fiction of the wild/domestic binary.

“The Winnipeg Wolf” is in large part about the conflict between domestication and wildness. Le Garou’s mother and siblings are killed for the bounty on their heads – a government-sponsored method of domesticating the wilderness – and he himself is collared and chained, a wild animal brought home to live in unwilling servitude to human whims. Le Garou expresses disregard for the constraints that human civilization would place upon him: he commits “murder” of a man (119), kills dogs in defiance of accepted cultural practices, and, after Jim’s death, runs wild and refuses to be caught – although he also refuses to leave the cultivated lands surrounding the city. The domesticated huskies are not punished for eating Fiddler Paul, but le Garou, the murderer, must be brought to justice. In meting out this justice, the men who hunt him down exert their dominion not only by killing him but also by stuffing his corpse: there is scarcely a greater display of domestication, of taming and control, than the total appropriation of the animal’s physical being and presentation inherent in the killing, disarticulation, and re-articulation of taxidermy.

“When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots” expresses the conflict – and intermingling – of the wild and the domestic both through its depictions of the land and the animals’ motives and through its descriptions of the cow’s defence of her calf. In terms of the former, this story’s expression of the cultivation of wilderness areas to the detriment of the wild animals who live there depicts the encroachment of civilization and domestication upon wilderness areas; the stump lots themselves are a liminal space, a semi-domesticated area that was once wilderness but is no longer quite wild but not yet fully tame. It is a space that, in this story, both domestic and wild species inhabit. In terms of the latter, this story depicts a sort of wildness within the domestic cow, similar to Barney Nelson’s description of domesticated animals as harbouring a “hidden ‘wildness’” that appears in what Roberts and Seton might call “ancestral traits,” behaviours that appear to originate from instincts that pre-date domestication (6). For the cow, her motherhood triggers such instincts. Her gaze holds a “wild and menacing watchfulness” (96), and her attack on the bear is all instinct: she smells the “scent of peril” and recognizes it instantly: “With a snort of anger she sniffed again; then stamped a challenge with her fore-hoofs, and levelled the lance-points of her horns toward the menace. The next moment her eyes, made keen by fear of love, detected the outline of the bear’s head through the coarse screen of the juniper. Without a second’s hesitation, she flung up her tail, gave a short bellow, and charged” (98). A whiff of wildness is in these behaviours: a wild

aurochs might have done the same; elephants charge lions in much this fashion, and moose wolves. Scenting a predator, the cow's protective instincts inspire aggression on behalf of her offspring, and she behaves here not as a defenceless domestic animal – Hans Kruuk calls domestic animals' ineffectual responses to predators the loss of “anti-predator defence through domestication” (51) – but as a powerful wild animal in defence of her offspring. This behaviour is not, apparently, the behaviour she exhibits when the farm hand comes for her, or when the calf is led off to the slaughter: a scent that she identifies as representing danger triggers pre-domestication reactions.

Of course, inasmuch as “When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots” and “The Winnipeg Wolf” explore the interplay between the wild and domestic, so they are also exploring conceptualizations of masculinity and femininity. Wildness – as opposed to wilderness – is typically masculinized, while the domestic is feminized (Nelson 52). “Wild males,” Barney Nelson explains, “are imagined as big, strong leaders with the skills to live off the land, their lives free, violent, and unencumbered by such boring domestic responsibilities as tending children or practicing sexual restraint. Wild males are free to collect harems and serve any female who comes into heat” (54). By contrast, domestic animals have been conceived of in feminized terms in Western cultures for centuries; Kari Weil writes that “From Rousseau through Nietzsche to Deleuze and Guattari, we find a similar condemnation of the domestic pet as a deanimalized creature that has been stripped of its original virile wildness and tamed into a ‘feminine’ and inauthentic servitude” (56), and other types of domestic animals are treated little differently. Engagement with the wild and the domestic is, then, necessarily also engagement with the masculine and the feminine.

“When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots” is exceptional in that its two protagonists are female; Misao Dean notes that “Roberts's stories create as reality a natural world which is inflected with assumptions about human personality and masculinity as norm which are endemic to his historical period” (“Political Science” 302), and it is rare to see female protagonists in his work or the work of other animal story writers of his period. The presence of the female protagonists in this story nevertheless fits Dean's argument, however. “[T]he male is the norm,” she writes, and “female animals appear only in the context of their reproductive functions, as ‘mate’ or mother of the protagonist, actors in the struggle for existence only when procuring food for their (male) young” (“Political Science” 311). In this case, none of the offspring survive; the bear cubs are an undifferentiated “they,” but the calf is briefly identified with a masculine pronoun (98). The

purpose of both the cow and the bear is to provide for their offspring; their actions and desires revolve around their (by default male) offspring's welfare, matching Dean's assessment that "female animals are motivated primarily by mother-love" ("Political Science" 312). The bear is positioned unusually as a female representative of wildness – wild animal protagonists are typically male – but also as a representative of a feminized wilderness that must be conquered in order for masculine civilization to advance, a feminized space as opposed to a masculinized actor in that space (Hessing 283, 291, 282). She dies from wounds inflicted by the domestic cow, who is led home to continue to act, as Weil puts it, as "a passive (and feminized) animal slave" (139). Civilization, marked by rationality and therefore masculine, has not yet completely subdued the (feminized) wilderness. However, the destruction of the wild – and by definition uncontrolled – female bear by the domestic cow, and the cow's apparent acceptance of (male) human dominion, indicates both that masculine civilization will inevitably triumph over feminine wilderness and that domestication of the feminine is a necessary component of its survival.

The case is perhaps even more complicated in "The Winnipeg Wolf," in part because of its protagonist species. Writing of the United States, but true of Canada as well, Gavin van Horn notes that "the presence of wolves often defined the boundary between the 'civilized' (i.e., settlement, ranches, domesticated animals and landscapes) and the 'wild' (i.e., indigenous communities, nondomesticated animals and lands). The presence of fewer wolves was taken as a sign of economic and moral progress," a position that has reversed today (224). To have a wolf, semi-tame or not, roaming the civilized environs of a city and its surrounding countryside is, then, a marker of continued wildness or a lack of civilization. It may also make a statement about the lack of civilized behaviour exhibited by the saloon keeper and Fiddler Paul, neither of whom possesses much of the masculine quality of reason: as a provider of drink and an abuser of children and puppies, the saloon keeper is a man with few evident virtues, and Fiddler Paul, a dishonest man who drinks too much and is also pleased to abuse those weaker than he, is no better. Like the bear in "When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots," le Garou partakes of both masculine and feminine connotations: wild animals are figured masculine against a feminine domestic, but wilderness is figured as the irrational feminine against rational, masculine civilization. Insofar as he is a character, he is an archetypal masculine wild animal as Nelson has described them and as Dean summarizes them, possessed of the qualities of "independence, physical superiority, ability to learn and adapt, superior cunning, honesty, trust, [and] ability to cooperate toward material

ends” (“Political Science” 310). His vigilante-style justice in killing dogs and Fiddler Paul is also typical of “lone wolf” depictions of masculinity. However, insofar as he is an uncontrolled wild element in a masculine-coded civilization, he marks an encroachment of the feminine wilderness upon the masculine. Little Jim holds his leash – literally and figuratively – but Jim dies, and the men in the story have no understanding of the bond that motivates his actions and ties him to the settlement. By killing him and taking permanent control of his corpse, they re-affirm their own dominion, but such an act, accomplished in what amounts to a mob, does little to signal masculine physical prowess, honesty, or rationality, and thus does little to assert their masculinity. The hero of the story is le Garou; as a group, his killers can exert dominance over him, but their triumph cannot inscribe them with personal or cultural masculinity.

1.4 Conclusion

“When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots” and “The Winnipeg Wolf” complicate definitions of the realistic wild animal story through human influence and domestication in these stories. However, like “King of Beasts,” both are *once* stories that feature protagonist animals – in “King of Beasts,” Johns is positioned as that animal – represented in physiologically accurate ways and that both include wild animals and engage with concepts of wildness and domesticity. Although Seton’s “The Prairie Chicken” variants also engage with the possibility of domestication, they do not explore theoretical, as opposed to practical, implications of domestication; it cannot be said that the prairie chickens are protagonists in the purest sense of the term; and the story is an *always* story, focused not on the actions of specific animals but on disseminating information about the species as a whole. “The Prairie Chicken” variants do not meet the criteria developed here to be considered a realistic wild animal story. “King of Beasts” may, if one believes that humans are solely domesticators and not always also domesticated. “When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots” and “The Winnipeg Wolf” meet the threshold of definition with little difficulty, despite their complicating factors.

In each text, human superiority and masculinity are at issue: the claim of human dominion implicit in Seton’s attempt to domesticate a wild species for human convenience; Roberts’ clear positioning of “man” as the “master animal”; the implacable advance of civilization across wilderness spaces; and the destruction even of a stereotypically masculine symbol of wilderness because he would not separate himself from the city. The claim of human superiority does not

stop on the doorstep of the animal story, but the conceptualization of humans as entirely separate from animals, of humans being defined against animals and animals against humans, does. Such a conceptualization poses a problem for any definition of animal stories that acknowledges animal stories as actually being *about* animals rather than treating animals as signifiers of something else. Animal stories, on the whole, link humans and nonhumans together; these texts are in large part about creating connections between people and nonhuman Others, highlighting similarities and, at times, differences. That they do so out of a mode whose name demands the demarcation of human from animal in order to maintain meaningful parameters is both paradoxical and troubling. As Lutts puts it in concrete terms, “[o]ur conceptions of animals help to shape our actions toward and responses to them; and they are reflected back to us by the very conditions we impose upon their lives. Whether deer are viewed as a crop to be harvested or as persons with rights, for example, has an enormous impact upon them” (“Wild Animal Story” 3). The words used to discuss nonhuman animals matter, because those words both reflect and shape the way humans think about nonhumans.

Animal stories are heavily invested in eroding the human/animal binary and replacing it with, at the very least, an evolutionary continuum in which humans form the metaphorical peak of evolutionary progress and other species are “advanced” to a greater or lesser degree, depending upon their perceived likeness to humans. As a tool for categorization, however, “the animal story” insists upon the very binary division that many animal stories seek to abandon. Other means for defining animal stories, such as *once* versus *always* stories, can serve only as exclusionary tools: the “animal” is a requirement of the animal story, and the animal in the animal story is understood to be the nonhuman animal, because the inclusion of humans, as Roberts tries to accomplish in “King of Beasts,” must necessarily dissolve the meaningfulness of the mode as a means of separating stories into categories. Nor, however, can humans be ignored in stories categorized as animal stories: human characters often have a powerful impact on plots and the significance of animal stories, and readers may be predisposed to project the human onto animal representation. Using “significant human impact” as an exclusionary tool, then, indicating that animal stories are *only* about animals, as Alec Lucas does in “Nature Writers and the Animal Story” (397-98), is also a flawed criterion. Animal stories are about nonhuman animals, but they are also about human-nonhuman interactions and connections and bonds, which are also experienced and/or generated at the reading level. These four texts by Roberts and Seton, for example, engage with concepts of

reason and emotion as masculine and feminine characteristics, respectively. “True” masculinity appears in different ways in the stories: Seton marks masculinity through his editing of the prairie chicken variants to create an increasingly objective account divorced from emotion, which characteristic proves critical to its classification as “legitimate” and scientific, giving it value as a natural science essay while precluding it from being an animal story; in “The Winnipeg Wolf,” le Garou typifies wild animal masculinity and in so doing undermines the masculinity of the men, ostensibly representing masculine civilization, who kill him; Roberts casts reason as one of the primary weapons that Johns uses to achieve his status as “king of beasts”; and civilization marches inexorably forward in “When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots,” positioning the female characters as either doomed or subservient. Complicating this inscription of human masculinity, many animal stories also ascribe reason to nonhuman animals, thus sharing this perceived masculine trait among nonhumans (although if such stories are not careful to parcel out reason in small amounts, the animals are assumed to be heavily anthropomorphized). Animal stories struggle to turn a binary system of classification into a system of relationships, but they do so from within a term that superimposes a binary upon them. This superimposition creates assumptions about subject and significance that register in the criticism and perhaps even the writing of both those stories that are classified as animal stories and those that, because they are not animal stories, must be human stories.

2 “Is It for Children?”: The Relationship Between Children’s Literature and Animal Literature

“What’s [the play] about?”

“I’m not sure. There are two characters, a monkey and a donkey. They’re quite focussed on food.”

“Is it for children?”

- Martel, *Beatrice and Virgil* 87

Children are interested in animals. This is the supposition upon which many critics have based their arguments about children’s literature, animal literature, and children and animals’ social interactions in Western cultures. Animals have been part of children’s literature, in fact, since the origins of children’s literature in the eighteenth century (Townsend 28, 121; Carpenter and Prichard 24). Children possess an affinity for animals, it is believed, and therefore it is only natural that literature for children should contain a multitude of animals, as it capitalizes upon the connection that children feel for creatures more similar to them, in some ways, than adults are. This association of animals with children has created a feedback loop in which causation is difficult, if not impossible, to separate from correlation: do children’s books abound with animals because children have an affinity for animals, or do children have an affinity for animals because children’s books have such an abundance of animal characters? This chapter parses some of the pieces that make up that link between children and animals, beginning with an overview of child-animal relationships and the role that literature plays in them before moving on to an examination of representations of animals and humans, with particular emphasis on subjectification versus objectification, anthropomorphism, and depictions of violence in three recent novels: Kenneth Oppel’s *Silverwing* (1997), Ben Gadd’s *Raven’s End* (2001), and Yann Martel’s *Beatrice and Virgil* (2010).¹ While no single feature determines the suitability of a particular text for a particular age group, this analysis proposes three elements of content that increase the probability that a given

¹ Sections of this chapter’s work on *Beatrice and Virgil* have been published in K. S. A. Brazier-Tompkins’ “Subject: Animal: Representing the Seeing Animal in Yann Martel’s *Beatrice and Virgil*” in *Studies in Canadian Literature*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2016.

text will be treated as children's literature: (1) the subjectification of nonhuman animals, (2) anthropomorphism other than that employed for symbolic or allegorical purposes, and (3) a secure moral framework that sorts violence into acceptable and unacceptable acts.

Animal and children's literature are not synonymous. "Children's literature" is itself a difficult term to define, and this examination is interested in particular in texts that are similar in form to most adult prose, with long narrative passages and few pictures or photographs, but which are nevertheless marketed as children's literature or understood to be for children. Peter Hunt notes that "a text must 'imply' a reader; that is, the subject-matter, language, allusion levels, and so on clearly 'write' the level of readership" (4). Determining that level of readership is not always as simple as Hunt suggests; nevertheless, there *are* indicators that clearly place at least some texts in the category of children's literature and others in that of adult literature. For example, British author William Horwood's *The Wolves of Time* (1995) is manifestly *not* children's literature. The language is dense, the vocabulary sophisticated to the point of obscurity, and the concepts dealt with both difficult and dark. Just as clearly, Austrian Felix Salten's *Bambi* (1923) is a book for children. *Bambi* has a much simpler and more repetitive vocabulary, a less complex plot, and narrative that is prone to slipping into a didactic mode. Didacticism is itself an indicator of children's literature, stemming from the common belief that children's stories should be moral tales that teach lessons (Carpenter and Prichard 24; Nodelman and Reimer 86). While *Bambi* attempts to educate its readers morally and in terms of the natures of various species of animals, it is also a *once* story, as Chapter One delineates, and so focuses on a particular animal protagonist. These two examples are clearly intended for different reading audiences. However, many animal stories straddle the line between adult and children's literature. Sheila Egoff maintains that "of all types of writing the realistic animal story makes perhaps the least distinction in the age of its readers. Who could say . . . whether *The Call of the Wild* (Jack London), *Tarka the Otter* (Henry Williamson), or *Rascal* (Sterling North) were meant for children or adults?" (138). According to Egoff, the case is further complicated by the "adoption" of some adult literature by children and of children's literature by adults, with animal stories apparently being particularly prone to this crossover regardless of the intended target audience (141).

There is a tendency to conflate animal literature with children's literature, possibly due to a belief in a "natural rapport" that exists between children and nonhuman animals (Irvine 31). Some go so far as to pinpoint the source of this rapport as a stage of development, asserting that

children exist somewhere between that which is animal and that which is fully human. Elliott Gose, for example, insists that “[c]hildren, with their simplified humanity, can be easily associated with or readily represented by animals. They are closer to the animal state from which humanity evolved and can empathize with animals more readily than adults can” (182). This sort of statement is a hierarchical one: in it, infants begin in a base state as “animal” or “near animal” and, through a process of maturation and acculturation, “evolve” into a superior human entity that is very much divorced from animality. Some animal stories do subscribe, in one form or another, to this problematic extension of ontogeny as recapitulating phylogeny, but other narratives prove more difficult to shoehorn into this system. In *Raven’s End*, for example, the ravens develop relationships with humans and other species that suggest differences between types of animals rather than the superiority of one species.

Human-animal relationships are complex: the majority of children and adults in North America interact in various ways with domestic animals such as pets and wild species such as insects and pigeons, sympathize with animal characters such as the pig in *Babe* (1995), consume pre-packaged pieces of animals, and use products that have been developed through animal experimentation and testing. Children’s frontal lobes are not yet fully developed, however, and they have not been “trained” to see that which is not human as that which is Other – or that which is object. Certain animals may be friends, while others are only meat, and children’s ability to toggle between the two is limited. An anecdote in Erica Fudge’s *Animal* exemplifies this:

As a child my mother fed me rabbit pie, but called it by the pseudonym ‘chicken pie’. The reason she did this is simple. For me, the rabbit was an animal to be petted, not potted, and her deception was meant to protect my sensibilities. The fact that I couldn’t bear the idea of eating rabbit speaks of an inability to draw a line between what is pet and what is food, an inability that I would, I think it was assumed, grow out of. I did. (34-35)

As a child, Fudge would no more have knowingly eaten rabbit meat in a pie than she would have eaten a pet rabbit or dog or even a sibling. Rabbits were family or potential family, not food, and she was not able to perform the cognitive exercise of separating “friend rabbits” from “food rabbits.” Chicken, by contrast, was presumably a word that lacked a prior association of friendship that would have turned “chicken” from a food source no different from pasta into individualized chickens with minds and personalities of their own. Of course, Fudge’s distinction between the

“petted” rabbit and the “potted” chicken suggests a more urban upbringing than that of a farm child, who would have had to struggle early with the knowledge that furred and feathered friends might first be petted and *then* potted.

This anecdote also highlights the acculturation process expected of children. Fudge’s mother caters to her daughter’s distress at the prospect of eating rabbit, apparently on the assumption that this reaction is acceptable in a small child. As she ages, Fudge is able to separate her treatment of individual animals from her treatment of species (i.e., “a rabbit” is different from the archetypal species “rabbit” represented by “rabbit pie”) and, presumably, consume the innominate rabbits without remorse. In “The Conceptual Separation of Food and Animals in Childhood,” Kate Stewart and Matthew Cole note that the “loss of sympathy or empathy with nonhuman animals is [considered] an inevitable part of the process of growing up” (264), and empathy is an aspect of subjectification. In empathizing with the nonhuman animal protagonists in stories, readers create emotional connections with those creatures. They become absorbed by representations of beings other than themselves (Shepard 121). If empathy for animals, with its concomitant requirement of treating at least individual nonhumans as subjects rather than objects (e.g., property, pests, food), is something associated with immaturity, then it is little wonder that animal stories so often fall within the purview of children’s or crossover literature.

Subjectification of animals is also a gendered characteristic in Western cultures: Stephen Kellert observes that “[w]omen consistently express greater humanistic and moralistic sentiments toward nature – particularly strong affection and emotional attachment to individual animals, especially pets,” and are less likely to support activities that cause animal suffering (51). However, despite this gendering of sentimentality toward animals, “men reveal significantly more interest and less fear of wildlife and nature,” and women’s attachments are localized more in individual animals (53). Women are more likely “to emphasize interpersonal responsibilities, compassionate relationships, and the importance of affection and familiarity,” while men tend to “stress the importance of positional and hierarchical ties, the distribution of power and authority[, . . . and] relatively fixed ideas of fairness, logic, and rights” (53).² Charles G. D. Roberts’ “King of Beasts” (1916), discussed in Chapter One, is a hallmark example of the latter. This divide looks remarkably like the one between subjectivity and the objectivity associated with the acculturation

² For a summary of proposed explanations for this split, see Brian Luke’s *Brutal: Manhood and the Exploitation of Animals* (19-21).

process of growing up, so that this childish sentimentality toward – and associated subjectification of – nonhuman animals is also characteristic of women, while objectification is a masculine characteristic. Because Western cultures remain systemically sexist, “what is manly is deemed good,” while “emotional attachment to animals [is] construed as unmanly or childish” and therefore undesirable (Luke 204, 35-36).³ The dismissal of animal subjectification as juvenile is, then, also likely to form a concomitant dismissal of what is perceived as a feminine characteristic.

The three novels examined in this chapter are recent examples, with which the scholarly community has not yet engaged in much detail, of animal literature by Euro-Canadian men. *Silverwing* and *Beatrice and Virgil* are well known in their own right, at least by certain groups of readers. *Raven’s End* is more obscure, but major retailers still sold it nationally upon its release. Differences in the ways in which these texts portray humans, animals, and human-animal relations promote or discourage treatment as children’s literature or adult literature. These texts show how the use of anthropomorphism, degrees of subjectification and/or objectification of human and nonhuman animals, and depictions of violence within or outside a moral framework combine to position animal literature along the sliding scale of children’s literature to adult literature. Objectification of animals and graphic, undiluted descriptions of violence place a text firmly in the realm of adult literature and, generally, “serious” literature. However, although subjectification and anthropomorphism tend to position these texts within children’s literature, framing these qualities within the context of unreliable narration or a text within a text, as *Beatrice and Virgil* does, can cement a text’s place within adult literature rather than relegate it to children’s literature or otherwise muddle its categorization.

In terms of audience, these three novels represent work marketed for adults, for children, and for both children and adults. *Beatrice and Virgil* is clearly adult literature. It is an international bestseller and a finalist for a number of awards. *Plains Review* calls it “multi-layered” and more serious in subject than its better-known predecessor, *Life of Pi* (2001) (“*Beatrice*”), and Random House lists it under the broad category of “Fiction” and subcategories “General” and “Literary.” The reviews are tepid, and none speculate about its suitability for children. Texts’ covers also

³ However undesirable it might be, emotional attachment to animals is nevertheless still associated with femininity, and stories by Euro-Canadian men that flip this stereotype, such as Alistair McLeod’s “In the Fall,” tend to be unsympathetic in their portrayals of unsentimental women.

offer markers of audience marketing (Ewers 34), and *Beatrice and Virgil's* “field marks,” in this respect, are also clearly indicative of adult literature: the 2011 edition is a trade paperback with a matte black front cover whose only images are a pear and a knife that take up less than half of the cover; text fills the rest of the cover; the cover’s colours are monochromatic; the images on both front and back use less than half of the available space; and excerpts from reviews form densely packed text on the back cover. Under the bar code, it is listed as “Fiction.” The original hardcover dustjacket is likewise covered in text, and with small silhouettes of a monkey and a donkey.

Silverwing, by contrast, is a children’s novel and likely also holds some appeal as a crossover novel: it has won both children’s literature awards and young adult literature awards, with “young adults” addressing the muddy area of the potential crossover. An image of a bat exiting a cave encompasses the entire front cover of the 1998 edition, with the seal of Mr. Christie’s Book Award prominently displayed. The back cover shows similar children-oriented marketing, including mention of several awards for works written for “children” or “young adults,” and the bottom of the back cover includes a review that recommends the novel for “readers around age 8 all the way to adult.” *Silverwing’s* awards and nominations lean on the text’s appeal to young audiences, which its cover highlights. Publisher HarperCollins lists it as “JUVENILE FICTION, Action/Adventure, General” (“*Silverwing*”), but does not parse these categories further; the category of juvenile fiction thus places *Silverwing* alongside, for example, Rob Scotton’s rhyming board book *Russell the Sheep* (2011), which is clearly meant for younger readers than the eight-to-twelve age range for *Silverwing* that *Quill and Quire* suggests.

Raven’s End falls somewhere between *Silverwing* and *Beatrice and Virgil*. Although its intended audience seems to be adults, it easily crosses over into children’s literature. In his review of the novel for *Quill and Quire*, Doug Beardsley comments that he finds it difficult to “peg a target audience” and that its appeal to a younger audience is mitigated by the “formal, somewhat stilted” dialogue. *Quill and Quire* itself categorizes the novel as “Children and YA Fiction.” Some reviews explicitly label the novel as children’s literature, while others make no mention of target audience, perhaps because, like Beardsley, they feel unable to designate it either fish or fowl. Corax Press’ website, launched by Cia and Ben Gadd, links back to Gadd’s website, which describes *Raven’s End* as a best-selling “wildlife story for readers of all ages” (“Ben Gadd’s Books”). Like *Silverwing*, the 2002 trade paperback edition of the novel features a full-cover image of ravens flying over mountains, with text much less prominent than the illustration. The

illustration continues, less prominently, onto the back, where overlaid text markets the novel for “the whole family,” and for lovers of great stories, birds, the Rocky Mountains, nature, and mountains in general. Two excerpts from reviews compare it to *Watership Down* (1972), a fairly common reference that seems to indicate that the text is a children’s animal story that adults may also enjoy, and one that features talking animals.

Raven’s End and *Silverwing* are paired here as two texts that might be considered children’s literature, although *Silverwing* is most likely to cross over to adult literature from children’s literature and *Raven’s End* to cross over from the other direction. Published within five years of each other, they share a number of features, including nonhuman animal narrators, multiple subjectified species, extensive anthropomorphization, fantastical plots, explicit violence and cannibal antagonists, and treatment of humans as unknowable Others. These similarities highlight patterns of subjectification of animals and objectification of humans in animal literature more broadly, and permit a comparative analysis of subject/object relationships and anthropomorphism in the novels. Moreover, differences in subjectification of nonhuman animals demonstrate how the frame surrounding textual violence typically works to place that violence within a moral system in children’s literature, although the systems employed may differ.

Beatrice and Virgil stands on its own in this chapter as the work representing adult literature. It differs so markedly from the other two novels that a comparative analysis is difficult to undertake. Textual violence is rampant and lacks the basic idea of underlying didactic purpose or good versus evil that controls representations of violence in *Raven’s End* and *Silverwing*, and the human narrator – while the narration is third person, Henry is identified as the author of his own story in the final chapter – demonstrates unreliability in his reporting, which has a significant impact on readings of anthropomorphism and subjectification in the novel. In addition, *Beatrice and Virgil* is a metanarrative that uses allegorical animals in a play and excerpts from Gustave Flaubert’s animal-rich “The Legend of Saint Julian Hospitator” as well as animal characters, taxidermied animals, and taxidermied animal characters within the larger novel. The multiplicity of representation in this text makes its treatment of animals more complex, if perhaps not more sophisticated, than animal representations in *Life of Pi*, which permits a particularly nuanced analysis of anthropomorphization, subjectification and objectification, and violence.

These novels are not seminal animal stories. They range from books for select interest groups to international bestsellers. Their presence here marks an attempt to move beyond the

accepted canon of Canadian animal stories, beyond Roberts, Ernest Thompson Seton, and the like, to works that are currently considered of critical importance to neither animal literature nor Canadian literature more broadly. The analysis performed here examines violence, anthropomorphism, and subjectification/objectification as three aspects of these texts and of animal literature more broadly that are critical to (1) the categorization of these texts as children's or adult literature and (2) consideration of some of the underlying cultural biases that shape these understandings about suitability and categorization. Each depicts animals in its own way, but none is far removed from the focus on scientific accuracy and the conviction that humans are both animal and other than animal that were at the roots of the Canadian animal story in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

2.1 *Beatrice and Virgil*

On the surface, *Beatrice and Virgil* lends itself to a more realistic depiction of animals than *Silverwing* and *Raven's End*. The latter two stories have nonhuman narrators, but *Beatrice and Virgil's* narration is focalized through Henry's perspective, acquiring his thought processes and beliefs as the result of his purported authorship of the story. The narration, then, is explicitly human. The text therefore frames its animal representations as mediated through a human lens, a reflection of the human filter through which all animal representation must pass. The answer to Thomas Nagel's problem of "what is it like for a *bat* to be a bat" (439) is, of course, that only bats know. As the Introduction has outlined, stories told by nonhumans are patently impossible. The use of nonhuman narrators inhibits the suspension of disbelief necessary for the reading of any text called fiction and increases the potential for readings that focus on the fiction's "fanciful flight" into "Dreamworld" (Beardsley) or nonhumans' "too-human behavior" (Coakley). The outermost layer of *Beatrice and Virgil's* metanarrative, within which other stories are nested, is a more plausible story because it uses human narration and mimics a modern, realistic setting.

The perspective from which the story is told has additional implications. It not only affects the surface realism of the narrative but also influences the degree to which individuals act as subjects or are acted upon as objects. In Western cultures the treatment of nonhuman animals as subjects is a sign of neoteny or otherwise juvenile behaviour. Luc Ferry, simplifying matters somewhat, asserts that "[w]e are, at least since Descartes, authorized to treat animals as simple *things* devoid of the slightest ethical significance" (148). This is not a biological imperative. It is

learned and, as such, young children are far more likely to treat other animals, particularly those who share prominent features with humans (e.g., two eyes, a spine, four limbs), as subjects than as objects.⁴ This granting of subjecthood, this looking at the Other and seeing the Other looking back, is not unique to children. However, the socialization process – from toys to laws designating nonhuman animals as property to the stigma surrounding an abundance of concern for animals (Luke 165) – makes it more likely that adults (particularly men) will objectify nonhuman animals, especially if they are not named and known animals such as companion animals. Empathy, while also a sophisticated emotional response, is discouraged as an appropriate response to those who are neither human nor companion animals. Objectification of animals is a more socially sophisticated and socially acceptable behaviour than subjectification of animals, especially given the former’s association with masculinity. The Cartesian philosophy that animals do not reason and do not have souls has filtered into most, if not all, branches of science (Fudge 99), and it reached its most extreme form in the rise of behaviourism and operationalism, which marginally softened Descartes’ conceptualization of animals as beings without minds or souls to the idea that people “do not and cannot know that animals think or feel, so to be parsimonious we should just assume that they do not” (Luke 180). This sort of disavowal of nonhuman animal affectivity and mentation creates a culture of objectification in which anything with regard to nonhuman animals that cannot be scientifically proven is, in the name of objectivity, assumed not to exist. Because narrative from the point of view of a nonhuman animal is inherently subjective, this association of objectification with maturity and subjectification with immaturity creates an impulse to classify the text as juvenile in nature. This tendency may also occur from the other direction, with authors writing for younger audiences tending to compose works from the perspective of nonhuman animals while authors who are targeting adult audiences use human narrators.⁵

⁴ John Rowe Townsend notes that the “assumption of kinship” is common in small children, because “[t]he animals they see around them are not clearly differentiated from people” (121).

⁵ For example, in Mazo de la Roche’s oeuvre, the narrator of “The Sacred Bullock” (1933) is human, while *The Song of Lambert* (1955) has an animal narrator. The latter is clearly designed for younger children; the former is for an older audience. This is not uniformly the case, however: for example, American Marguerite Henry’s *Misty of Chincoteague* (1947) has a human narrator but is children’s literature, while Leon Rooke’s *Shakespeare’s Dog* (1983) and André Alexis’ *Fifteen Dogs* (2015) are works for adults that are told at least partially from the perspectives of nonhuman characters.

Because of the multiplicity of storylines and animal relationships within it, *Beatrice and Virgil* is the most sophisticated of the three novels in terms of its treatment of human and nonhuman animals as subjects and/or objects. One early complication is human “focalizer” and protagonist Henry’s awareness that he himself may be objectified. Contemplating his own renown as a successful author, he notes that fame was “entirely external, coming from the minds of others. . . . [Y]ou are who you are, and then people project onto you some notion they have” (5). Henry’s understanding of objectification provides some insight into how objectification occurs. A critical part of objectifying someone is to make that someone a *something*. That is to say that objectification begins with the denial of the “I” in another, with the idea that the being that one is looking at cannot apprehend that look, cannot *look back*. It is a simple thing to see a being as an object: one must merely fail to recognize that being as one with consciousness, intent, voluntary actions, a point of view distinct from one’s own.⁶ Henry, like most humans, has the ability to represent himself linguistically, to say “I” and speak his own subjectivity and believe himself to be heard and seen as a subject on the basis of his ability to refer to himself as a self, self-aware and responsive. However, he believes that a group of people who have learned that he is a successful author see him first as a thing, a body carrying his career and its success, before they see him as person and subject. With nonhumans, this becomes even more pronounced, as species are used symbolically to embody certain characteristics, so that the symbolic function of the species in human discourse supersedes individual animals and their personalities (Roberts, “Animal” 141). Dogs are faithful, donkeys stubborn. The symbolic functions of the animals in language are the primary means through which most people reference most nonhumans (Huggan and Tiffin 139), something that is particularly risky in literature *about* animals because of the abundant number of references and the ease with which one may use animals to tap into the symbolic and thus add to the complexity of a given narrative.

Erasmus and Mendelssohn are perhaps the most representative animals in *Beatrice and Virgil*, and at first appear to be subjects in their own right, with thoughts and feelings and the ability to regard Henry in Derridean fashion, with views to which Henry is not privy. “[B]right-eyed and vigorous,” dog and cat “complete the picture” of Henry and his wife Sarah (26). The details of their physical appearance are sketchy: neither is purebred, and the only physical

⁶ Jacques Derrida discusses the power of the gaze in his example of his cat looking at him (6-11).

description provided is that Mendelssohn is black. Unlike the title characters Beatrice and Virgil, the shape of these animals is apparently unimportant. They might be long- or short-haired, fat or slender, gold- or copper-eyed. The descriptions of them that Henry finds important pertain to their personality characteristics and behaviours. Erasmus is “rambunctious, but easy to train,” while Mendelssohn is “retiring,” and avoids strangers (26). They are fairly stereotypical as animals, even down to their sex: the dog is male, the cat female.⁷ Like the classic “2.5 kids, a dog, and a white picket fence,” they may serve as markers of success and apparent normalcy in the novel.

Although Henry spends time with the animals and appears to see them as subjects, his imagination is the root of at least some of their subjectification, and the narrative’s unreliability, as constructed by Henry, jeopardizes the animals’ gaze as subjects. Troublingly, Henry equates Mendelssohn’s “attention” to him while he plays the clarinet with that of the howler monkey skull he has purchased from the taxidermist: he has, he believes, “two faithful spectators” in “Mendelssohn, who was patiently fascinated in the way only cats can be, and the monkey skull. . . . Their round eyes, the cat’s and the skull’s, were always on him when he played” (119). The skull is more spectre than spectator, but Henry invests its eye sockets with the same attention as Mendelssohn’s living gaze, a comparison between an empty skull and a living animal that marks their attention as Henry’s creation and, consequently, forms a denial of the cat’s subjectivity. Henry has a tendency to bestow mindfulness upon the dead, which has the effect of creating narratives for and emotions in that which is wholly object, without mind or self (e.g., 60-61). This rampant subjectification casts doubt upon Henry’s reliability as an assessor – rather than imposer or composer – of subjectivity.

Erasmus is a surer barometer of subjectivity, of both himself and others. Henry not only enjoys spending time with the dog but also talks to Erasmus regularly, and fancies that he reads comprehension in Erasmus’ facial expressions (53). The text describes the dog as “responsive” (53), a word that recalls the widespread contention among philosophers that “the animal” cannot respond to the human in a way that can be properly distinguished from a reaction (Calarco 125), and this denial of the possibility of response makes the animal an object. Despite Henry’s belief in the dog’s response-ability, however, he does project some of his own feelings onto his dog:

⁷ Writing of children’s animal stories in Victorian England, Monica Flegel explains the classic gendering of cats as female as part of a classist coding in which cats are analogous to the working class (127).

Erasmus may recognize some of the words and phrases that Henry says, and he is likely to recognize tone and behaviour that reveal emotional states (Wang and Tedford 167), but he would not be able to follow a running monologue, as Henry suggests that he can. Ironically, the amount of response-ability that Henry has granted to Erasmus endangers the legitimacy of the dog's subjectivity.

Erasmus is also the animal gone mad in *Beatrice and Virgil*. In a pathos-saturated scene, Henry discovers Mendelssohn dripping blood and unable to stand, and the veterinarian must euthanize both of his pets on the same day. Mendelssohn, her body broken but not yet showing symptoms of madness, dies quietly, "trusting" Henry all the way to death (161). Erasmus, however, cannot be handled and is killed in a gas chamber, dying "mouth frothing, eyes rolling and legs trembling" (161). Rabies' zoonotic properties highlight an essential similarity between humans and nonhuman animals: the bite of a mad animal makes a mad animal, and that madness does not differentiate between the human and the nonhuman (Wasik and Murphy 3). Erasmus' deterioration to this "bestial" state suggests a prior higher level of functioning, from which he devolves into something not "himself," a state Henry had noticed at several earlier points (e.g., 119). In their description of a rabid dog, Bill Wasik and Monica Murphy explain that "[o]ne could hardly grieve for the dog, because the dog was already gone. To euthanize it . . . was merely to acknowledge its departure" (223). That is to say that the thing that makes the dog an individual is gone, and only a shell remained; that shell is the object, as much as the skin of an animal without the animal in it is an object. In his madness, Erasmus has lost that which makes him "himself," a nod to a subjectivity noticed through its absence.

The narration's untrustworthy ascriptions of subjectivity endanger the subjectivity of the "real" animals in the novel and point to the text itself, beyond its marketing, as being adult literature. Although subjectification of animals is associated with children or childishness, this text offers an explanation for that subjectification in the form of Henry's imagination. Glimmers of the animal subject exist, but, for the most part, the narration's fallibility positions Erasmus and Mendelssohn not as subjects but as objects upon whom Henry projects his fantasies. If "childhood is defined in terms of seriousness," as Hunt asserts (13), and subjectification of animals is a sign of this childish immaturity, then any subjectification of animals in the novel points to Henry's

immaturity – and possible unmanliness, especially given his interest in the arts and position as victim late in the novel – rather than the novel's.⁸

Despite his fallibility, Henry is still a man in a male-dominated story. As the novel's implied author, he controls the story through his purported authorship of it. He and the taxidermist, whose name is also Henry, are the two main human characters in the novel, and most of the minor characters are also male. Henry's wife, Sarah, takes a supportive role, and is seen as vulnerable because of her pregnancy. The only other female in the framing narrative, Mendelssohn, dies as the victim of a male animal, overpowered because of the size difference between their species but also possibly in part because of her sex. Confronted by Erasmus' madness, Sarah remains hidden while Henry acts; in his madness, Erasmus attacks, and Mendelssohn's defence is ineffective.

