The Wild Animal's Story:

Nonhuman Protagonists in Twentieth-Century Canadian Literature through the Lens of Practical Zoocriticism

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University

Signature: ……..

Abstract

Despite the characteristic cross-disciplinarity of animal studies, interactions between literary and scientific researchers have been negligible. In response, this project develops a framework of *practical zoocriticism*, an interdisciplinary lens which synthesizes methodologies from science, animal advocacy, and literature. A primary focus of this model is the complex relationship between literary representations of animals, scientific studies of animal cognition, and practical and theoretical work advocating animal protection. This thesis proposes that the Canadian wild animal stories of Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G.D. Roberts operate at an intersection of these three factors. Their potential for facilitating reciprocal communication has not been recognized, however, due to their damaged representation within Canadian literature as a consequence of the Nature Fakers controversy. By re-contextualizing and re-evaluating these texts this project illuminates the unique contributions made by these authors. It also offers new evidence of the intersecting discourses and ideologies that stimulated the controversy. Re-defining the genre has enabled this project to uncover a selection of twentieth-century Canadian texts that perpetuate its core aims and characteristics. This project suggests that after the Nature Fakers controversy, the wild animal story diverged into two new forms: 'realistic' and 'speculative.' By placing the wild animal story in relation to a broader canon of Canadian literature, this thesis identifies three distinct modes of animal representation. These methods of relating to literary animals in the Canadian context are the *fantasy of knowing* the animal, the *failure of knowing* the animal, and the *acceptance of not-knowing* the animal. This novel characterization of Canadian literature is a product of the diverse, interdisciplinary approaches offered by the practical zoocriticism framework.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> *In this collection, see how often his name appears. See how often scholars defer to his authority. See how often they attack his credibility. See how many authors claim him as a seminal influence. See into how many languages his work has been translated. See all of this and more and recognize, in the flawed work of Ernest Thompson Seton (an immigrant to Canada with no formal education beyond art school), ideas that simply will not go away"* (John Wadland, review of *Other Selves* 262).

"Ideas That Simply Will Not Go Away": The Legacy of the Wild Animal Story

The late nineteenth-century wild animal stories of Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G.D. Roberts hold a much debated position in Canadian literature and, more recently, at the heart of Canadian literary animal studies. These stories have been described as "distinctively Canadian" (Atwood 73) and have shaped much subsequent Canadian fiction about animals. Yet the eminent Canadian critic, James Polk, famously described them as an "outdated, scarcely respectable branch of our literature" (51) and they continue to be marginalized as something of a national embarrassment.[1] These short stories about wild animals also triggered a long and well-publicized dispute, known as the Nature Fakers controversy, which began with a disparaging article by the American naturalist John Burroughs (published in 1903) and ended when President Theodore Roosevelt wrote his own condemnation of the stories in 1907. How could short stories about the lives of wild animals prove so divisive? How did these two Canadian authors attract such heavy criticism, and why has the reputation of their work improved so little?

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[1] Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972). James Polk, "Lives of the Hunted," *Canadian Literature*, issue 53 (1972).

Although these questions have stimulated some debate, I contend that no sufficiently comprehensive explanations have been produced. It is my opinion that a full understanding of both the stories and the controversy requires a far more detailed investigation into their relevant contexts than has been completed in the field, so far. In this thesis, I take the position that the negative perception and reception of the wild animal story can be explained through intersecting discourses surrounding the relationship between Canadians and animals, the anxiety of anthropomorphism, the scientific study of animal minds, and the division between science and literature. Likewise, I suggest that the continued marginalization of this topic is the product of both anthropocentric stigma against concern for animals and disciplinary trends that are shaping the emergence of literary animal studies (which I discuss in the following section of this chapter).

It is my belief, then, that Seton and Roberts are responsible for a literary *innovation*, rather than a literary embarrassment. Using an original analytical framework that I have developed, called *practical zoocriticism*, it is my aim to re-examine, re-contextualize, and re-evaluate both the wild animal story and Nature Fakers controversy. In the 1880s, Seton and Roberts began experimenting with ‘realistic’ forms of nonhuman literary representation. Their narratives prioritized the lives and experiences of wild animals, and were generally based on a combination of natural history and individual observation. Seton gained his knowledge first-hand, while Roberts collated the anecdotes of other witnesses. As such, the wild animal story is a hybrid blend of science and storytelling, in which the boundaries between ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’ are often blurred. This became the central point of the controversy. The stories were deemed to be both inaccurate and anthropomorphic. Seton and Roberts were condemned