This gendering of action and passivity continues through the play within the framing narrative. The violence in the taxidermist's play is violence perpetrated by human males upon both human and nonhuman females. Men torture Beatrice, the donkey. "Some men" terrified two women enough that they ran into a pond, drowned their own babies, and then drowned themselves while the men stood on the edge of the pond and "jeered the women on" (186). Institutionalized torturers spend two to three days depriving Beatrice of food, waterboarding her, and playing a game of tug-of-war between her tail and a hoof nailed to the ground until the hoof gives way (174-79). A boy and his friends torture and kill Beatrice and Virgil, a howler monkey, and the boy cuts off Virgil's tail (183-84). The victims of this violence are mostly – but not uniformly – female, and the perpetrators are human males. Here, women's maternal instincts are channelled into drowning as the kindest of the options available to them. None of these females have male protectors in the form of husband or father figures; Virgil is the closest thing to a male protector that Beatrice has, but he is only a friend. He was not there when she was tortured, and he is another victim when they are killed.

Like Erasmus and Mendelssohn, Beatrice the donkey and Virgil the howler monkey carry human names, and the issue of subjectification is also pertinent to them. The revelation that

⁸ There is much to be said about the taxidermist's attack on Henry with the knife that he has used to skin the animals that he taxidermies. On a psychoanalytic level, the phallic symbolism of the knife alone suggests that the taxidermist, at least, is attempting to take a masculine role and force a feminine one on Henry. In addition, "[r]egardless of their biological sex or species, subordination feminizes people and animals" (Luke 98), and being the victim of an attack is certainly a position of subordination.

Beatrice and Virgil are animals shocks Henry (74). There is nothing in the opening scene to differentiate a howler monkey and a donkey from two people having a conversation. This means that Henry, as well as every reader who comes to *Beatrice and Virgil* without some prior knowledge of the novel, initially reads Beatrice and Virgil as subjects, without preconceived ideas of the “most salient characteristics” of the animals (Roberts, “Animal” 141). In addition, any symbolic referents brought to bear on Beatrice and Virgil early in the novel will be purely human symbols to Henry and the naïve reader, flipping the standard symbolic order as the symbolic qualities of human characters inform an initial reading of animal characters. In concert, Beatrice and Virgil strongly recall *The Divine Comedy* and these characters’ roles as docents; the symbolic function of the names is difficult to escape and pre-empt the symbolic functions that the embodied characters have as donkey and monkey.

Of course, this line of argument can only go so far. The text is structured in such a way as to layer this literary symbolism upon the animals, reversing the norm of symbolic animals informing literature and other narratives, but the metafictional construction of the play within the novel highlights the act of construction. The taxidermist has written this play – or Henry has reconstructed it *ex post facto* – just as Martel has written the novel, so any representation of animals in text, and in language generally, is one in which a human creator has imposed a human vision of what a particular animal is. In point of fact, this is no different from a human creator imposing the same vision of what a particular human is, since a human can no more *know* the reality of another human as of another animal, as the Introduction addresses, but the taxidermist’s obsessive need for control is evident in how stringently he has shaped these characters, both in terms of the play and the corpses of the inspiration for the play. The taxidermist has no use for living animals; they have too much agency. It is strange, Henry thinks, that “someone so involved with animals should react so little – in fact, not at all – to a live one right in front of him. The taxidermist hadn’t even glanced at Erasmus” (86). But the taxidermist is not involved with animals; the word *involvement* implies some sort of relationship. The taxidermist’s work is with the dead, with disarticulation and reconfiguration of bodies that have no life left, that are ‘pure’ objects (Sands 46). The dead have no mind left with which to attempt to assert subjectivity. Erasmus is well aware that the taxidermied animals are neither living beings nor subjects.

A taxidermist's work is one of extreme objectification, and is undertaken in a prototypically male fashion.⁹ "The taxidermied mount," Garry Marvin explains, "is only a superficial animal; it is, literally, only skin deep, but that surface must be crafted to convey a sense of the whole. In this sense a mount is a simulacrum [that] attempts to convey those proper qualities of the living and original animal, but it can never be more than an appearance" (114). The taxidermist's work with his animal mounts and play are textbook examples of objectification. The help that the taxidermist wants from Henry is, in fact, help with fixing the *thingness* of the taxidermied animals into words, to find the right words with which to pin their images to the page (Martel 83). Anne Emmanuelle Berger and Marta Segerra argue that animals are typically "denied the power to refer to themselves through *deixis*, the power to point to the world and to themselves in the same thrust in order to 'say': Here I am" (8), and the taxidermied mount can only reaffirm the self and subjectivity of the one describing it while marking the *thingness* of the object referent. The speaker is in control of the representation of the thing and, in the taxidermist's case, even in the actual physical appearance of the thing being represented. They are the product of a human imagination, are utterly dominated by their human re-creator, and the real animals that inspired them are dead. Even Henry sees the text of the play as "fixed and immobile, like one of [the taxidermist's] mounted animals," with the one controlling the dissemination of the text as the one in control of the text itself (147).

Although *Beatrice and Virgil* contains significant anthropomorphization, which is typical of children's literature, that anthropomorphization clearly originates from a human source within the text itself, and so reaffirms human subjectivity without challenging the masculine Western standard of nonhuman objectification. Henry's subjective gaze empathetically reanimates the fox's corpse and gives emotion to the taxidermied tigers, and that same gaze renders thoughts and emotions in living nonhuman animals without demanding that others acknowledge those thoughts and emotions as *real*, rather than the product of Henry's imagination. For example, Henry, through his narrator, observes Erasmus and concludes that the dog is bored (61). Boredom is not a directly observable, objective characteristic, and comparing the dog's behaviour in Okapi Taxidermy with a child's behaviour in a museum is not objective. These are sentimental acts and are linked to

⁹ Taxidermy is a profession overwhelmingly dominated by Caucasian men. Stephen L. Eliason's study of taxidermists in Montana, for example, found that, of the 44 survey respondents, 88% were male and 97.7% were Caucasian (6-7).

anthropomorphization, in much the same way as sentimentality and animal stories are linked. There is a grey area surrounding what constitutes anthropomorphization, depending largely on where an individual draws the line between shared human-animal characteristics and purely human characteristics, but there are also things that clearly fall under anthropomorphization of the waistcoat-wearing warthog variety. With regard to the “real” animals in the book, *Beatrice and Virgil* contains limited true anthropomorphization, for which Henry’s active imagination, as the implied author, may take both blame and credit.

Strongly anthropomorphic narratives are associated with narratives for children, and *Beatrice and Virgil* addresses the question of audience directly: it is this tendency to view the talking animal, the anthropomorphized animal subject, as the province of children that prompts Henry’s wife to ask “[i]s it for children?” when her husband first describes the taxidermist’s play to her (87). Although Henry himself has written a story about animals for adults, reminiscent of Martel’s own history as the author of *Life of Pi*, Henry explains that he has used animals “for reasons of craft rather than of sentiment,” because he believes that people “might not shelter [animals] from habitat destruction, but we do tend to shelter them from excessive irony” (29-30). *His* story, he says, is for adults (35), and he invokes a utilitarian view at least of representations of animals: he uses them as tools to shake readers loose from preconceived notions. Despite this, however, he still questions the taxidermist’s target audience (105-06). The characters are animals; the setting is a shirt. As with *Silverwing* and *Raven’s End*, anthropomorphized animals in this play are speaking beings; moreover, they move through a world that is patently unrealistic in its setting. The cumulative effect of these facts causes Henry to question his own initial judgement that this play is not for children. Assured that it really is for mature audiences, he seeks to clarify that “[i]t’s for adults *despite* the characters and the setting” (106, emphasis added), because those details indicate to Henry that this must be a work for children. The taxidermist catches the import of Henry’s preposition and alters the phrase: no, it is “*because* of the characters and the setting” that the play is for adults (106). According to the taxidermist, animal characters and fanciful settings do not make a story a children’s story.

Just as Henry’s statement reveals an underlying bias toward equating animal literature with children’s literature, so the taxidermist’s reveals a bias toward identifying children’s literature with triviality. The characters and the setting are important. This is not just a fantastical story with realistic animals performing unrealistic acts: Beatrice and Virgil have found themselves in an

allegory, where symbols convey a hidden moral message, and Beatrice and Virgil are two of those symbols. When Henry presses him about why he is using these two species, the taxidermist claims that he chose Beatrice and Virgil as his characters “[b]ecause monkeys are thought to be clever and nimble, and donkeys are thought to be stubborn and hardworking” (101). This is what Roberts refers to as the “salient characteristics” by which animals are known. Because “it was simple to remember that the tiger was cruel, the fox cunning,” the animals have come to be seen, “for the purposes of literature, as types or symbols merely” (“Animal” 141). In their role as symbolic animals, Beatrice and Virgil represent certain characteristics, nonhuman animals as a group, and those groups of people who were victimized in Nazi Germany (16).

Anthropomorphization is rarely challenged when the animals are performing primarily symbolic functions, as in allegory, because it is clear that the animals are really people wearing the skins of animals. Allegorical anthropomorphism is far more complex than the simple anthropomorphism of Rupert the Bear, for instance, who can be understood simply as a boy with the face of a bear (Baker 136).¹⁰ It includes “descriptions of animal behavior that are not intended to be interpreted as biological fact” but rather use animals “to make an argument more appealing or to conceal true identities” (Lockwood 45). Sophisticated reading is required for the comprehension of more than the “face value” of an allegorical story, and suggests adult readership.

The symbolism and allegory in the play reveal serious content. Just as the Shirt is both a shirt and symbolic of the parcelled-out world, so the skins represent both the “real” animal and the purchasers’ and taxidermist’s visions of what that animal represents. People make meaning of these symbols. They are pure objects, without the ability to contradict or to make meaning of their own. In addition, the play broaches a subject rarely mentioned in children’s literature: the Holocaust.¹¹ In an item in Beatrice and Virgil’s list, “A Horrors Sewing Kit” (listed on 48-49), Henry finds proof that the taxidermist is “using the Holocaust to speak of the extermination of animal life. Doomed creatures that could not speak for themselves were being given the voice of a most articulate people who had been similarly doomed. He was seeing the tragic fate of animals through the tragic fate of Jews. The Holocaust as allegory” (173). Of course, as much as the

¹⁰ See Chapter One for a more comprehensive discussion of this type of anthropomorphism.

¹¹ For a discussion of animal analogies in the Holocaust and the use of the Holocaust to describe animal genocide, see Carey Wolfe’s *Before the Law: Humans and Other Animals in a Biopolitical Frame*.

Holocaust is being used to speak of the fate of animals, so is the fate of animals being used to speak of the Holocaust (18). The Horrors that Beatrice and Virgil endure are perpetuated upon humans and nonhumans alike. The mounted donkey upon whom the character of Beatrice is constructed came from a petting zoo, where a delivery truck struck and killed her. A scientific team “collected” the mounted howler monkey who died “in transit” and becomes the character Virgil (75). A suture line around the monkey’s tail, where the taxidermist reattached it after the monkey’s arrival at his shop, is the only indication of trauma in these animals’ lives (153). It is, the taxidermist says, the only thing that “really counts” (152).

The play uses the Holocaust to speak to animal genocide. In the taxidermist’s words, his play is about “[t]he animals! They’re two-thirds dead. . . . In quantity and variety, put together, two thirds of all animals have been exterminated, wiped out forever. My play is about this . . . irreparable abomination” (134-35). The taxidermist is speaking of a way of treating animals as much as he is about specific species, and if Beatrice and Virgil represent the animals in his play, the boy and his friends and the men represent the humans. They are not the only humans in the play, but they are the ones with the power, and they use it indiscriminately against others, human and nonhuman. In the play, Virgil is astonished to read a government edict that announces “a new category of *non-citizens*,” a category into which he now falls (128). As with the “undesirables” in Nazi Germany, Virgil has been reduced from a state of some significance, from a being with acknowledged rights if not parity in his society, to that of a subhuman (“Victims”).

The Holocaust was morally reprehensible, and linking human killing of animals to the Holocaust sets up these acts as equally reprehensible. Wendy Lamb notes that censorship issues surrounding children’s literature stem from the idea that children are “vulnerable, in need of protection” (300), and this play violates a number of assumptions about children’s literature: that children’s stories (1) should not “describe unacceptable behavior, such as violence, rudeness, or immorality,” (2) should not describe things that might scare them, and (3) should contain “characters who act in acceptable ways and are rewarded for it” (Nodelman and Reimer 86). In the play and in the novel as a whole, however, frightening things are depicted in detail, unacceptable behaviour is frequent, and the “good guys” are either morally suspect or not the unequivocal winners of the story.

If animals are both other than and less than human, to translate this into the taxidermist’s stated position of human treatment of animals, then wrongs done to them are less wrong, or perhaps

not even wrong at all. It would not be right to equate property to humans in any way. Henry ponders this issue in a circuitous fashion as he contemplates the significance of the text that the taxidermist has sent him as their initial point of contact. This text, which later links back to the taxidermist's play in the form of the human body that Beatrice and Virgil discover and name Gustav, is Gustave Flaubert's "The Legend of Saint Julian Hospitator." In the story, Julian grows up to be an indiscriminate slaughterer of animals. However, Henry believes that it is "for killing his parents that [Julian] wanders the earth forlornly and it is for opening his heart to a divine leper that he is saved. His stupendous hunting carnage only provides the great stag that curses him. Otherwise, the slaughter, a wished-for extinction of animals, is a senseless orgy about which Julian's saviour has not a single word to say" (42-43). Thus, the animal genocide in which Julian was involved in his youth is immaterial to his initial damnation and to his eventual salvation. Acting upon animals is, in Flaubert's story, not immoral but amoral behaviour.

Allegorical anthropomorphism indicates a requirement for sophisticated reading and the presence of serious subjects, as the above discussion has illustrated, but it also places the discussion of animal subjectification into a state of abeyance. Superficially, the animal characters here appear to be subjects. Beatrice and Virgil use language to discuss philosophy and experiences, which correlates with the unrealistic plots and anthropomorphic mentation of *Raven's End* and *Silverwing*. Neither those novels nor this play-within-a-novel treats anthropomorphism as anathema, and they do not attempt to represent their animal subjects within the genre of realism. Here, however, the similarities end. While *Raven's End* and *Silverwing* attempt to represent animals as animals, for their own sake and in a loosely symbolic fashion in their environmental criticism, the animals in the taxidermist's play are primarily symbolic. They were never meant to represent "real" animals. Even the physical beings from which Beatrice and Virgil have been taken are fictional constructs given symbolic names. In order for the allegory to work, a set of similarities must be constructed or made known so that the connection is clear, and these similarities make Beatrice and Virgil too human. They are manifestly *not* the monkey and the donkey they are representing, except insofar as all are the creations of the taxidermist. Moreover, Beatrice's tale of torture, Virgil's discovery that he has been made a non-citizen, and the murders of both humanize the monkey and the donkey, so that the nods to their animal skins and the gestures to animal characteristics (e.g., Virgil's fondness for bananas) seem dark humour rather than active attempts to retain "the animal" for the purposes of the allegory.

The allegory alone indicates a need for sophisticated reading skills, and violence is another aspect that indicates that *Beatrice and Virgil* is not children's literature. Its violence is explicit, graphic, and extensively documented, and ranges from human-against-human violence to violence in its diction. A discussion of the nature of the English language, for example, explains that it is driven to "exploit the new and the alien," "robbing words from other languages (23, emphasis added)." "[S]tab his heart," the narrative continues, and Henry would "bleed French, slice his brain open and its convolutions would be lined with English and German" (23). The verbs are laden with force, dissection, violence. If violence occurs outside of the narrative line, as with Erasmus' attack on Mendelssohn, the narrative returns to the aftermath to relive the violence through the mutilation that has resulted from it. Even Henry's Games for Gustav, appended to the larger novel, appear in the form of questions that articulate trauma. "Your daughter is clearly dead," one begins; "[i]f you step on her head, you can reach higher, where the air is better. Do you step on your daughter's head?" ("Game 7," n. pag.). Henry insists that the animals in his work are not "sentimental caricatures," and that, because "[h]e intended his story for adults . . . he allowed himself all the animal violence it required" (35). The sheer amount of violence in *Beatrice and Virgil* – in the connotations of the diction, the skins of the taxidermied mounts, the stories within the story, the rabies and the fallout from that, and the word games that conclude the novel – precludes *Beatrice and Virgil* from being "for children."

Perhaps most importantly, however, its violence originates from a variety of sources, some of which are ultimately unidentifiable, and the deaths do not belong to any sort of natural order. There are no evident benefits to human-caused death or violence within the scope of the novel. The mounted animal skins are representative of hunters' "exercise in domination" (Luke 94), the mounts monuments to their prowess but also commemorating the essential meaninglessness of the act: Okapi Taxidermy bursts with unwanted mounts, many abandoned by those who had initially desired to preserve them. The taxidermist's attack on Henry is simply murderous, and the torture and killing of Beatrice and Virgil in the taxidermist's play is an end in itself. The men who torture Beatrice are "just doing their job," but then they let her go (179). There is no reason for the torture or for the release. Like Julian's orgy of slaughter in "The Legend of Saint Julian Hospitator," the purpose of the violence is the violence itself. Killing for the sake of killing and torture for the sake of torture does not enforce order, but embodies chaos.

The unpredictable source of violence magnifies this chaotic aspect. The taxidermist does not reveal himself to be an antagonist until near the end of the novel, and little of the violence within the text can be laid at his feet. Henry's discovery that the taxidermist is a Nazi suggests that the taxidermist has perpetrated a great deal of violence on other humans, and the taxidermist's attempts to compare humans to nonhuman animals may mark an attempt to justify violence against humans by equating them with nonhuman animals rather than to condemn violence against nonhuman animals by raising their status to that of humans. In her discussion of the novel, Janis E. Haswell observes that Beatrice's torturer in the play bears a physical resemblance to the taxidermist as the novel describes him, and that the boy who kills Beatrice and Virgil is the same age that the taxidermist would have been in 1945, the end of World War II (35). She also notes, however, that it is not clear that the taxidermist was indeed a Nazi or Nazi sympathizer; Henry is convinced of the fact, but the taxidermist may have been a victim of the Nazis, or even "a *Kapo* imprisoned by the Nazis but in a position of authority over other inmates" (38). Despite Henry's conviction, the taxidermist's role in World War II – as oppressor, oppressed, some mix of the two, or even outside the conflict entirely – is unclear, and so the taxidermist's status as an antagonist relies principally upon Henry's opinion about him and the taxidermist's attack on Henry at the end of the novel. The original play is the taxidermist's creation, so it is possible to credit him circuitously for the trauma that Beatrice and Virgil endure, but within the world of the play, characters harm other characters. The perpetrators of these acts are human males, like the taxidermist and Saint Julian, but the violence is not limited to even this broad category. Those who killed the animals whose skins populate Okapi Taxidermy remain unknown. Rabies, an invisible and deadly virus, consumes Erasmus, who in turn ravages Mendelssohn. Physical and emotional trauma saturate this novel from the plot to the diction, and there is no single identifiable source, no criminal mastermind to blame. Without a source for the most violent acts – like the bogeyman antagonists that *Silverwing* and *Raven's End* produce – violence manifests not as an aberration in an otherwise secure moral code but as systemic.

With its extensive graphic descriptions of the disarticulation of bodies, murder, and attempted murder perpetrated by a variety of characters, as well as the lack of an evident purpose for the killing, *Beatrice and Virgil* makes few allowances for delicate sensibilities and offers no protective salve that indicates that this violence is only an isolated facet of the larger moral system. If anything, it asserts the prevalence of disorder, of immorality intrinsic to so many levels of

Western cultures that it has become the standard. The novel anthropomorphizes animals without granting them subjectivity *as animals*, and infuses its text with violence that cannot be packaged up and set aside as something for which specific “bad people” are responsible.

2.2 *Raven’s End* and *Silverwing*

Raven’s End and *Silverwing* are far less overtly masculine texts than *Beatrice and Virgil*. To begin with, both contain female characters of significance who are not subsumed into their roles in relationships with males, such as those of mate and mother. *Silverwing’s* protagonist, Shade, is born into a maternity colony of female bats. That colony is ruled by a council of female elders equal in stature to their equivalents in the males’ colony. The chief among these elders, Frieda, takes Shade under her wing and mentors him. Unlike Poe’s “The Raven,” *Raven’s End* is not a male-dominated story with an absent female object of desire, but one that includes strong female characters whose roles are neither primarily sexual nor maternal. The novel has a similar character to *Silverwing’s* Frieda: Greta, a wise and respected raven who takes the protagonist on as her pupil. In *Silverwing*, Shade’s chief companion for most of the novel is a female bat of another species, Marina; she is instrumental in Shade’s survival, and in this novel their friendship remains platonic.¹² *Raven’s End* has no equivalent to Marina, and most of its other female characters are in mated pairs or juveniles in some stage of courtship, but two prominent females are an exception to this rule: Zygadena, the novel’s villain, and the Great Raven, the first raven and leader of the Mythical Flock of immortal ravens. The latter does have a mate, but he appears in the novel only in passing. Zygadena, however, is unmated, and this may be a symptom of her aberrant nature; in fact, she uses her “feminine wiles” to ensnare Colin, the protagonist, before she attempts to kill him (249-50). Nevertheless, these novels are populated with far more female characters than *Beatrice and Virgil*.

In terms of animal representation, the high subjectification in these stories is also more prototypically feminine – and juvenile – than that found in *Beatrice and Virgil*. In *Silverwing* and *Raven’s End*, the animal characters are anthropomorphic subjects that are neither mediated by unreliable human narration nor mitigated by allegory. In addition, the violence in the stories occurs within a secure moral framework in which some things are “bad” and other things are “good,” and

¹² This relationship becomes romantic in a sequel, *Sunwing* (1999).

it is possible to differentiate between the two. Although the novels engage in the struggle of representing the nonhuman animal through the human author, they present this difficulty with less complexity than *Beatrice and Virgil*. With these texts, the constructed nature of narrative is largely invisible, rather than foregrounded through elements of metanarrative. Because the protagonists are nonhuman animals, both novels must necessarily treat at least some nonhumans as subjects. Unlike *Beatrice and Virgil*, there is no question about the subjectivity of at least some nonhuman subjects in these stories, because the narrative perspective requires insight into some of the characters' thoughts and perceptions. Both *Raven's End* and *Silverwing* present their animals as *either* subjects *or* objects, without referring to their construction as such.

In *Raven's End*, nearly everything is a subject. Many entities are alive and talking, including an angry cold front, the lichens who debate ecology and the Darwinian "survival of the fittest," and the philosophically minded pikas who choose a new collective name for themselves every day and have no objection to dying because *pikaness* will go on without them (64, 196, 19-20). Everything asserts its subjectivity, if not necessarily its individuality as a single, discrete self. Given the affiliation between children and subjectification of nonhumans, and the Western assumption that objectification is indicative of both maturity and masculinity, this sort of blanket subjectification signals a "feminized" text that may be considered suitable for children.

A complicating factor in this world of rampant subjectification is that *Raven's End* does maintain distinctions between humans and animals in this regard. Although the raven is a prominent figure in Indigenous narratives, the novel makes no reference to Indigenous cultural contexts and instead preserves a Western-based human/animal binary while attempting to reverse the subject/object relationship. Humans are "sort of" *not* animals (117), the ravens think, and in this novel the nonhuman animals have the subjectivity while the humans are reduced to objects that the ravens must observe in order to puzzle out meaning from their actions, paralleling Henry's ascription of boredom to Erasmus in *Beatrice and Virgil*, for example. Despite this, the binary flip is incomplete. Some passages, particularly those in which humans speak, mark humans as subjects, although ravens generally lack the capacity to access that subjectivity. In addition, scenes such as Greta's description of national and provincial parks prevent the binary from asserting itself fully: "humans have to have everything in opposites," she says (91). "For all their poisonous cities . . . they have to have a place that's exactly opposite," and the most important thing about a park is that humans refrain from killing things there and so, by keeping this part of the world more or

less intact, “they can save part of the world from themselves” (91-92). Gadd’s ecological critique, which declares that humans will destroy themselves if they destroy too much of the planetary resources – and their accompanying ecosystems – upon which people rely for supplies, shows the difficulty that Colin has in understanding human motives. However, it also disrupts the enactment of the flipped human/animal, because this sort of critique grants humans agency, mindfulness. This does not mean that Colin understands human motives (e.g., Gadd 166), but it does mean that the role reversal of the human subject and the animal object is incomplete.

Oppel’s *Silverwing* contains a similar partial reversal. In this novel, human speech is as unintelligible to the reader as it is to the bats. Humans have “big slow voices like thunder,” and one makes “a long, slow moan of surprise” when the spectral bat Goth strikes at him (74, 169). Bats emit sounds between 20 and 120 kHz, much higher than humans’ speaking – and hearing – ranges of 40 Hz to 20 kHz (Altringham 67); Oppel appears to have made an attempt to represent *bats’* perceptions of human noise, and it makes sense that, given the higher pitch and frequency at which bats emit sound, they would perceive human sound as both low and slow. Despite this barrier, however, bats are interested in humans, primarily because humans have intruded on the bats’ world and have become attached to a prophecy in the process. In the story of Nocturna’s Promise, the goddess decrees that the bats’ banishment will end one day, and bats will one day be able to fly in daylight again (39). The vision in the story, created via echolocation and preserved in a carefully maintained echo chamber, shows a black sun with only a slender ring of light around it, with bats “swirling beneath this silver ring” (38-39).¹³ That ring bears a striking resemblance to the bands humans have put on a number of bats, and although different colonies and individual bats believe different things about those bands (e.g., Oppel, *Silverwing* 40, 73-76, 88, 188-94), many of them believe that the banding has something to do with Nocturna’s promise and are eager to discover the connection (e.g., Oppel, *Silverwing* 131-33, 269). Thus, humans not only intrude upon the lives of the bats but also take on symbolic significance in their culture. The bats create symbolic meaning out of humans and their creations in a similar fashion to the human symbolism layered on the title characters in *Beatrice and Virgil*.

In both *Silverwing* and *Raven’s End*, the protagonist species credit humans with motives. Although no characters engage in dialogue with humans, as Shade and Colin do with other species,

¹³ The ring is silver because bats do not see in colour (Oppel “Why I Wrote *Silverwing*”).

the humans are Other rather than object. Moreover, the humans speak. In *Raven's End*, that speech takes the same form as that of the nonhuman characters, with nothing in the dialogue to distinguish human beings from any other kind of being; everyone speaks the same language, or it is all translated into the same language, with some changes in diction and tone that are unique to particular characters but not to particular species. What *does* distinguish them is that the humans, although intelligible to readers and to human characters in the novel, appear to be unintelligible to ravens (e.g., 59). Except for humans, however, everything and everyone in *Raven's End* appears to be mutually intelligible (e.g., Colin speaks with a cold front; Greta responds to some orange lichens). This barrier of intelligibility between humans and nonhumans does maintain some amorphous distinction between humans and everything else in the ecosystem. Although humans appear as a destructive force in the novel, the ravens acknowledge that the results of humans' bloodthirsty ways can be beneficial to them (7, 65). Humans, then, are both predators of and a food source for ravens, a double-sided relationship that is similar to the ravens' relationship with wolves.¹⁴ Additionally, it positions people within the ecological frame *as animals* rather than something from outside the natural order, as they appear in *Silverwing*.

In *Silverwing*, humans are beyond understanding. Readers must translate humans' behaviours into something meaningful within a human frame of reference, because the narrative does not provide answers. Many bats believe that humans have a reason for banding bats, for example, but the humans never reveal their true motives and the bats never discover them. The narrative wraps tightly around what the *bats* know, and since they know very little about the humans and cannot communicate with them, people take on the position of Derrida's absolute Other. In Derrida's example of this Otherness, he is the subject viewing a totally alien being. Derrida can see the "being-there-before-[him]," he writes, but it can also "look at [him]. It has its point of view regarding [him]," the cat whose subjectivity must be present but ever unreachable because it is completely foreign to him (11). Like Nagel's problem of what it is like "for a *bat* to be a bat" (439), the idea that the mind of another must be wholly alien because that Other does not belong to the same species as the one acknowledging that mind is problematic. *Silverwing* flips Derrida's paradigm of a human-seeing-a-nonhuman-that-he-sees-seeing-him in the opposite direction: the narrative point of view makes bats the subjects, and the bats' idea that people have

¹⁴ Gadd represents raven-wolf relationships in ways that are similar to nonfictional representations of raven-wolf interactions (Gadd 97-99; Heinrich 231-35).

reasons for the things they are doing suggests that the bats see humans as subjects, imbued with self and agency and capable of response. Because the total foreignness of humans to bats makes any intercommunication impossible, however, the potential for response must remain as potential without ever being actualized. This is the closest to objectifying humans that *Silverwing* comes, which is a step closer than either *Raven's End* or *Beatrice and Virgil* takes. Even *Raven's End*, in which human actions are so puzzling, includes human speech that is intelligible to readers, if not to the ravens; this helps the text to represent them as subjects despite those hints at an awkward Otherness that separates humans from everything else in the ecosystem. *Silverwing* shows the other side of the coin, a representation of the consciousness of a being seeing us looking at it.

Humans are not gods in *Silverwing*, but they occupy a position that is different from every other species in the novel. Their actions make the very plot possible: without them there would be no spectral bats in the northern forests. Spectral bats are the primary threat to Shade and Marina, directly through their cannibalistic intentions and indirectly through their killing of birds and small mammals (this latter action causing the birds and beasts to declare that the skies are closed to bats at all times). Human machinations are, like Nocturna's Promise, at the heart of this novel. Humans are neither gods nor demigods, but they are manifestly Other, absolutely Other, with a subjectivity that can be guessed at but never known.

Because *Silverwing's* readers are human, however, what is impossible for the nonhuman characters in the novel is not only possible but almost unavoidable for its readers. The humans' actions may not be entirely decipherable, but some understanding of human motivations and experiences (e.g., why humans pray, what it is like to be unable to fly) are accessible, and in some cases intuitive. What this creates, then, is a flipped world in which the characters are unable to understand what it is like for a *human* to be a human, Othering readers and calling human conceptual frameworks into question (e.g., why *do* humans pray, and what is the effect of doing so *en masse*?). This feature forms a marked contrast to *Beatrice and Virgil*, where narrative devices make it clear that the nonhuman subjects being represented have minds that originate in the human. Any character that the taxidermied animals display is character that the narrator has imposed upon them or that a taxidermist has created a likeness of, including Beatrice and Virgil; the Beatrice and Virgil in the taxidermist's play are subjects created out of the mind of the taxidermist; and the narrator undermines what subjectivity he sees in his pets when he equates Mendelssohn's living mind with that of a mounted skull and when his perception of Erasmus'

response as subject moves into the realm of the incredible. Somewhere between the two on this continuum, *Raven's End* grants subjectivity to everyone and everything, and while it, like the other novels, continues to separate humans from other animals, it does this while maintaining an accessible subjectivity denied to *Silverwing's* humans.

Silverwing's reversal of the gaze of the absolute Other is a sign of the fantastic. Neither the fantastic nor the use of a nonhuman animal's perspective is confined to children's literature, but the shifting of the subject to the nonhuman animal and away from the human is one indicator of a narrative that may be accessible to children. *Raven's End* offers a less radical perspective than *Silverwing's* absolute Othering of humans; in Gadd's novel, limited access to human subjectivity is available through human speech and corvine interpretations of human behaviour. *Beatrice and Virgil*, while it treats animals in a variety of ways, undermines its own representations of animal subjectivity to hold to the status quo, and reaffirms the mature, masculine, "objective" understanding that humans are subjects and nonhumans are objects.

This reversal of gaze in *Silverwing* and *Raven's End* shows strong subjectification of nonhuman animals of a variety of species, and this subjectification is an indicator of anthropomorphism. Literature about animals is always already anthropomorphic, in the broadest sense of the term, and even a real animal standing before a person, like Derrida's cat, becomes a representation of that animal as soon as the human mind begins to perceive and think about it. All human thoughts about and conceptualizations of animals are, in this regard, necessarily anthropomorphic, necessarily human-shaped, because they exist within and originate within anthropomorphic minds. Fundamentally, humans cannot "comprehend and represent the presence of the animal" without anthropomorphization (Fudge 76), and the use of nonhuman animal perspectives signals the constructed nature of the representations more clearly than animal representations as mediated by a human narrator.

Anthropomorphism is an exacting term that "takes humanity as its standard" (Donaldson and Kymlicka 33) so that, at its most extreme, any interpretation or representation of animals that includes characteristics that can be or are associated with human characteristics is called anthropomorphic, literally taking on the shape of the human. Anthropomorphism is not merely a term used to denote a particular literary device, as personification denotes the ascription of human characteristics to inanimate objects; it is also an allegation, a charge made when literature that is supposed to be "serious" seems to slip the bounds of the plausible with regard to nonhuman animal

emotions and mental states. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin write that it is used against “those who argue for animal consciousness, agency or intelligence,” and, although it is acceptable and even expected in children’s literature, it is “usually outlawed in adult writing” (153-54). It is, simply put, the ascription of human traits to nonhuman animals or deities. Yet it is more complex than this, because this definition indicates that human traits are uniquely human, and this anthropocentric assumption cannot bear closer examination. “In our neo-Cartesian culture,” as Paul Shepard puts it, “to anthropomorphize is to endow an animal with bogus humanity. Apart from its weakness in this sense, the term has a destructive effect on understanding, for it closes to the door on the common processes in men and animals by simply declaring them illusionary” (68).

For humans to place themselves in an animal’s position (i.e., to practice empathetic thinking) and to imagine emotional responses based on this is anthropomorphism, which is “the cardinal crime for the animal observer” (Broadhurst 12, in Lockwood 41-42).¹⁵ To impute emotion or cognition to a nonhuman animal is a “crime,” then, because neither emotion nor cognition can be quantified and proven. One may count the number of vertebrae in a cat’s tail, but to suggest that the lashing of that tail signifies “anger,” or “hostility” speaks to an emotional state to which humans are not privy. Instead, it is more acceptable to say that a cat’s lashing tail signifies a state of heightened stimulation. To suggest that a glowering human is angry, however, by definition cannot be anthropomorphism, although a person is no more privy to the inner workings of another human than to those of a cat. However, nonhuman animals *do* share characteristics with humans. If they did not, there would be no value in, for example, using them as test subjects in experimental research.

The controversy over anthropomorphism has spilled over into fiction and creative nonfiction, particularly with regard to animal stories, given writers’ and critics’ focus on scientific accuracy with regard to representations of animals. Accuracy was at the heart of the nature faker controversy in the early twentieth century, as the Introduction explains in more detail, and anthropomorphism is one of the features of “inaccurate” accounts of animal life. John Burroughs, for example, wrote of Roberts’ animal stories that the animals “are simply human beings disguised

¹⁵ Morgan’s Canon, first published in 1894, asserts that “[i]n no case may [humans] interpret an action as the outcome of the exercise of a higher psychological faculty, if it can be interpreted as the outcome of the exercise of [a faculty that] stands lower in the psychological scale” (Morgan 53). Morgan’s Canon has been widely used in psychology, particularly animal psychology, and biology (Lockwood 43).

as animals; they think, feel, plan, suffer, as we do; in fact, exhibit almost the entire human psychology” (“Real and Sham” 131). According to Burroughs, animals in Roberts’ stories have both thoughts and emotions, and this makes them humans in fur coats, no different in this respect from the animals in Æsop’s fables or Beatrix Potter’s children’s stories. Such anthropomorphism is excusable in human narrators, because the blame for ascription of purely human qualities – or what some judge to be purely human qualities – to nonhumans can be attributed to the fallibility of the narration rather than a quality of the narrative itself; *Beatrice and Virgil* is an excellent example of this. Because *Raven’s End* and *Silverwing* lack an explicitly human narrator, however, all emotion and cognition that their nonhuman characters display are “true” within the world of the story, rather than framed as human projections within the texts. Straightforward anthropomorphism, anthropomorphism not mediated within the texts themselves, is not scientifically rigorous, and thus not characteristic of “serious” literature, in much the same way that a high degree of subjectification of nonhuman animals signals frivolous or fanciful literature.

There is much overlap between anthropomorphism and subjectification. For instance, the more rigorous proponents of a human/animal binary would designate any hint of the animal-as-subject as anthropomorphic. Most, however, would grant some subjectivity to at least the more closely related animals, particularly large mammals, without claiming that this subjectivity is anthropomorphic. If happiness is a characteristic that dogs and humans share, for example, then to say that a dog is happy is not a statement that anthropomorphizes the dog.¹⁶ This line of thought would dispute Burroughs’ claim that thinking, feeling, planning, and suffering are uniquely human qualities and thus anthropomorphic. They are, however, qualities that make nonhuman characters subjects.

There is no question that nonhuman characters are subjects in *Raven’s End* and *Silverwing* – multiple nonhuman characters exhibit mentation and emotion in both novels – but the novels are also patently anthropomorphic. Some of this anthropomorphism is clumsy in terms of its integration into the structure of the fictional world in Gadd’s work in particular, but the fantastical nature of both novels’ plotlines assures anthropomorphism: the animals talk, quest, and engage

¹⁶ In *Animal*, Erica Fudge questions the role of anthropomorphism in animal representation, asking “If I cannot say that a dog is sad, what can I say that it is?” (76). “Without anthropomorphism,” she writes, “we are unable to comprehend and represent the presence of an animal” (76).

with aspects of philosophy and religion. Human perspectives do not mediate this anthropomorphization within the novels' contexts. Unlike *Beatrice and Virgil*, these texts undermine neither the anthropomorphism nor the subjectivity of their animal subjects. Subjectification and the anthropomorphism that some would argue is inherent in the animal-as-subject are the *sine qua non* of these novels, based as they are upon the perspectives of nonhuman animals. Given the association between subjectification of animals and both immaturity and femininity, this reliance on nonhuman subjectivity – and on anthropomorphism for, at the very least, propelling the plotlines – neotenzes the texts, giving the impression that they are less sophisticated in form, and possibly subject, than texts that control animal subjectification and anthropomorphization through human narrators.

Narratives told from the point of view of a nonhuman animal tend to have more anthropomorphic qualities than those narrated by a human or an omniscient Other, and this is true of both *Raven's End* and *Silverwing*. Giving dialogue to nonhuman animals who are not, like *Beatrice and Virgil*, functioning as animals on a primarily symbolic level is anthropomorphic in itself (Pitts 171). The complexity of the cultures depicted in the novels, with myths, prophecy, and philosophy, is also patently anthropomorphic. What keeps novels such as *Silverwing* and *Raven's End* within the realm of animal story and out of fable or allegory is their grounding in natural science (see Egoff 133), their commitment to the physiology and behaviour of the subject species in order to represent the animals as animals, at least in terms of physiology. Strongly anthropomorphic narratives are associated with narratives for children, especially if those narratives are fantasy (Nodelman and Reimer 86), and both *Silverwing* and *Raven's End* fall within the fantasy genre. Fantasy and animal stories are closely correlated: the progenitors of both include fairy tales and fables (Timmerman 2), and animal fantasy is often included as a subset of fantasy itself (e.g., Swinfen 13; Saltman 193-94). Again engaging with issues of anthropomorphization that the Introduction raises (e.g., what constitutes a purely human characteristic and what might be shared among different species?), animal stories tend to be categorized as fantasy when they are perceived to require more than the typical suspension of disbelief necessary for reading fiction. Thus, any fiction with talking animals automatically assumes an aura of the fantastical. Fantasy is particularly pertinent in this chapter because many of the crossover texts read by both children and adults are fantastical; Judith Saltman goes so far as to claim that “[f]antasy is perhaps the only genre to find children and adults reading the same book” (190).

The association between strongly anthropomorphic narratives – such as those classified as animal fantasy – and children adheres to the maturation process expected of children: if, as Kate Stewart and Matthew Cole contend, “loss of sympathy or empathy with nonhuman animals is an inevitable part of the process of growing up” (264), then there should be an inverse correlation between the maturity level of the reader and the amount of empathy elicited by or incorporated into a text. Anthropomorphized animals, with their human-shaped cognitions and behaviours – such as Shade’s concern with being a runt in *Silverwing* – are more likely to do or think things that elicit empathy in readers. Matthew Cole and Kate Stewart note that “affective child-other animal relations tend to be usurped by more instrumental relations [with maturation], albeit ones that are frequently enchanted with an aura of affectivity, or even value-rationality” (62). The more anthropomorphic the story is, the more closely it resembles child-nonhuman animal interactions (Townsend 120-21). Equally, the more a text insists upon nonhuman animal subjectivity – without undermining that subjectivity – the further it moves from the objectification of animals that is a hallmark of social maturation. Just as people learn to “hide, disregard, or prevent altogether [their] feelings for animals” in anthropocentric Western cultures (Luke 165), so do adults hide, disregard, or scorn the feelings *of* animals.

Another factor that gears both *Silverwing* and *Raven’s End* toward younger readers is the moral code within their novels. This code tends to be closely tied to depictions of violence in the novels. In *Silverwing*, the code is clear: good subjects only kill living things that are not subjects. The novel opens on a hunting scene, with Shade using echolocation to track and catch insects. The emphasis in this section is on how he uses his “echo vision” and body for successful catches and how the insects taste to him: “Braking sharply, he scooped the beetle up with his tail membrane, flicked it into his left wing, and volleyed it straight into his open mouth” savouring “the delicious beetle meat as it squirted down his throat” (3). Shade’s morality is dependent upon representations of his prey: they are pure objects, without mind or gender. Mosquitoes, in fact, hardly need to be hunted at all, since all a bat needs to do to catch them is “keep your mouth open and swallow every once in a while” (4). Shade considers their taste and texture, not their thoughts and feelings. As in Fudge’s example of the chicken pie, the food animals are food and purely objects, while potential “friend” animals are purely subjects. *Beatrice and Virgil*, by contrast, features violence perpetrated upon both subjects (e.g., Henry, Beatrice, and Virgil) and objects (e.g., the taxidermied animals).

Silverwing's villains are South American spectral bats, who eat beings that the novel depicts as sentient. Their indiscriminate killing of birds is, in fact, the reason the owls declare the skies "closed" to bats, day or night: "This murder of birds by bats," the owl ambassador declares, "is an act of war, and we will respond in kind. The law is broken" (112). The fact that the spectral bats have killed subject animals, animals capable of expressing themselves as sentient beings, makes their killings murder. The northern bats, however, kill only beings that the novel does not depict as sentient. If killing birds is expressly unlawful, then killing insects must be lawful. This "lawful" order does not seem to be connected to the bats' natural food sources. Shade and Marina's natural food, as with all species of North American bats, *is* insects, but spectral bats feed upon birds and small mammals – including other bats – as naturally as the northern bats feed upon insects (Harvey et al. 12). Their eating habits are no less natural than those of the northern bats, except that Goth and Throbb are in the north unnaturally, through human interference. Although Goth and Throbb eat mice in captivity, the scene that introduces them differs from the one that introduces Shade only marginally in terms of the subjectification of food sources: there is a vague sense that the mice might suffer when Goth swallows some of them whole "so he [can] feel them wriggling down his throat" (97). Still, even in a scene that should position them as victims of some incomprehensible human scheme, these spectral bats are clearly "bad." Again, *Beatrice and Virgil* differs in this respect; Erasmus, for example, is violent in his madness, but he is not "responsible for his actions," as it were.

That these bats murder is something that becomes clearer later in the novel, but what is immediately known is even worse: they are cannibals. Asserted in the scene that introduces them, their cannibalism ensures that these bats will be killing and consuming others who have been depicted as subjects. Phyllis Passariello writes that "power and identity issues are intimately involved with cannibalistic behaviours," although the meaning and significance of cannibalism differs from culture to culture (21). In terms of Western cultures, cannibalism has significance as a sacred act (i.e., in Christianity, the holiest sacrament is the act of consuming the flesh and blood of Christ, which some denominations treat as literal and others as figurative), and thus it is easily profaned. Beyond this ritualistic act, cannibalism is a taboo that, Huggan and Tiffin write,

allegedly marks the outer limits of the human. . . . Human cannibalism turns people into 'animals' or 'beasts', but without jeopardising human distinctiveness since the deed has already been categorised as 'animal': humans can thus behave *like* animals

or beasts while at the same time the species boundary, with its operational distinction between animals and non-animals, is kept firmly in place. (172-73)

It might be argued that the human/animal paradox that cannibalism creates in Western cultures is strong enough to create distinctions between types of animals: those who cannibalize, who are more “base” in their animality, and those who do not cannibalize, who are more virtuous and human-like. In Roberts’ oeuvre, for example, wolves are the only species that engages in cannibalism, and only in stories in which they are represented as more demonic than anything else. Georges Bataille points out that people “cannot say concerning a wolf which eats another wolf that it violates the law decreeing that ordinarily *wolves do not eat one another*. It does not violate this law; it has simply found itself in circumstances where the law no longer applies” (36). The subjectified protagonist animals in these novels, however, express horror and disgust over the act of cannibalism; for them, it very much a taboo, and the antagonists are fully conscious of their actions and, presumably, the “law” against eating each other. For *Silverwing* and *Raven’s End*, which contain characters belonging to the protagonists’ species who kill and consume others of their own kind, the transgression of the taboo against cannibalism is a clear signifier of evil. The creatures the antagonists kill are not simply sentient; they are no different from the ones doing the killing. They are subjects being killed and consumed.¹⁷

Again unlike *Beatrice and Virgil*, the novel depicts few actual acts of murder. The spectral bats think and talk about killing bats, but they only ever make these kills “off stage,” so to speak. *Silverwing* depicts the cannibalism (e.g., 61), but the text never describes the killing in the main narrative, alluding to it only through the memories and fantasies of the spectral bats. Of all the subject animals in the novel, only Goth kills other subjects in the “real time” of the text, and even this must often be inferred, because the actual killing blows occur almost exclusively outside of the narrative.

In *Raven’s End*, Zygadena is the cannibal. Like Colin, she has been transformed into a raven by the Trees – the Trees are effectively deities, and occasionally they transmogrify other species into ravens, who are their preferred creation – making her lifespan indefinitely long. She does not appear physically until more than two thirds of the way through the novel. She kills other

¹⁷ An abundance of literary criticism exists on cannibalism in specific texts or the work of particular authors, including Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi*. For an introduction to cannibalism scholarship, see Jennifer Brown’s *Cannibalism in Literature and Film*.

ravens and crows and turns their flesh into a drug, which she then consumes and gives to other ravens to consume. Another raven explains that Zygadena “kills ravens and crows and turns their flesh into a poison. She calls it ‘Magic Meat.’ Her victims take more and more of it, and after a while they’ll do anything to get it. Anything at all – even killing flockmates,” although eventually the Magic Meat “makes Zygadena’s slaves so sick they can’t serve her. Then she kills them. And she uses them for more Magic Meat” (334). She functions in the text much like a bogeyman, illustrating what might happen to ravens who come under her influence or into her presence. Molly speculates that Zygadena has been attempting to addict the flock bullies to Magic Meat, and Scratch notes that “Zygadena’s always eatin’ dead ravens” (76). It is here that the flock leader clarifies that although ravens are free “to eat what [they] please,” cannibalism is an exception to that rule (76). Violence is present in the novel: it is inherent in carcasses just as in the taxidermied mounts in *Beatrice and Virgil*, in the threats and fights among the ravens, and in attacks upon a member of one species by a member of another. However, the text offers no details and Zygadena never successfully kills another corvid within the confines of the novel. As with *Silverwing*, *Raven’s End* depicts only the cannibalism, and not the killing, directly. Unlike *Beatrice and Virgil*, much of the violent behaviour is left to the imagination.

Deaths do occur in *Raven’s End*. Despite the fact that the novel’s protagonists are hunters and scavengers and fixated on food, however, these depictions are rare. Dead animals are a major food source for ravens, but again, the animals are typically dead before the ravens arrive. There are, however, several instances where the ravens observe animal deaths. The longest such scene is the ravens’ observation of the death of a Richardson’s ground squirrel on a roadway (205-06). The ravens under Zygadena’s influence express joviality at the animal’s death, but the other members of the flock remain unmoved, instead focusing on the dangerous task of removing their meal from the path of oncoming traffic. They are more interested in benefiting from the animal’s death than in celebrating it, and Colin is more curious about why the squirrels are so determined to cross the road than he is emotionally invested in their deaths. Death, for the ravens, is a fact of life (although they do grieve when members of their flock die). This distancing of violence from the actual text of the novels by having the violence occur outside the scope of the narrative, which is apparent in both *Raven’s End* and *Silverwing*, limits both the length and vividness of depictions of violence, and this makes the texts more acceptable as children’s literature. Animal stories are notorious for delivering unpalatable messages about the reality of life for animals, and violence

and death frequently align with such messages. However, a high frequency of graphic depictions of violence in an animal text do not endear such a story to those who would choose it for their children; Roderick Haig-Brown writes in his preface to his animal story *Panther* (1946), in fact, that one critic objected to exposing young children to the novel because the critic found that “[t]he amount of killing in the book is sickening” and thought that it was “very bloody and cruel” (7).

Like the effacement of violence, animal death is also less traumatic if the animal in question is an object rather than a subject. In Western cultures, violence done to animals is in large part hidden. Writing of the “absent referent,” Carol J. Adams describes how meat, for example, is “separated from any idea that she or he was once an animal, to keep the ‘moo’ or ‘cluck’ or ‘baa’ away from the meat, to keep something from being seen as having been someone” (51-52). Thus, meat and other animal products (e.g., burger, rawhide) become separated from the animals, so that they become absent referents within the human society itself (Cole and Stewart 23). This tactic helps to separate Flopsy from the rabbit in the pie. Cole and Stewart plot the social construction of animals along axes of subjectification/objectification and sensibility/non-sensibility, the latter of which deals with animal visibility. This graph places animals such as pets in the high-subjectification, high-sensibility quadrant, while animals categorized as “vermin,” for example, fall into the opposite quadrant of high objectification and high non-sensibility (22). Thus, violence performed upon or by a subject animal is far worse than violence performed upon or by an animal object.

Animal deaths in *Silverwing* include the deaths of both subjects and objects, but, because everyone and everything in *Raven’s End* is subjectified to some extent, all deaths in it are deaths of subjects. The pika’s death in a prairie falcon’s talons is a more significant death than that of the beetle that Shade eats in the opening pages of *Silverwing*, for example, because Colin’s conversation with the pika has turned the animal into an individual, just as Shade and Colin are individuals. By revealing thoughts and feelings, the pika reveals himself as a subject, and this gives more meaning to his death than accrues to a forkful of salad or a rack of lamb. That said, the deaths in *Raven’s End* generally occur as part of the “natural cycle”: the falcon, in this instance, requires meat so that *he* can go on living, and the pika himself has professed that his individual death does not matter (20). Still, this enactment of the cycle of life assumes more significance in a text in which everything that dies is sentient. Animal stories increase readers’ sensibility to the animals in the stories by their very nature, and the more sensible people are of animals and the

more subjectified those animals are, the more traumatic violence toward those animals becomes.¹⁸ If these stories are to be appropriate for children, it seems, a moral code must balance out this subjectification and sensibility to make the violence acceptable.

In *Raven's End* and *Silverwing*, violence has two main sources: (1) it occurs as part of a natural function, as when the prairie falcon kills the pika or Shade hunts a moth, or (2) it stems from an identifiable source of evil, such as Goth and Zygadena. The spectral bats in *Silverwing*, in fact, partake of both, as antagonists whose dietary requirements demand that they eat creatures who are subjects in the novel. The antagonists concentrate “bad” or “immoral” behaviour within a few aberrant individuals. Violence occurring as part of a natural function is more complex. It stems from a concept of the cycle of life, whether that is “[l]ive and let live” or “survival of the fittest” (Gadd 196). This type of violence, normalized as “natural,” emphasizes the necessity of death, although not always of pain and suffering, in order for life to continue. Within this frame, the pika’s death is sad, but it is necessary because the prairie falcon needs that flesh to go on living. These two methods for framing violence – as natural and as localized in concrete, contained characters – make violence more understandable and ultimately more acceptable.

Neither *Silverwing* nor *Raven's End* wholly mitigates the violence in its narrative. *Raven's End* includes unpredictably aggressive humans, for example, while in *Silverwing* Shade plays in a grey moral area when he consumes the flesh of a Brightwing bat in order to drug Goth and Throbb. Human-caused deaths are unnatural in these novels, because both texts have framed humans as separate from the rest of the “natural” world and thus separate from the cycle of life. When a vehicle strikes and kills some bighorn sheep in *Raven's End*, for instance, the people in that vehicle do not consume any part of the sheep (131). The deaths are unnecessary, unjustified, and excessive – something Chapter Four deals with in more detail – and even the watching ravens are too

¹⁸ The 2015 controversy over the killing of Cecil the lion is a real-world example of the power of high subjectification and high sensibility (Howard). Cecil’s high profile triggered an intense reaction to his death unmatched by the trophy hunting and/or poaching of other, more anonymous animals. Although trophy hunting is a controversial practice, his killer seems never before to have suffered social consequences from his trophy hunting activities. Described as “an avid big game hunter,” Walter Palmer had been on probation for a matter involving a black bear he had killed in Wisconsin in 2006 (Howard). He had even been in the media before; in 2009, *The New York Times* ran a feature on Palmer’s killing of a tule elk, said to be near record size (Brick). It is likely that Cecil’s high media profile was a factor in the overwhelmingly negative response to Palmer’s killing of him.

concerned about the event to approach the dead animals. Despite the excessiveness of the destruction, however, some nonhuman animals do benefit from human activities. The ravens enjoy the carrion that trophy hunters leave behind (Gadd 23), for example, and Shade and Marina initially escape Goth and Throbb when the humans hunt down the escaped spectral bats (Oppel 165). Thus, although the human element leaves room for uncertainty about where humans fit in the symbiotic system invoked through the idea of the cycle of life, both novels work within a moral framework.

That moral framework, which exists in *Beatrice and Virgil* in a much more complex fashion that involves graphic depictions of violence, is a technique that *Silverwing* and *Raven's End* use to soften the problematic nature of violence in the texts. Because objects are amoral, subjects can consume them without crossing the boundary between “killing” and “murder,” and thus Shade’s consumption of object insects becomes a morally inert matter. When subject animals *do* kill other subject animals, the narratives can frame the killing as a “law of nature,” part of a moral world in which animals kill what they need – and only what they need – in order to survive. Ideas about laws of nature, from the trophic levels of the “food chain” to natural selection, affirm a sense of an overarching morality in which bad things happen to individuals for the good of species and ecosystems as a whole, with each individual animal acting out the “nature” of its species, so that organisms’ actions combine to generate ecological equilibrium. Even when antagonists perpetrate violence, their position as “evil,” “bad,” or “vicious” *and therefore aberrant* reaffirms the moral standard. By limiting the amount of violence in their narratives and by employing this moral safety net where violence does occur, these two novels normalize certain types of violence, lessening its impact and making the texts more acceptable to adult mediators of children’s literature and more easily accessible and comprehensible to younger readers. The violence in *Beatrice and Virgil*, however, is apparently senseless.

The ordering narrative that provides purpose – and ultimate good – for things that seem bad and/or relegates true “badness” to a single aberrant individual is a comforting fiction that allows both children and adults to make sense of and order things that they find distasteful, unethical, or frightening. This reduces the horror of violence done to highly anthropomorphic, highly subjectified nonhumans in these novels, and *Silverwing* in particular works to reduce traumatic violence by making the protagonists’ living food sources objects rather than subjects. The animals in *Silverwing* and *Raven's End* increase readers’ sensibility to a variety of nonhuman animals, and to two protagonist species that are much maligned in Western cultures, while making

these species as appealing as possible through characters that are both subjectified and anthropomorphized. There is no rule stating that these texts must be children's literature, but the diction, plots, and organizing principles (e.g., *Bildungsroman*, good versus evil) certainly make them accessible to children. In addition, the distinction that *Raven's End* and *Silverwing* maintain between humans and nonhumans, making subjects of animals while marking some form of difference between animals and humans, is both typical of animal stories as a group and culturally "safe." It affirms the status quo. Subjectifying and anthropomorphizing nonhuman animal characters without undermining the nonhuman animals' subjectivity or problematizing the binary structure increases the likelihood that critics will categorize such narratives as children's literature.

2.3 Conclusion

For reasons that range from the belief that children are more animal-like than adults to the stigmatization of empathetic responses to animals in adults, there is a tendency to equate animal literature with children's literature in Western cultures, and a strong correlation does exist between the two. Even animal narratives that are not strictly children's literature are often considered crossover literature, suitable for both children and adults, such as Farley Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf* (1963) and the stories in Roberts' *Kindred of the Wild* (1902). This association stems in large part from an androcentric social bias that validates objectification of animals; empathy for nonhuman animals and treatment of nonhumans as fellow subjects is generally tolerated in children, but these ways of relating to animals are, with a few exceptions, expected to dissipate as children mature. Because literature about animals regularly invokes nonhumans as subjects in their own right, using animals' points of view and insisting on mentation and emotion in nonhumans, an association exists between these narratives and a stage of development in which subjectified animals are acceptable.

The objectification of animals permeates Western culture, from language that turns the animal into an absent referent to the concept of animals as automata that originates in Cartesian philosophy. It surfaces in schools of thought such as behaviourism and operationalism, and lurks more insidiously in general cultural conceptions of animals. The more firmly a text asserts nonhuman animal subjectivity, the further it stands from the masculine social norm of objectification, and the less likely it is to be treated as "serious" adult literature. One exception to this distancing tactic occurs where texts use animals in a symbolic way, such as in the taxidermist's

play, in which the allegorical nature of the story allows readers to treat the animals themselves as ancillary to the tale's true subject. Another exception, also occurring in *Beatrice and Virgil*, is to undermine the animals' subjectivity. The implied human author's perspective proves fallible, and so it is possible to attribute the subjectivity of the novel's nonhuman characters to Henry's unreliable judgement.

A third way for a narrative that deals largely in animals to avoid becoming categorized as children's or crossover literature is to suffuse the text with violence that defies ascription to deviant subjects or an overarching ordering narrative. Although much adult literature does order the violence within it, situating violence in the province of evil antagonists whom the protagonists must combat or slotting it into a moral order in which everything happens for a reason, a lack of evident purpose or meaning to violent acts is extremely rare in children's literature, if not entirely absent from it (Nodelman and Reimer 119). The presence of violence in animal literature often normalizes predator-prey relations and other such conflicts among nonhuman animals, and between humans and nonhumans, animals and their environments, and groups of humans when one group categorizes another as animal. It helps to introduce or inure readers to key social concepts about the "natural" world such as natural selection, the survival of the fittest, and the dog-eat-dog world in which a nonhuman animal's life revolves around getting enough to eat, avoiding being eaten, and successfully reproducing, a competitive worldview that also privileges stereotypically masculine characteristics (Kellert 53).

Representations of animals as subjects, plotlines dependent upon anthropomorphization, and nonhuman animal mentation are characteristic of animal literature accessible by children. These are acceptable in children's literature, but proscribed from adult literature (Huggan and Tiffin 153-54), and so it makes sense that so many of the texts considered children's literature are narratives told from the point of view of nonhuman animals. Because all stories told by humans come from humans, these representations are necessarily human perceptions of animals, but texts narrated by nonhuman animals consist exclusively of empathetic representations of animal mentation and affectivity. These representations are highly subjective, even going so far as to attempt human-as-subject/animal-as-object role reversals, although these were not fully realized in either *Silverwing* or *Raven's End* and not attempted in *Beatrice and Virgil*.

Strategies for representing violence, animal mentation and emotion, and the type or scale of anthropomorphization do not, individually, make a novel children's, adult, or crossover

literature. However, the degree to which a narrative (1) asserts the subjectivity of nonhuman animals, (2) represents nonhuman animals empathetically and anthropomorphically, and (3) displaces or “naturalizes” and so tempers the narrative’s violence has an impact on Western cultural understandings of where the literature fits in terms of the degree of social maturation that the texts exhibit. In Western cultures, where emotional attachment to animals is undesirable, the correlation between maturity and the objectification of animals means that the more a text represents nonhuman animals as subjects in their own right, the more likely it is to become associated with younger readerships and the less likely it is to be accepted into the world of objective, mature adult literature.

3 Showing the Face of the Animal: Methods and Meanings of Animal Representation

The deer show out from around the word “deer”
and they have no name.

- Lilburn, *Living in the
World As If It Were Home* 5

“The pack reassembled in the middle of the mud flat,” Ian McAllister writes in *The Last Wild Wolves* (2007), “and a large, dark alpha male, the leader, began howling. Within seconds, every other member joined in. The sound was like a victorious battle cry, and it seemed to silence every living thing in the valley” (19). In this excerpt, McAllister presents a selective picture, filtered through his own perception and understanding of an event, his purpose, and his vocabulary. He emphasizes the hierarchy in the pack’s social structure with his use of the terms “alpha male” and “leader” and compares their howl to the sound of human voices expressing triumph. Like any writer, he has made choices about what aspects of his characters are important to depict, and in this selection he has represented his wolves as a sort of war band.

Language cannot encompass the real, but it can and does tilt perspective to represent animals in different ways. This chapter’s focus is on three novels that revolve around species that are feared or misunderstood in Western cultures, or about which little is known. Beginning with the premise that Farley Mowat’s *Never Cry Wolf* (1963), Cameron Langford’s *The Winter of the Fisher* (1971), and Kenneth Oppel’s *Silverwing* (1997) represent their protagonist species positively, this chapter examines which strategies these texts use to create these positive representations and explores the implications and effects of those strategies. All three texts have found ways to turn their protagonist species characters into subjects. They have achieved this through two or more of the following strategies: (1) using anthropomorphism and Western cultural ideologies to create and/or emphasize similarities between humans and animals, (2) attempting to represent animal minds as working in alien ways, and (3) emphasizing the animals’ perspectives and ability to see others as subjects. By framing the protagonist species as subjects, the texts

increase not only the sensibility of the species among their readership but also subjectification, which is critical to generating a sense of relationship with and empathy for nonhuman animals.

These texts' approaches to their protagonist species are disparate. *Never Cry Wolf* plays at the borderland between fiction and creative nonfiction and would not be out of place in a selection of satires; *Silverwing* uses plotlines and types of anthropomorphism that mark it as fantasy; and *The Winter of the Fisher* is a realistic wild animal story written in a fairly traditional style. *Never Cry Wolf*'s narrator is human and ostensibly Mowat himself; Opper's narrative is focalized through the perspective of bats who regularly engage in dialogue; and Langford employs what might properly be termed an omniscient third-person narrator whose cognitive distance from the fisher protagonist enables it to discuss concepts, such as beauty, that are beyond the animal's comprehension. As with Chapter Two, these texts branch out from the established canon of Canadian animal literature: *Never Cry Wolf* is well-known and potentially canonical; *Silverwing* is popular as children's literature, but has not yet engaged critical interest; and *The Winter of the Fisher* is an obscure text about an equally obscure species, but which nevertheless is part of the Laurentian Library series. Each takes a single predatory species with at best an unformed reputation and at worst a poor one as its subject, narrates the daily activities – the life – of one or more representatives of that species for a period of time not exceeding one year, and presents that species in a positive manner. Each also imposes some aspects of Western cultural frameworks that decrease the perceived distance between their protagonist species and readers, which raises issues of appropriation, as these texts attempt to represent the animal Other while aligning their animal protagonists with Western cultural ideologies.

These texts' efforts to make a good name – or at least mitigate a bad one – for the protagonist species are not simply a form of story-spinning designed as entertainment: they also constitute attempts at the rehabilitation of public opinion of these animals. As animal stories, they break down several distancing techniques that regularly serve as the separating line in binary cognitions (e.g., us/them, human/animal). The mere fact that they are telling the stories of these protagonist species increases sensibility of those species among the texts' readership. This analysis examines the narrative techniques that these stories use to introduce and depict the protagonist species as subjects in their own right. These techniques tend to make the species seem more like humans, and therefore more familiar, comprehensible, and sympathetic.

This is the avowed aim of both *Silverwing* and *Never Cry Wolf*. Opiel published a commentary on *Silverwing* shortly after its release, in which he wrote that bats “have traditionally been such objects of fear” in European society, and that he set out to create a world from a bat’s point of view at least in part to see if readers would “be able to identify with bats” (“Why I Wrote *Silverwing*”). According to Opiel, he wanted to take a species to which most people in Western cultures react negatively and create a story that causes readers to feel some sense of kinship – identification – with that species. This was not the original purpose of *Never Cry Wolf*. In his preface to the 1973 edition of the text, Mowat writes that he had at first intended to create a satire about “that peculiar mutation of the human species known as the Bureaucrat,” with wolves acting as the story’s foil (vi). Instead, however, the tale metamorphosed into a conservationist “plea for understanding, and preservation” of wolves as a species (vi-vii). Langford never published a statement of his purpose in writing *The Winter of the Fisher* – it is his only book and was published posthumously – but Muriel Whitaker asserts that Langford “carefully researched and verified” all of the details in the novel (228). This is unlikely, as there is little extant information about fishers even now, nearly fifty years after its publication, but *The Winter of the Fisher* does show sustained efforts at accuracy in depictions of the protagonist species, other species, and the world in which the fisher lives. In addition, *The Winter of the Fisher* regularly attempts to make the fisher’s actions understandable, and imposes a Western cultural framework over some of the fisher’s behaviours. Authorial intention is of limited value in literary analysis, but it is worth noting that species rehabilitation was at least on the minds of Opiel and Mowat, and most likely of Langford as well, given the textual evidence.

By focusing on nonhuman characters, these three stories are invoking one of the key elements of animal stories: they are calling attention to specific nonhuman animal species. This is a statement of the obvious, but its function is significant and relatively unexamined. Animal stories pull nonhuman characters and species into human cognitive awareness. One of the methods by which people reconcile treatment of animals that is at odds with their personal or moral convictions is by using distancing techniques. Distancing is multilayered: in those who work directly with animals, it may include linguistic strategies to efface cognitions of the animals and cognitive dissonance arising from negative human interactions with those animals (e.g., phrasing such as *harvesting pelts* instead of *killing mink*), a shifting of focus onto individuals who are pampered and “saved,” a refusal to see suffering (e.g., the belief that animals do not feel pain),

and/or a diffusion or spreading of responsibility (Serpell 31). The desire is to not know or see or be responsible for the suffering of an Other, and this can be accomplished by physical exercises that literally limit the amount of suffering that a person sees or by distancing and rationalization techniques that eliminate the animals as Others, turning them into objects instead. Among those who do not work with animals directly, it is possible to achieve distancing by not thinking about animals. If animals are not present, they are easy to forget. Animal stories break down that sort of distance: although the animals might not be physically present, if they engage readers' imaginations, they are cognitively pervasive for at least the time it takes to read the texts.

These three novels take misunderstood animals as their subjects, raising the profile of species that have received little attention (i.e., fishers and bats) or that have historically had negative reputations in Western cultures (i.e., bats and wolves).¹ The protagonist species in these texts are poorly understood in Western cultures, and even within scientific communities in the case of fishers. Like the stories themselves, the protagonist species share a few basic commonalities: they are predatory mammals who are indigenous to Canada. However, they differ physiologically, behaviourally, and in Western cultural imagination. Physiologically and behaviourally, for instance, wolves are large long-distance runners who live in social units; fishers are medium-sized predators who are solitary except for breeding pairs and females with young; and North American bats are small, aerial insectivores who use echolocation to navigate and to capture prey, and who live in large colonies, with the closeness of social ties varying from species to species. Culturally, wolves have been hunted for bounties, for sport, and as vermin, and have been the subject of numerous campaigns for either extirpation or conservation. Fishers, however, are regarded primarily as fur-bearing animals whose value to humans comes from the quality of their pelts, and bats "are associated with the devil, the underworld, and the supernatural," with most species' populations declining in large part due to habitat loss, the use of pesticides and other toxins, and negative human attitudes toward them (Harvey et al. 1, 193-94). Few Euro-Canadians who do not specialize specifically in the study of these species, through research, trapping, etc., have any significant knowledge of these animals. In the twenty-first century, people are probably most able to recall information about wolves, although at the time of *Never Cry Wolf's* original publication

¹ In Sarah Batt's study of human attitudes toward animals, bats were perceived negatively, receiving a mean average liking of 4.4 on a scale of 1-10 (183). Fishers and wolves were not included in the study.

in 1963, only a few full-length texts about wolves were available for consumption.² Although the protagonist species are very different from each other, each of the novels attempts a sort of reputation rehabilitation for the species, with the possible exception of the fisher, a species so far removed from human sensibility that many North Americans might have difficulty describing one.

The fact and manner of the representation of these species is important, because attachment to nonhuman characters may have an impact on the species those characters represent. Sarah Batt points out that “[c]ertain species and groups seem to be valued more highly in terms of conservation, research and public interest” (180). Chapter Four explores the valuing of species in more detail, but it is important to note here that several studies have pinpointed “‘similarity to humans’ as a factor influencing human attitude towards a species,” and Batt found a significant correlation between physical similarities to humans and people’s “average liking ratings” of the species (181, 183).³ She suggests that “humans are evolved to recognize and appreciate similarities between themselves and others and be suspicious of differences (that may signify conflict)” (184). Thus, “when humans encounter those animals with which they cannot identify, there is less care and concern” (185). Batt notes that “even an instantaneous reaction to a species may derive from previous observation or consideration of its behaviour” (185), and that observation and consideration may come from previous exposure to textual representatives of that species. F. Elizabeth Hart explains that narrative requires “that readers or listeners create and then immerse themselves in an *alternate reality* that springs to vivid existence out of the exchange between a narrative’s formal elements – its language – and the receivers’ minds” (112). Animal stories do not constitute direct contact with animals, but they may achieve much the same ends in terms of decreasing social distance. In fact, evidence suggests that when children form emotional attachments to animal characters, those attachments persist unconsciously throughout adulthood and influence adult behaviour, and “have the capacity to inspire social practices that serve the best interests of their actual counterparts” (Anderson and Henderson 301, 303). The mere existence of nonhuman animal characters is significant, then, because it increases readers’ awareness of particular species. Positive representations of those species may result in positive reactions toward

² Stanley Young’s *The Wolves of North America* (1944) and Adolph Murie’s *The Wolves of Mount McKinley* (1944) are the most notable of full-length texts available in the early 1960s.

³ The evaluation of species’ similarity to humans is, in fact, a factor influencing current animal husbandry practices (Anderson and Henderson 304).

those species. Given this, the significance of the choice of protagonist species cannot be overstated, because the very fact that stories about them exist increases their profile in human imagination.

In their mapping of the social construction of nonhuman animals, Matthew Cole and Kate Stewart place categories of animals along two axes: subjectification/objectification and sensibility/non-sensibility, explaining their use of the latter axis by noting that “Western culture is dominated by the visual” (19). This visibility includes both nonhuman animals themselves and representations of nonhuman animals. The sensibility/non-sensibility axis of the graph thus refers to the degree to which humans are able to experience varying categories of animals. Vermin, a class that included virtually all predatory animals at one point in North American history (Coleman 93), are typically low-sensibility species that are hidden from view, and although aspects of them may be visible (e.g., rat poison suggests the presence of rats), they are frequently glossed over. Wild animals, according to this graph, are granted more subjectivity, but they too are hidden beings, rarely seen and even more rarely experienced. Some crossover exists, of course, in species such as mustangs or feral cats that belong to more than one category, but Cole and Stewart’s illustration provides useful categories of animals, and its axes of subjectification/objectification and sensibility/non-sensibility explore human connections to animals through two yoked concepts that relate to distance.

The closer an animal is to a person, mentally and physically, the more difficult it is to achieve distancing techniques, and the harder it may be to rationalize that animal’s suffering. According to K. Deaux and L. S. Wrightsman, people “tend to apportion their social and moral obligations according to how ‘close’ or similar others are to themselves,” so that they are more inclined to behave altruistically, for example, toward friends than strangers (in Serpell 31). This is social distance, and it is subject to change. Interaction with and observation of others cause changes to social distance, and the closer an individual is socially, the more a person is likely to care about that individual’s thoughts, feelings, and general wellbeing. In James A. Serpell’s words, “if Jack ultimately intends to harm Jill, he must either have some way of absolving himself of responsibility for his actions, or he must take steps to prevent Jill becoming too familiar in the first place” (31). In typical animal story fashion, these three novels disrupt various kinds of distance, bringing their subject animals into closer connection with those who read them.

Animals that fall into the non-sensibility category are typically those animals with which few humans have day-to-day interactions: they include wild animals, animals used in research, and animals classified as vermin or nuisance animals. In addition, while a rural area may abound with wildlife and a city teem with rats used in scientific research, pigeons roosting on eaves, and mice invading cellars, few people knowingly spend time in the company of such animals. Knowledge of these animals is slight. They are largely unseen and unacknowledged when they are seen, unless they having an impact upon human activities. Thus, even animals in physical proximity to humans are distant to human sensibilities, and physical, mental, and emotional distances make up a recipe for apathy.

Animal characters are representations of animals and do not replace the reality of the animals themselves, but they offer representations of many species to the realm of human sensibility. Animal characters have high sensibility, and the literature within which they are found can dramatically decrease emotional and cognitive distance. They bring representatives of species into human habitation and imagination. In her discussion of animals as “food” or “not food,” Erica Fudge suggests that these categories are based on endogamy and exogamy, on closeness to family unit, proposing that the reasons why “North Americans can eat a cow but cannot eat a cat . . . may actually be based upon some more deep-seated understanding of how we live with animals” (34). That is to say that a person is more likely to consume a representative of a species with which s/he has no pre-existing relationship: the more distant from a person’s sensibility the better. Through animal stories, people can learn about different species, form emotional connections to the character representatives of those species, and read examples of human-animal interactions that may be foundational to individuals’ own behaviour toward those animals. Literature about animals may not eliminate physical distance, but it has the capacity to turn exogamous animals that are completely outside the sphere of day-to-day human interaction into animals with whom people feel a sense of kinship, empathy, and/or emotional connectivity.

The Winter of the Fisher, *Never Cry Wolf*, and *Silverwing* are all texts that perform this function. They do this in large part by creating subjectified characters and by stressing similarities between those species and humans, but these two methods of representation may conflict when representing animal similarity entails appropriating an animal’s individuality or imposing patently anthropomorphic – as opposed to zoomorphic – qualities upon that animal. The section that follows focuses on the presentation of the species itself, on what *Never Cry Wolf*, *The Winter of*

the Fisher, and *Silverwing* say about their respective protagonist species, focusing particularly on narrative techniques. These texts are, after all, increasing their readership's sensibility of a given species, and part of what they are doing is saying, "This is what this animal is" and "this is what this animal is not." Such framing and character formation are specific to individual characters but also adhere to the protagonist species more broadly, often explicitly so. After this, the next section focuses on subjectification more minutely, examining the techniques through which the texts represent their protagonist species as subjects, and the difficulties that attend attempts to present an animal subject as simultaneously animal *and* subject. Ultimately, it may be impossible to respect the Otherness of an animal while emphasizing similarities between that animal and humans, but because the animal as subject is itself a fundamental aspect of similarity between humans and animals, these two competing methods of representation are both of critical importance in engaging readers' sympathies.

3.1 The Animal as Subject: Presentation and Narrative Techniques

These three stories are significant simply because they exist, and therefore increase every reader's awareness of their protagonist species, but they also use narrative methods that generate increased familiarity – and identification – with the protagonist species. As Chapter One notes, narrative discourse is a fundamental component of narrative (H. P. Abbot 16), and the mediation of the story that narrative discourse provides promotes sympathetic bias toward the protagonist species. Each of these stories uses a different type of narrator, and this alters the narrative frame, as well as each story's capacity to represent the perspective of the protagonist species itself. These narrative approaches alter the degree to which the mind of the protagonist species is represented, but, in each case, the imposition of anthropocentric frameworks demonstrates a clear appropriation of the animal Other.