as ‘nature fakers.’ In this thesis, I contend that the dispute was driven by specific contextual factors, rather than any inherent fault in Seton’s and Roberts’ writing. In particular, I will observe the impact of the late nineteenth-century professionalization of the sciences and its consequences for the study of natural history and animal psychology. Using the practical zoocriticism framework I develop through this work, I will also offer new evidence of the contemporary influences shaping Seton’s and Roberts’ literary innovation. This will include: the increased public interest in the minds and inner lives of animals, which developed from the 1860s onwards; the emergence and steady momentum of animal welfare and wildlife conservation movements in the United Kingdom and United States; the absence of any such coherent animal advocacy in Canada; the mid-nineteenth century anthropocentric use of animals in Canadian literature, in which they appeared not as individuals, but as objects of utility. Through this method of re-contextualization, I will demonstrate that Seton and Roberts had actually produced a new style of nonhuman literary representation and a unique form of Canadian literature.

In a review of the first edited collection of Canadian literary animal studies essays published so far, *Other Selves: Animals in the Canadian Literary Imagination* (2007), John Wadland takes note of the ubiquitous presence of Seton and his work. Seton’s name is mentioned in many different essays, in all three sections of the book, and in “numerous conflicting guises” (259). Moreover, Wadland declares that the wild animal story, which he sees as “primarily Seton’s creation,” is “ultimately responsible for launching Canada’s version of ecocriticism” (262). If the wild animal story is so intrinsic to the study of animals in Canadian literature, why has it not yielded any sustained, book-

length analysis? The closest is the work of Ralph H. Lutts, yet his monograph, *The Nature Fakers: Wildlife, Science & Sentiment* (1990), is more concerned with describing the events of the controversy than providing any critical analysis. His book *The Wild Animal Story* (1998) is an edited collection of wild animal stories, articles from the subsequent debate, and more recent critical essays. There is minimal interpretation from Lutts himself. Moreover, his definition of the wild animal story extends beyond the work of Seton and Roberts to incorporate the American writers William J. Long, Jack London, John Muir, and Rachel Carson. In Lutts' hands, the Canadian writers of this "distinctively Canadian" (Atwood 73) genre are actually outnumbered by Americans.

Here, then, we encounter one of the fundamental problems: there is still no consensus on the definition of the wild animal story, what it should be called, or who created it. It is my contention in this thesis that the wild animal story is a highly specific form of animal writing, co-created by Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G.D. Roberts, in response to the changing perception and treatment of animals in the second half of the nineteenth century. One of the functions of this thesis will be to provide the first full definition and set of identifying characteristics for the wild animal story. In order to assess the lasting impact of Seton's and Roberts' innovation on Canadian literature, I will use this definition to trace the wild animal story's core characteristics across six twentieth-century novels by Canadian authors.

In the early twentieth-century, immediately following the Nature Fakers controversy, the wild animal story went into decline. I propose that we can see its re-emergence, and post-Nature Fakers adaptation, in Roderick Haig-Brown's *Return to the River: A Story of the Chinook Run* (1941); Frederick Philip Grove's

Consider Her Ways (1947); Fred Bodsworth's *Last of the Curlews* (1956); R.D. Lawrence's *The White Puma* (1990); Barbara Gowdy's *The White Bone* (1998); and Alison Baird's *White as the Waves* (1999). Whilst the chronology of these texts might seem unusual, this is due to the fact that such narratives are remarkably rare. Many authors have written in opposition to Seton's and Roberts' style, but only a few have replicated it. I believe that this is due, in part, to the stigma attached to the genre after the Nature Fakers controversy. Indeed, these six texts are divided between what I have designated 'realistic' and 'speculative' forms of wild animal story. Again, I attribute this separation to the issues raised during the controversy; most importantly, the question of 'realistic' animal representation. It must be noted, however, that extremely little scholarship has been produced about these texts—for some of them, my work is the *first* and *only*—and, at best, there are often just mere paragraphs in which *any* scholar has interpreted them through the lens of the wild animal story. Therefore, using a survey of *other* twentieth-century Canadian texts in Chapter Two, I will attempt to demonstrate the highly distinctive nature of the genre, which I see as a divergence from dominant methods of animal representation.