The Winter of the Fisher is a more traditional animal story than *Silverwing* or *Never Cry Wolf*, and breaks down distance and establishes a sense of connection differently from the other two texts. Langford's novel tells the story of a fisher's life from his birth until the end of his first year. It follows the tradition of Charles G. D. Roberts, Roderick Haig-Brown and, to a lesser extent, Ernest Thompson Seton, with an omniscient third-person narrator whose broader perspective permits discussion of concepts unavailable to the subject species. The discourse engendered by this narrative strategy can provide the thoughts, feelings, and motivations of other

characters, which clarify some of the motivations that underlie their interactions with the protagonist fisher. Narrative perspective influences people's conceptualizations of justice (Peer 325), and this novel offers the narrative in a discourse that provides many perspectives, including the fisher's own. In addition to the fisher's mind, the narrator has access to the minds of others who cross paths with the fisher, including those of an ecologically minded Ojibway man and a trapper most likely of European descent. The input of these human characters offers insight into different modes of interaction with members of the fisher's species. For example, the trapper responds to the fisher's depredations of his trapline with anger and initiates a war with the fisher that powers much of the novel's plot (121); the Ojibway man, however, saves the fisher when human actions threaten the animal's life and responds philosophically to the idea of the fisher damaging his property or killing his chickens (87). By offering the perspectives of both the fisher and the two primary human characters, *The Winter of the Fisher* provides "built-in" human-protagonist relationships and the underlying, emotionally charged motivations for the creation and maintenance of those relationships for each character. The novel thus represents both the animal's perspective and two modes of human-animal relationships.

Never Cry Wolf also offers a human perspective on the protagonist animal. Because the text limits itself to a single first-person narrator, ostensibly Mowat himself, this "showing" of the protagonist species occurs in a more limited format. It does, however, contain a similar dynamic between the benevolent human and the antagonistic human, with the protagonist wolves caught between the two. Mowat takes the position of the ignorant but good-hearted man who slowly gains an appreciation for the protagonist species through a period of immersion with the wolves in their own habitat. The governmental agencies that are baying for the wolves' blood take the part of the antagonists against whom the narrator must battle on the wolves' behalf. "You, Lieutenant Mowat, have been chosen for this great task! It only remains for you to go out into the field at once and tackle this work in a manner worthy of the great traditions of this Department. The wolf, Lieutenant Mowat, is *your* problem!" expostulates his superior, and just like that Mowat becomes responsible for the "Lupine Project," whose mandate is to discover how to stop the "carnage being wreaked upon the deer population by hordes of wolves" (14). All information about human interactions with the protagonist species, including Mowat's own, comes filtered through his perspective, and so the text offers up information about the protagonist species as Mowat himself discovers it, from the self-appointed "authorities" in Churchill who assure him that "wolves devour

several hundred people in the Arctic Zone every year” to the first-hand observations that the wolves’ interactions with him reveal them to be no threat to humans (20, 56-57). The novel’s knowledge base depends upon its narrator, and it is through him that the protagonist species becomes visible.

Silverwing differs from *Never Cry Wolf* and *The Winter of the Fisher* in that it presents its protagonist species without using a human’s perspective, except insofar as all texts originate from and reflect human perspectives. Still, although humans appear at various points in the novel and drive the plot of the novel in a manner similar to human actions in *The Winter of the Fisher*, the protagonist bats can only guess at the human motivations behind their actions. *Silverwing* uses a limited third-person narrator who has access only to the bat protagonist’s perspective and, in a few chapters from which the protagonist is physically absent, the primary antagonist’s perspective. Despite this, there are places where the novel makes Western cultures’ attitudes toward bats clear: the mystical albino bat Zephyr informs the protagonists that humans have “been known to attack bats, thinking we were pests, or worse, evil spirits, something to be destroyed” (125), and banded bat Marina confesses to the protagonist that she once flew toward two humans and that the humans “were scared. They waved their arms, and shouted, and covered their faces” (133). These moments represent some insight into human thinking, but this narrative strategy is more restrictive in its presentation of the protagonist species and humans’ interactions with members of that species. It also places the entirety of the subject gaze on nonhuman characters, making the narrative dependent upon *their* beliefs, thoughts, and actions.

Richard J. Gerrig notes that reader “participation often sets in motion the mental activities (i.e., both inferencing and responding) that allow readers to discover perspectives” (305). *Silverwing*’s immersion of readers into the protagonist bat’s perspective offers both the potential motivations of the bats and the motivations of humans with regard to bats, because humans already have access to their own cultural frames of reference. Similarly, *The Winter of the Fisher*’s omniscient narrator provides more structured human perspectives but also offers the perspective of the protagonist animal. *Never Cry Wolf* is limited to a human narrator, but the narrator ultimately proves sympathetic to the protagonist species, and his very humanity provides many of the details that break down distance between what is human and what is lupine in the text. In fact, *Never Cry Wolf*’s human, first-person narration has some advantages in its representations of its protagonist species. Theoretically, a human narrator is capable of experiencing or knowing

anything readers are capable of experiencing or knowing, thus eliminating swaths of debates about whether a member of a particular species of animal is capable of conceptualizing ideas, thinking, remembering specific events, etc. Such debates comprise the most contentious issues of the nature faker controversy of the early twentieth century. Furthermore, a human narrator may have knowledge of human preconceptions of the protagonist species and governmental – and other organizational – policies concerning the protagonist species and the ecosystem(s) within which its members dwell, and so may address the protagonist species from a familiar perspective. These perspectives are available to a much more limited extent in narratives like *Silverwing* and *The Winter of the Fisher*, which incorporate human perspectives to a lesser extent or not at all.

Never Cry Wolf has served as a protesting voice against both wolves' vilification and governmental eradication programs. Titles of news items such as "'Never Cry Wolf' Author Farley Mowat, 92, Has Died" (Kellogg) suggest not only that this book is the most illustrious of Mowat's oeuvre but also that it has outstripped its author's fame, as its title functions as a memory aid for readers in this context. As a text, it teeters on the edge of the animal story category. Based on Mowat's experiences studying the relationship between wolves and caribou in the Keewatin district at the behest of the Dominion Wildlife Service in 1948, the text is as much or more about the human narrator as about the wolves he observes; with its descriptions of wolves as exemplars of their species, it plays on the edges of being an *always* story more than a *once* story. However, its satirical analysis of governmental sensibility and patent anthropomorphization of the wolf family with whom he makes contact nevertheless present a positive image of wolves – and a negative one of humans – rarely seen until recent decades. Even the nature writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries tended to depict most human characters sympathetically and did not offer uniformly sympathetic depictions of wolves and wolf behaviour.⁴ Mowat establishes both governmental and personal positions with regard to wolves long before he records his initial first-hand encounter with a live wolf, which does not occur until nearly a quarter of the way through the text. This "pre-wolf" section establishes Mowat's character as narrator and both provides and undermines prevailing Euro-Canadian attitudes toward wolves as conveyed to Mowat by governmental branches and citizens who range from prostitutes to police officers, all of whom offer the beleaguered narrator bits of wolf lore masquerading as facts (Mowat 20).

⁴ For examples of contrasting representations of wolves by a single author, see Roberts' "Wild Motherhood" (1902) and "With His Back to the Wall" (1911)

Mowat puts himself in a position of total ignorance, and so acts as a sponge – and then later a sieve – for wolf information. This ignorance, established early, is an essential ingredient of the text’s satire. The tale’s humour comes from the juxtaposition of dry mockery with the presentation of a naïve narrator: it is *just* possible that, instead of cleverly making use of a front of naïveté to critique everything from his own preconceptions to government efficiency, the narrator is actually taking his own words at face value and that readers are interpreting secondary meanings of which the narrator himself is unaware. With this sort of double-voiced discourse, Mowat is able to introduce his wolves twice: once with what is said of them and once with what remains unsaid. Mowat’s chief informs him, for example, that “the *Canis lupus* problem has become one of national importance. . . . [T]he wolves are killing all the deer, and more and more of our fellow citizens are coming back from more and more hunts with less and less deer” (13). However, when Mowat arrives at his destination, he discovers that “the density of caribou remains decreased in an almost geometric ratio to the distance from [the trapper’s] cabin” (38). Naturally, he assumes that, since he is aware “from [his] researches in Churchill that trappers never shot caribou,” the wolves are the culprits, but he cannot understand why they “have chosen to commit their worst slaughter so close to a human habitation” (38, 39). The description of the facts makes it clear that, despite the narrator’s interpretation of them, humans are at the root of the caribou population decline, not wolves.

Because the protagonist species appears relatively late in the text, these initial introductions are based on circumstantial evidence, as it were, heavily inflected by Western cultural understandings of what wolves are and presented as such. Even the title takes its name from the fable “The Boy Who Cried Wolf,” and although its moral is not about wolves – the story is a warning that nobody believes a habitual liar when that liar tells a truth – it nevertheless hearkens to a stylized, symbolic rendering of the protagonist species as the villain of the piece, a biblical devourer of Christian souls/flocks. Thus, the title can be read as a reaffirmation of the fable’s moral not to “cry wolf” (i.e., sound an alarm when there is no danger), or it can be read against the image of the wolf-as-villain, indicating that there is never a reason to “cry wolf,” because the problem does not rest with wolves. Nevertheless, the opening section of the text is both heavily invested in and conscious of the cultural framing that surrounds the protagonist species. It roots itself in established Western perceptions of the species.

The Winter of the Fisher approaches its protagonist species in the established style of animal biographies by nature writers. Its narrative, which is third-person omniscient but largely self-limiting to the protagonist and those whose thoughts and actions may be significant for the protagonist, begins with the fisher's birth. It is, in fact, an exemplary *Bildungsroman*, beginning literally with the process of the protagonist being born and ending approximately one year after the fisher's birth, marking his growth to physical and intellectual maturity. Beginning with the fisher's experience and the sensations – pressure, movement, cold, air – that make up that experience immediately puts the fisher *and his sentience* in a position of importance. In fact, the fisher's sentience initially overshadows his position as a member of his species: he is not expressly named as a fisher until several pages into the novel and five to six weeks into the fisher's life. The first naming of species comes through a description of the fisher's mother, and here it appears in a dependent clause, subordinated to the sentence that describes her and the larger paragraph that paints her portrait:

He was too young, too animal to understand how incredibly beautiful she was. Her lithe body was slightly under three feet long, and though she was large for a female fisher, her son would eventually top her by a foot. More than a third of her length was tail, but even its magnificence was surpassed by the depth and luster of her coat. Honeyed highlights danced deep in the rich brown under-fiber through which longer, darker guard hairs grew, adding a brilliant, changing texture to the subtly shifting tones. Her head was a triangle from which glowed two exceptionally intelligent eyes . . . (11-12)

The detailed description is necessary in part because the protagonist species is relatively unknown, but also in part because this is where the fisher's species is named, and so the description supplies this five-week-old sentient being with a shape. The third-person omniscient narrative permits descriptions such as the one above, which would defy the capabilities of a similar story told from a first-person or third-person limited viewpoint. It invites visualization of the species after it has established a point of similarity between the protagonist and the novel's readers: sentience.

Although the title and the synopsis on the back cover proclaim fishers as the protagonist species, the novel's delayed naming is significant. Unlike *Never Cry Wolf*, *The Winter of the Fisher* defers disclosure of the animal as category, as *Martes pennanti*, while supplying descriptions of the growth and development of the animal itself. This places the representation of

the experiences of the individual animal above its symbolic and/or economic significance, a method of representation opposite that employed in *Never Cry Wolf*, which invests in wolf-as-symbol long before a member of the species appears within the text. Overall, however, the narrative strategy in Langford's novel achieves some of the same ends as Mowat's: by accessing several points of view, the text offers reasons for human behaviour, from their presence in the wilderness to their motivations for helping or harming the protagonist fisher. Both texts use human characters to provide context and rationalization for their respective human-animal interactions, and model human-animal relationships that emphasize similarities between the humans and the protagonist species.

In *The Winter of the Fisher*, however, the protagonist species' perspective is accessible, whereas the wolves' perspectives in *Never Cry Wolf* remain untouched, and these differences in representation expose one of the problems with representing animals: appropriation. In *Never Cry Wolf*, the first-person, human narrative perspective offers representation that initially appears not to run this risk. The narrator is as unable to access nonhuman psyches as any human, and thus the narrator's perspective does not seem to annex the voice of the nonhuman for its own necessarily human purposes. By exclusively using a human perspective, the psychic integrity of the nonhuman animals in the story should remain inviolate. Except that it does not. As John Simons points out, writing is "a reproduction of the experience, real or imagined, which preceded, or was coterminous with" the act of writing, but reproduction can only produce copies of something that was already itself made, created, and so "all the examples of the use of non-humans in literary texts are acts not of reproduction but of representation" (87). The act of representation, regardless of its purpose, "appropriates the non-human experience as an index of humanness" and uses the likeness of an animal "to further the aims of the human," even when that human intention is to ease animals' suffering (Simons 87). The act of writing, per se, simultaneously claims the animal and creates a representation of it. A human narrator can obscure this when the text offers only human perspectives, as the narrator's distance from the nonhuman characters mimics humans' distance from other beings in the world.

One indicator of appropriation, which is perhaps more problematic on a systemic than individual level, is the privileging of the male gaze endemic to animal stories written by Euro-Canadian men. These stories typically focus on a single male protagonist, and are told from the

perspective of one or more male characters.⁵ *Silverwing* is, in fact, a rarity in Euro-Canadian animal literature by men in that it also includes at least one strong female character in a role other than that of mother, mate, or potential mate to the protagonist. However, even in *Silverwing* the female characters' perspectives are not accessed: this story is told from the point of view of the male protagonist and, to a limited extent, the male antagonist. *Never Cry Wolf* and *The Winter of the Fisher* are even more strongly male-dominated. In the former, Mowat's male, first-person narrative perspective dictates all forms of representation (i.e., his gaze alone dictates what is significant enough to include, and how that discourse will be formulated), and the story includes only a few female characters, and of these all but Angeline are marginal to the story. Angeline, the female in the wolf pack, exists as both mother and mate, and descriptions of her revolve around her relationship with these males, as Chapter One discusses.⁶ In Langford's novel, a few female animals do occur (e.g., the fisher's mother, his mate, the lynx), and their perspectives are generally at least gestured toward where they appear, but all are marginal characters in the novel, which revolves around the fisher and two human men. The male gaze – human or animal – inflects the stories not only from their male authors but from their male protagonists, and in the limited extent to which females appear in the stories, in typically marginal positions and in roles that regularly predicate their importance on their relationships to male characters. The fictional and fictionalized worlds of these stories are, therefore, androcentric in ways that are both anthropomorphic and endemic to dominant Western cultural perspectives.

The mere fact of animal representation is problematic. If all representation of nonhuman animals must be a form of appropriation, then it is not possible to represent animals without at the same time appropriating them. The alternative, to not represent them, is to shut them out of human discourse, which decreases sensibility and increases social distance, leading to cognitions such as the refusal of individuality to animals (cf. Russell 167). Don McKay, however, suggests that this appropriation via language need not be necessarily harmful or total. He writes that humans use animals as tools in language, and that in the process of making tools, people “remove them from autonomous existence and conscript them as servants, determining their immediate futures” (20).

⁵ This is not uniformly the case, as Charles G. D. Roberts' “When Twilight Falls on the Stump Lots” demonstrates. In this story, however, both protagonists are mothers, and their actions are predicated on this fact.

⁶ The pups are rarely individuated in *Never Cry Wolf* but, where they are, the narrator describes the individual pup with masculine personal pronouns (154).

He goes on to argue that tools contain something that he calls wilderness, a term that encompasses both “a set of endangered spaces” and “the capacity of all things to elude the mind’s appropriations” (21). According to this reasoning, despite this “conscription” to human service, such as the bending of the reality of an animal into a depiction of it, the representation itself retains vestiges of the real, or Other. These tools thus have the ability to surprise people with the vestiges of their wildness, in the “sudden angle of perception, the phenomenal surprise” in which the tool eclipses the mind’s understanding of it, and “in such defamiliarizations, often arranged by art, we encounter the momentary circumvention of the mind’s categories to glimpse some thing’s autonomy – its rawness, its *duende*, its alien being” (21). There is a way of representation, he believes, that comes not out of a desire to possess – “the primordial grasp” – but out of a longing that lacks such possessiveness, which McKay tentatively labels “poetic attention” (26). Poetic attention, he writes, “is based on a recognition and a valuing of the Other’s wilderness; it leads to a work which is not a *vestige* of the Other, but a *translation* of it” (28). If this middle ground of translation is possible, it is a difficult position to negotiate, and even more so in novels, which must sustain these animal representations as the plots run their courses. If it could be achieved, however, it would increase human sensibility toward the species represented without turning them, as McKay describes it, into “Mount Rushmore” (99), upon which humans inscribe themselves.

With its human narrator, *Never Cry Wolf* is the most obviously anthropocentric of the three texts examined here. All things nonhuman acquire human significance by virtue of the narrator’s humanity, and many are dealt with in a decidedly anthropomorphic way. That said, Mowat is as careful, in his own way, to depict his own version of the story’s wolves as Langford is to depict the protagonist fisher as both a sentient being and a creature whose interactions with humans depend upon pre-existing cultural frameworks about or including fishers. Mowat paints a picture of an idealized Western nuclear family in the shape of wolves. He christens the alpha male George and bestows upon him an “unassailable” dignity, conscientiousness, thoughtfulness, and affection “within reasonable bounds,” calling him “the kind of father every son longs to acknowledge as his own,” and names George’s “wife” Angeline, whose slender build, thick hair, and pale complexion make her sound like an Aryan pinup girl (66). She is, moreover, “the picture of a minx,” containing attributes of beauty, ebullience, and passion while still managing to be an excellent mother to her pups (67). The third adult in this family is Uncle Albert, a wolf who, though not so large as George or white as Angeline, is nevertheless a patient babysitter and a godsend to a harried mother (68-

69). These depictions make Mowat's manipulation of lupine representation evident: everything from the naming to the physical descriptions to the characters of the wolves presents them as an idealized human family unit, after a patriarchal, *Leave It to Beaver* fashion. Thus, although the text represents the animals as animals, it also co-opts them into an anthropocentric structure that is both the narrator's distinctly human interpretation and impossible to divorce from the presentation of the animals themselves. Mowat retraces the comparison between wolf family and an idealized human family to the point where it appears that the narrator is in fact placing human faces on the wolves. The representation offers less translation and more imposition, and this stems in large part from the narrator's unabashedly anthropocentric values. However, the humanizing of the wolves makes them more like people, and people show strong preferences for animals that exhibit a "biobehavioural similarity" to them (Batt 186). Batt goes so far as to comment that it may be beneficial "to use the anthropomorphizing nature of humans to highlight similarities between an animal's behaviour and our own" when promoting a species (186). The appropriation of wolves into a Western cultural framework, then, may transgress against the alterity of the animals while it generates affectivity toward them.

This inculcation of aspects of Western cultural frameworks recurs in both *Silverwing* and *The Winter of the Fisher*. The latter begins with a conflict between the fisher's family and a man's dogs. The mother fisher defends her young against the dogs, which prompts the dogs' owner to massacre the family, which leaves the fisher alone in classic *Bildungsroman* style: suddenly orphaned, the young animal must make his own way in the world, meeting friends and adversaries and learning what – and who – he is as he matures. It is a relatable story, bearing some relationship to classics such as Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1860), and while the narrator carefully paints the protagonist as an animal who lacks emotional and cognitive complexity (e.g., 189, 89-90), the fisher nevertheless makes use of several aspects of Western cultures that encourage readers to empathize with him. For example, like Mowat's wolves, the fisher is solicitous of the young of his species. Given his youth, he cannot be the father of his mate's young, and thus there is no biological advantage to be gained for behaving amiably toward them, yet he finds the kittens "enchanting" and allows them to climb on him and even smack him on the nose (195). When the fisher's mate arrives at the den's entrance, she finds him "lying blissfully spread-eagled on his back, with two kittens rooting at his chest and one creeping adventurously along each arm" (195-96). This picture of benevolent

babysitting lasts no longer than his mate's estrus cycle, but it is a mark of Western human expectations about tolerance of – and even affection for – unrelated same-species infants that is unlikely to be consistent with the behaviour of his real-life counterparts.⁷

Another example from *The Winter of the Fisher* comes from the protagonist's behaviour with and toward humans. The fisher eats the Ojibway man's gifts of eggs while respectfully avoiding the henhouse, choosing not to damage the possessions of one who has helped him; in other words, he repays good deeds with good deeds. The only time he raids the man's coop, he does so as a result of being debilitated by the trapper's rifle; this sours his opinion of men and for a short while he feels hatred toward men as a species (103, 138). Overall, however, he is respectful of the Ojibway man's property, and he does not damage the man's possessions again, despite the fact that food is easily accessible near, and sometimes provided by, the man. On one occasion, he even refrains from attacking some birds despite his hunger, because he has sensed a connection between the man and the birds and because his hunger is too enervating for him to "overcome his scruples" (169). Similarly, he operates according to *lex talionis*, as he conceives a hatred for the trapper who has tried to kill him and works to ruin the man through an assault upon his possessions. The traps, it is explained, are "connected with the man. [The fisher] hated the man, and therefore it was natural to hate the traps and what was in them," and so he shreds the pelts of animals caught in those traps, working methodically "to destroy everything connected with the trapper" (147-49). He even goes so far as to break into the trapper's meat locker and soil his food. Inside the locker, he finds that "the smell of the man was everywhere" (157). His decision to urinate on the meat is a significant one in terms of both depictions of fisher behaviour and performances of masculinity: the fisher is marking territory, but he is also exercising power by physically laying claim to the man's possessions, overlaying his own scent atop the trapper's and thus declaring dominance. His treatment of human property corresponds to his relationships with the humans to whom that property belongs, and although it is couched in terms of connection via scent, the fisher's attempts to revenge himself on the trapper through destruction of what is, by bush law, the trapper's property

⁷ Although there is no data on wild male fishers' behaviour during denning, there are records of male fishers harming young on fur farms (Powell 57), and there is at least one recorded case of a wild marten, closely related to the fisher, killing marten infants (Dubruiel et al. 178). Males of other solitary carnivorous mammalian species, such as domestic cats, will kill young of their own species if offered sufficient opportunity (Pontier and Natoli 445).

– and his concomitant respect for the belongings of the Ojibway man – show an anthropocentric understanding of property and its relationship to those who possess it.

This notion of property rights also occurs in both *Never Cry Wolf* and *Silverwing*. In the former, for example, Mowat is able to communicate with the protagonist species, after a fashion, by the use of his own urine to mark human-lupine territorial boundaries (Mowat 60-62). In the latter, rats jealously guard the borders of their kingdom and owls punish the protagonist's transgression by destroying his home, much as Langford's fisher spoils the trapper's meat in lieu of damaging the trapper himself. The fisher understands property rights, and his treatment of human property as an extension of the humans to whom it belongs is something that most readers will understand, and to which they will be able to relate.

Finally, while *Silverwing* does not show the same level of comprehension of humans, its North American bat colonies employ a hierarchical, semi-democratic governmental structure and monogamous mating practices, both of which are esteemed in Western cultures. The antagonist bats, however, subscribe to a monarchical system whose privileging of birthright over individual enterprise has fallen out of favour in recent centuries. The bats are not wholly given over to anthropocentric governance of colony and family – the protagonist, for example, belongs to a species in which males and females live separately during the warmer months before congregating in the fall – but although bats are gregarious as a rule (Altringham 138), their political structures in this novel are both anthropomorphic and anthropocentric.

These three texts use Western human values extensively, particularly with regard to family life and to property values. Such impositions go beyond the metaphors that McKay discusses in *Vis À Vis*: they are not simple translations of nonhuman animal actions into human understandings, as when Mowat describes Uncle Albert's courtship of a husky bitch as “falling in love” (108). They are large-scale transferences of cultural values and ideologies onto nonhuman species, which influence behaviours and have a significant influence upon the plots of *The Winter of the Fisher* and *Silverwing*. There are aspects of the novels that may achieve this translation of what is animal, and places where an animal may “show out” from around the textual representation of it (Lilburn 5); but, to greater and lesser extents, the texts themselves repurpose the animals into anthropocentric frameworks that privilege Western cultural values over the animals in the animal representations.

This privileging is an important part of the texts' introductions of their protagonist species. Grafting aspects of Western values and social structures onto the animals provides familiar structures around which readers can build their understanding of individual characters and the species overall. Perhaps more importantly for misunderstood species such as wolves, fishers, and bats, they mark the protagonists as *like people* in critical ways. Mowat's wolves and Opper's bats belong to nuclear families and stretch outward into extended familial ties and, in *Silverwing's* case, political structures that help to ground the protagonist species' behaviours in familiar modes of enacting relationships. Langford's fisher is less anthropomorphic in representation, but the protagonist's demonstration of affection toward offspring not his own marks him as a "good guy," although he functions in the novel more as an antihero than a hero. In addition, his ability to use human property as an extension of his regard for individual humans also places him in an anthropocentric frame. These frames reduce social distance. People's empathetic responses to others correlate with others' degrees of endogamy or exogamy, their places within people's cultures, social circles, and families (Fudge 34; Serpell 30-31). This tendency indicates that empathy depends at least in part upon people's *identification with* these others, that the more they feel they know about and share with others, the more likely they are to care about those others' emotional, physical, and cognitive wellbeing. These texts increase sensibility toward the protagonist species by virtue of their focus on those species, but they also generate a level of identification through the use of anthropocentric frames that validate Western ideals of family, governance, and/or property, and apply those to the protagonist species.

These acts of appropriation are also acts that help to build a sense of relationship. By writing Western cultural practices, ideologies, and values into the protagonist species, whether through the narrator's anthropomorphic, anthropocentric gaze or as part of the plot, these texts make it easier for readers to relate to the protagonist species by suggesting that some of the fundamental values and characteristics that these characters possess are values and characteristics that they have in common with people. Relatability and relation continue to be problematic, however. In his exploration of the Other in Derridean philosophy, Matthew Calarco asserts that "[a]ny act of identification, naming, or relation is a betrayal of and a violence toward the Other" (136), and if this is true, then the identification that people feel with Others constitutes an act of violence, because *identification with* does not respect the alterity of the Other. According to Calarco, "violence is irreducible in our relations with the Other, if by nonviolence we mean a

thought and practice relating to the Other that respects fully the alterity of the Other. In order to speak and think about or relate to the Other, the Other must – to some extent – be appropriated and violated, even if only symbolically” (136). Within this framework, as Calarco has explained it, relation requires appropriation. This is at odds with McKay’s vision of translation as a possible method of representing the Other, as an honouring of the Other instead of taking and repurposing the Other in order to discuss the human. Relating the Other to oneself may be an act of transposing oneself onto – and thus violating the integrity of – that which is absolutely Other, but it also assumes common ground between the self and the being before the self.

This sort of relationship or understanding of the Other is at least in part culturally based. Margaret Robinson writes that in many Indigenous cultures, for example, “[t]here isn’t a sharp human/animal divide” and in stories humans may “turn into animals or vice versa” (236). The fluidity between human and nonhuman animal stems in part from an understanding of “a basic kinship between humans and other animals” (Robinson 236), and, while people from outside those cultures may read – and trivialize – such depictions as anthropomorphism, they instead stem from a worldview of shared subjectivity. There is much to be said about the implications of difference in these culturally influenced worldviews. However, this study has focused exclusively on the work of Euro-Canadian men in order to isolate representations of animals within the hegemonic Western discourse, which does not recognize the sort of fluid relationality that Robinson discusses. Within Western cultural framings, casting the nonhuman animal Other as a subject is a key point of difficulty: assuming common ground between oneself and another may be a violation of the (Western) Other, but it is also a method for reducing one’s cognitive and social distance from the Other. People care more about and for those to whom they are cognitively and socially closer. Anthropomorphic violations of the integrity of the Other may, then, be a necessary component of increasing readers’ affectivity toward the species that the fictitious protagonist animals represent. They may constitute attempts at relationship-building.

By the nature of their subjects, *Never Cry Wolf*, *The Winter of the Fisher*, and *Silverwing* reduce cognitive distance by generating awareness of their protagonist animals in the texts’ readers, but they do more than this. The narrative techniques differ, but they all foreground the protagonist species, and they further foreground the individuality, agency, and subjectivity of specific members of the protagonist species. They increase sensibility toward these animals, but they also increase subjectivity: wolves, fishers, and bats, which typically occupy lower sensibility

– and in the latter two cases lower subjectivity in Cole and Stewart’s rendering – become elevated in these texts to the high-subjectivity, high-sensibility area of the graph that is usually afforded to the companion animals that many North Americans consider part of their families. These texts make their animal characters subjects.

3.2 Subjectification/Objectification

According to Linda Vance, animals “have equal moral considerability with humans to the extent that they are considered to be *like* humans – that is, to feel pain and pleasure as humans do, to have wants and desires, to be able to act intentionally and so on” (171). If they are *not* like humans, or if humans are able to distance themselves from animals sufficiently to feel as though animals are not like humans, then humans have no need to account for animals when considering the morality, ethicality, or responsibility of their actions. If people believe that animals do not have consciousness, are not sentient, or have no purpose other than to serve human needs, or if they categorize animals with classes of objects (e.g., food, furs), then no social or moral consideration can be extended to them, because they lack the basic closeness required for humans to generate empathy and the social responses that come from recognition of others as subjects. This corresponds to the objectification half of Cole and Stewart’s map of the social construction of nonhuman animals, into which they place categories of animals such as vermin, meat, and farmed animals (22). Animal stories typically position their protagonist species as subjects, and in so doing they reduce both cognitive and social distance. By presenting these species as characters with motives, emotions, relationships, and agency, such texts put a face to a group of otherwise low-sensibility individuals.

Thus far, this chapter has discussed methods of decreasing modes of distance through narrative discourse, most specifically through narrators’ points of view and representations through anthropocentric and anthropomorphic framing. The narrative introduction to the protagonist species in Mowat’s, Langford’s, and Opper’s texts positions the protagonist species as individuals, and the anthropomorphic and anthropocentric representations of the species make them seem similar to humans. These are narrative techniques that familiarize the unfamiliar. These same techniques, however, jeopardize the representation of animals as subjects.

The subjectification/objectification axis of Cole and Stewart’s graph involves cognitive distance. If an animal is an object rather than a subject, it is unlike people. If it is food or fur “on

the hoof,” the social distance becomes irrelevant, because sociability requires subjectivity. One can socialize with neither a coat hanger nor a hamburger patty. Extreme objectification removes all social constraints and obligations by refusing the social sphere altogether. It is not beyond exogamy but *other* than exogamy. This cognitive distance is one of absolute alienation. It indicates not just that there can be no meaningful interaction between a human and a member of another species, but that there can be no interaction at all. If the animal has no face, no subjectivity with which to meet the face of a human subject, then no possibility of response exists, and so there can be no interaction or ethical responsibility except as that responsibility relates to others who *are* subjects. This is an extreme view, but it is ubiquitous. Almost all people refuse the face of the animal at some point. For Emmanuel Levinas, for example, a point of doubt arrives with reptiles: he indicates that a dog does have a face, that but he does not know “if a snake has a face,” nor the point at which one has “the right to be called ‘face’” (49). Others may draw the line at mammals, or at vertebrates. Somewhere along the way between other humans and unicellular protozoans, people cut off the possibility of subjectivity. Although it is alive, it is a thing rather than a being. Subjectification ends and, with it, the possibility of social experience.

The relationship between anthropomorphism and subjectivity is uneasy, because anthropomorphism involves the superimposition of human characteristics onto nonhuman animals or even entire species, and this anthropomorphic casing makes it difficult to determine whether there is, in fact, an animal subject within or whether such characters are simply, as John Burroughs put it, “human beings disguised as animals” (“Real and Sham” 131). Such “(m)animals,” Misao Dean writes, are “reproductions of the ideological subject” that can only convey the nonhuman aspects of themselves through their absence (“Political Science” 307). The dividing line is difficult to find, and it cannot be expected that a person’s measure of empathy toward a nonhuman animal character will transfer to living representatives of that species if it is understood that the living animals bear no relationship to their fictionalized representatives.

In this, *Never Cry Wolf* reveals the cleverness of its construction, for if it does not make its lupine characters into animal subjects in their own right, it nevertheless identifies and emphasizes the fictitious nature of *other* representations of wolves. “[T]he wolves,” the Dominion Wildlife Service informs Mowat, “are killing all the deer,” with the result that citizens are returning from

their hunts with “less and less deer” (13).⁸ The narrator’s interviews with the Churchill locals confirm the diagnosis: “each wolf killed thousands of caribou a year just out of bloodlust, while no trapper would think of shooting a caribou except under the most severe provocation” (20).⁹ The narrator receives his information about wolf predation amid a flurry of folklore and observations so nonsensical as to render the entire mass of “facts” incredible: wolves kill humans regularly, the narrator learns, but they will never attack “a pregnant Eskimo”; once every four years, wolves shed their skins so completely that they are naked (and subject to fits of modesty if approached during this time); and the establishment of an American Airforce Base near Churchill has caused the wolf population to burgeon (20).

Over the course of his time in “wolf country,” however, Mowat finds himself unable to substantiate any of the claims that have painted wolves as a bloodthirsty plague upon the land, and sometimes finds himself in possession of evidence that outright contradicts traditional Western representations of wolves. One of his helpers, an Inuit-EuroCanadian trapper named Mike, informs him that Mike himself shoots two to three hundred – or more – caribou every year to feed himself and his dogs, and that “[e]very trapper got to do the same” (91). When Mowat first halves the numbers to insure that the estimates are not excessive and then multiplies these figures by the eighteen hundred trappers within range of the Keewatin caribou herd, he finds that trappers must kill at least 112,000 caribou each year. This number is inconsistent with information supplied by the trappers themselves, who “to a man had insisted that wolves slaughtered the deer in untold thousands” and that they themselves never killed more than one or two each (91-92). Mowat realizes that such conclusions would be bad for his career, and rationalizes that he was not employed to gather “hearsay evidence” (92). However, direct evidence will supply him with the same conclusions, which are that wolves are not the cause of the caribou’s decline. He finds, from observing the hunting wolves and examining their faeces, that the wolves with whom he has contact and “by inference at least, all the Barren Land wolves who were raising families outside the summer caribou range, were living largely, if not almost entirely, on mice” (77). He learns that wolves are typically able to kill only old or infirm animals (140). Perhaps most importantly,

⁸ The use of “less” rather than “fewer” in reference to deer suggests that the Department considers deer to be a singular resource, such as water or “meat,” rather than discrete individuals.

⁹ These concerns remain current today; in 2015, for instance, the government of British Columbia instituted a wolf cull for the express purpose of preserving a population of mountain caribou (C. Brown).

however, he learns that the stories surrounding human-wolf interactions are largely fictitious. Close to the end of the text, he explains the origin the story of “the invasion of Churchill by wolves in 1946,” which features a town besieged and women, children, and dogs slaughtered (134). It began, he explains, with a rabid wolf, described as “sick and dying,” who appeared in Churchill and caused a panic until a trucker accidentally ran over and killed the animal (133-34). The only ones to die, in the origin story of this myth, were a Dene individual, an American Private First Class, and a number of dogs, all killed by people during the ensuing hysteria – and, in the end, the wolf. In other words, the “mainstream” reputation that wolves carry in Western cultures has only a tenuous hold on the reality of the species.

Mowat proves this repeatedly in his personal encounters with wolves. In his first contact with a real wolf, he and the wolf notice each other in the same moment, when only a short distance separates them, and each flees the other (40-41). The narrator describes the wolf’s reaction as one of exaggerated fear, with the wolf springing “a yard into the air” and running away so fast that he seemed to be not so much running “as flying low” (41). The rest of his encounters with the wolves continue to emphasize wolves’ nonaggressive natures, as he eventually gains enough confidence to “shoo” the wolves off of their kills (146) and even traps Angeline and a half-grown pup in the den when he crawls inside to investigate it (174). This last instance can be expected to provoke an aggressive reaction. Mowat has, after all, pinned an animal into a place of no escape, encroached on its personal territory, and threatened a pup through these actions. Defence of territory, defence of young, or plain fear could be used to explain an attack. The wolves, however, are clearly terrified. “They were scrunched hard against the back wall of the den; and they were as motionless as death,” Mowat reports. They “did not even growl” (174). In relating his personal experiences, he describes the wolves’ actions as neither aggressive to people nor threatening to ungulate populations. This is a point that he articulates early on, describing himself as having been “at the mercy of these ‘savage killers,’” who “had displayed a restraint verging on contempt, even when I invaded their home and appeared to be posing a direct threat to the young pups” (56-57). Thus, although the new representations of wolves that Mowat creates are affected by his own unreliable persona, the text also casts doubt upon prevalent existing representations, possibly nullifying some pre-existing stereotypes.

Neither *Silverwing* nor *The Winter of the Fisher* attempts this sort of subversive reputation rehabilitation. Lacking access to (explicit) human narrative, *Silverwing* relies upon its constructed

nonhuman animal perspectives to relay information about its protagonist species; it cannot address Western representations of bats as directly as *Never Cry Wolf* addresses representations of wolves because its narrators lack access to those representations. While *The Winter of the Fisher* contains human perspectives, the representations of the protagonist species here are in many ways reputation forming; there is little extant reputation for this novel to buttress or undermine.

Although the absence of a pre-existing reputation means that the novel does not need to struggle against prejudice against the species – except insofar as anthropocentric thinking privileges human life over nonhuman life, with the attendant biases that arise from nonhuman competition with humans – *The Winter of the Fisher* does need to spend considerable time developing the representative animal in narrative. This development extends from physical attributes to vocalizations to the minutiae of behaviour that are not necessary in *Silverwing* and *Never Cry Wolf*. A writer may assume that readers know that bats fly and wolves live in packs, but no corresponding assumptions about fishers can be made (although readers may infer knowledge from better-known relatives such as martens and weasels). Compared to the protagonist species of the other two texts examined here, the fisher is an empty vessel; it has been so far outside the range of human sensibility that stories, folklore, and even labelling (e.g., vermin) are almost nonexistent in Western cultures. What the novel *does* do is present the fisher as understandable, with motivations with which readers can identify. In his first fall, for example, the fisher learns from observing other animals what things are good to eat. After seeing a sow bear and two cubs eat berries, he tries some: “He sniffed one, wrinkled back his lips, and nipped it free. He blinked, his eyes warming at the honeyed flavour, and then began carefully to pick the berries out of their thorny nests. By the time he finished the moon was down. He belched and trotted home, staggering slightly from the jab of a belly ache” (71). This is an experience with which many readers would be able to identify. That suspicious initial sniff and tentative initial taste (careful not to touch the food more than necessary) may well strike a few memory chords in readers. The surprised realization – “Oh hey. That’s not bad. It’s actually really good!” – and the gorging that follow likewise transcend the species barrier. The text does not explain why the fisher stuffs himself on the berries because it does not need to: readers are able to infer the fisher’s motivations from personal experience.