From this wider survey of Canadian literature, I have identified three distinct modes of relating to animals. The first is the '*fantasy* of knowing' the animal, in which the author imagines both the lives and the experiences of nonhuman animals, and attempts to write from an animal-centric perspective as much as possible. I argue that the work of Seton, Roberts, and the six twentieth-century authors belongs to this category, and that the differences between the 'realistic' and 'speculative' styles relate to the ways in which they negotiate the question of 'knowing' the animal. The second, the '*failure* of knowing' the animal, describes narratives of human and animal interaction in

which there is always an inability to understand or to communicate with the nonhuman animal; human efforts to bond with an animal, and their eventual failure, are often the focus of the plot. The third mode is the '*acceptance* of not-knowing' the animal, and this refers to narratives founded on the premise that the nature of 'the animal' can never be known. In fact, distinctions between humans, animals, and supernatural beings are often blurred, challenging the rigidity of scientific classifications and exposing the arrogance of any human perspective that claims to 'know' the animal. Based on my investigation, I have found that the majority of twentieth-century Canadian literature featuring nonhuman animals falls into the latter two categories. Moreover, I have observed that it is with these two styles of animal representation that literary animal studies seems to be most concerned at present.

Literature Review: Defining Animal(ity) Studies?

Introducing *Social Creatures: A Human and Animal Studies Reader* (2009), Clifton Flynn observes that, until fairly recently, "scholars' examinations of the social lives of human beings was limited only to interactions with other humans; our relationships with other animals had been almost completely ignored" (xiii). This emphasis on the social is apt, as the early beginnings of animal studies were driven (almost entirely) by the social sciences. In Kenneth Shapiro's editorial introduction to the inaugural issue of *Society & Animals* (1993), he declared that the journal's primary goal was to "foster within the social sciences a substantive subfield, animal studies, which will further the understanding of the human side of human/nonhuman animal interactions" (1). Anthropology, history, and philosophy were the first of the humanities to join the multidisciplinary endeavour. On the whole, the implicit anthropocentrism of

humanities subjects delayed major engagement for some time. Literary studies would be one of the last to contribute. Indeed, this was despite clear invitations to participate, as in Shapiro's editorial: "more studies are needed in the area of animals in the popular culture, particularly of animals in literature" (2). Although the field of literary animal studies has grown considerably since then, broadly speaking, it continues to be a niche interest. Much like the traditional perception of animals in literature, literary animal studies is still seen by many as something of a novelty—engaging, but perhaps not to be taken too seriously.

One factor inadvertently sustaining this marginality is the multitude of approaches that have developed in response to animal studies. As yet, we remain unable to define literary animal studies, its purpose, or how it should be conducted. To borrow Susan McHugh's words from her article, "One or Several Literary Animal Studies," we must ask: are there one or several ways of reading animals in literature (McHugh)? Whilst this has prevented organization and cohesion within literary animal studies, it does indicate the vitality and promising potential of such research:

> [T]he proliferation of methodological differences constitutes a considerable achievement in the development of this (sub)field, which until recently had been stymied by a largely tacit agreement to consider animals as irrelevant to literature and other traditionally 'humanistic' subjects. (*Ibid*)

This diversity is characteristic of animal studies, as well as its various offshoots, which many believe should be celebrated. In his introduction to *Animal Encounters* (2009), Tom Tyler describes animal studies as an "open, contested field, with no clear canon;" it is a "meeting point where different species of researcher gather," and the resulting "varied, often conflicting approaches" should be considered a "strength rather than a weakness" (2). I agree that this is a distinctive strength of the field, although I would add that the potential

weakness becomes more apparent in the (sometimes heated) conflicts arising from the question of animal ethics. In such a varied, open, multidisciplinary space, it is not surprising that there is still no final agreement on animal studies' relationship with or duties towards real animals.

The majority of animal studies work tends to suggest, at the very least, some form of allegiance to improving the welfare and ethical treatment of nonhuman beings. Within literary animal studies, however, the relationship between academia and advocacy seems more tenuous. The very nature of literary analysis seems to beg the question of whether it could *ever* hope to have any bearing on animal welfare. Yet, some of the earliest and most important advocacy-oriented work in animal studies mirrored the methods of literary studies, by focusing both on language and the direct relationship between discourse and physical treatment. Cary Wolfe's posthumanist deconstruction in *Animal Rites* (2003), for instance, continues the legacy of this work. His focus on speciesism insists that we pay attention to the asymmetrical material effects of anthropocentric discourse, the violent consequences of which fall overwhelmingly on nonhuman animals (6). In other words, the reductive objectifying language of speciesism both legitimizes and naturalizes animal exploitation. Jacques Derrida in "The Animal That Therefore I Am," famously interrogated the homogenizing, objectifying effect of the word 'animal,' which he describes as an "appellation that men have instituted, a name they have given themselves the right and authority to give to the living other" (23). This word encompasses the vast difference and heterogeneity of all nonhuman beings and designates each one as inferior and exploitable. Unique individuals vanish into this indistinguishable mass and we are left with identical, replaceable objects devoid of personality or individual history. Likewise, the importance of

speciesist language is revealed in our tendency to refer to nonhuman animals in terms usually reserved for inanimate objects: ‘it’ or ‘something,’ rather than ‘she,’ ‘he,’ ‘they,’ and ‘someone.’ This attention to how we describe animals was one of the earliest and most widespread features of animal studies. Throughout the field it is now common practice to use ‘other animals’ or ‘nonhuman animals’ to remind readers that they too are encompassed in the word ‘animal.’ In this thesis, I will use ‘animals’ and ‘nonhuman beings’ interchangeably, but I will also refer to animals as individuals and, where possible, I will use non-objectifying pronouns.

It is clear, then, that deconstruction of anthropocentric and speciesist language is one of the ways literary animal studies can impact the ethical treatment of animals. However, not everyone shares the opinion that it *should* be engaged with advocacy at all. As McHugh comments, literary animal studies “likely will continue to foster unpredictable (and often conflicted) positions of animal rights and welfare, establishing no clear foundations of political let alone epistemological solidarity among researchers” (McHugh). Whilst “the most basic questions” continue to produce “conflicting answers,” those “who want this work to resolve the pressing problems of animals in human society” will remain frustrated, and the “dream of a shared method or interpretation” may be deferred (*Ibid*). It is clear that this type of wholesale cohesion within literary animal studies is not possible, but perhaps solidarity within political or a-political positions is achievable. This divide has been recognized by many but (perhaps unsurprisingly in this characteristically diverse field) it has been conceptualized in a number of ways.

In *The Postmodern Animal* (2000) Steve Baker draws on Kate Soper’s terms ‘nature-endorsing’ and ‘nature-sceptical’ to propose the admittedly

"clumsier" animal-endorsing and animal-sceptical (9). He argues that an animal-endorsing perspective "will tend to endorse animal life itself (and may therefore align itself with the work of conservationists, or perhaps of animal advocacy), rather than endorsing cultural constructions of the animal" (9). Whereas an animal-sceptic "is likely to be sceptical not of animals themselves (as if the very existence of non-human life was in question), but rather of culture's means of constructing and classifying the animal in order to make it meaningful to the human" (9). Julie Smith, who uses the terms "pro-animal" and "pro-use" instead, draws the divide along modernism and postmodernism; the former operating from a position "established by animals rights philosophy" that "the evolutionary continuity between humans and animals" allows "authoritative statements about pain and pleasure," and the latter asserting that "animal-rights philosophy reinscribes animals as lesser human beings, failing to imagine a radical egalitarianism" (296). Echoing the sentiments of McHugh and Tyler, Smith recognizes that this "expert and engaging" diversity of animal studies holds the potential to "gain respectability in humanities departments," however she concedes that as a consequence, animal studies will not be the "site of unilateral advocacy" many (her included) had hoped for (297). Others, too, are concerned about the increasing distance between animal advocacy and animal studies. In "The Rise of Critical Animal Studies," Steve Best expresses fears that the field will be "co-opted, tamed, and neutralized by academia," immersed in "abstraction, indulgent use of existing and new modes of jargon [and] pursuit of theory-for-theory's sake," so that clear, lucid communication is "oiled over" with "inscrutable language accessible only to experts" until the realities of living

animals and their exploitation are completely "buried in dense theoretical webs" (Best).[2]

The distance between academic discourse and living animals is also a concern for Charles Bergman, who wonders "what happens inside academe to the sense of the presence of animals" (Bergman). In "Making Animals Matter" for *The Chronicle for Higher Education*, Bergman perceives academia's attempts to theorize and conceptualize animals as "barriers to our full understanding of real animals" and our obligation to them, which he calls "one of the greatest ethical issues of our times" (*Ibid*). He declares boldly that "we must pay greater heed to the animals themselves […] We need to care as much for the worlds of being as we do for the worlds of meaning […] 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" (*Ibid*). Regarding animal representations, he remarks that we discuss them almost exclusively in terms of what they mean to us, but there is "virtually nothing about how our representations affect the animals, or the ethical issues involved in representation. The actual animals seemed almost an embarrassment, a disturbance to the symbolic field" (*Ibid*). Whilst I undoubtedly share Bergman's anxiety, we may need to recognize that this is an instance in which, as Jennifer Howard states in her article "Creature Consciousness," the "true interdisciplinary nature" of the field is a "double-edged sword" (Howard).