In addition to fostering human ability to empathize with the fisher as an individual, the novel attempts to rehabilitate the reputation of predatory mammals in general, using the fisher as

a specific example. In one instance, the Ojibway man notes that the fisher is “incapable of gluttony,” a quality that he shares with most other predators, as he “would never allow himself to overeat to the point where his speed and agility would be impaired” (55).¹⁰ In another instance, the narrative explains the fisher’s killing of trapped animals according to the fisher’s logic: “The animals he killed ceased to be real animals. By his own understanding, an animal was capable of flight, and with flight came the hunting chase, the stimulus that raised the killing urge to its natural, perfect pitch. These animals were pinned to one spot” (149). This quotation is representative of two qualities of the novel: it regularly uses the fisher’s point of view, and it explains the fisher’s behaviour, the narrative discourse here using objective, scientific language (e.g., the chase-catch-kill sequence, “stimulus”) that encourages detachment from the animals in this moment. In this instance, the actions that the novel is describing are distasteful. The fisher is walking a trapline and killing all the animals he finds in the traps. This is the very sort of slaughter that reinforces predatory animals’ negative reputations, as when a fox kills all the chickens in a coop, but Langford takes the act and translates it into the fisher’s perspective. For the fisher, animality is inextricably bound to a creature’s ability to move. Flight triggers the chase response, and chasing leads to killing, and a kill is the natural conclusion of a chase. The sequence of events is necessary to satisfy the fisher’s desire to kill; lacking the other steps of a hunt, the kill itself is unsatisfactory. In fact, the fisher’s actions here are so far removed from his hunt-chase-kill action pattern that he does not even consume his kills. According to the fisher’s logic, what he is doing is destroying “everything connected with the trapper” (149); because they cannot run, the trapped animals have forfeited their animality and simply become objects to be ruined.

Confinement changes the fisher’s understanding of what a creature is. The fisher has his own definition of what constitutes an animal. An animal can run. If it cannot run, it cannot be an animal. His objectifying gaze, by definition, makes him a subject; he determines what is an object and what is a subject in his world; and his perspective, in this regard, shows a Western cultural understanding of the world, in which very few entities are subjects. It is not clear that the fisher views other animals as subjects, but the cessation of their animality (by the fisher’s definition of it) also negates the possibility of even the most basic of relationships. In the fisher’s mind, an immobile animal is no different from a dead one, reminiscent of Erasmus’ view of the taxidermied

¹⁰ The incident with the berries is, apparently, an exception to this rule.

animals in Yann Martel's *Beatrice and Virgil* (2010), as Chapter Two discusses. In his first act of destruction against the traps, the fisher finds a mink that "lay dead and therefore was no longer a mink and certainly not prey," but the fisher finds that it is only natural to hate the mink because it is connected to the traps and the traps are connected to the trapper and the fisher hates the trapper (146). Because the fisher is invested in destroying everything that he associates with the trapper, he destroys the physical bodies of the animals in the traps, whether they are alive or dead, understanding no difference between them.

These actions position the fisher as a dominant entity within androcentric Western ideologies: captivity has placed the trapped animals in a position of enforced passivity, or helplessness, thus feminizing them (C. J. Adams, *Pornography* 84). By his failure to acknowledge the trapped animals as anything more than extensions of the trapper, the fisher both refuses their subjectivity and positions himself within the dominant discourse as the one whose ability to name gives him the power (C. J. Adams, *Sexual* 75; Derrida 23). Carol J. Adams notes that "[a]nimals in name and body are made absent *as animals* for meat to exist" (*Sexual Politics* 51). The fisher is erasing the animal referent even before the animals are dead. Adams suggests that "the structure of overlapping absent referents" is so endemic to Western cultures that "we fail to see anything disturbing in the violence and domination that are an inextricable part of this structure" (*Sexual Politics* 54). This may not be entirely true in *The Winter of the Fisher*: like the majority of animal stories, this novel is invested in eliciting an affective response to its protagonist species, an animal that otherwise might itself be objectified or turned into an "absent referent," and so readers exposed to the possibility of the animal-as-subject may experience heightened sympathy for the trapped animals. However, the fisher's acts correspond to Western perceptions of masculinity, including the power of designation as object and the violence of his actions. Male socialization in Western cultures accepts, tolerates, and ultimately encourages male violence (Brod 20). "Men who are violent," Harry Brod explains, "are therefore not deviants or nonconformists, but overconformers" (21). The fisher's acts of violence upon animals deemed objects, then, closely align him with

expressions of Western masculinity, in which he adopts the dominant discourse as his own.¹¹ Refusing the subjectivity of the Other, he eliminates any possibility of moral obligation or relationship. His killing is thus reframed according to his perceptions, and, in their refusal of the animality of the animals, these perceptions render his actions reasonable. This is particularly true within the story's masculinist narrative frame: Western cultures conceive of meat-gathering and meat-eating – and its concomitant violence in the form of hunting, trapping, etc. – as masculine pursuits (Luke 204-05; C. J. Adams, *Pornography* 88), and Carey Wolfe notes that even “the ‘ipseity’ of sovereignty” requires “‘carnivorous sacrifice’ as a testament to its autonomy, its phallic ‘freestandingness’” (*Before the Law* 95). The objectified and butchered animals are a testament to this masculine frame.

It is also clear from the fisher's destruction of the trapped animals that he has his own point of view, which sometimes differs from what the facts of the case might indicate. Like Mowat in *Never Cry Wolf*, the evidence provided in the text does not always match the conclusions that the fisher draws. The text clearly states that the fisher travels the trapline and kills every living animal that he finds in these traps. This has every appearance of wanton slaughter of the sort that gives predators a bad reputation. However, knowledge of the fisher's point of view – and narrative discourse that does not incorporate the perspectives of the victims – mitigates the reprehensibility of these actions. Similar instances recur throughout the novel. For example, the fisher usurps a den from a lynx, wins a battle for possession of the den, and then stalks and attacks the lynx until he is successful in chasing her from the area (60-68). These actions make the fisher a thief, a bully, and the aggressor in his interactions with the lynx. For the fisher, however, right of possession gives him claim on the den, which he makes “his own” in the lynx's absence (61); the lynx is the one who initiates battle, both vocally and physically (62); and after her retreat, it is fear of her reclaiming the den in his absence or ambushing him from above that impels him to chase her down and drive her from the area: “It would not be comfortable,” he feels, “to have such a capable enemy

¹¹ The use of the term “dominant discourse” here is inflected by Edwin Aderner's conceptualization of a *dominant (male) group* and a *muted group* (women, in Ardener's model): Elaine Showalter explains that “[b]oth muted and dominant groups generate beliefs or ordering ideas of social reality at the unconscious level, but dominant groups control the forms or structures in which consciousness can be articulated” (262). In his claiming of the right of objectification and his destruction of the beings so designated, the fisher is assuming the role of the dominant group, and the social status that accompanies it, despite the difference between his species and the humans who normally occupy the position.

in the immediate area” (66). His perspective has an ameliorating effect on his actions, some of which might appear malevolent if not depicted from the fisher’s perspective.

The fact that the fisher has a perspective indicates that he is a subject. This perspective sometimes appears alien, as with the concept of animals forfeiting their animality with their freedom of movement, and this exemplifies the novel’s attempts to represent the animal *as* animal, rather than as a “(m)animal.” Like Derrida’s cat, the fisher “has its point of view” (11); he, too, possesses the gaze of the seeing subject. A subject, however, is capable of seeing an Other, not merely of seeing others as objects, and, despite immobilized animals ceasing to be “real animals” to the fisher, there is little evidence to suggest that he recognizes the individual “subjecthood” of other animals. His responses to other animals occur mostly in relation to what they represent *to him*: he loves his mother because she is the source of food for his infant self (11), he attacks the lynx because she is a “capable enemy” who threatens his possession of his stolen den and his own personal safety, and his mate is “an object of incredible desire” (190). It is possible that he recognizes them as subjects, but the text is cautious in the degree of psychological complexity that it affords the fisher. The fisher’s interactions with the Ojibway man are telling in this regard. The fisher has a tendency to categorize whole species of animals as good or bad, enemy or neutral party (e.g., 70-72), and his initial experience of the hunter who kills his family places humans in the “enemy” camp. After rescuing the fisher, the Ojibway man is surprised to find that the fisher is not simply afraid of him but truly furious (46); for the fisher, “the man shape triggered the memory of the death in the clearing, and beyond it the choking of the smoke and the orange horror of the fire” (47). During the fisher’s week-long stay with the man, food, water, and space temper his hatred into tolerance, but while the man feels a sense of loneliness when the fisher departs (59), there is no indication that the fisher feels any sort of absence of connection, of being apart from another subject, when he quits the man’s residence. He has simply re-categorized the man in the position of not-a-threat (90). The trapper shoots the fisher as their initial contact, however, and this erases the effects of the Ojibway man’s kindness; the fisher is unable to distinguish the men he has known *as individuals*: instead, he has classified them all as “part of a single entity – man – and in his mind he felt only enmity” (99). Such difficulty in separating categories into discrete individuals indicates that the fisher is in fact incapable of experiencing another as a subject; he appears to lack the capacity to see individuality.

When the Ojibway man frees him from the trapper's set, however, the fisher experiences an epiphany about the man. He separates the man from the collective noun "man" in a mental leap that likens the man's individuality to his own individuality. The revelation happens after the man releases him from the first of two imprisoning traps:

At that moment, the fisher made what was probably the most important discovery of his life. It came to him the instant the man moved upwind, for in the pleasant muskiness, the warm, woodsy scent that overlaid the sweat smell, was the clear message that this man was an individual, a separate creature, a being not to be placed in the collective picture of man. For this man was as unique and different from the hunter and the trapper as he was himself from all others, even the fisher that denned somewhere to the north. And this man, this warm, familiar-smelling creature was the part of the best memories he had of the time since coming to the lake. (134-35)

This is the moment when the fisher separates this man, this specific man, from his experience of all other men. What is more, he understands the man's individuality through his sense of his own individuality. He understands himself as a subject, as a being different from everyone and everything else and possessing a self, and his understanding of the man as an individual originates from this foundational understanding of himself.

There is a tendency to emphasize visual connection as the source of understanding the Other as a subject, which is a frankly anthropocentric concept. One example of this is Derrida's description of "being caught naked" "by the insistent gaze of the animal," by his cat's gaze and his own knowledge that he is seeing the cat seeing him (3, 4, 11); another is John Berger's description of the importance – and loss – of the seeing gaze of the animal in his essay "Why Look at Animals?" The fisher does make meaningful eye contact with the man, but not at this point in the novel. In the climactic final confrontation between the trapper, the fisher, and the Ojibway man at the cabin, the fisher "looked deeply into the old man's eyes when the Indian knelt to force apart the trap's vicious jaws. He held the gaze while he carefully drew his leg free" (208), and it is this sense of connection that causes him to break off his attack on the trapper a few moments later. Despite the importance of the gaze in this final scene, scent is a sense that takes precedence over sight for the fisher, at least in terms of his knowledge of others. When his eyes open in his seventh week of life, his sense of smell triumphs over the newfound vision of his mother (11); when the

Ojibway man rescues him after the fire, a quality in his scent gives the fisher pause despite the “man-shape” that he associates with the trauma he has experienced (47-48); he makes the lynx’s den his own by turning the earth until “the alien animal odor was drowned” (61); and his first contact with the fisher who will be his mate is his investigation of her scent, which is similar to but different from his, “with a distinctive, rich musk that brought a fleeting image of his dead mother” (82). When he first conceives of the man as a distinct subject, the fisher leans forward to breathe in the man’s scent (135), as though imprinting it on his memory, before he draws his leg free of the trap, just as he holds the man’s gaze while he pulls his leg free in the final confrontation. Instead of making eye contact, in this scene he leans toward the man and takes the man’s scent, pressing his nose against the man’s hand in the process. It is a moment of recognition and acknowledgement of the man as a unique being, and the crystallization this concept of the individual in the fisher’s mind recalls Derrida’s insistence about the cat being neither metaphor nor symbol nor generic category of being but rather “she and no other, the one *I am talking about here*” (7). The fisher *sees* the man, as English’s anthropocentric bias puts it, through the individuality that the man’s scent projects. He breathes in the essence of the man. It is the only occasion where the fisher makes nonviolent contact with a member of another species.

The fisher’s response to the man as a subject originates from a “nonhuman” perspective, focalized on scent rather than sight or sound. As such, it acknowledges the Otherness of the fisher, but it does so while marking the fisher’s response to a human as a subject, and therefore fundamentally *like* the man in their mutual subjectivity. Subjectivity, that awareness of the self as an individual and the ability to see another seeing oneself, has frequently been used as a critical distinction between humans and nonhuman animals, from Descartes’ assertion that animals lack response-ability to Heidegger’s vision of animals as being poor in world – Heidegger believed that although animals have some ability to relate to other entities in the world, they relate to those entities only in terms of their relationships to them, and do not have the ability to relate to other entities beyond such relationships (Calarco “Heidegger’s” 22) – to Levinas’ claim that “the priority here is not found in the animal but in the human face” (49).¹² The novel affirms this critical

¹² The Introduction provides further commentary on Cartesian philosophy. For additional analysis of Heidegger’s theory of world and Levinas’ theory of face, see Matthew Calarco’s “Heidegger’s Zoontology” and Peter Atterton’s “Ethical Cynicism” in Atterton and Calarco’s *Animal Philosophy: Ethics and Identity*.

likeness, that both the man and the fisher are subjects, through a marker of difference. Despite the animal Other's difference, then, there exists the crucial similarity necessary for engagement in relationship. This is potentially more significant than all of the novel's anthropocentric and androcentric discourse, because that discourse is superimposed on the animal and can be dismissed as belonging wholly to humans and not to the species at all: the fisher's subjectivity *in spite of* his difference acknowledges his Otherness as an animal and marks him as a subject anyway. If, as Batt argues, "human attitudes to animals are affected by species' similarity to humans" (185), then this distinction is critical as one that acknowledges difference, of which people are "suspicious" (Batt 184), but that nevertheless posits an underlying likeness that supports the possibility of relationship. *The Winter of the Fisher* contains anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism, but it has also crafted an animal subject in the form of the fisher.

Part of the difficulty in combining subjectification with anthropomorphism is that increased subjectification tends to be associated with increased anthropomorphism (i.e., the circular argument that if an animal has the psychological complexity necessary to be a subject, then s/he must be anthropomorphized, because animals do not possess the psychological complexity necessary to be a subject). *The Winter of the Fisher* is careful in this regard: instinct drives much of the fisher's behaviour (33, 77, 185, 189); the novel downplays his psychological sophistication by declaring what he is *not* capable of, such as sorrow and gratitude (28, 90); and the fisher's perspective itself sometimes shows an understanding – or lack of understanding – of a situation that is nonhuman in appearance (149). These three things mitigate the effects of the anthropomorphization and anthropocentrism in the novel, so that the fisher himself emerges as an animal character, however couched within a human framework he may be. His subjectivity is a nonhuman subjectivity, evident in the novel and affirmed by both his human ally and his human enemy (59, 178). Thus, *The Winter of the Fisher* presents a potentially ideal representation of the protagonist species: brought into imaginative proximity by its featured role in the novel, the animal retains its animality while being presented as a subject through both the fisher's and the Ojibway man's gazes. Simultaneously, the Western cultural framing, including aspects such as the focus on property rights and the development of male characters over female ones, also glosses the discourse as familiar, so that, like anthropomorphism generally, it may "increase interest, care and concern for a species" (Batt 184).

Silverwing does not attempt such a delicate balancing act. It unapologetically embraces the anthropomorphism involved in speaking subjects and fantastical plots. Chapter Two examines the role of subjectification and anthropomorphization in children's literature, and *Silverwing* has been part of that discussion, but that critique has not addressed the degree to which this level of anthropomorphization represents the animal subjects *as animals*. As Chapter Two illustrates, *Silverwing* reverses standard perspectives so that humans are unintelligible to bats while bats and other small mammals share a common language. In so doing, the novel upends the relationship between humans and animals to turn humans into what Derrida calls the absolute Other, the being who has a point of view that is so alien it cannot be approached (11). This Othering turns the characters belonging to the protagonist species into subjects, as there is no doubt that they conceive of themselves as subjects and view others in this manner as well, but it does not necessarily represent these characters as *animal* subjects. In "Why I Wrote *Silverwing*," Opper explains that he wanted the challenge of crafting characters out of a species that people typically fear, to see whether children would be able to identify with bats. One might be forgiven for wondering, however, whether any identification is with *bats*, as animals, rather than humans in bat costumes. The critical question here is whether, given the ubiquity of its anthropomorphism, this novel actually depicts the protagonist species.

Rather than adhere to realism, which has its own code for attempting to represent animals as they are and without exaggeration, *Silverwing* takes its protagonist species' shape and gives it a frankly human intelligence. The anthropomorphism in *Silverwing* is not simply that the bats speak English and share some values, such as property rights, with humans. In this novel, teenage bats risk their popularity with dares, practice religion, and boast about the hunting prowess of their respective subspecies (12, 193, 83). The protagonist species share many of the same concerns as humans, including a desire for justice, a need for some variant of religion or mythology, and belief that it is important to record events for posterity (51, 53, 33). Cognitively, therefore, the bats in *Silverwing* are very human in nature – and so are familiar to readers. Their minds are not representative of real nonhuman animals.

However, Opper goes to great lengths to represent certain aspects of bat physiology and perspective that are foreign to humans. The novel represents the bats' sonic and ocular dual vision, a huge task in a language that has little capacity to articulate any vision other than ocular, and creates a greyscale world that depicts both types of vision without the colour that humans can see

but bats cannot (Opperl “Why I Wrote *Silverwing*”). Echolocation creates sound maps that help the bats to navigate during their migration, and echo chambers store their visual/verbal stories. The protagonist’s ability to both interpret and project “echovision” proves crucial to his survival (202-03). What the different species eat at different seasons, how much they can carry, and how wind and temperature affect aspects such as their flight and food consumption persist throughout the novel (4-5, 63-64, 175-77, 182-83), and while these rarely influence the trajectory of the plot, they are some of the factors that the protagonist species consider, and by which their behaviours are affected, on a regular basis. Because of this emphasis on the nature of bat perception and physiology, the novel falls somewhere between *The Winter of the Fisher* and, say, *Little Red Riding Hood* in terms of its degree of anthropomorphization. The subjects may have the minds of humans, but those minds work within a world in which the animals’ physical and physiological limitations mark the limitations of the animals’ characters. These human minds in animal bodies are complicating factors: while the anthropomorphism makes the animals familiar, and familiarity decreases social distance, the anthropomorphized animal minds inject humanity into animal bodies.

Despite the differences in their narrative approaches, *Never Cry Wolf* shares this complication with *Silverwing*: their protagonist species are so highly anthropomorphized that it is difficult to determine whether they are animal subjects or human subjects in the shape of animals. In *Never Cry Wolf*, the narrator attempts to present a quasi-scientific study of wolves in a way that his readers will understand, and so he depicts the protagonist species as subjects. He does so, however, by casting them in roles reminiscent of a 1950s sitcom. George, Angeline, Uncle Albert, and the pups enact behaviours that the narrator explains in anthropomorphized terms: Angeline “quite literally embraces” George with her forelegs while George plays the part of the stoic male enduring his wife’s displays of emotion, the pups attend school to learn how to hunt, and Uncle Albert postures to such effect that the narrator translates his communication into the words “[i]f it’s a workout you kids want . . . then I’m your wolf!” (48, 155, 70). All of this foregrounds anthropocentric explanations for reported behaviour, mixing subjectivity and anthropomorphism too tightly for one to be separated from the other. The wolves are subjects, it seems, but they are not presented as *animal* subjects.

An additional complication is the narrator’s own conversion to a wolflike being. While he represents the protagonist species in unabashedly human terms, he is himself in the process of

attempting to understand the wolves by mimicking their behaviour, becoming, as he calls it, a “pseudo-wolf” (156), or, as Brian Johnson describes it after the fashion of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, “a becoming-wolf” (337). He attempts to eat, sleep, and mark territory like a wolf (81-83, 65, 60-62), learning about the animal’s lives by becoming as wolflike as possible. He reframes their behaviours in terms of his own Western, human culture – for example, the male wolves go “to work” each day (63) – and he interprets his own behaviour as being “[w]olflike” (136), thus blending the behaviours of wolves and humans into a single mutually explicable unit. Even lupine vocal communication becomes a source of investigation, as Inuit Ootek’s education in “lupine linguistics” relieves the narrator of his “delusion that complex communications among animals other than man did not exist” (93, 69). His representation of wolves constitutes an “erosion of the species boundary” (Johnson 337).

Lauren Corman notes that many fields of theory and movements “have spent considerable time grappling with the difficulties of representing various Others, including rigorous debates about appropriation of (cultural) voice,” but that “animal movements have generally been remiss in confronting the issues that plague political representation” (473). In this respect, “benevolent” representations of women, Indigenous peoples, nonhuman animals and other minorities are similar in that they often depict these groups as victims, a position that fixes them as “constituted through victimization and thus precluded from subject status and agency” (Corman 475). Again, there is much work still to be done on the subordination of many groups to the hegemonic discourse perpetuated by white men in Western cultures, which are at once patriarchal, colonial, and anthropocentric, and how that subordination influences interactions among these groups and between these groups and the dominant discourse that writing by white men represents. For Indigenous authors (and, at least to an extent, others whose identities are not wholly situated within the dominant discourse), representation of oneself as a subject is mediated “by the settler’s language, experience, and imagination” (Bell 184), and this has its own complications. This study focuses on hegemonic Western discourse, on what the dominant narrative as represented by the animal stories of Euro-Canadian men is saying about nonhuman animals, but also what it is saying about colonialism and androcentrism as those aspects intersect with nonhuman animals in these narratives. Chapter Four speaks to the colonial impulse in hegemonic Western discourse, the ventriloquist’s burden that Corman discusses, in conservationist animal stories that present threatened species as being in need of saving by virtuous humans (i.e., readers), although this is

somewhat complicated by the presentation of humans as simultaneously the *cause* of the species' precarious hold on survival. This section addresses representations of Indigenous and animal characters as fundamentally similar, as well as appropriations of voice.

Never Cry Wolf and *The Winter of the Fisher* represent the voices of both Indigenous and nonhuman animal individuals. Joshua Russell writes that “the experience of animal narrativity presents a subversive, counter-hegemonic, and more inclusive approach, recognizing that humans are not the sole subjects, agents, authors, or proprietors of stories” (149), that animals are individuals and have their own stories. Here, however, Euro-Canadian men are writing those narratives, and so are assuming the voices of those animals, as well as the Indigenous people who appear in those stories. Speaking for animals is part of the ventriloquist's burden: Corman writes that the assumption of voice is pervasive in animal rights discourse, and “likely stems in part from the ways in which animals have been considered speechless and voiceless, ‘mute’ and ‘dumb’ throughout Western thought” (482). Thus, “[i]t is through human speech and language that animals' experiences . . . are made meaningful to humans who otherwise ignore or simply fail to recognize these experiences (Corman 486). Corman is writing here of the discourse surrounding animal rights activists' presentations and representations of animal suffering, but the import is applicable to representations of animal experience more broadly. In the same way, stories coded in Western language, as influenced by Western thought on the level of story and language alike, cast Indigenous characters in troubling terms in both *Never Cry Wolf* and *The Winter of the Fisher*.

Johnson presents a compelling case for *Never Cry Wolf* as an indigenizing fantasy of settler-invader postcolonialism, arguing that the “wolf-indigene homology is ubiquitous in Canadian literature” (337-38), and it is certainly the case that Mowat's Inuit and Inuit-EuroCanadian allies, Ootek and Mike, provide a bridge between Mowat and the wolves. As part of “going to the wolves” (Mowat 58), Mowat absorbs information provided by Ootek and Mike. This does affirm these dwellers-in-the-land as possessors of better knowledge than the “facts” offered up by those who have had no personal contact with wolves. However, it also puts Indigenous individuals once more in the position of being closer to animals than non-Indigenous individuals, as being more like animals than non-Indigenous people and therefore better able to understand those animals. As the Introduction points out, this is a problematic concept that recurs in early evolutionary theory, which reframes racist hierarchies as part of evolutionary progression:

Charles Darwin, for example, wrote that “ancient races stand somewhat nearer than modern races in the long line of descent to their remote animal-like progenitors” (13).

Like *Never Cry Wolf*, *The Winter of the Fisher* also expresses this idea when the fisher finds in the Ojibway man’s scent “a certain muskiness that robbed the odor of much of its sting. As if there was something of the animal in the man” (48), and again in the same man’s scent that “hinted at an underlying kinship” (87). The blurring of boundaries that the Darwinian-influenced animal story writers began in the late nineteenth century, stressing the essential kinship between human and nonhuman animals, also provides “a conceptual basis for identifying ‘lower races’ with ‘higher animal species’ (Johnson 340). As Roberts put it, “[a]s 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” (“Animal” 212). *The Winter of the Fisher* posits a scent-based similarity between the fisher and the Ojibway man that is not present in the men who are not identified as Indigenous. The Ojibway man’s character is complex: he blends Indigenous and Catholic religious systems, served in “the War,” and, sick of all the killing, afterwards saved his money until he could move to a remote area and live in solitude (43, 48, 49-50). He escapes the stereotypes of the innocent primitive, the lazy Indian, and the drunk – he is a world-wise, fiscally responsible man who drinks only on Christmas Eve, with the trapper. On the whole, the Ojibway man’s character is well considered and dynamic, and if he is representative of a harmonious relationship with the fisher and the wilderness as a whole, his character’s back story provides reasons for this, rather than assumptions about “natural” Indigenous connectivity with nature. However, his scent is comprised of both “man smell” and a hint of animality that the other men in the novel appear to lack (47-48). The “underlying kinship” that the fisher senses in the Ojibway man comes from this animality, not the scent of men in general (87). It is possible that this kindred scent emerges from the man’s immersion in the natural world, whereas the other human characters are visitors who carry the scent of more urban living with them. However, given that the trapper spends months in the wilderness but does not acquire this animal-like scent, it is far more likely that the Ojibway man’s race rather than his humanity contains this kindred scent. The Ojibway man’s “animal smell,” not accorded to non-Indigenous human characters, is, then, a perpetuation of the racist belief that Indigenous peoples are closer to animals than Caucasians, and it also undermines the relationship that the novel is building between

the protagonist species and the man, because it is predicated on the man's fundamental animality where there is no fundamental animality in the novel's non-Indigenous human characters.

Race and animality have been tightly linked, historically: Wolfe posits that species is an extension of race, writing that it is impossible to "talk about biopolitics without talking about race, and you can't talk about race without talking about species, simply because both categories – as history well shows – are so notoriously pliable and unstable, constantly bleeding into and out of each other" (*Before the Law* 43). Several writers, perhaps most notably Derrida and J. M. Coetzee, have compared the large-scale slaughter of animals to human genocides such as the Holocaust – a thread that Chapter Two also picks up with *Beatrice and Virgil* – and Wolfe notes that analogies between humans and animals are prevalent in literature about the Holocaust (*Before the Law* 43). Analogies between endangered animals and "vanishing Indians" are also prevalent (Johnson 338-39).

In *Never Cry Wolf*, Ootek acts as a sort of Indigenous double for Mowat and legitimizes the narrator's indigenization/becoming-wolf through his interpretation and acceptance of it (Johnson 347), and, in addition, he functions as a docent for Mowat in his explanations of lupine behaviour (Mowat 86, 90). However, Johnson reads in *Never Cry Wolf* a failure of the settler-invader fantasy of indigenization. Mowat might assume a wolf's diet and a wolf's sleeping habits, but these are not sustainable. Lupine napping, for instance, is incompatible with Western socio-cultural expectations, and financial security depends upon fulfilling mandates that have nothing to do with imitating lupine behaviour (66, 156). More than these external pressures, however, it is Mowat himself who reverts back to the culturally ingrained fear with which he began his sojourn. Surprised by the presence of the wolves when he finds them observing him and again when he investigates their den, he reacts with the same aggression born of fear with which he heard the huskies that he believed to be wolves shortly after his arrival in the Keewatin range (32, 174). Humans, Mowat concludes, chose for themselves "an alien role" separate from the natural world to which the wolves belong, and although Mowat tried to put himself into the paws of a wolf, he finds that he is the cause of his own exclusion (175). He is simply not able to sustain making himself *more* wolflike, which creates an imbalance in the way in which he describes the wolves as humanlike. He renders the wolves in human cultural terms (e.g., with work schedules [63]) without being able to render himself in lupine terms. He has discovered that "the wolf den he sought to colonize was actually still inhabited" (Johnson 349). Mowat's "reassertion of the species

boundary through the rhetoric of self-exclusion, and his related despair that he can only ever be a ‘pseudo-wolf,’ all suggest that Mowat’s indigenizing narrative is actually blocked by a persistent . . . aboriginal presence” (Johnson 349). In effect, he has placed a human mask on the wolves but been unable to fix a lupine mask on his own face. He relates them to his own frame of reference, then, and is unsuccessful in relating himself to *their* frames of reference. This would suggest that while the wolves appear in the text as subjects, they do not appear as *animal* subjects.

However, despite the failed merging of lupine and human worlds, and despite the strong anthropomorphism of the text, the wolves themselves do not function solely as either (m)animals or objects of study. *Never Cry Wolf* also depicts the wolves’ gaze and, in so doing, places them in a position of having a perspective of their own. In fact, Mowat’s first experience with a real wolf is one of a shared gaze. In pursuit of what he believes to be a husky puppy, Mowat lifts his head above the top of a ridge and stares straight into a wolf’s eyes. “We stared at one another in silence. I do not know what went on in that massive skull,” Mowat relates, but “[f]or some seconds neither of us moved but continued to stare hypnotically into one another’s eyes” (40-41). In this instance, Mowat does not offer an interpretation of the wolf’s reaction. They see each other, and mirror each other in their reactions, each staring at the other before turning and fleeing. Mutual gaze as the initial point of contact is significant. Berger asserts that animals are “the objects of our ever-extending knowledge. What we know about them is an index of our power, and thus an index of what separates us from them. The more we know, the further away we are” (267). As a scientist sent to study wolves, Mowat’s position is one of a subject observing an object. He is here to *examine* the animals, the detritus of their lives, and the components of their bodies, and build his understanding of the wolves from units of data. His purpose is not to consider the animals as individuals, but the first time he comes into contact with one, he enters into a mutual gaze that places him as both the observer and the one being observed. Because animals are typically objectified, the animal gaze has lost significance in Western cultures (Berger 267). Berger even goes so far as to assert that “[t]hat look between animal and man . . . has been extinguished” (273), but it is the animal gaze that confirms its own subjectivity. The animal gaze confirms that the animal possesses its own point of view (Derrida 11), that it is not merely something seen but someone seeing.

That is why the animal gaze is so important to representing nonhuman animals as subjects. Mowat’s initial encounter with wolves is one that acknowledges both his sight and the wolf’s, and

this continues throughout his interactions with the animals. They react to his presence, altering their behaviour in response to Mowat's presence and behaviours. By itself, this means little, but the way in which the wolves respond is one that privileges their own perspectives, suggesting that they have response-ability. Having discovered the pack's den site, Mowat creeps back to observe the wolves from a hiding place, but fails to spot them. In a scene reminiscent of Derrida's contemplation of his cat looking upon his nakedness, Mowat notices the presence of the wolves only when he takes a break from his own watching in order to relieve himself. The wolves have, quite literally, caught him with his pants down. While he has been peering down his monocular telescope looking for the wolves, the wolves have been watching him. They have turned him into a spectacle (Dvorak 233). Shocked to have the tables turned on him, he yells, "What the hell do you think you're at, you . . . you . . . peeping Toms! Go away, for heaven's sake!" (53). The extremity of this reaction is in part due to fear, as he still has not shaken the idea of wolves as "savage killers" from his mind, but it is also in part embarrassment, such as he might experience were he to turn around and find a group of people observing him. He feels the embarrassment of being seen in a private moment. Later, he begins to wonder "*who* was watching *whom*," and experiences a blow to his pride when he realizes that his status as a human does not grant him automatic right to be the subject observing objects, and as much as he is watching the wolves, so too are the wolves watching him (54).

However, representing protagonist species as subjects, as Mowat does here, is not the same as representing the protagonist species as animal subjects. All three texts use varying degrees of anthropomorphism to form or rehabilitate the reputations of their protagonist species, but *The Winter of the Fisher* and *Never Cry Wolf* also engage with the protagonist species at the level of the animal's perspective, acknowledging a nonhuman animal perspective that is *other* than the human. In Langford's novel, that nonhuman perspective comes across in an alien understanding of concepts such as animality and individuality, and the fisher also demonstrates his ability to view at least one other living being as a subject. The fact that that living being is a human cracks the possibility of relationship wide open – although the story closes that possibility down significantly with its problematic rendering of the Ojibway man as animal-like in ways in which non-Indigenous characters are not. In Mowat's story, the narrator constructs an anthropomorphic narrative little different, in its way, from Opper's superimposition of human motives and struggles onto the shapes of bats, but he also casts doubt upon those same representations through his own inability to "go

wolf,” his demonstrated narrative unreliability, and his breakdown of pre-existing conceptualizations of wolves. Like *The Winter of the Fisher*, the experience of connection between a human and the protagonist species is critical to *Never Cry Wolf*'s formulation of the species as response-able subjects: the narrator experiences himself as seen by the nonhuman Other in a classically Derridean moment early in his attempts to observe the wolves. He realizes then that he is himself an object of study. These human-animal relationships, affirmed in one text from the nonhuman's perspective and in the other by the human's, are critical to creating a text in which members of the protagonist species are not just subjects but animal subjects.

Subjectification of species in novels is, by itself, unlikely to have an impact on readers' understandings of the protagonist species as subjects, and thus to decrease social distance, unless it is clear that a given text is attempting to represent an animal rather than a (m)animal. With its use of a combination of selective anthropomorphism, nonhuman perspectives, nonhuman acknowledgement of others as subjects, and limitation of nonhuman cognitive abilities, *The Winter of the Fisher* offers the most realistic depiction of a nonhuman animal that is both a subject and a being that the text represents as an animal, physically and cognitively. While *Never Cry Wolf*'s wolves are highly anthropomorphized, the text is also skeptical of Western representations of wolves in general and has moments of human-lupine interaction in which Mowat experiences himself as *being seen* by the seeing Other. *Silverwing*, however, imbues the protagonist species with a wholly human cognitive capacity and moral framework. It is as interested in bat behaviour and physiology as the other texts are in the behaviour and physiology of their respective protagonist species, but the fundamentally human construction of the characters' subjectivity precludes them from having that subjectivity grounded in nonhuman animality.

3.3 Conclusion

Silverwing, *Never Cry Wolf*, and *The Winter of the Fisher* all focus on the physiology and behaviour of the protagonist species in their representations of those species. They show awareness of negative attitudes toward and beliefs about their species, from Langford's refutation of gluttony in predators to Mowat's epiphany that wolves are not aggressive toward people to Opper's statement that some humans think that bats are evil spirits. They represent their protagonist species characters as subjects. The mere fact of the texts' existence raises their readership's sensibility of these species, and the stories offer positive representations of those

representative animal characters in ways that couple increased familiarity with decreased threat. In general, they stand at the opposite end of the spectrum from horror stories, in that they are actively trying to create good associations with these animals.

Some of the ways in which these texts create positive associations are by dispelling misconceptions about the protagonist species and inculcating in the protagonist species Western cultural components that include patriarchal family units, democratic governance structures, and respect for property rights (across species lines). These actively reduce any conceptualizations of the threat that these species pose because they undercut prior negative associations and build familiarity through both mental exposure to the protagonist species and the imposition of Western cultural social structures and values upon these species, making them seem more humanlike. At the same time, however, the imposition of human frameworks on these animal representations is a kind of appropriation of the animal for the purposes of the text. In McKay's estimation, the recognition and valuing of the alterity of the Other is what generates a work that truly translates the Other into text (28). This is a difficult line to walk, in which animal representation honours the real animal rather than using it as a tool. In the case of these novels, the agenda appears set: reputation rehabilitation is a goal, and the anthropocentrism that encases the animal characters is a sign of their use as tools to achieve this goal.

Above all, however, these texts call on the subjectification of the protagonist characters and insist upon the characters' sentience. In *The Winter of the Fisher*, the fisher's individuality takes precedence even over his categorization as a member of his species, privileging *oneness* over *alwaysness*. His perspective as an animal is clear, and he demonstrates the ability to differentiate between individual humans and recognize at least one as a subject. *Never Cry Wolf* has more difficulty with this because of Mowat's highly anthropomorphized depictions of the wolf pack he is studying, but he, too, experiences the wolves as subjects. He fails in his attempts to "become wolf," and it is not possible to experience the wolves as subjects directly because Mowat is the human narrator, but Mowat experiences himself as seen by the wolves, as seeing the wolves see him. In these two novels, the characters of the protagonist species are animal subjects. In *Silverwing*, this subjectification is so strongly couched in the human-shaped minds of the protagonist species that, although the characters are undoubtedly subjects, they do not represent animal subjects. The characters have the shape of animals, but not the mentation of them.

This is significant in terms of decreasing cognitive distance because the idea that an individual is *like* oneself generates a sense of closeness, kinship, and identification. Given that negative beliefs are frequently extrapolated to a species as a whole (e.g., wolves are indiscriminate slaughterers), it should be possible for people to likewise extrapolate story-based positive associations to whole species as well.¹³ *Silverwing*'s subject characters, with the minds of humans and the shapes of bats, may have less impact on its readership because the animal characters are more (m)animal than animal. On the other hand, however, heightened sensibility is necessary before any text has a chance to rehabilitate anyone's perceptions of anything: if no one reads a text, it does not matter how well an animal is represented as simultaneously a subject and an animal. *Silverwing* has been extremely popular. More than one million copies of the novel and its sequels have been sold worldwide as of 2016 (Kerns 17). *Never Cry Wolf* has also enjoyed bestseller status for some time, was made into a film in 1983, and has been credited with helping to change popular perceptions about wolves ("Farley Mowat"). A Google search of "'Never Cry Wolf' 'Farley Mowat'" turns up more than fifty thousand results. By contrast, a search for "'The Winter of the Fisher' 'Cameron Langford'" returns just over six thousand results. Likewise, *The Winter of the Fisher* is almost invisible in terms of scholarship: it has received passing mentions in no more than half a dozen scholarly works, whereas scholars have analyzed aspects of *Never Cry Wolf* in some detail. Sensibility must come before subjectification, but subjectification is a key component in these texts' attempts to rehabilitate their protagonist species' reputations.