[2] The position of literary analysis within the emerging subfield of 'critical animal studies' remains ambivalent. Dawne McCance's *Critical Animal Studies: An Introduction* (2013) provides some guidance by using Carrie Rohman's book, *Stalking the Subject* (2009). This is based on animal-sceptical analysis, however. So, although my framework takes some inspiration from the explicitly political stance of critical animal studies, the path for animal-endorsing work remains obscure. As such, this project does not take any overt stance in relation to critical animal studies.

A potential solution to these conflicts could lie in how we classify the research itself. For instance, in “From Animal to Animality Studies,” Michael Lundblad argues that the phrase “animal studies” is too limiting to encompass the multiplicity of academic work regarding animals, and is “too easily mistaken for a unified call for universal advocacy for animals” (496). He wishes to solidify our understanding of animal studies and associate it even further with both advocacy and work explicitly concerned with the treatment of nonhuman animals. Conversely, he suggests a new term, “animality studies,” to describe “work that expresses no explicit interest in advocacy,” even though it “shares an interest in how we think about ‘real’ animals (496). He admits that such a methodology could be described as speciesist, but is necessary to “open up a space for new critical work that might have different priorities, without an imperative to claim the advocacy for nonhuman animals that runs through much of the recent work in animal studies” (467). Whilst the multiplicity of animal studies has been necessary for the growth and vitality of this minor field, perhaps the profusion of varied and increasingly specialized research suggests that we are approaching a point at which we can begin to define and classify these conflicting perspectives. Although this could seem divisive, it may be necessary for animal studies scholars to begin declaring their allegiances, if we are ever to achieve cohesion.

In light of this, then, I am obliged to declare my own allegiance. I position my work in alignment with the ‘pro-animal’ or ‘animal-endorsing’ scholarship. I concur with Bergman that we must never efface the nonhuman presence, or the realities of exploitation, from our discussions. In a joint editorial for *Society & Animals*, “Toward a Critical Theory of Animal Issues in Fiction,” Kenneth Shapiro and Marion Copeland propose three methods for literary animal

studies: firstly, to deconstruct “reductive, disrespectful ways of presenting nonhuman animals”; secondly, to evaluate “the degree to which the author presents the animal ‘in itself,’ both as an experiencing individual and as a species-typical way of living in the world”; and thirdly, to explicate the forms of animal-human relationships in the work at hand and place them in the “universe of possible relationships—from the animal as forgotten resource for a consumer […] to the animal as more or less equal partner in a relationship—the fruit of which is a common project, a shared world” (345). In what I sense as the implicit formation of a pro-animal literary canon, the authors call for articles prioritizing texts that “give a more robust and respectful presentation of animals” as well as making “observation[s] about the history and development of the human-nonhuman animal bond” (345). In a similar vein, I also agree with John Simons’ assertions in *Animal Rights and the Politics of Literary Representation* (2002) that while we cannot fully “dissociate ourselves and enter an animal world […] we can imagine and we can speculate,” and thus it is “the imaginative and speculative acts of literature” coming “closest to the animal experience in itself” that deserve recognition (7).

At the Crossroads of Science, Advocacy, and Literature: the Origins of Practical Zoocriticism

The analytical framework I have developed during the course of this research which I call ‘practical zoocriticism,’ blends Glen A. Love’s scientific ‘practical ecocriticism’ with Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin’s literary ‘zoocriticism’ to interpret what Marian Copeland terms, ‘zoocentric’ texts. Although I have already provided an overview of some current issues facing animal studies, and literary animal studies, in this section I will offer a more

detailed case for the creation of such a framework, after which, I will outline my methods and their suitability for re-contextualizing and re-evaluating the wild animal story.

Despite the characteristic interdisciplinarity of animal studies, I have observed that interactions between literary and scientific researchers have been negligible. Even the emerging work studying the relationship between literature and science has paid little attention to the literary animal. With such an obvious point of contact, it seems surprising that there has not been more engagement between animal sciences, animal studies, literary animal studies, and literature and science studies. I suggest that that this deficiency exposes some of the disciplinary biases, anxieties, and prejudices that have remained at work, despite our common ground.