The Winter of the Fisher, *Silverwing*, and *Never Cry Wolf* come from different eras and use different narrative strategies, but they share at least one common goal: to bring their protagonist species out of the shadows and into the light of sensibility and familiarity. Like words, the representations of the animals can neither replace nor truly depict the animals themselves, but it may be possible, if the translation is good, for the animal subject to "show out" from around the animal representative (Lilburn 5), and to give readers a glimpse of the untranslatable other, the "alien being" of the thing itself (McKay 21). By variously emphasizing the erroneous nature of Western preconceptions of these animals, calling human representations of animals into question, and offering their own representations of their protagonist species as both *like* humans in select

¹³ For a discussion of the influence of childhood attachment to animal characters on adults' treatment of animals, see Marla V. Anderson and Antonia J. Z. Henderson's "Pernicious Portrayals: The Impact of Children's Attachment to Animals of Fiction on Animals of Fact."

ways and yet subjects and Other, these texts also reject the notion that their protagonist species are reducible to stereotypes, symbolism, or *thingness*. Batt writes that “our attitudes are influenced by the degree of biological or behavioural similarity between a given species and ourselves” (180), and the strategies that these stories use play into these similarities: they create characters that are *like* people, up to and including being subjects in their own right. If enough people read the stories, and absorb the concept or the emotional affectivity that is a component of social proximity, then these stories have the potential to change the way Westerners think about and treat these species.

4 Noble Victims: Values Education and Conservationist Activism

We live out our threescore and ten, and tie our knots
and lines only to ourselves. We take solace in
pictures, and we wipe the hills of history.

- Macdonald, *H Is for Hawk* 265

Ernest Thompson Seton makes a number of pointed comments in “Redruff, the Story of the Don Valley Partridge” (1898), a short story that chronicles Redruff’s life and his death in an illegally set trap. Seton asks, “[h]ave the wild things no moral or legal rights?” and demands, “[w]hat right has man to inflict such a long and fearful agony on a fellow-creature, simply because that creature does not speak his language?” (295). In his prefatory note in the volume, he writes that “Redruff really lived in the Don Valley north of Toronto, and many of my companions will remember him. He was killed in 1889, between Sugar Loaf and Castle Frank, by a creature whose name I have withheld, as it is the species, rather than the individual, that I wish to expose” (“Note” 11). The story vilifies the poacher, a man depicted as a squatter utterly lacking in morals (265-66). It uses the dehumanizing term “creature” to describe him while elevating Redruff to the position of “fellow-creature,” with “fellow” here indicating an essential connection between readers and the bird and also suggesting an informal sort of humanity or personhood belonging to the bird.¹

Seton is not alone in using animal stories to take a stand. Animal stories have been used as agents of social change since the end of the nineteenth century. They have been used as tools for understanding humanity’s place in the natural world, for debating the ethics of human – and humane – treatment of animals, and for pushing the boundaries separating “the human” from “the animal.” As a nation, Canada has a long history of literary activism as it relates to animals. Margaret Marshall Saunders’ *Beautiful Joe* (1894), a book whose chronicling of the life of an abused dog serves as a means to moralize about the treatment of domestic animals, was Canada’s first bestseller (McHugh 212). From roughly the same period, Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles

¹ The Introduction discusses the use of animal terms to dehumanize people.

G. D. Roberts, who have been credited with co-founding the short, realistic wild animal story, both added their voices to discussions of animal rights. Selections from Seton's prefatory "Note to the Reader" (1898) are particularly well known in this regard: there, he asserts an essential kinship of and likeness between humans and nonhuman animals, and espouses animal rights on that basis (11-12). Later writers, including Farley Mowat and Fred Bodsworth, built on this foundation to create popular texts that remain powerful voices for conservation and change in Canadian literature. This chapter uses Roberts' "The Aigrette" (1916), Bodsworth's *Last of the Curlews* (1954), and Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf* (1963) to examine one facet of a wealth of activist/environmentalist animal literature: conservationist animal stories written by Euro-Canadian men. These texts actively position themselves as voices in debates about conservation and, as such, they emphasize both the intrinsic worth of their protagonist species and humankind's power over nonhuman life, and they do so from the segment of Canadian society that for the last few hundred years has played a dominant role in determining the fates of Canadian species and ecosystems.

Activist animal literature represents animals in both senses of the term: literally, through the construction of linguistically based images of animals, and in the sense of advocating, as one who speaks on behalf of animals and/or the environment more broadly.² This literature engages with loaded concepts that have real-world implications for nonhuman animals, humans, and the environment. It prods issues of cruelty, morality, ethical obligations, and animal genocide. It depicts human-caused suffering in unflinching detail. It interrogates the boundaries of language and the use of human language as an exclusionary tool. Lawrence Buell explains that representations of the physical environment matter "aesthetically, conceptually, [and] ideologically" because although language cannot replicate landscapes, "it can be bent toward or away from them" (33), and, similarly, so too can language bend toward or away from the animals who inhabit those landscapes. Stories have the power to inspire change. Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty* (1877), a cornerstone of animal activism, is "[o]ne of the most powerful artifacts that was both cause and consequence of the changing attitudes" of the nineteenth century (Irvine 50). Similarly, *Beautiful Joe* "revolutionized a generation's view of animal welfare" and "defined the

² This phrasing borrows from Lawrence Buell's discussion of environmental rhetoric, in which he points out "language's capacity to represent both in the sense of 'image' and in the sense of 'advocate'" (45).

international movement that changed the way people treated animals” (Chez 11). Texts have the power to effect change through the values that they espouse.

Conservationist discourse also has strong ties to colonialism and colonial development, and, as Arun Agrawal points out, its history has many “patronizing and dominating motifs” (464). Agrawal suggests that the Western colonial mission to “develop” conquered lands and to “better” Indigenous peoples has been “displaced on to the need to conserve natural resources” (466-67, 471): in both cases, Western colonizers act upon (perceived) passive recipients. Agrawal provides a doctor/patient analogy, in which the “underdeveloped” area or natural resource in question exercises no control, but instead waits for the physician to administer the necessary medication (471). Thus, biodiversity became another kind of natural resource, as “many people sense a degree of responsibility for species in other lands as part of mankind’s patrimony” (Myers 200). In Canada, too, the colonial – and anthropocentric impulse – was strong. North America’s designation of protected spaces, now typically considered part of Canada’s conservation history, occurred originally to protect natural features such as hot springs for *human* use (Altmeyer 101). Accordingly, Parks Canada practiced predator control (MacEachern 198), paying bounties within the confines of national parks, while Canada as a nation practiced similar methods. In the 1921-22 season, for example, “bounty was paid on over 30 000 coyotes and 3500 wolves” in Canada (MacEachern 198, 200). Predators threatened game animals and livestock, and in his analysis of Canada’s history of predator control, Alan MacEachern goes so far as to say that they were also “seen as cutting against the divine grain, usurping what was otherwise human’s dominion” (198). The discourse of conservation, perhaps particularly in the writing of white men, sounds notes of colonialism in its tropes of animal victimization and “white man’s burden” to care for these conquered species. The prominence of this type of story in the history of Canadian animal activism reveals how the animal in the national imagination has been shaped by colonial perspectives and ideologies.

Roberts, Bodsworth, and Mowat have deliberately engaged with the power of story to further aspects of conservationist principles. Roberts rarely focuses on conservationism as explicitly as he does in “The Aigrette,” but his opus of animal stories condemns indiscriminate slaughter (Dunlap, “Realistic” 244), and specifically targets poaching as reprehensible.³ “The

³ “The White-Slashed Bull” (1907), for example, comments on “the evil work of the game poachers” (*House* 124-27).

Aigrette” is one of the earliest conservationist realistic animal stories ever written, and Roberts’ position as the co-founder of the realistic animal story lends added importance to his work. *Last of the Curlews* and *Never Cry Wolf* are popular later works, and although “The Aigrette” has been relegated to obscurity, Roberts’ animal stories were once among the most-read Canadian texts (Altmeyer 100). *Last of the Curlews* and *Never Cry Wolf* both follow in the tradition of the realistic animal story that Roberts established, and they too are invested in promoting conservation through their work. Bodsworth and Mowat are, in fact, known for using their literature as a means to enact personal conservationist principles. Bodsworth was a lifelong member and former president of Ontario Nature, a conservationist group dedicated to protecting both habitat and threatened species, and spoke out against the continued use of fossil fuels as early as in 1971 (Consiglio A17). Caroline Schultz, the executive director of this group, noted that Bodsworth “mentored several generations that have gone on to be important forces in the conservation community,” and that *Last of the Curlews* specifically acted as an innervating force (in Consiglio A17). Mowat, too, was an advocate for the environment and environmental action, and in 2007 he and his wife donated two hundred acres of coastal property as conservation land (“Farley’s Ark”).

These three texts have been selected because of their strong historical and cultural connections to conservation and conservation movements in Canada. “The Aigrette” is one of the earliest examples of the realistic animal story used expressly as a tool for conservation, and, despite its current state of obscurity, it remains, in Joseph Gold’s words, “one of the most powerful pleas for the conservation of the beautiful and the interesting” in Canadian animal literature (Introduction xvi). Moreover, Roberts’ animal stories were in high demand at the time of its publication, and so the stand that Roberts takes in this story would have been widely noted. *Last of the Curlews* and *Never Cry Wolf* were immediately popular. The former “has never been out of print, selling 3 million copies in eight languages” (MacKay E4), and quickly became so successful that the proceeds from book sales allowed Bodsworth retire from journalism (Consiglio A17). Of the latter, also a bestseller, Erich Klinghammer writes that it has had “a greater impact on the general public than biologists have” with regard to changing attitudes about wolves (85). Klinghammer comments that he has “found that more people have first become interested in wolves through [*Never Cry Wolf*] than from any other source” (85). Stephen Kellert holds the wolf up as “a powerful symbol of changing attitudes toward the natural world” (110), and Marta Dvorak enlarges upon this, writing that *Never Cry Wolf* “made people aware of an astounding

interdependence between predator and prey” and “contributed to the growth of a movement proning an Orphic society that adapts rather than conquers, that has relearnt to coexist and to conserve” (235). This chapter revisits *Never Cry Wolf* to explore this added facet: while Chapter Three focuses on the wolves themselves – how they are popularly perceived, the wolf-narrator relationship, lupine subjectivity, the wolves’ relatability, etc. – Chapter Four shifts the angle of perspective to conservation. This chapter highlights new aspects of the text, as well as reviewing previously mentioned sections from this new angle. *Never Cry Wolf*, *Last of the Curlews*, and “The Aigrette” were all popular in their time. They are artefacts of some of the conservationist controversies prevalent during the decades in which they were published, as well as voices adding to the dialogue.

These stories represent Euro-Canadian conservationist writing from close to the origins of the realistic wild animal story – Roberts’ “The Aigrette” was first anthologized in 1916 – to the 1960s, which approximately marks the advent of conservationist institutions such as the World Wildlife Fund (1961) and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (1962) and governmental management of the populations of declining species, such as with and the United States of America’s Endangered Species Act (1966) and Canada’s Species at Risk Act (2002). They appeared in a Canada that was, like much of the rest of the world, in the midst of renegotiating ideas about the species boundary, coming to grips with the concept that humans as a species were capable of wiping other species from existence, and engaging in the moral quandaries that accompanied such knowledge. “It may be,” Mowat wrote in his preface to the 1973 edition of *Never Cry Wolf*, “that there is still time to prevent mankind from committing yet another in the long list of his crimes against nature – the elimination from this planet of a fellow creature which has at least an equal *right* to life” (vix). This is a rallying cry, and while Mowat might have been alone of these three authors to state his purposes so bluntly – and only after the fact, since the original edition includes no prefatory explanation – all three texts are calls to action, and not to governments but to individuals.

A critical aspect of this call to action is education. Each of the stories provides careful physical and physiological descriptions of their protagonist species – Bodsworth’s Eskimo curlew, for instance, probes in the mud with his “strange bill,” which is “curiously adapted for this manner of feeding,” being “two-and-a-half inches long” and “strikingly down-curved, almost sickle-like,” a shape that allows him to feel with the bill’s sensitive tip for small crustaceans and insect larvae

(21) – and these descriptions paint a picture of what the species looks and acts like. As conservationist texts, it is important for them to establish their credibility, and accurate depictions of their protagonist species' physiological characteristics are an important part of building trust in the texts' assessments.

Animal stories regularly go out of their way to provide credentials, often but not exclusively in prefatory materials. Although there is no introduction or author's note to the anthology within which "The Aigrette" was published, Roberts regularly highlighted his own credibility, with statements ranging from current knowledge of various species to his personal experience with wildlife. In *The Haunters of the Silences*, for example, Roberts notes that he has "spared no pains to make these stories accord, as far as the facts of natural history are concerned, with the latest scientific information" ("Prefatory" vi), and he reiterates this sentiment in his introductions to many other volumes of animal stories. Mowat takes a different tactic in *Never Cry Wolf*. In this text, Mowat positions himself as a naïve narrator, but his direct observations of his protagonist species place him in a position of authority, so that his first-hand experience of wolves supersedes the contrasting stories told by a bumbling bureaucracy and scientific colleagues who use "the raw material of life" solely as "fodder for the nourishment of calculating machines" (9). His lived experience, set against government and scientific communities depicted as myopic and deeply flawed, provides the credibility needed for the narrator to debunk the beliefs of the otherwise monolithic establishments. The double-voiced discourse of the prevailing views of wolves and Mowat's experience of wolves, which Chapter Three explores, becomes a question of hearsay versus evidence, and evidence triumphs. For Bodsworth, nonfiction reports of Eskimo curlews do not simply tell the story of the fate of the species as a whole; they also lend credence to the individual, fictional story of *Last of the Curlews*, and to the novel's underlying message.

These credentials are significant, because if a text is taken seriously as a work that makes credible points about the natural world, it can and sometimes does have an impact on human behaviour toward and even legislation and policies about nonhuman animals and ecosystems. Nature storytelling, Linda Vance writes, is "a form of ethical discourse, modelling . . . beliefs about human/nature relationships," and these stories in their turn shape other stories (176). Vance believes that stories shape attitudes, and "The Aigrette," *Never Cry Wolf*, and *Last of the Curlews* are examples of attitude-shaping texts in action. Nor are these texts alone in having a literary impact on Canadian history specifically. John Sandlos, in his examination of the early biological

surveys of northern Canada, explains that nineteenth- and early twentieth-century sportsmen's and naturalists' writings and recommendations were critical to the development of wildlife policy for that region (409). In Sandlos' example, literature is a basis for concrete changes to and implementation of governmental policy.

Ralph H. Lutts notes that animal stories have been "overtly tied to the animal welfare movement. They presented animals as individual, sentient creatures capable of feeling mental and physical pain," and so their depictions of human impacts on nonhuman lives, often from nonhuman perspectives, promote humanitarian responses" ("Wild Animal Story" 9). These stories are not so much about the welfare of individual animals as they are about the welfare of species and, to a limited extent, the ecosystems within which those species thrive. They have a "moral agenda," as it were, of promoting the conservation of species, and both textual credibility and depictions of animals designed to promote empathy for those animals are tools used in the advancement of that agenda. Bodsworth's novel proper is almost completely devoid of physical human presence, but through the nonfictional accounts that separate each chapter, *Last of the Curlews* makes it clear that the curlew's primary distress – his aloneness – is the direct result of human slaughter. An account from 1861 states that "ALTHOUGH SIX OR EIGHT GUNNERS . . . KEPT UP A CONTINUAL ROUND OF FIRING UPON THE POOR BIRDS, THEY CONTINUED TO FLY DISTRACTEDLY ABOUT OVER OUR HEADS, NOTWITHSTANDING THE NUMBERS THAT EVERY MOMENT FELL," while another from 1906-07 reports that the Eskimo curlew was "FORMERLY AN ABUNDANT BUT NOW A VERY RARE" visitor to Labrador (48). The curlew's loneliness, dimly conceived but often felt, comes from the slaughter of others of his species, reported in the novel's included documents and recorded in the shooting death of the only other Eskimo curlew the protagonist ever finds. Like Bodsworth, Roberts also uses textual placement in the advancement of his cause: he sandwiches an account of the egrets' slaughter between two scenes involving a young woman called "the Girl" and her suitor, "the Man," and uses the deaths of the birds and the Girl's ignorance and hypocrisy to denigrate the wearing of egrets' feathers. "What brutes men are!" the Girl complains when a driver whips his horse, but "[p]erhaps they can't help being cruel! They have no intuition, so how can they understand?" (108). The aigrette still in her hair makes a mockery of her concern. As Chapter Three discusses, *Never Cry Wolf* uses a sort of double-voiced discourse that, Marta Dvorak explains, deconstructs myths about wolves while constructing another discourse, "using irony to defamiliarize

stereotypes, to contest authority, to unmask the constructed nature of conventions and norms that lay claim to absolute, universal value” (229). “Whenever and wherever men have engaged in the mindless slaughter of animals (including other men),” Mowat writes, “they have often attempted to justify their acts by attributing the most vicious or revolting qualities to those they would destroy” (167). Thus, by engaging sympathies with individual representatives of the species and by denouncing, literally or by implication, the human actions that have led to the plights depicted in the texts, the texts attempt to persuade readers to take the “side” of the animal as it is depicted by the text.

Education solely through the dissemination of fact is not sufficient to change opinions, perceptions, or reactions to nonhuman animals. It is not enough to say, for example, that wolves kill whatever individuals are easiest to kill, which are typically the weak, sick, or injured. Because people tend “to use additional knowledge to rationalize and reinforce rather than change strongly held attitudes toward the living world” (Kellert 110), the dissemination of purely factual information is not likely to have an ameliorating effect on a negative opinion, for example, or to otherwise inspire any sort of change in personal attitudes or behaviours. Animal stories, however, engage readers on emotional levels as well as intellectual ones. The result can be increased interest in a protagonist species or human effects upon that species, as illustrated by Klinghammer’s anecdote about individuals’ interest in wolves originating from reading *Never Cry Wolf*. Kellert divides what he calls “values education” into a two-pronged approach that involves both cognitive and affective learning. Cognitive learning is the process of knowledge acquisition, such as that readily available through textbooks, which Kellert believes is complete – as far as human understanding of the natural world is concerned – when this learning “develops an awareness of how humans impact the living world, as well as the skills necessary for exercising responsible stewardship and intervention” (211). Affective learning is the process of “cultivating an emotional appreciation of how the living world offers people profound opportunities for kinship, wonder, and beauty,” and one method of cultivating such sentiment is by “building attachments to the familiar and appealing in nature, evoking both empathy and loyalty” (Kellert 211). According to Kellert, this combination of learning types is potent enough to alter systems of values that affect people’s ways of relating to the world and its creatures.

The combinations of fact and emotional charge are common to animal stories as a group, but are particularly pronounced in the conservationist animal stories examined here, whose tales

are intended to influence human behaviour toward imperilled species and ecosystems. The factual aspects of the texts facilitate cognitive learning by providing information about what the protagonist species is, what value it has, and what impact human actions have had upon the species, as long as sufficient credibility has been established for readers to treat the stories as reliable sources of information. In conjunction, the personal stories of individual animals create emotional attachment to the animal characters and empathy for their plight. Together, cognitive and affective learning at work in conservationist animal stories have the potential not only to involve readers in the lives of animal characters but also to create investment in the living species represented on the page.

4.1 The Value of Animals

“The Aigrette,” *Last of the Curlews*, and *Never Cry Wolf* depict their protagonist species as both valuable to humans and intrinsically valuable. They are not alone in asserting the value of nonhumans. In his discussion of the rise and fall of feather fashions, for instance, Robin W. Doughty divides the arguments against the killing of birds for feathers into the utilitarian and humanitarian. In particular, he notes that cruelty to animals was a humanitarian charge levelled by most opponents of the feather fashion industry (64), and that two strong utilitarian arguments were (1) birds’ usefulness in terms of their consumption of insects harmful to crops and (2) the patrimony argument that a species should be preserved “for posterity” (59, 90). Versions of both these utilitarian and humanitarian arguments appear in the stories discussed here.

However, these stories also position their protagonist species as intrinsically valuable, in and of themselves. Even the humanitarian arguments of the feather fashion debate propose that the killing of birds or the wearing of their plumage *affects humans* morally and religiously (see Doughty 31); for example, one of James Buckland’s arguments about the value of birds is that “there is a spiritual teaching, an uplifting influence, in the study of birds which tends to make a man act more constantly from principle, which tends to give a new and a more wholesome tone to his whole life” (710). Thus does a human reap spiritual and moral rewards from the study of birds, by which Buckland presumably means the observation of living birds. In “The Aigrette,” *Last of the Curlews*, and *Never Cry Wolf*, however, anthropocentric arguments frame texts in which the protagonist species are valuable as sentient individuals, and not merely for their physical, economical, and spiritual effects on the human condition. Misao Dean identifies the values

“celebrated” in Roberts’ (m)animal characters as: “independence, physical superiority, ability to learn and adapt, superior cunning, honesty, trust, [and] ability to cooperate toward material ends” (“Political Science” 310). These qualities and others are present, in varying degrees, in all three of these texts, and are not simply a celebration of masculinist ideals but also a development of protagonist species in such a way as to appeal to the sympathies of cultures for whom such values are essential components of valuable, worthwhile individuals.

Texts that promote species and ecosystem conservation are inherently concerned with the concept of worth, because people will attempt to preserve only what they consider to be *worth* preserving. Kellert argues that four broad, intersecting categories of factors influence people’s attitudes toward wildlife: knowledge of wildlife, including biological and ecological knowledge and awareness of issues or problems; human-animal relationships, such as a species’ conservation status or conflict between humans and wildlife; perceptions of specific species, such as aesthetic preferences and conceptions of species’ overall intelligence; and what he calls “basic wildlife values,” of which there are nine (100). Rendering these systems of belief more finely than Doughty’s division into the utilitarian and humanitarian, Kellert considers these wildlife values to be “a taxonomy of basic values [that are] a way of organizing and describing people’s beliefs about animals in nature” (6). Although they are somewhat limiting, the categorization and definition that Kellert supplies offer a concrete means to parse and discuss aspects of valuing in “*The Aigrette*,” *Last of the Curlews*, and *Never Cry Wolf*. The nine values Kellert lists are: naturalistic, humanistic, ecologicistic and scientific, utilitarian, aesthetic, symbolic, moralistic, negativistic, and dominionistic (6). Some of these sets of beliefs about animals can increase one’s perceptions of a species’ value, while others can decrease those perceptions. For instance, negativistic fear of a species might decrease a person’s perception of that species’ value, but ecologicistic valuing of that species’ role in its ecosystem might balance that fear. These values are not meant to polarize human belief systems; people likely possess all of these sets of beliefs, to greater or lesser degrees and varying between species.

The texts examined here make statements about the value of their protagonist species. Although they partake of aspects of Kellert’s systems of value, they do not fit precisely into this mould, and no single text touches upon all of the values that Kellert expresses. All, however, promote values that increase the worth of their protagonist species to and for humans. The subsections below discuss these values with regard to these texts, with extended discussions of

how aspects of aesthetic, symbolic, and moralistic systems of valuing work in these stories to promote both the protagonist species' worth to humans and their intrinsic worth, and how aspects of dominionistic, utilitarian, and negativistic systems of valuing function to subjugate the protagonist species in the texts.

4.1.1 *Naturalistic Value*

Naturalistic value encompasses the pleasure “people obtain from the direct experience of nature and wildlife” (Kellert 11). This value does not transfer well to literature, except insofar as human characters model such value. These three texts have very few human characters: the chief benefit that the humans in “The Aigrette” and *Last of the Curlews* derive is utilitarian, in terms of the material benefit that they can take from nature. *Never Cry Wolf*, however, does incorporate some naturalistic value in Mowat's attempt to “go to the wolves”: Mowat explains that he “would have been glad to spend all [his] time afield, living the life of a pseudo-wolf to the fullest” (156). The time he spends observing the wolves is not part of his job description, and is therefore something that he considers worthwhile, and also enjoyable for its own sake.⁴

4.1.2 *Ecologistic-Scientific Value*

Kellert lumps ecologistic and scientific value together because of their emphasis on nature's patterns, structures, and functions and the desire to comprehend – and sometimes control – nature through that study (13). There are some differences between the approaches: the ecologistic view is more integrative, and emphasizes “interdependence among species and habitats,” while the scientific view stresses “structures and processes below the level of whole organisms” (13). Kellert speculates that “[u]nderstanding nature's functions and structures” may instill “a cautious respect for maintaining natural systems and a reluctance to overexploit species and habitats” (14). Understanding the protagonist species and the world within which they live is central to both *Never Cry Wolf* and *Last of the Curlews*. Mowat emphasizes wolves' ecological

⁴ Kellert notes that mental and physical health benefits accrue to naturalistic experiences (11), and there is some indication that the experience of *images* of nature can have physical effects, such as the reduction of perceptions of sensory pain (Vincent 216-17). Evidence indicates that people visualize object words that are represented as text (e.g., reading the word “wolf,” people's brains visualize a representation of a wolf) (Anderson et al. 317), and so it is possible that people experience some health benefits from reading texts that are heavily focused on nature.

roles – quality control for caribou, population control for mice, and internal regulation as a species through low breeding rates predicated on the availability of territory. Bodsworth provides descriptions of the Eskimo curlew and its adaptations, as well as habitat descriptions. Roberts offers less in the way of ecologicistic value in terms of the necessity of the egrets for ecological balance or the species' highly specialized adaptations, as Mowat and Bodsworth do, but emphasizes the break in the “circle of life” when the poacher eradicates the colony.

4.1.3 *Aesthetic and Symbolic Values*

Aesthetic and symbolic values intertwine in these three texts, as one might expect with any medium in which language and imagery meet, both laden with associations of beauty and signification. The natural world is a source of much symbolism, and Kellert suggests that “[a]nimals seem to play a dominant role in the symbolic value of nature” (18). All three of these species are or have been symbols in and of themselves. In the early twentieth century, egret populations were critically low, and egrets became symbolic of “a need to save native species endangered by the feather trade” (Doughty 154). According to Carolyn McGrath, the Eskimo curlew has long been symbolic of the mystery inherent in wilderness spaces (269), but, like the egret in the early twentieth century, it has also come to symbolize both the risk of extinction and the effects of human hunting pressures on species populations. Like “The Aigrette,” *Last of the Curlews* was written on the cusp of extinction, but egret populations recovered while curlew populations did not. The lack of physical evidence of their existence in recent decades means that the species “can be considered extinct” (Jarić and Roberts 2812). Wolves, meanwhile, are in the process of undergoing a symbolic shift. Like the other stories, *Never Cry Wolf* depicts its protagonist species sympathetically, but wolf-human relationships differ from those of the other two stories because the protagonist animals are apex predators. As such, they have been considered threatening to humans and human property throughout Euro-Canadian history. Douglas W. Smith et al. explain that “[w]olves were considered competition for wild prey and destroyers of domestic animals and therefore obstacles to the purposes of civilization” (108) – and, implicitly, to colonization – and continue to be treated as such in some areas even in the twenty-first century. However, sympathy for wolves has grown, which some attribute to continued urbanization, asserting that wolves have become “poster beasts for an environmental movement” (Coleman 203, 224). *Never Cry Wolf* is particularly significant in literary and cultural terms

because of its focus on such a controversial animal, which to some symbolizes “the arch type of ravin, the beast of waste and desolation” (Roosevelt 51) and yet to others is an icon of wilderness. The wolf’s reputation continues to be critical to the population’s recovery in areas from which it had been extirpated (Coleman 233), and is crucial to its long-term survival.⁵ In the simplest of terms, then, wolves signify wilderness and Eskimo curlews extinction, and the egrets of the early twentieth century were icons of persecution in the name of fashion. However, their symbolism in these stories extends beyond that of the protagonist species themselves, and this section now turns to aesthetic value and the symbolism that adheres to depictions of the animals’ appearances.

Aesthetic value is concerned with the sensory appeal of wildlife. Kellert’s focus is on visual aesthetic, but the same principle can be applied to other sensory data: in general, euphony is preferred over cacophony, for instance. Kellert suggests that the aesthetic experience of nature “may reflect an intuitive recognition of an ideal modeled in nature,” in that aesthetically pleasing images (in his visual analysis of aesthetic) “suggest a striving after integrity, harmony, and balance in nature” (16-17). He notes that although people generally consider aesthetic response to be part of one’s individual preferences, most aesthetic responses have a “universal character” such as “color, light, contrast, texture” that indicates consistent principles across peoples and cultures (15). These aesthetic elements “seem to be associated with feelings of harmony, order, and an almost striving after an ideal” (Kellert 15). In short, Kellert is suggesting that aesthetic value indicates a desire for order and coherence, and that aspects of nature that appear to demonstrate these qualities evoke sensual pleasure.

Darwin writes that “birds appear to be the most æsthetic of all animals” (232), and “The Aigrette” is a story about the appeal of egret feathers to a particular woman and the cost of acquiring those feathers. The opening line, “[t]he Girl, sitting before her dressing-table, looked at

⁵ Wolves continue to be controversial animals, threatened by both individuals and government-sponsored programs, and their threat to human welfare – directly and indirectly – is the acknowledged force behind any push for their destruction. In 2015, for example, the Government of British Columbia launched a multi-year plan to kill approximately five hundred wolves in the province in an effort to save declining woodland caribou numbers (Hume). The history of wolf eradication programs and hunting regulations in North America is well documented; for further reading on this, see works such as MacEachern’s “Rationality and Rationalization in Canadian National Parks Predator Policy” and Gilbert Proulx and Dwight Rodtka’s “Predator Bounties in Western Canada Cause Animal Suffering and Compromise Wildlife Conservation Efforts.”

the fair reflection in the great mirror and smiled happily” (95), is all about aesthetic pleasure. The Girl is gazing at a reflection of herself and judging it to be “fair,” with all the multiplicity of meaning that that implies. The remainder of the paragraph lends credence to the Girl’s judgement, describing her colouring as flawless and “tender,” her skin as possessed of “luminous whiteness,” her eyes and mouth as “kind and gay,” and her hair as “bright” (95).

Even the crowning glory of the Girl’s hair, however, is “surmounted by a tuft of straight egret plumes, as firm, pearl-white, and delicate as a filigree of frost” (95). The choice of verb here depicts the aigrette as rising above the young woman physically, but also as surpassing her in beauty. In this section, both the Girl and the “ethereal white plume” receive narrative attention in addition to compliments from the Girl’s suitor, the Man (96-97), and the text begins the process of ascribing value not just to the feather as a beautiful thing, but to the feather as a thing of beauty on a living bird. The Man is a source of authority in this text, by virtue of his sex, age, and greater knowledge (i.e., the Man is both male and adult, in contrast to the Girl’s diminutive appellation despite her status as a female old enough for courting). Because “nothing could heighten your beauty,” the Man tells the Girl, “[y]ou do not need [the aigrette], and I’m rather afraid the bird did” (96). He is aware of the birds’ suffering, while the Girl remains in deliberate ignorance, as she is “very tender-hearted, and loth to be reminded of unpleasant things” (96). The Man regains her favour by putting her pleasure above the birds’ plight, saying, “It can’t make you more beautiful, but if it makes you happier, that’s quite enough for me. . . . [A] very little pleasure for you is of more consequence in my eyes than a thousand million birds” (97). Thus is the aesthetic – and economic – value of the aigrette set. It is a thing of beauty, surpassing the beauty of the Girl in the narrative if not in the words of the Girl’s suitor. Moreover, it provides sensual pleasure: it pleases everyone who looks upon it, Girl, maid, and Man. This pleasure is worth the blood and coin paid for the plume. The Girl admires it and refuses to hear more about the lives that the aigrette cost, and the Man admires it and assures her that he values her pleasure more than any number of egrets’ lives.

The aesthetic value of the aigrette having been set, the story now turns to the egrets from which such feathers come,⁶ and the juxtaposition of the feather-bearing human with the feather-bearing birds creates a contrast that is distinctly unflattering to the Girl. The egret's "snow-pure plumage shone in the sunlight like spun silver," and the feathers that are taken for aigrettes are "long, exquisitely delicate plumes, as white and apparently fragile as the frost-flowers on a window. These [are the egret's] festal adornment, worn, by herself and her mate alike, only in the nesting season" (101-01). The beauty and grace of her aspect heighten the pathos of the scene, in which a man snares egrets on their nests and cuts the feathers from the living birds. The tactic takes advantage of their parental devotion, as they answer the hungry cries of their offspring even after they understand the danger awaiting them. The story counterpoints its descriptions of snowy plumes, in this scene, with words and phrases of blood, pain, suffering, and violence: "seized," "jerked," "agony," "scalped," "hacked," and "weltering in its blood" are some examples (101-06). Within a day, every egret in the colony is dead. "Few characteristics of life so consistently arouse such strong emotions in people under so many circumstances," Kellert writes of the natural world and its creatures (14), and the aesthetic appeal of the egrets and their feathers heightens the pathos of their deaths, engendering sentiment and sympathy for the living birds and horror at the manner of their deaths. This begins with the aesthetic valuing of the Girl's aigrette and builds throughout the scene of the egrets' slaughter.

The egrets' beauty enhances the ugliness of their deaths. Commenting on a particular description of the egrets, Gold writes that the story depicts the birds as "a decorative and colourful relief to landscape and in some way a civilized pattern in the midst of 'wilderness.' The effect of horror at the birds' cruel slaughter is thus enhanced" (Introduction xviii). Such conclusions recall Kellert's suggestion that aesthetic appeal stems from a desire for order and coherence. The contrast between the beauty of the birds and the horror of their deaths extends throughout this middle section of the story in the words used to describe the physical expression of the birds in form and movement set against the words and phrases that depict their deaths. The juxtaposition of the egrets' grace and beauty with the jerky movements and ugly manner in which they die emphasizes

⁶ The term "aigrette" derives from the word "egret" and is indicative of "tall, slim, stately feathers that are white in their natural state" (R. Abbot 279-80). An aigrette might be fashioned from any species whose feathers meet this description, but Roberts' focus on egrets in the second portion of the story makes it clear that they are the source of the Girl's plumes.

the essential ugliness – and cruelty – of egret feather procurement, and provides a commentary on the superficiality of the aesthetic appeal of the aigrette-wearing Girl. Gold claims a symbolic difference between the feathers on the birds and the feathers on the Girl, writing that “the feathers which were a warm covering for the birds have become like frost on the girl” (Introduction xviii). This is not entirely true. The feathers *are* essential to the birds, but the imagery of frost and snow recurs throughout the story with regard to the egrets’ feathers. The repetitive imagery of the feathers’ whiteness symbolizes purity. The story describes the egret feathers as pure and ethereal several times (e.g., 95, 96, 97, 100); purity, of course, indicates that a thing is uncontaminated, physically or symbolically, and ethereality has several possible definitions, including delicacy and refinement, and connotes the quality of being heavenly in nature. Because these qualities belong to the feathers, they are, like the feathers, natural to the birds but affected in the Girl. The Girl “is in love . . . with herself, with the image in the mirror, and as a potential mate makes a sad comparison with the devoted birds slaughtered on the lake” (Gold, Introduction xvi-xvii), for just as her finery contrasts with the “nuptial plumes” of the egrets (Roberts, “Aigrette” 102), so does her behaviour. The Girl’s physical attractiveness remains high, but the story turns her aesthetic appeal against her by transferring the aesthetic value of the aigrette to the living birds and indicating that the Girl’s appeal is only a façade, while the egrets’ beauty is an external manifestation of internal virtues that include parental devotion and self-sacrifice.

Last of the Curlews and *Never Cry Wolf* also make some use of the appeal of the aesthetically pleasing. *Last of the Curlews* is an illustrated book, with what appear to be ink-based sketches of curlews, scenes that include curlews, and occasionally other animals at the beginning of each chapter and interspersed throughout the text. Currently, illustrations are more typically found in children’s or scientific narratives, although adult literature was frequently illustrated in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There is a history of the use of illustrations in realistic animal stories, including Roberts’ and Seton’s animal stories (Seton typically created his own illustrations), possibly as a result of the alignment of animal stories with children’s literature, as Chapter Two discusses, or realistic animal stories’ dedication to scientific accuracy, which Chapter One addresses. These illustrations assist readers in their visualizations of the curlews, who are, John Stevens writes, “set apart by beauty from the birds that are to survive them” (xi). The novel opens on a quotation from C. William Beebe’s *The Bird: Its Form and Function* that places greater value on animals than on music or art (xvii). Despite all its aesthetic appeal to eye or ear, he

asserts, the beauty created by the human mind cannot match that which already exists in nature, in living beings. *Last of the Curlews* thus begins by placing nature's beauty in a higher echelon than that which is human in origin, and then goes on to provide descriptions of its protagonist that emphasize size, paleness, grace, and softness of voice (e.g., 44, 83, 87). The Eskimo curlew's flight is particularly significant in this regard, because flying is a critical part of the curlew's life and because its movement and function are an aesthetic wonder. The curlew's every wing "stroke [is] an intricate series of gracefully co-ordinated actions merged with split-second precision into a single, smooth movement" so exquisitely engineered that the flap of the wings need not provide lift but only propulsion (40-41). The curlew is displayed to advantage against smaller, darker birds, and his pleasing shape is one that gives him an advantage in strength, endurance, and speed over all other shorebirds. The curlew's physicality, showcased in text and illustration, is a perceptible indicator of qualities that humans value, and these qualities extend into the curlew's behaviour as a leader and, later, a loyal and devoted mate.

Mowat's wolves are similarly pleasing to visualize. Their behaviours are depicted in culturally acceptable terms, as Chapter Three discusses, and even their physical qualities are culturally coded. In his preface, Mowat describes wolves as "extraordinarily highly evolved and attractive" (vii): these two qualities are apparently the most compelling in the case for lupine conservation. Of the mated pair, he describes George as "massive and eminently regal" and "silver-white," and Angeline as "slim, almost pure-white," and "[b]eautiful" (66-67). The third adult member of the pack is "smaller," "not so lithe and vigorous, and with a gray overcast to his otherwise white coat" (68). Physically, then, the mated pair possess all the virtues of sexual dimorphism that sexually dimorphic humans might find appealing, while "Uncle Albert" suffers in the comparative description. Angeline is nearly pure white, slim, and thick-furred, while George is large, regal, and cast in silver like an elder statesman, with similar prestige and power conferred by his size, age, and place in the social structure. Moreover, as with the birds in both "The Aigrette" and *Last of the Curlews*, the wolves live up to the symbolic billing of their attractive forms and pale colours by exemplifying any number of virtues associated with purity, including fidelity to their mates and devotion to their offspring. George and Angeline are "as devoted a mated pair as one could hope to find" (67). George is "[c]onscientious to a fault thoughtful of others, and affectionate within reasonable bounds," an ideal father (66). Angeline is "[b]eautiful, ebullient, passionate," and "there could have been no better mother anywhere" (67). This wolf

pack is, according to Mowat, representative of wolves everywhere, as all female wolves are “virginal until their second year,” and, unlike dogs and humans, wolves are “strict monogamists” (67).⁷ As with “The Aigrette,” *Never Cry Wolf* deliberately contrasts human behaviour with the behaviour of the protagonist species, and finds the humans wanting. The animals’ sensual attractiveness matches an internal attractiveness: virtue, as Western cultures recognize it.

The protagonist species’ aesthetic appeal is thus doing two things in these stories. It marks the species as appealing on a sensory level and so encourages an emotional response of pleasure in the species and distress in the destruction of the species. It also, however, functions symbolically to indicate the presence of lives whose emotional and/or cognitive virtue is as pleasing to traditional Western morals as the species’ physical aspects are pleasing to the senses.

4.1.4 *Humanistic Value*

Chapter Three has explored humanistic value at length, in terms of concepts such as social distance, anthropomorphism, and the text-generated affectivity that can and does influence how people treat real animals. In humanistic value, people express and develop “attachment, bonding, intimacy, and companionship” with wildlife and nature, regularly anthropomorphizing the individual animals for whom they feel affection (Kellert 21). “The humanistic experience of nature,” Kellert writes, “develops the capacities for caring, bonding, and kinship” (21). There is some overlap between moralistic and humanistic methods of valuing in these texts, and this chapter defers discussion of the valuing of feelings of closeness, likeness, or kinship to the subsection of kinship in the discussion of moralistic value.

4.1.5 *Moralistic Value: Rarity and Kinship*

Moralistic value is strongly identified with concern for animal welfare (Kellert 23). This value “flows from discerning a basic kinship binding all life together, and an ethic emerges directing humans to minimize harm to other creatures viewed as fundamentally like ourselves – particularly species characterized by the seeming capacities for sentience, reasoning, and directed

⁷ Again, qualities of *onceness* and *alwaysness* are valuable here in gauging the text’s mode, as Chapter One explores in detail. As Chapter Three notes, *Never Cry Wolf* is a boundary-straddling text: it tells a story, but it also contains elements, such as descriptions of how humans kill wolves, that are distinctly expository in nature.

self-action” (Kellert 23). Moralistic value is a broad term with many facets; two that are particularly prominent in the three stories examined here are rarity and kinship.

4.1.5(a) *Rarity*

Rarity is one of the primary driving forces behind hobbies such as coin collecting or games such as Pokémon Go, in which collectors and players attempt to acquire either specific rare objects or all objects, including rare ones.⁸ Such value placed on species can put added pressure on them. “The rarity of certain plumes,” Doughty notes, “lent them especial value” to the purveyors and purchasers of feathers for fashion (6), which could put additional hunting pressure on the birds who possessed the feathers. One study of rarity shows that people at zoos looked longer at, were willing to spend more money and suffer more discomfort to see, and took more risks to steal rare species than common ones, regardless of whether the species in question were *actually* rare or people only *thought* that they were (Angulo et al. 1333). Rarity, Paul F. Donald et al. conclude in their analysis of the study, “appears to carry its own intrinsic value” (7). This may well be the case. With regard to conservationism, however, the goal is not to acquire members of rare species, but to preserve members of rare species, and conservationist work by Euro-Canadian men appears to attempt do so by heightening the value of the rarity of *living* members of a species. This process often occurs through education about the role of human actions in causing this rarity, thus prompting people to rectify the mistakes of the human species out of a sense of moral obligation, ethical responsibility, or simple guilt. For this reason, rarity falls under moralistic value in this chapter.

As might be expected of a novel about a species considered “probably extinct” at the time of its writing (Stevens xiii), *Last of the Curlews* focuses on the Eskimo curlew’s rarity. In her review of it, McGrath notes that the text “gives a convincing portrait of the behavior that distinguishes this particular species from other shore birds” (269), and this act of distinguishing asserts that the Eskimo curlew is unique, that the loss of this species is an irreparable loss. Stevens writes that the novel is a “protest against the spoliation of what is truly native to the continent by the grosser influences of the invading civilization” (viii), a statement that speaks to humanity’s moral responsibility to the species. Similarly, Alec Lucas describes the novel as one that “gives exact scientific data, but combines them with a story of interest and poignancy based on the old

⁸ Pokémon Go is a particularly compelling example, given its slogan “Gotta Catch ‘Em All,” the lack of monetary impetus associated with playing, and the zoomorphic nature of the creatures.

motifs of the search and the hero's plight as the last of a vanishing race, a victim of man's greed and insensitivity" ("Nature" 403). These descriptions of "vanishing races" of animals are unsettlingly similar to the trope of the "vanishing Indian," and mark the colonial impulse behind the desire to mourn the (safely) lost being. In addition, the novel's emphasis on rarity calls on moralistic colonial obligations, as (white) humans are both the authors of the curlew's plight and the potential saviours of the species.

Last of the Curlews also depicts the curlew as a unique species, and intrinsically valuable because of its uniqueness. The opening quotation by Beebe is again instrumental in establishing this early. In full, it reads: "The beauty and genius of a work of art may be reconceived, though its first material expression be destroyed; a vanished harmony may yet again inspire the composer; but when the last individual of a race of living beings breathes no more, another heaven and another earth must pass before such a one can be again" (xvii). Compared favourably against the beauty and genius of music and art, the individual animal, belonging to a vanishing species, acquires intrinsic worth because it is both aesthetically pleasing and unique. While uniqueness and rarity are not synonymous, this quotation combines them; the species' rarity highlights its uniqueness.

Another aspect that underscores the protagonist species' rarity is the novel's fixation on the curlew's aloneness. The anecdotes that dot the text speak first to the former abundance of the species, and then to its dwindling numbers (e.g., 30, 48-49). Many of these anecdotes offer observations of an orgy of killing – "A WHOLLY UNREASONABLE AND UNCONTROLLED SLAUGHTER" (82) – in addition to a lament about the species' near-extinction. These notes, together with the curlew's story, point an accusatory moral finger at human behaviour, blaming people for driving the species to "EXTINCTION'S LIP" (19), and frame a plot driven by the protagonist curlew's search for "the female."

The protagonist curlew enters the story in a search for a mate. The story itself is androcentric in this respect: not only is the protagonist male, but his *raison d'être* is the search for a mate, a heteronormative sexual impulse that drives the protagonist and the plot. His quest is a masculine one. Reading *Hamlet's* "to be, or not to be" soliloquy, Harry Brod notes the poem's elucidation of the dichotomy between (feminine) passive feeling and (masculine) active response: "if we acknowledge and feel our psychological pain, we will cease to exist. 'To be,' to exist, on the other hand, is to take up arms, to oppose, to fight. This is not 'the human condition.' This is a historically specifically masculine way of understanding the relation between feeling and acting"

(22). The curlew is a creature of emotion and instinct, with little capacity to reason (Stevens x; Bodsworth 35). Nevertheless, his emotion drives him to action, and all of his actions are powered by his desire for a mate: he finds and defends territory in anticipation of a female's arrival, delays migration in anticipation of one, studies the flocks of birds in search of one, and, once found, assumes the role of suitor and protector. His questing, then, is a form of hunting. "Men," Brian Luke notes, "are often portrayed as innately predatory, with women and nonhuman animals as their natural prey" (97), and the curlew's pursuit of "the female" places him within a (Western) masculine frame: males are predatory, active, and dominant, females prey, passive, and subordinate. This frame holds throughout the novel, as the female takes a passive role first as the male's weaker follower and then as the farmer's victim.

The female's arrival completes the curlew's quest for a short time, but he must resume his search when a man kills her. Implicit in the novel is the suggestion that there *is* no other mate for the curlew. Just before the chapter in which the female is killed, Bodsworth has placed an anecdote of the last confirmed sighting of Eskimo curlews, believed to be a mated pair (Stevens xiii). The implication is that the species has effectively died with the female curlew, along with the male protagonist curlew's purpose in life, procreation. The curlew's rarity has put him in a position of perpetual solitude that is antithetical to his nature:

Why was he always alone? When the rabid fire of the mating time burned fiercely in every cell, where were the females of his species which the curlew's instinct promised springtime after springtime? And now with the time for the flocking come, why . . . were there none of the smaller and lighter-brown curlews he could recognize as his own kind? (35)

Even amid other birds, the curlew is always studying the flocks "for birds he would recognize as his own kindred" (44). This essential loneliness makes the curlew a bird embattled: instinct tells him to wait for his own kind, but instinct also tells him to migrate (52). Thus, when he finally succumbs to the need to migrate, he does so in a state of conflict. The female's arrival proves a respite from this, but when she dies, he flies north unrequited, "in silence, alone," for "[t]he tundra call was irresistible" (124). He ends as he began, defending his patch of tundra against all birds, waiting for a female who will not come. The curlew's rarity, underlined again and again by his persistent loneliness and aloneness, calls for an emotional response, for sympathy, pity, and sorrow

commensurate with the individual character's tragedy, and possibly extending into the tragedy of the species' extinction.

"The Aigrette" is more subtle in its use of rarity value. It was published amid great concern about the persecution of birds for feathers: between 1914 and 1921, the United States and England passed laws that restricted the trade of exotic plumage, during which time demand for egrets far exceeded supply (R. Abbot 280-81; Doughty 150, 154). Roberts approaches the birds' rarity as both commodity and animal in this story. Using much the same method as it does to contrast the aesthetic value of the Girl's aigrette with that of the birds themselves, "The Aigrette" first indicates the scarcity of the aigrette and then compares this to the scarcity of the egrets. The opening section marks the first time that the Girl has worn an aigrette (95), and the focus of Girl, maid, and Man upon the ornament makes it clear that the aigrette is both lovely and unusual. The Girl's "filmy garments and dainty adornments" merit no additional attention, but every human character who sees the Girl notices the aigrette, including, of course, the Girl herself (95-96).

Aigrettes are available for sale – "if I didn't buy the thing, some other woman would," the Girl explains (96) – and the story describes the market as consumer-driven, blaming the egrets' deaths on the women who wear their feathers. Such a position shows a cavalier disregard for men's involvement in the feather trade. Virginia Woolf called men to account for the slaughter of birds in "The Plumage Bill" (1920), writing that women may wear the feathers, but it is men who kill the birds, "not vicariously, but with their own hands" (288). For the most part, however, the controversy surrounded the wearing of birds rather than the hunting of them (Doughty 38), and so women bore the brunt of the blame. Roberts' "The Aigrette" participates in this discourse. The poacher who kills the birds knows that it is illegal to shoot egrets "in the nesting season, when alone they wore the plumes which women crave" (102), but he finds a way to skirt the law: he "hacked the prize from the living bird and released it while still alive and able to fly" (105). The poacher's method kills the birds, as the story attests, but slowly and painfully (107). However, despite the fact that he is the direct cause of the colony's eradication, he escapes the blame for the birds' deaths: he is only responding to market pressures, after all. The Man, who values appeasement of the Girl's vanity over the lives of the birds, likewise escapes judgement, his smile even inviting readers to share in his patronizing amusement when the Girl demonstrates her own hypocrisy (108). This masculinist framing, like that in *Last of the Curlews*, reinforces dominant Western ideologies surrounding masculinity and femininity: "The Aigrette" depicts masculinity as

the seat of reason and femininity as marked by irrationality, and belittles the Girl's focus on beauty as characteristic of vanity despite the influence that the male gaze has on developing those standards. Moreover, it blames the Girl, and women generally, for driving market pressures. While the poacher may take some blame for physically killing the birds, his impulse is one born from a desire for financial gain; he kills the birds in order to acquire "the plumes which women crave" (102). The Man's response to the Girl's exclamations about men's cruelty – he "glanced at the aigrette, smiled discreetly, and said nothing" (108) – invites readers to share in the joke the Girl has made of herself. The root cause of the egrets' misfortune is, in this story, women's desire for the birds' feathers.

In addition to a chauvinistic apportioning of blame, statements about the demand for feathers also contribute to cementing the value and rarity of both feathers and birds. Women "crave" the feathers, and they are expensive enough that the rewards of the sales outweigh the risks of poaching. The egrets wear the coveted feathers for only a short period each year, and during this time they are nominally protected from hunting by law. An aigrette created from such feathers is, then, exceptionally valuable because of this associated rarity. By highlighting the value of the aigrettes and then shifting its focus to the deaths of the birds, the story shifts attention to the rarity value that the *living* animals have.

Like egrets at the time of Roberts' writing, wolves had been extirpated from much of their original territory by the time Mowat wrote *Never Cry Wolf* and, as with egrets, people were beginning to notice the scarcity of wolves and to begin to see this as detrimental. The American Endangered Species Act (1966) was symptomatic of concern about the extirpation and extinction of species, and some wolf populations joined this list in 1974 (Smith et al. 108), but Canada's protections for wolves were – and remain – scant. In the Canadian north, considerations of rarity revolved around a different species: the caribou. Caribou were the last populous herd animal in North America and had become symbolic of the Canadian north (Sandlos 398); the species remains the signature image of the Canadian quarter. Fears of "a Northern landscape depopulated of caribou" predominated in the early twentieth century (Sandlos 399). Wolves continue to be considered a cause of caribou population decline (Sandlos 399; Kennedy), but *Never Cry Wolf* counters the rarity value of caribou in its championing of wolves.

The rarity value of caribou is evident from the beginning of the text. Mowat the narrator receives his mission to go to the north to study wolves because the caribou are diminishing in

numbers (i.e., there are not enough caribou to satisfy all the hunters) and the Wildlife Service Department and organizations such as Fish and Game clubs believe predation by wolves to be the cause (Mowat 13). Caribou, Mowat explains, were formerly abundant, but “had shown a catastrophic decrease during the three or four decades preceding my trip to the Barrens” (72). Mowat’s mission, therefore, is one created out of confirmation bias: to find “incontrovertible proof with which to damn the wolf wherever he might be found, and provide a more than sufficient excuse for the adoption of a general campaign for his extirpation” (72). *Never Cry Wolf* does not question that caribou are rare and therefore valuable, but rather questions wolves’ complicity in causing that rarity in a three-pronged argument: that (1) wolves do not subsist mainly on caribou (74-77), (2) wolf predation is an important part of keeping caribou healthy as a species (90, 142), and (3) humans are responsible for killing staggering numbers of caribou annually (92). In so doing, Mowat shifts blame for declining caribou populations onto people. Thus, the rarity value of the caribou stands, and lupine predation assists with the preservation of the species as a whole (Mowat 147), giving wolves value as a sort of quality control of the rare species.

Mowat also determines that wolves are themselves much rarer than population estimates suggest (129), conferring some rarity value to the protagonist species itself. After conducting his own survey of the area, Mowat revises a “semi-official” estimate of wolf density in the Keewatin area down from thirty thousand to three thousand wolves, and Mowat considers even this drastic reduction a “gross exaggeration” (129). Lack of territory in which to breed, disease, and human hunting pressures reduce their numbers (130-31, 165). Mowat’s description likens the wolves’ plight to that of the caribou, with populations of both endangered by humans. Trappers kill wolves because wolves compete for food and tamper with traps, white trappers in particular kill them because they fear wolves, and the Federal Government incites further harassment by offering lucrative bounties on wolves that act like subsidies to trappers and traders (165-66). The information that Mowat offers is generally factual, and focuses on wolves’ persecution by various means: poison, trapping, aerial hunting, etc. (166-67). Thus, wolves become victims of “unsportsmanlike conduct,” as it were, playing on the unspoken notion of the ethical kill, which Misao Dean explains “is defined in hunting practice as one in which a selected animal, appropriate in age, gender, and life cycle to support conservation goals, dies after a ‘fair’ hunt, without any preventable suffering” (“Mania” 294). However, the information that Mowat provides also creates

an overall impression of an orgy of slaughter, much like Bodsworth's anecdotal excerpts of curlew hunting, and spreads this across wolves and caribou alike (e.g., 168-69).

These sentiments in *Never Cry Wolf*, of people's unjustified persecution of its protagonist species and of the resulting rarity of that species, echo those expressed in the other two texts. Mowat articulates these concepts in his preface to a later edition of the text, writing that wolves are "being harried into extinction by the murderous enmity and proclivities of man" (vii). He depicts the Canadian north as wolves' last stronghold, which humans now penetrate using technology such as light aircraft and snowmobiles, and expresses the hope that there is time to prevent the extermination of a kindred species that has a right to life (viii, vix). Each of these stories makes similar points: (1) its protagonist species is rare and has intrinsic value that is at least partially due to its status as a rare species, and (2) humans are the cause of this rarity, and therefore, by implication, humans are responsible for repairing the damage insofar as this is possible.

4.1.5(b) *Kinship*

An essential kinship between humans and nonhuman animals is a recurring concept in animal stories, and even in animal literature more generally. Like rarity, kinship is a value that does not fit neatly into the "moralistic" box; Kellert himself discusses kinship in his explanations of both moralistic and humanistic values (21-22). In terms of a humanistic perspective, feeling a sense of kinship with nonhuman life can engender emotional bonding that satisfies the human need for companionship and combats senses of isolation and loneliness (Kellert 22). Although this definition suggests that kinship bonds with nonhuman animals are mere substitutes for bonds with other humans, he also writes that a sense of "[k]inship with living diversity confers a deep sense of connection to a larger and transcendent whole" (33). This can be moralistic in nature, particularly with regard to imperilled species; extirpation and extinction may generate a sense of moral shame and, as occurs in the texts discussed here and other animal stories, "[t]he extirpation of a single creature can sometimes bring into greater relief the appalling finality of not just killing a life but destroying the very capacity of a singular species ever to be born again" (Kellert 33). While not all expressions of human-animal kinship in animal stories fall within the purview of moralistic value, the conservationist texts here focus on this latter aspect, framing their protagonist species as embodying virtues – often traditionally masculine characteristics such as autonomy and physical strength (Karremann 109) – that are widespread across many human cultures and thereby attaching added value to the species themselves and to their precarious circumstances by extension.

In *Never Cry Wolf*, the connection between humans and wolves is clear.⁹ Mowat states at the outset that he feels “a lasting affinity for the lesser beasts of the animal kingdom” (7), and this sense of affinity follows him into the Keewatin region and inspires the relationship that he develops with the wolves there. Wolves pay social calls, respect human territorial markers, and exhibit braggadocio (126, 63, 115). Some humans can understand and translate wolf howls (94-100). Wolves play, sing, court, embrace, and fear. Descriptions of Mowat’s “wolf family” convey traditionally gendered personalities and gender roles that accord with mid-twentieth-century Western cultures’ stereotypical male and stereotypical female, as Chapter Three has discussed. They exhibit virtues of strength, parental and familial devotion, and continence. In this latter regard, in fact, Mowat depicts the wolves as more virtuous than humans; in Dvorak’s words, he “lays to rest the wolf’s reputation for promiscuity by contrasting lupine behaviour with that of the dog and thus, indirectly, that of the corrupted and corrupting human” (233). Mowat’s emphasis on “virginal” females emphasizes their chastity as virtuous, and concomitantly ignores the prospect of male continence as immaterial; in Western cultures, virility rather than chastity is characteristic of masculinity.

There are only a few female characters in this text, which in itself privileges masculinity through its presence in comparison with the nearly-absent feminine. Mowat’s male gaze further emphasizes these roles, as he conceives a *tendresse* for Angeline, investing her with all manner of physical and psychological attractions and expressing the hope that he might one day “find a human female who embodies all her virtues” (Mowat 67). Angeline is a mate and a mother, and most of her activities in the novel revolve around George or the pups. She is affectionate, George restrained and stoic (48); she cares for the pups, while he defends the family and marks the territory (101-02, 49, 62). The most prominent female character in the story save Angeline, the sled-dog Kooa, enters the story only because Mowat wishes to observe lupine mating practices but has missed the wolves’ mating season (109), and so, like Angeline, her character is formed in relation to the story’s male characters. In heat, Kooa leaves “seductively scented billets-doux” for the wolves, and Mowat and Mike forcibly restrain her so that she must adopt a passive, waiting role (110). Uncle Albert, for his part, moves through a series of lupine courtship behaviours without regard for Kooa’s reaction to them – she is “nonplussed” and at one point retreats as “far away

⁹ Chapter Three provides a discussion of aspects such as anthropomorphism that promote a sense of social proximity (or kinship) in *Never Cry Wolf*.

from Albert as her chain would permit” (112). However, once Albert transforms himself into a “lordly male,” large, dominant, and stately, Kooa responds with feminine submission, turning playful and coy, but eminently willing (113). Remarkably, in this scene of Albert’s sexual conquest he is no longer the dingy white of Mowat’s first description (68), but “seemed to be made of white steel” (113), a comparison that is at once phallic – “steel” and “sword” are sometimes used interchangeably – and aggressive, strong, and pure. The Western “typing” of the lupine characters according these conceptions of masculinity and femininity makes the female characters objects of desire, recasting the tired trope of the female sexual object into the shape of animals while simultaneously lauding (female) lupine chastity. The double standard successfully survives the transmogrification.

The text coats the nonhuman with Western masculinist ideological constructs, but Mowat also spends much of it attempting to become more wolf-like. He even tries to eat and sleep like the wolves, as Chapter Three discusses in more detail. His affection for and absorption with the wolves contrasts with his early depictions of his childhood, in which he has “no soulmates” (6), and his work in the Dominion Wildlife Services, which can sustain so little life that humour and personal connection are prohibited and the scent “of Formalin swirled about like the fetid breath of an undertaker’s back parlor” (13). The humans of the government are, in short, less human than the wolves Mowat studies, and the more strongly he presents the wolves as akin to humans and virtuous according to Western cultural standards, the more kinship value they have.

Like *Never Cry Wolf*, “The Aigrette” focuses on the family lives of its protagonist species. The story tells two parallel tales of the Girl with her beau and the breeding pairs of egrets, and, as the section on aesthetic value has already made plain, the egrets compare favourably with the courtship demonstrated by the human characters. Gold is scathing in his condemnation of the Girl, painting her as beautiful but callous, vain, and narcissistic (Introduction xvi-xvii). The Man escapes the harsh judgement imposed on the Girl, despite the priority that he accords her pleasure over the birds’ lives and his apparent belief that such a shallow, self-absorbed creature as Roberts describes would make an appropriate mate.

The Man’s commitment to the Girl does, however, parallel the commitment that the egrets demonstrate to their offspring. “The Aigrette” presents the egrets as determined in defence of their nestlings (98). The description of their breeding feathers as “nuptial plumes” is laden with connotations of romance, love, and fidelity (102). The poacher is able to kill the entire colony of

egrets by the simple expedient of placing his snares on the nests that hold these offspring, because the egrets continue to land on those nests to feed their young even after they have perceived the threat: because they saw “the slaughterer” placing snares on their nests, “they dreaded to approach their nests again” (105). The nests, however, contained their offspring, who were “trustingly petitioning to be fed. The parent birds could not long resist those appeals. Love and tenderness triumphed over fear, even over the clear view of mortal peril” (106). Some of the stronger birds even manage to return to the nests after they have been caught and mutilated and to feed their offspring one more time before they die even while they try to fish more food for their hungry young (106-07). The story depicts the birds as devoted not primarily to each other, but to their offspring. Theirs is the ultimate self-sacrifice, of parental devotion even after they have learned of the fatal snare and even after they have been mortally wounded. Their response to their offspring demonstrates great bravery and devotion.

The Girl’s virtues pale in contrast to these. The adult egrets match her in physical beauty and demonstrate the beauty of good qualities and characteristics while the Girl demonstrates herself to be narcissistic, vain, and hypocritical. For his part, the Man lacks sufficient moral starch to critique the Girl’s choice of apparel, choosing instead to be silent and to amuse himself with the hypocrisy inherent in the Girl’s talk of cruelty to horses while she wears an aigrette in her hair (108). Their behaviours toward each other are courteous, overall, but lack any sign of the self-sacrifice or devotion that the egrets demonstrate in the story.

There is little opportunity for the curlew to showcase familial loyalty or parental devotion in Bodsworth’s novel, given the brevity of his time with another member of his own species. He is a bird alone, ultimately the last of his kind. However, he does demonstrate fitness as a mate and a parent by selecting and defending territory on the breeding grounds and then waiting faithfully – and in vain – for the arrival of a female (23-28). He demonstrates it again when the female appears in the novel, courting her and proving his superior strength by leading the pair in their migration, deriving strength from “the realization that she was close behind, drawing on the energy of the air that his strength produced, her flight a dependent part of his own” (85-86, 87, 101). In fact, the curlews’ absorption with each other as the mating season approaches is the fatal distraction that prevents them from taking alarm at the approach of the man who kills the female (122-23). The curlew’s devotion to the idea of a mate – his primary goal throughout the novel – and his responses to the female who does appear present him very much as a strong, protective mate who

is both loyal and devoted, just as *Never Cry Wolf* and “The Aigrette” depict wolves and egrets who are loyal to their mates and offspring.

In addition, the curlew embodies virtues that are traditionally associated with Western masculinity, including the independence and physical superiority that Dean mentions in her description of Roberts’ animals (“Political Science” 310). As the strongest flyer, the curlew leads the plovers through much of the migration, regularly demonstrating his fitness in flight, strength, and physical design (45, 59-63). In a world in which “[t]he weak neither ask nor obtain mercy,” he demonstrates himself to be incredibly strong (66). He is even larger and stronger than the female curlew, which appeals to Western notions of masculinity but is less common in shorebirds like curlews, in which females are often larger than males.¹⁰ He is, moreover, independent. He requires assistance from nothing and no one for his survival. This is true of necessity, as the curlew meets the first of his own kind late in the novel, but it is also true in his interactions with other species of birds, with whom he might assuage his instinct to flock on the migration (e.g., 36-37). When the curlew joins a flock of plovers, he both naturally assumes a leadership position and also waits to migrate further despite the departure of many of the plovers and the strength of his own need to push south. He is “torn between two torturing desires – to wait” in the hope of finding some of his own kind “and to move on” and yield to the press of his migratory instincts (52). By the time he leaves, the ideal time for migrating is past (52-54). Once partnered with the female, the curlew rejects the instinct to flock altogether (88). His resistance to flocking and to moving with flocks demonstrate both independence and strength of will that Western cultures’ bias toward individualism favours.

The human element in the novel is limited to a single man and the anecdotes interspersed throughout the text, at least in terms of direct physical presence, but *Last of the Curlews* joins “The Aigrette” and *Never Cry Wolf* in depicting some less-than-desirable human characteristics. An 1861 report depicts an orgy of shooting sufficient for six to eight gunners to fire continuously upon the curlews as the birds circled overhead, and an account from 1906-07 reminisces about the numbers of birds present only thirty years previous, such that a man could shoot “A HUNDRED BEFORE BREAKFAST” (48). Fishermen killed thousands (49, 57). The excesses were so great

¹⁰ In Sæther et al.’s study of sexual dimorphism in wading birds, females ranged from 8% to 23% larger than males in four of the five species in the *numenius* genus to which the Eskimo curlew belongs, and all three of the *numenius* species native to North America (284)

that sometimes wagonloads of birds would be dumped and left to rot because the supply of killed birds exceeded human ability use the corpses (105-06). Such descriptions depict a wanton greed and wastefulness on the part of humans, as well as an unsportsmanlike disregard for the Western concept of the ethical kill. The birds' qualities do not parallel humans' as neatly as those in "The Aigrette," but they show humans as possessed of the "deadly sins" of gluttony and greed, without redeeming qualities. The curlews, however, are unaffected by these vices.

In all three of these texts, the protagonist species possess qualities and characteristics that traditional Euro-Canadian culture, among others, identifies as both virtuous and stereotypically masculine and feminine according to the sex of the individual. Good fathers are devoted providers for and heads of their families. Good mothers are nurturing and self-sacrificing. Spouses are loyal to each other – although masculine virility does make allowances for a straying eye (Mowat 111-12). Good women are chaste, good men strong and independent. Curlews, egrets, and wolves all demonstrate loyalty to and affection for family. *Last of the Curlews* includes no curlew offspring, but *Never Cry Wolf* and "The Aigrette" depict their protagonist species as exemplary parents; "The Aigrette," in particular, expounds upon the egrets' martyrdom on behalf of their nestlings. The egrets are "pure," in the colour of their feathers and the virtue of their motivations. The protagonist curlew is strong and independent, Dean's typical "(m)animal," and devoted to the idea of a mate and to the mate herself. *Never Cry Wolf*'s female wolves are chaste until mated, Angeline is an exemplary mother and "wife," and George is affectionate (within reason), large, regal, and tolerant. These characteristics enhance the individual characters' values as well as the values of the species they represent. This, in turn, adds to the species' intrinsic worth and encourages the development of a sense of affiliation with or connection to the animals as a result of these shared desirable characteristics. Humans, however, are portrayed as unsportsmanlike and lacking in the virtues with which the protagonist species are inscribed, and so resist that affiliative bonding.

4.1.6 Utilitarian, Negativistic, and Dominionistic Values

Utilitarian value emphasizes the idea of "material benefit derived from exploiting nature to satisfy various human needs and desires," from the use of medicinal plants to sustenance hunting to the intrinsic pleasure that people can derive from activities such as chopping firewood (Kellert 10-11). "The Aigrette," *Last of the Curlews*, and *Never Cry Wolf* encode utilitarian value as negative, as they also encode negativistic and dominionistic values. Utilitarian value guides

resource-based economies: logging, fishing, and trapping are a few examples of Canadian industries that engage with utilitarian values. Utilitarianism, on its own, pays no heed to the consequences of unsustainable practices, and this is something against which all three texts struggle. In *Never Cry Wolf*, the Canadian government sees wolves as an impediment to material gain: “citizens” want to kill caribou, caribou are becoming increasingly difficult to procure, and wolves are blamed for this (13-14). Over the course of his investigation, Mowat discovers that human utilitarianism (and to some extent dominionistic impulses), in the form of overhunting, is the real cause of the caribou population’s decline, and therefore threatening to both the caribou and the scapegoated wolves. In *Last of the Curlews*, overhunting is likewise the cause of population decline, this time of the protagonist species itself. Market pressures – the demand for aigrettes – are the reason for the egrets’ extermination in “The Aigrette.” Collectively, these three texts denounce utilitarian greed as the underlying cause of the threats to their protagonist species.

Never Cry Wolf differs from the other two texts in its depiction of negativistic value as an additional source of peril for its protagonist species. Nature, Kellert points out, can evoke reactions born of fear, which range from “a healthy distancing and even respect for nature” to “excessive, irrational, and extremely cruel behavior toward certain elements of the natural world. In some cases, negativistic sentiments can create an impulse to eradicate entire species” (25). Negativistic value is this perception of wildlife and natural spaces as dangerous and to be feared, which generates hostile and negative feelings in those who view the natural world in this way (Kellert 24-25). There appears to be a predisposition for negativistic valuing of “large predators, snakes, and arthropods” (25), and so it makes sense that *Never Cry Wolf* incorporates negativistic valuing where *Last of the Curlews* and “The Aigrette” do not.¹¹ Mowat also specifically links the impulse to kill wolves to a fear of the animals: “most white trappers,” he writes, “are afraid of wolves – some of them deathly afraid – and there is nothing like the whip of fear to lash men into a fury of destruction” (165). Fear also precipitates aggression in Mowat himself (53, 56, 174-75), illustrating both the narrator’s fallibility and the ingrained character of the response. Battling this knee-jerk negativistic response, Mowat is at pains to point out the discrepancy between wolves’ reputations as “savage killers” and their observed behaviour, noting, for instance, that although he had been at their mercy three times in one week, “far from attempting to tear me limb from limb,

¹¹ Chapter Three discusses Mowat’s presentation of negative popular perceptions of wolves in more detail.

they had displayed a restraint verging on contempt, even when I had invaded their home and appeared to be posing a direct threat to the young pups” (56-57). With comments such as this, the text counters negativistic methods of valuing.

“People have long contested the wild and, in the process, honed their ability to subdue and control the unruly and threatening elements of the world,” Kellert writes of dominionistic value, and explains that “[b]y successfully challenging nature and wildlife, people derive feelings of self-reliance that are hard to achieve in an untested relationship or by simply experiencing nature as a spectator” (20). Dominionistic value regularly translates into an impulse to pit oneself against nature and/or the animals in it and so dominate (20), and so is closely linked to performances of masculinity as exercises in power, as Chapter One discusses. The desire to “master” nature and thus to experience oneself as powerful is certainly present in many animal stories – Roberts’ “King of Beasts” is a hallmark example – but is also closely tied to negativistic value. The fear-based aggression in *Never Cry Wolf* seems to emerge from a need to dominate or subdue the threat, to prove one’s mastery and thereby eliminate the source of the fear. In each of these stories, human dominion is clear: humans are the direct threat to the protagonist species, and the cause of each species’ decline. Dominionistic, utilitarian, and – in the case of *Never Cry Wolf* – negativistic approaches to the treatment of these protagonist species combine to subjugate the animals in these texts.

Other values – notably aesthetic and symbolic values, as well as rarity and kinship as they pertain to moralistic and humanistic values – work in these texts to increase the worth of the protagonist species, but in each case, the species are also depicted as the victims of human technology. In *Survival*, Margaret Atwood writes that Canadian animal stories “are about animals *being* killed, as felt emotionally from inside the fur and feathers” (89). Literally speaking, this is true of “The Aigrette” but not of *Last of the Curlews* or *Never Cry Wolf*. “The Aigrette” offers some insight into the pain the egrets feel as they die, but the protagonist curlew in *Last of the Curlews* does not die and the novel reports his mate’s death from an external perspective, and while the epilogue to *Never Cry Wolf* suggests that the protagonist wolves were poisoned, there is no conclusive textual evidence to that effect. Two of these texts do *not* tell the story of the animals’ deaths from the perspective of the animals themselves. They do, however, depict the animals as sympathetic victims of human slaughter. Despite all their many adaptations, fitness, and virtues, they possess nothing that allows them to resist the trump card that humans play against them:

technology. “The West,” Agrawal notes, “was able to colonize other regions of the world because of its superior knowledge in techniques of control and warfare, and because its superior knowledge allowed it greater power” (476). This holds true of these stories’ depictions of conflicts between (implicitly white) humans and the protagonist species: although the protagonist species are figured as like humans in various ways, in each case the protagonist characters’ lack of technology and ability to respond to technology is their undoing. Western dominance and dominionistic and utilitarian approaches to animals prevail, and individual characters and species as a whole are threatened as a result.

In “The Aigrette” and *Last of the Curlews*, the birds’ instincts and emotional bonds are both the source of much of their intrinsic value and the means of their downfall. There is no recourse in their Darwinian world for human technology. Bodsworth’s novel is particularly voluble about this. The curlew is supremely adapted for all the natural hazards of his world (e.g., 66, 98). Even his lack of fear is adaptive: curlews are so physically superior that they have no need of a highly evolved warning system, because they can escape any natural foe easily (117-18). Guns, however, are not natural. For the curlews, the sound of the gunshot is “thunder” coming from a clear sky, a “foe that could strike without visible form” (123). Moreover, the curlews’ emotional involvement with each other – Bodsworth writes that the approach of the nesting season has heightened their “emotional development” to something much more intense than anything experienced by humans (118-19) – and their commitment to each other as a mated pair is so intense that their absorption with each other prevents them from recognizing even the possibility of danger. The novel’s opening paragraph, a sort of eulogy for the species, explains that the curlews ran a gauntlet of guns from one continent to another and “LEARNED TOO SLOWLY THE FEAR OF THE HUNTER’S GUN THAT WAS THE ESSENTIAL OF SURVIVAL” (19). The mechanisms that have honed their aesthetic appeal and the emotional bonding that highlights their kinship with humans work against the curlews. Guns – and other technologies used in the anecdotal observations – make them victims of their own evolutionary design. Dean’s list of (m)animal attributes of independence, adaptability, cunning, physical prowess, honesty, and trust are all present in the protagonist curlew, with two exceptions: despite all these other masculine virtues, the lack of cunning and of ability to adapt quickly to a new threat dooms the whole species.

It is the same with “The Aigrette.” The birds’ devotion to their offspring compels them to return to their nests despite their “clear view of mortal peril,” and, because of this, they die. Of

Roberts' animal biography *Red Fox* (1905), Robert H. MacDonald comments that "when instinct gets [the fox] into trouble, it is instinct that rescues him" (230). *Red Fox* is not a conservation story, however, but an animal biography in which the protagonist emerges triumphant. For the egrets in "The Aigrette," instinct is what kills them. Not one is able to resist its nestlings' cries and abandon its young, so ingrained is the birds' parental devotion. They have no strategies, knowledge, or instincts that allow them to deal with the murderous technology. Lacking defences against the snares, they become martyrs, successfully victimized because they cannot choose their own survival over the survival of their offspring. In this, they are doubly victimized, in fact, because the parent egrets' devotion dooms both them and their offspring.

The use of technology in these stories allows humans to slaughter the birds *en masse*, which contravenes biological rhythms and makes the slaughter of the birds by humans unnatural. Alec Lucas writes that all of Roberts' stories have "a unifying theme: the amorality of nature, the struggle for survival, the cyclical aspect of time" ("Nature" 401), but in "The Aigrette" interference with this cyclicity makes human actions immoral. The poacher eradicates the colony and terminates the cycle. In most of Roberts' work, "some creature dies that some other creature may survive. The victor in all this struggle is life, never-ending survival, the mystery and wonder of regeneration and the hunt and death, over and over" (Gold, Introduction xii). In "The Aigrette," the purpose of the egrets' deaths is not another's survival but fashion, and the victor is unclear: the humans have won the day in that they have survived the story and achieved their ends, but they have pulled the egrets out of the "cycle of life" and eventually, if things progress along the trajectory that the story depicts, there will be no more egrets, which will translate to no more money in the business for the poacher and no more aigrettes for the Girl. Like *Last of the Curlews*, "The Aigrette" ends in death without regeneration. The pattern has become an extinction spiral, not a life cycle, with humans and their technology the cause.

In *Never Cry Wolf*, as well, technological dominance places humans in a position of power unlike that found in the natural order of species expressed within the text itself. Mowat is at pains to dispel perceptions of wolves as bloodthirsty slaughterers who can and do kill anything that comes close enough (e.g., 143). He depicts the wolves as hunting with the "guiding principle" of "[e]conomy of effort" (144) and contrasts wolves' hunting with that of humans, writing that "[t]he wolf never kills for fun, which is probably one of the main differences distinguishing him from man" (145). His examination of wolf-killed caribou carcasses proves the claim that wolf predation

weeds the weak from the caribou population (143, 146). His observations of wolves in the text depict the wolves as an integral part of an ecosystem, intrinsically valuable as quality control in addition to being aesthetically pleasing, scarce, and much like humans in their kinship bonds.

Never Cry Wolf differs from “The Aigrette” and *Last of the Curlews* again here, in that this text differentiates between Indigenous and Euro-Canadian relationships with wolves. The characters who companion Mowat in this text are Mike, an Inuit-EuroCanadian trapper, and Mike’s Inuit cousin, Ootek. These characters live in relative peace with wolves, although Mike’s slaughter of caribou contributes to negative effects on the wolves by making their primary large prey rarer and by the effect that this increased rarity has on governmental wolf control measures. The blame for indiscriminate wolf slaughter falls to Euro-Canadians, who are “afraid of wolves” and who run the governments that offer bounties on wolves (165). Mowat presents wolves as running a gauntlet similar to that experienced by Bodsworth’s curlews: they follow the caribou south to the treeline, where men slaughter them (165). However, this slaughter is driven not simply by greed and bloodlust but by institutionalized persecution rooted in fear and hate born of fear (166-67). It is, in Mowat’s estimation, a “war against wolves” (165). When an individual wolf manages to succeed against the technology that is enabling their slaughter, wolves as a species come out the losers: Mowat illustrates this with a case in which a wolf snapped at the ski of a chasing aircraft and caused a crash that killed the plane’s occupants. This became the subject of an article that used the event to demonstrate the “cunning and dangerous nature” of wolves and the “boundless courage of the men who match themselves against [wolves]” (167). The bloodlust of white men extends, in this text, not only to the negativistic desire to “rid the world of wolves” (166), but to the government-condoned slaughter of the caribou whom their wolf control measures are supposed to protect: in the text, sportsmen use planes to “round up” a herd of caribou, shoot them all, and then take as trophies the single head each is permitted (168-69). Even Mowat, as narrator, does not completely escape the bloodthirsty nature he ascribes to North Americans of European descent; finding himself in close quarters with Angeline and a pup at the end of the story, he longs for a rifle, “seized by the same old irrational anti-wolf prejudices he had set out to rectify” (Irmischer 110). While not as explicit as the other two texts in its depictions of the protagonist species as defenceless against human technology, Mowat’s story nevertheless positions wolves as innocent victims whose natural strength and virtue cannot triumph over the implacable deadliness of human technology.

These narratives are invested in presenting their protagonist species as *like* humans – and gendered as stereotypically masculine and feminine according to sex – and in depicting humans as a foe against which the animals are helpless. Despite the masculine ideologies at work in the texts and the gendered values that the characters reflect, the animals’ victimization should make them symbolically female (C. J. Adams, *Pornography* 84). Luke points out that while Western hunters typically depict hunted animals as masculine (virile, large, strong, and often dangerous), becoming victims feminizes the animals (93-99). Animal stories by Euro-Canadian men regularly make use of these masculine characteristics to present protagonist species as worthwhile – worth conserving or worth killing. Using *Bambi* as an example, Luke notes that the name originates from a male deer but is given exclusively to human women, explaining that, “[n]otwithstanding his overt maleness, as a designated target for sportsmen the character Bambi is assimilated to the prototypical target of men’s sexual violence, women. . . . Gender marks relative positions of power as much as it signifies biological sex” (98). Human (masculine) dominion is thus unquestionable in these stories; it does not need to be asserted, because it has already been established. The unfairness of the “hunt,” however, prevents any sort of laudation of the hunters. The stories identify human technology as alien to the animals and therefore beyond their ability to counter effectively, and each text contains descriptions of mass slaughter of the protagonist species, beyond any utilitarian use. Humans thus contravene the principle of the ethical kill, excising any honour from the act. Because honour is a characteristic of masculinity within the context of nobility (Rippl 77), this negates any masculine status that the texts’ hunters might otherwise garner from the act.¹² The animals’ victimization through tactics cast as dishonourable cements their nobility rather than robbing them of their masculinity.

The victimization of these animals works in concert with appeals to the animals’ value to represent humans as responsible for the species’ difficulties and, therefore, in a position of moral obligation to assist the animals in some form. “The Aigrette” implies that if women stop buying egret feathers, men will stop killing egrets. *Never Cry Wolf* is a call to action, for vocal support for wolves to balance or drown out the condemnation of wolves and so to save wolves from extinction and people from “committing the strictly human crime . . . of biocide” (Mowat, Preface ix). The elegiac nature of *Last of the Curlews* suggests that it is too late for humans to avoid

¹² As a whole, the human killers are men with lower-status professions: trappers in *Never Cry Wolf*, a poacher in “The Aigrette,” and fishermen and a farmer in *Last of the Curlews*.

biocide with respect to Eskimo curlews, but it remains a powerful statement about human effects on wildlife that acted as a rallying cry for conservationists (Consiglio A17).

4.2 Conclusion

These conservationist animal stories are like many animal stories in that they tend to represent perspectives that are more zoocentric or ecocentric and less anthropocentric in nature. Dominionistic narratives categorize animals as “good or bad” in accordance with their usefulness to humans, and these are the norms in the North American legal and ethical systems that “govern the treatment of animals” (Vance 168). Animal stories tend to challenge the objectification that such perspectives both reflect and encourage, and often even attempt to erode the categorical separation of “human” from “animal.” In these conservationist stories, as with so many other animal stories, human-animal likeness is an essential tool for engaging human sympathies.¹³ To quote Stevens’ assessment of *Last of the Curlews*, “[i]f Bodsworth is to win us over to his conviction that the passing of this species is in some sense tragic, then he must succeed in making us accept his two curlews as complex and beautiful individuals, distinctly inferior to us in conscious reasoning, but akin to us in some other way” (ix). This sense of kinship is what Stevens identifies as the critical aspect required to generate emotional investment in readers. The positive qualities and characteristics these texts ascribe to their protagonist species are crucial to establishing the value of a species as intrinsic to the animals.

Values such as kinship and rarity and those vested in aesthetics and symbolism can be and often are anthropocentrically-based, vested in the usefulness of these attributes *to humans* (e.g., aesthetically pleasing objects give the viewer pleasure), but in these texts each of these attributes also rebounds to add value to the living animal to which it belongs. People value that which is like themselves, as Chapter Three has discussed, and these texts ascribe virtues to their protagonist species’ characters and even gendered (Western) physical presentations, not only likening the

¹³ This insistence on human-animal likeness is often perceived as anthropomorphism, and thus makes it more likely that such texts will be classified as children’s literature or understood as suitable reading for children, as Chapter Two discusses. However, these stories also describe unacceptable behaviour and contain details that might frighten children, and the virtuous characters are rarely rewarded for their goodness, which are implicitly understood as unacceptable in children’s literature (Nodelman and Reimer 86). The moralistic framing is strong, but may be superseded by the poor modelling on the part of the humans’ characters.

species to humans but likening them to “good” humans, wherein they derive their intrinsic value from their adherence to traditional Western notions of masculinity and femininity. The interiority that this aspect grants to the species gives them value as living animals, because the value of their virtuous characters is dependent upon their status as living beings (in terms of kinship value). This works in conjunction with the emphasis on the species’ rarity by making them valuable not simply as examples of rare species – a taxidermied curlew would function almost as well in this capacity – but as living examples of rare species whose rare status humans are both responsible for and morally obligated to rectify. These stories depict the protagonist species in colonial terms, as threatened by Western power (i.e., technologies), with Westerners now obligated to save the vanishing races that their own colonization has endangered.

Likewise, symbolic and aesthetic values – inextricably intertwined in these texts – tend to be anthropocentric, receiving value from what they provide the human interpreter of sensory input. Here, however, these texts use aesthetic and symbolic values to reflect the values of the species themselves as “good” or “virtuous.” This focused exploration of some of the interwoven aspects of valuing shows how the texts use and exploit qualities that humans tend to find valuable – typically gendered qualities – to inscribe value upon people’s perceptions of particular species.

In addition, “The Aigrette,” *Last of the Curlews*, and *Never Cry Wolf* also use negative qualities and characteristics to decrease human value. All three narratives highlight negative aspects of human character, in terms of either individual humans or humans as a species, to show people to disadvantage against the virtuous protagonist species. In this manner, all three texts create “noble victims” of their protagonist species, unjustly persecuted by humans whose displays of excess – gluttony, greed, vanity, hypocrisy, fear, and violence – are faults of character that endanger the protagonist species so glowingly described therein. These texts do make some gestures that undermine the sanctity of the categorical boxes of “human” and “animal” – Mowat’s “going wolf” is a good example of this – but they are nevertheless heavily invested in differentiating between humans and animals. This differentiation occurs in large part through technological innovations, including guns, poisonous compounds, and traps, that are designed to cause harm and that allow humans to cause far more harm than would be possible otherwise. In one sense, then, technology is the differentiating factor between humans and nonhuman animals in these texts; however, this technology only permits humans to gratify impulses already inherent in the species, such as bloodlust and vanity, that the stories suggest are absent in their protagonist

species (e.g., Mowat 145). The trope of the animal victim in these stories relies on a near-omnipotent human antagonist in order to underscore the moralistic values so central to the texts.

The damage that human technology and persecution have done to many species is certainly grounded in reality. The populations of all three of the protagonist species in these texts have been greatly reduced as a direct result of human hunting pressures, and direct hunting pressures are only a fraction of the behaviours that affect nonhuman animals, which include clearcutting, water and soil contamination, and even such seemingly innocuous activities as the maintenance of ski trails in otherwise inaccessible areas.¹⁴ Narratives about animals have been and “remain at the center of conflicts surrounding preservationist and sustainable land-use approaches to conservation” (McHugh 213-14). There is little data available on the impact of “The Aigrette” on the plumage trade, but European and North American authors voiced their objections to the trade (Doughty 53), and this story is both an artefact of changing sentiment and an early example of a much-respected author of the time using his name and established readership to promote a conservationist cause. The influence of *Last of the Curlews* and *Never Cry Wolf* on prevailing opinion has been more thoroughly documented: the Government of Canada’s Species at Risk Public Registry specifically names *Last of the Curlews* as a text that highlighted “the Eskimo Curlew’s plight and conservation message . . . to generations of Canadians” (Kirk and Pearce), and *Never Cry Wolf* has also been critical to challenging and changing perceptions about wolves (Klinghammer 85). In terms of conservation, the texts’ protagonist species have gone in different directions: egrets have recovered from near-disastrous decline in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Eskimo curlews are almost certainly extinct, and the future of wolves in North America remains uncertain. Each of these stories, however, uses the entertainment value of animal stories as popular literature to carry a message of conservationism.

These conservationist animal stories combine cognitive and affective learning to provide factual information about their protagonist species, the world within which they live, and the impact of human behaviours upon them, in addition to cultivating a more sentimental attachment to the species. This joint endeavour is what Kellert calls values education (211). Values education, he explains, “concludes with a deep ethic of care and compassion for all life and an abiding commitment to ensure the natural world’s healthy perpetuation” (212). Except where these texts

¹⁴ The latter give predators easy access to prey animals in areas where deep snow would otherwise restrict their movements (Covey).

are used in school curricula, their ability to provide this education occurs on an informal basis, and is likely, therefore, to primarily affect those who are predisposed to be sympathetic to and supportive of either the protagonist species specifically or biodiversity generally. In other words, a person must read a text before its contents can have any effect on that person's perceptions. These narratives and others like them can, however, have profound impacts on people's perceptions of nonhuman animals and the environment (Kellert 213). "The Aigrette," *Last of the Curlews*, and *Never Cry Wolf* provide social commentary on human perceptions of animals and human values of animals, and their narratives use multiple methods of valuing to shift focus from an anthropocentric concern for what value a species has for people to the more ecocentric assessment that a species has intrinsic value, as do individual members of that species. This value works in conjunction with the animal victimization in the texts to send the dove-tailed message that these animals are worth preserving and that humans have an obligation to assist with that preservation.

Conclusion

Shall we just tell stories then, simply chronicle the events of our lives, and leave the meaning-making to others? I think not. . .

- Vance, "Beyond Just-So Stories: Narrative, Animals, and Ethics" 175

The stakes of animal representation are high. Dominant representations influence public and personal opinions, and these in turn influence both personal actions and governmental policy. Montreal's September 2016 ban on pit bulls, for example, stems from an understanding that a subset of dog breeds and mixes that have the general appearance of a modern-day American pit bull terrier (i.e., "pit bull-type dogs") is inherently so dangerous to people that it should not be permitted within city limits ("Montreal"). However, a 2008 study determined that, between 1990 and 2007, only one of twenty-eight dog attacks in Canada that resulted in fatalities implicated pit bull-type dogs (Raghavan 579). In 2005, Toronto implemented a similar ban, despite the fact that in the previous year German shepherds were considered responsible for the most bites in the city (Cain). Pit bulls were clearly considered more dangerous than German shepherds: this may be part of a bias engendered by an association between German shepherd-type dogs and police work, in which the breed's aggression is used to enforce civil obedience, or an association between pit bull-type dogs and people of colour and/or people of lower socio-economic status (Boisseron 17-18) – or even a preference for the visual aesthetics of German shepherds over pit bulls. This is just one example of the ways in which perceptions of animals, regardless of the validity of those perceptions, directly affect those animals, in Canada and internationally. Animal stories by Euro-Canadian men work within preconceived conceptualizations of animals – as Farley Mowat does, for example, when he opens *Never Cry Wolf* (1963) with an exploration of a plethora of negative stereotypes of wolves – and either reinforce those conceptualizations (e.g., cats are aloof, dogs loyal) or diverge from them to work against the predominant Western understanding of those

animals. Sometimes, as with *Never Cry Wolf*, these countercurrents have lasting effects on both cultural and environmental landscapes.

However, any message to the reading public must reach the public before it can be heard. As the previous chapters note, many of the stories examined here have been and remain popular, enjoying wide readerships, being made into television shows and films, and becoming part of the New Canadian Library and the Laurentian Library.¹ These two library series, especially the former, have been influential in Canadian literature, and particularly in establishing university curricula (Lecker 77). Euro-Canadian men predominate as the authors of both popular animal stories (e.g., Opper's *Silverwing* series) and animal stories that became part of canon-making efforts such as the New Canadian Library series and the compilation of anthologies (e.g., Roberts' oeuvre). This being the case, the animal stories of the reading public and of academia are inflected by Eurocentric and androcentric "assumptions about human personality" and hegemonic masculinity (Dean, "Political Science" 302), reinforcing, inculcating, and even defining values such as courage, endurance, and virility (Dunlap, *Saving* 24). These stories typically have male protagonists and male narrators, and use expressions of Western masculinity and femininity as means of creating identification with the protagonist species.

Nor is this masculinist approach specific to wild animal stories by Euro-Canadian men. André Alexis' *Fifteen Dogs* (2015) is a recent example of an animal story outside this study's parameters – it is a domestic animal story written by a Trinidad-born Canadian man – that nevertheless adheres to this masculinist frame. The novel has proven to be popular, and widely read in literary circles, like Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf* and Bodsworth's *Last of the Curlews*; it won the 2015 Scotiabank Giller Prize and the Rogers Writers Trust Fiction Prize, and has already become an addition to some university course reading lists. Like the majority of animal stories examined here, and the majority of wild animal stories by Euro-Canadian men, *Fifteen Dogs* focuses on the points of view of males – male gods and male dogs. The fifteen dogs of the title include only five females, three of which survive the initial phase of the novel. Sonia Urlando notes that the text's narrative perspective, however, "never enters the minds of these female dogs. They are described only externally by the narrating voice or the male dogs. Given the

¹ Those of Roberts' and Seton's stories that are examined here are not part of the New Canadian Library. However, Roberts' and Seton's collections of animal stories *The Last Barrier and Other Stories* (1958) and *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1898), respectively, do appear in it.

philosophical tone of the story, a huge absence is felt of the female voice responding to the moral and social issues the dogs face.” *Fifteen Dogs* includes other female characters in the form of human women, but of the dogs, the perspective is always the male gaze. Majnoun, for example, tells the human woman Nira a “dog story” in which the storyteller’s purpose, like the curlew’s in *Last of the Curlews*, is to find a mate. “There is the smell of bitch but I am before a wall,” Majnoun relates (131). “The smell,” he says, “is strong and I am going mad. . . . I call to the bitch but there is no answer. . . . I dig even though I can smell the master’s food from his house. The smell of bitch is stronger and stronger. I call out, but now I am hungry” (131-32). In Majnoun’s story, he is torn between two conflicting hungers: for food and for sex. The story is not his story – he is neutered and does not feel the urge for sex, precisely (130) – but it is the example he chooses to tell, and one that dismisses all female perspective; even the bitch herself is absent from the story, represented primarily as “smell of bitch,” not as an individual but as a general scent that is desirable. The source of the smell is insignificant to the story. Like the wild animal stories by Euro-Canadian men examined here, Alexis’ *Fifteen Dogs* privileges masculinity in its depictions of characters and in its depictions of the thought processes of the fifteen dogs granted “human intelligence” by Hermes and Apollo.

Because hegemonic masculinity is so invested in the creation and maintenance of power, everything against which it is set is depicted as powerless and, frequently, feminized, which creates conflicts between depictions of nonhuman animals as masculine and as victims. The balancing act is delicate: humans are typically depicted as much more powerful than nonhumans, but many Western ideals are tied to conceptualizations of masculinity that require the exercise of power, and so depictions of animals that incorporate hegemonic masculinity must either depict animals as weak and passive or find ways for animals to demonstrate their prowess in spite of their weaker status. “King of Beasts” (1911) does this by depicting the protagonist man as the *most* powerful in a series of animals, so that he affirms his own supreme masculinity through his triumph over other powerful animals. *Never Cry Wolf* does it by typing his wolves culturally and physically, and through Mowat’s acknowledgement of his own impotence. *Last of the Curlews* (1954) does it by emphasizing people’s unsportsmanlike conduct, in which men violate masculine norms such as honour and “*mano a mano*” predation according to the concept of the ethical kill. *Fifteen Dogs*’ rendering of dogs is more complex at least in part because of the feminization of domestication, as Chapter One has discussed. In it the male dogs Majnoun and Prince give their loyalty to the

human females Nira and Kim, and are happiest when with or thinking of them (148, 171). It is not love, precisely, or even subservience – Majnoun feels that he and Nira are of equal status (120-21) – but the dogs demonstrate loyalty for their “special” humans. This unwavering loyalty is, Majnoun feels, an expression of “mere instinct,” a residue of the canine origins of his mind (142), and is both an expression of devotion that may well have its roots in (feminized) domestication as well as being a stereotype about dogs. In terms of the dogs themselves, however, the persistence of the male gaze and male perspective places the male dogs in a position of (relative) power over females in the pack and female dogs generally.

Like Yann Martel’s *Beatrice and Virgil* (2010), *Fifteen Dogs* is a story that escapes categorization as children’s literature despite high levels of anthropomorphism and the frankly fabulistic premise that Apollo and Hermes grant human intelligence to a group of fifteen dogs in order to settle a wager about whether any animals with human intelligence could be happy. *Fifteen Dogs*’ philosophical underpinnings – e.g., that language is verbal, that human intelligence changes creatures in palpable ways, that human intelligence is intimately tied to language (22, 26, 28) – accord with hundreds of years of Western thought about the paramountcy of human intelligence, and the importance of language in separating humans from nonhuman animals. The dogs, then, are taken to serve as a sort of apologue about the differences between humans and nonhuman animals; if the dogs are not being considered as dogs but as serving a larger purpose, the story is not children’s literature. In addition, the high degree of violence, the lack of clear “good” and “bad” characters, the philosophical and metaphysical commentary, and the explicit descriptions of (canine) sex and sexual desire all mark the text as literature for adults.

Nevertheless, many animal stories, if not most, are categorized as either children’s or crossover literature. This correlation between the marginalized subjects of children’s literature and animals contributes to the trivialization of texts that deviate from the scientific objectivity that white, male Western discourse has adopted as ideal. “The animal man,” writes John Burroughs, has retained “much of his animality,” but “has evolved from it higher faculties and attributes, while our four-footed kindred have not thus progressed” (“Do Animals” 170). Stories that, like “The Winnipeg Wolf” (1905), *The Winter of the Fisher* (1971), and *Silverwing* (1997), grant these “higher faculties and attributes” to animals, and especially texts that grant uncritical subjectivity to animals, are much more likely to be classified as children’s literature and to be dismissed as unworthy of critical study. If the prevailing opinion among publishers and academics is that animal

stories as a whole are “trivial” (Cogswell 13) and that – as Robert Lecker’s suggests is the judgement underlying Lorraine McMullen’s commentary on E. W. Thompson’s work – “what should endure are stories of Canadian life, rather than stories for children” (Lecker 126), then who will preserve animal stories that are classified as children’s literature? If the animal stories that make it into the Canadian canon are those that emphasize scientific objectivity over sentiment (cf. *Last of the Curlews* and *Silverwing*) and privilege mimesis over sentimentality as androcentric Western cultures construct them (Lecker 127), then how will hegemonic male, Western discourse be challenged? If an animal story is worth less simply because it is an animal story, as Susan McHugh suggests in her analysis of companion animal stories (15), what does that say about the value that people place on animals? At this point, “animal story” and “children’s literature” as systems of classification have lower status both popularly and in academia (Falconer 3; Hunt 6). As a result, texts that adhere most closely to Western standards of objectification – and likely also those that adhere to other Western standards, such as androcentrism – are considered to be “more serious” and, therefore, in some way “better” than texts that deviate from the established model.

Paradoxically, however, precisely because they are generally considered to be “unserious” and “for children,” these stories are often marketed and purchased for younger readers. Disney, for example, is full of films such as *Finding Nemo* (2003) and *Bambi* (1942) that make animals the heroes and humans the villains. This means that children are exposed to what Marla V. Anderson and Antonia J. Z. Henderson call “[m]isrepresented animal characters” (303) – animal characters that are self-reflexive, self-aware, and subjectified – and children demonstrate attachment to these (mis)represented characters that is generally “impervious to the process of maturity” (310). As a result, children who form sentimental attachments to nonhuman animal characters may grow up to be adults who experience psychological conflict between their sentimental attachments to animal characters and the scientific, objective, and objectifying gaze that Western cultures consider a sign of maturity (Stewart and Cole 264).² Attachment to animals is “unmanly or childish” in a world where manliness is good (Luke 35-36, 204), and so to conform to these standards of masculinity and maturity, adults acculturated to Western values must slough off or deny sentimentality toward or connection with animals that the same cultures abetted in the material deemed suitable reading for children. They will remain accessible, however, only as long

² Hunters, for instance, often blame Disney’s film adaptation of *Bambi* for anti-hunting sentiment (Cartmill 162).

as publishers and marketers consider them to be both profitable and worthwhile, and so animal stories that, like *Silverwing* and *Raven's End* (2001), appeal to pervasive assumptions about children's literature – children love fantastical animal stories; children's stories should not be unduly frightening; children's stories should have characters that model moral and acceptable behaviour; good children's stories “make learning fun” (Nodelman and Reimer 86) – are much more likely to be popularly successful, and simultaneously less likely to receive critical attention in the academic sphere.³

Captivated by story and metaphor, one risks losing sight of the animals represented in these stories, but what people read or see or hear about animals – as children or adults – influences their perceptions of those animals, and that has real-world consequences (Lutts, “Wild Animal Story” 3). As Paul Schullery and Lee H. Whittlesey note, the “cultural underpinnings of an animal's public image” are deeply embedded, “and complex enough that we will tolerate grievous personal harm from one species without demanding its destruction but will destroy another merely because of inherited hatred of it and its potential for causing us economic harm” (32). Perceptions matter, and stories influence perceptions. Linda Vance argues that stories both reflect and influence human beliefs “about how the world works,” and so “our stories about how the world works lead us, consciously or not, to the creation of theory, as we repeat and revise them” (175, 176). Vance sees storytelling as “a form of ethical discourse, modeling, as it were, [her] beliefs about human/nature relationships” (176). “Imagine, then,” she writes, “the power of *conscious* narrative, of myths and tales intentionally constructed and repeated that would inform and instruct us in ‘proper’ attitudes toward nature” (176). Even within this study's selection of animal stories authored by Euro-Canadian men, there is variety in what stories indicate are “proper” attitudes toward the natural world; they are unified, however, in presenting their nonhuman protagonist species' lives as valuable, worth preserving at least insofar as that preservation does not adversely affect human quality of life. Anderson and Henderson note that “children as young as two developed strong emotional attachments to stories,” and that these attachments persist in adulthood, so that “[c]hildhood attachment to animal characters and stories unconsciously may

³ The University of Saskatchewan's bookstore brought in copies of Virginia Woolf's *Flush* (1933) for the first time in 2016, for example. Although it was Woolf's only bestseller during her lifetime (McHugh 15), and Woolf's work is used extensively in university curricula, her only animal biography has been largely dismissed in academia.

influence adult behavior toward animals” (302, 298). Thus, they say, it is likely that representations of animals “can transform attitudes and behaviors toward animals globally in a positive fashion” (304). This is both the danger and the promise of stories like the ones studied here: they can perpetuate androcentric, masculinist, and colonialist norms, but they can also undercut some of the dominionistic, utilitarian, and negativistic values that adversely affect nonhuman animals.

Animal stories are invested in animals, beings that have become increasingly marginal in Western cultures (Berger 266), by constructing representations of animal Others. To varying degrees, they offer information about the animals’ physiology and behaviour and create spaces of dialogue about human-animal relationships and the impact that humans and human actions can and do have upon nonhumans. Humans are the “[s]elf-appointed sovereigns of inhuman nature,” Jeffery Jerome Cohen points out, and “we are used to placing our demands casually upon these environments. We seldom think about what nonhumans might desire for themselves” (“Introduction” vii). Inescapably anthropomorphic, and informed and inflected by Western masculinist values, the animal stories in this study posit the animal Other from this unquestionably privileged position in order to construct an influential, yet highly particular, vision of what these nonhuman beings want or, in some cases, require as a species in order for them to survive or thrive.

Erica Fudge suggests that although representing animals may constitute some form of appropriation of nonhuman animal subjectivity and/or voice, “where the stories may represent an extension of a world that we can control, in our desire that animals should be *for* us,” in the creation of narrative representations that include the imagined perspectives of the animal Other, “we might actually be undoing that dominion. In our desire to rectify the loss of communication with the nonhuman world we may in fact be upsetting the human one” (77, emphasis added). Although told from a position of privilege, stories as varied as Roberts’ “The Aigrette” (1916), Mowat’s *Never Cry Wolf*, and Oppel’s *Silverwing* still attempt to promote humanitarianism by appealing to readers’ empathy and telling stories in which humans constitute threats to the stories’ protagonist species. These appeals, and even the act of presenting nonhuman animal perspectives as valid, may have lasting consequences for the animals and environments depicted in the texts. Stephen Kellert lists four factors that shape attitudes toward wildlife specifically: “perceptions of individual species, knowledge of wildlife[,] human/animal relationships,” and the “basic wildlife values” that Chapter Four explores (100). These factors are to a large extent also applicable to animals other

than those classified as wildlife and even to ecosystems, and animal stories touch upon all of them. As the texts examined in this study demonstrate, animal stories are inflected with values about animals, human-animal interactions, and the extent of human rights and privileges. Human attitudes reflect “a range of influences including knowledge, values, experience, culture, history, and biology. And in each case, the consequent attitudes have much to do with the treatment and destiny of particular creatures” (Kellert 100). People’s perceptions of species influence the decisions they make about those species, and so beliefs and opinions about nonhuman animals in general and specific species in particular are significant.⁴ Other factors, including people’s ideas about the value of animals and ecosystems, also play a role in human behaviour toward and treatment of nonhuman animals – for instance, those who express predominantly utilitarian values about animals value them only insofar as they are useful to people (Nie 33) – but apathy toward or an active feeling of dislike or disgust for specific species allows or encourages the destruction of those species for human gain or pleasure. However, support for particular species can lead to sanctions against harming those species or their habitats or even programs directed toward increasing species’ populations and reintroducing species to areas from which they had previously been extirpated.

Animal stories are important not just as literary artefacts, but because language and stories have an impact upon their creators, users, and consumers, and this in turn affects animals generally and protagonist species specifically. McHugh notes that the animal stories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were, in fact, “so successful in inspiring interest in the lives of animals that they immediately raised concerns about the social effects of anthropomorphism, and especially anthropocentrism, on impressionable readers” (212), which was one of the main concerns raised in the nature faker controversy. Today, many animal advocates, activists, and theorists welcome the complications of the social effects of narratives that position animals as individuals, as subjects, and as voiced (e.g., Russell 145-46, 149; Corman 474). McHugh contends “that commitments to living with and learning from animals ethically . . . can proceed from creative engagements with narrative forms (217), a sentiment with which Vance concurs, writing that “good” narratives “should give voice to those whose stories are being told” and “make us care”

⁴ Anderson and Henderson note that “[m]any of our current animal husbandry practices are justified by evaluating the extent to which a given species is similar to humans” (304), for example.

(179). They use varying methods and display varying perceptions about what animals are and why they are important, but animal stories as disparate as *Silverwing* and *The Winter of the Fisher* regularly attempt to do just that.

Narratives such as these also demonstrate, however, that as much as they are about animals, animal stories remain unavoidably about humans. In John Berger's estimation, this is because animals have historically "interceded between man and their origin because they were both like and unlike man. . . . They belonged *there* and *here*" (260-61). In other words, animals' joint similarity to and separation from humans makes them liminal, beings at a threshold of humanity and human understanding, capable of being used to comment upon humanity past and present. Without question, animals have been used as stepping stones to knowledge about humans (Fudge 10; Tighem 16; Bergman, "Academic Animals" 143). Humans have used animals in story as symbol and allegory to speak of humans and human conditions, and academics have followed suit in their interpretations. More than that, however, as several intellectuals and activists have pointed out, it is impossible to reach "out to the animal world without also to some extent humanising it" (Huggan 175). Animal stories are fundamentally human constructs, derived from both human language and human perspective.⁵ Sue Walsh suggests that recognizing the essential human element in all textuality is a step toward recognizing human "implicatedness in, and responsibility for, the world that we construct" (150). It may well be impossible for animal stories to root out and eliminate all human cultural constructs from its narratives about animals; what is most important is that we acknowledge those constructs, identify them whenever possible, and explore their implications not just for humans – in what they say about the human cultures from which they originate, for example – but for the animals upon whom those constructs have been imposed.

There is a great deal more research yet to be done on animal stories and animals in stories, as well as the effects of representations of animals on animals as individuals and as species. This study has looked specifically at four elements of animal stories – definition, categorization, representation, and conservationism – in the work of Euro-Canadian men. Work by Canadian women or writers from other cultural backgrounds may reveal resistance to the messages that these stories send, may struggle with entirely different issues, or may offer similar messages differently, with different emphases. Lawrence Buell, for example, believes that ecofeminist inquiry

⁵ "[E]ven designedly 'realistic' texts," Lawrence Buell writes, "cannot avoid being heavily mediated refractions of the palpable world" (33).

originates “from the premise of a correlation between the history of institutionalized patriarchy and human domination of the non-human” (19), while Melody Hessing suggests that “[g]ender provides a lens to understand the alienation from wilderness experienced by many women as a product of social subordination, patriarchal control, and cultural domesticity” (296). These are also valid ways of exploring animal stories, either through comparative work between female and male authors or by focusing specifically on aspects of animal representation in work by women. Much of this is also equally applicable to work by writers of other cultural backgrounds and nationalities, and comparative examinations may prove a fruitful basis for continued work with animal stories, as the different approaches revealed in the stories may provide new insights. Moreover, many Canadian animal stories have received little to no critical attention thus far, including work by otherwise illustrious Canadians,⁶ and study of this work may provide insights into not only the stories themselves but also the authors’ works as a whole, their contributions to Canadian literature, and animal representation broadly. On a more interdisciplinary level, studies into human behaviour and/or mental and emotional states after reading animal stories may yield important findings on how methods of animal representation influence humans.

Animal stories are critical sites of study in large part because of their role in perpetuating or disputing ways of seeing the world, ways of imagining the environment, animals, humans, and human-animal relationships. Frequently, they are sites of boundary crossing, holding up particular species and saying “they are like us,” or even “we are like them.” Stories that insist on animal agency move beyond purely metaphoric or symbolic uses of animal representation, offering something more than the human for consideration as subject and seeing Other.⁷ Ian Bogost describes the “inhuman” as paradoxically omnipresent and simultaneously impermeable to humans, but suggests that it is part of “the human condition,” as it were, to wander “in an exotic world of utterly incomprehensible objects, that nevertheless we might try to comprehend” (143). Animal stories – even animal stories such as *Fifteen Dogs*, in which qualities and characteristics

⁶ In contrast to the renown that *Never Cry Wolf* achieved, Mowat’s short story “The Woman and the Wolf” (1986) has remained critically and popularly obscure; Nellie McClung is an icon of Euro-Canadian women’s suffrage, but her short animal stories “A Short Tale of a Rabbit” (1912) and “The Ungrateful Pigeons” (1912) remain unstudied.

⁷ McHugh notes that “animal acts signal profound ruptures to identity forms and less clearly extensions of struggles to represent animals as nonhuman social agents,” writing that “animal representations themselves pry apart forms of agency and the human subject” (12).

that Alexis considers as marks of “human intelligence” are grafted onto the minds of the canine characters – dig down into the lives and perspectives of animal Others, attempting to represent the perceptions of animals that many consider to be beyond human comprehension. In these attempts, perspectives shift, alter, expand. Kellert points to these changes in his discussion of values education, which he describes as focusing on “attitudes and beliefs consistent with a deep appreciation of the role of living diversity in human life” (211). It may well be, however, that such methods of valuing also contribute to an appreciation of that which is nonhuman, biocentrically or ecocentrically rather than anthropocentrically. Walsh points out that “the issue of how we view animals, how we articulate that ‘vision’ in language, and how we understand that linguistic articulation, in turn, continue to be of crucial importance today, on both a theoretical and an ethical level” (133). What is at stake in the claims people make for or about animals, she asks; “what projects or ideologies do they support, and whose interests do they serve?” (151).

The stakes are high, for people and for nonhuman animals. The stories examined here support hegemonic masculinity that perpetuates and glorifies prototypically masculine values such as virility, dominance, and physical superiority that reinforce gendered stereotypes and male dominance in Western cultures. In addition, the preponderance of male characters and the positioning of female characters as typically secondary, dependent for their purpose upon their relationships with males, or absent altogether, perpetuates a gendered “default” of masculinity, thus Othering femininity and non-binary identities. In large part, these stories perpetuate the status quo, and even go beyond this to naturalize these cultural understandings of masculinity and femininity as biological, endemic to the “natural world.”

In terms of the animals themselves, however, these stories have the power to change perceptions of entire species, and even to alter human behaviour toward nonhuman animals on a cultural level. *Never Cry Wolf* and *Last of the Curlews* had profound effects on people’s attitudes toward wolves and conservation, respectively. *Silverwing* and its sequels may well inspire similar benefits for bats in the coming decades. Stories that offer nonhuman animal perspectives, that insist that nonhuman animals think and feel and are fundamentally similar to people, promote empathy for and affiliation with those species. Increased empathy for and affiliation with nonhuman animals, on an individual level, may benefit individual animals (e.g., an individual who believes that pit bulls are no more dangerous than any other dog may adopt and so improve the circumstances of a homeless pit bull). Increased empathy for and affiliation with the same animals,

on a cultural level, may lead to public censure of practices that harm animals and even legislation that protects nonhuman animals from harm. In July 2017, for example, social outcry over a wasp trap that had (allegedly) trapped and killed songbirds led most Canadian retailers to pull the product from their shelves (Dunham). In the same month, concern over the deaths of eight critically endangered right whales prompted the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to close the snow crab fishery off northern New Brunswick (Fraser), a move that will have at least some negative economic impact on fishermen in that area. If people did not care about these species, no changes would have been made. Instead, retailers have responded to public pressure by removing traps that have the potential to cause pain, suffering, and death to songbirds, and a branch of the Canadian government has acted to try to mitigate harm to right whales despite economic repercussions. Public opinion matters, perhaps more in today's age of social media than ever. And animal stories can and do shape public opinion about animals and what responsibilities, if any, humans have toward individuals and species.

John Wadland writes that “[t]he *sine qua non* of what we have chosen to identify as Canadian culture is the wilderness. And on a symbolic level wilderness is the closest we shall ever come to absolute nature” (14-15). Wilderness, for Wadland, is a sort of code for an extreme form of nature, which humans do not affect or modify and in which humans do not live (Hessing 282). This understanding of wilderness exists only at the level of concept; in the twenty-first century, there is no mountain peak or deep-sea trench totally unaffected by humans. It has become increasingly obvious that the strict separation of nature and culture, wilderness and civilization, is untenable. The wilderness is indeed critical to the Euro-Canadian mythos – of exploration, railway building, settlement, colonialism, etc. Animals, however, have also been important, both as symbols of nature and as an opposite of humans that parallels the wilderness/civilization and nature/culture binaries. Like wilderness/civilization and nature/culture, the animal/human binary has proven a tenacious yet overly simplistic way of thinking about a complex concept. Because they are so often positioned on the same side of that binary line, however, they become part of the same set of concepts: wilderness, nature, and animals stand on one side of the abyssal divide, civilization, culture, and humans on the other. As wilderness is important to Canadian identity, so nature; as nature, so animals. As “language acts upon its users” (Cohen, “Introduction” ii), so stories about animals reflect, respond to, and shape perceptions of animals. They may even shape perceptions of identity, individual or collective. The animal, like the wilderness, is an Other set

against the human, which cannot be conceived of because the ability to conceive it negates its Otherness. Nevertheless, animal story writers have persisted in putting words to this great unknown. This struggle may well be more indicative of Canadian identity – at least insofar as it is shaped by Euro-Canadian men – than the concept of the wilderness itself.

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