Without devoting too much space to unpicking these issues, I believe that the marginalization of literature about animals is an obvious starting point. In “Nonhuman Animals,” an essay for *Society & Animals* (1998), Marion Copeland notes that, due to the literary studies’ “inherited humanistic tradition,” the only “major works are those focused on human protagonists in human-centred drama/plots,” whereas literature about animals is routinely “ignored, seen as minor or skewed so that the nonhuman animal subject is interpreted as metaphor or symbol meant to illuminate something human” (87). This marginalization is further compounded by the stigmatization of concern for animals, which John Simons recognizes as constructed in terms of anthropomorphism and sentimentality as a sign of “childishness or effeminacy” (37). We can perhaps assume that those who perpetuate this stigma imagine that all literary animals are anthropomorphic—essentially humans in silly animal costumes—and are unaware that any serious, committed attempts to represent

animal experience exist at all. These assumptions and prejudices are informed by the reciprocal interactions between anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism. As Glen Love puts it in *Practical Ecocriticism (*2003), literary studies has, thus far, been conducted so as to "serve as a textbook example of anthropocentrism: divorced from nature and in denial of the biological underpinnings of our humanity and our tenuous connection to the planet" (23). Like Copeland, he explains how this human-centred thinking extends to the literary canon:

> It is one of the great mistaken ideas of anthropocentric thinking (and thus one of the cosmic ironies) that society is complex while nature is simple. […] That literature in which nature plays a significant role is, by definition, irrelevant and inconsequential. That nature is dull and uninteresting, while society is sophisticated and interesting. (23)

Thus, the self-perpetuating problem becomes clear; by marginalizing all texts that prioritize the nonhuman, or by distorting them until they *seem* to be about humans, literary studies creates and maintains the belief that all animal literature is only ever anthropocentric and anthropomorphic. In other words, it erases the possibility of zoocentric animal literature, our point of cross-disciplinary contact.

I also suggest, however, that—rather curiously—present trends in literary animal studies may be perpetuating its own isolation. According to my own observations, the field currently operates through a broadly animal-sceptical perspective. As stated above, this stance is sceptical of culture's ability to construct and classify the animal in a way that makes it meaningful to humans (Baker 9). Hence, my previous assertion that it is likely to prioritize the 'failure of knowing' and 'acceptance of not-knowing' models of animal representation. In such an analysis, the radical alterity of the nonhuman is used to interrogate, challenge, or re-evaluate dominant forms of knowledge. This becomes

problematic, however, when attempting cross-disciplinary engagement. From the animal-sceptical perspective, scientific knowledge of animal life tends to be associated with anthropocentrism, speciesism, and human arrogance. I perceive two particular dangers in this strategy: fetishization and immobilization. Despite literary animal studies' collective declaration to take animals in literature seriously—to see each as an *animal*, not as symbol or allegory—it is possible to become too focused on the animal's subversive, anti-anthropocentric presence to the point that all connection to the fleshy realities of living animals is forgotten. The animal becomes a fetishized symbol of alterity, and inadvertently abstracted into a prop for human meaning once again, or as Steve Best put it, "buried in dense theoretical webs" (Best). For those animal-sceptics engaging with 'animality studies' this is perhaps not an issue. But literary scholars who offer contributions to advocacy-oriented work in animal studies can become immobilized by the animal's ability to demonstrate the fallibility and insufficiency of human knowledge. Furthermore, as Love observes, such thinking can lead to a kind of anthropocentric, human solipsism—a "subjectivism [which] intimates no reality, no nature, beyond what we construct within our own minds" (25). Thus, in becoming lost in this type of deconstruction, we can distance ourselves from the engaged, innovative work of the broader, multidisciplinary animal studies project.

In a review for the journal *Anthrozoös*, Copeland defines "zoocentric texts" as "literature in which nonhumans appear not as the agents of social satire or of allegory but as characters in their own life stories" (277). She adds that such texts use "a variety of literary techniques, including anthropomorphism, to interpret the stories of other living beings for human readers who cannot, unaided, hear the words of the furred, feathered, scaled, or

finned, never mind the leafed or barked" (277). This idea is reminiscent of Simons' assertion, stated above, that the "imaginative and speculative acts of literature" coming "closest to the animal experience in itself" deserve recognition (7). I believe that what both Copeland and Simons describe is essentially the 'fantasy of knowing' the animal, an animal-endorsing form of representation that uses literature as a conduit for empathy and education. And indeed, Love promotes a similar such use of literature. He observes that the nature-endorsers gain credibility where the nature-sceptics do not by "being drawn to real problems and in advocating and working towards analyses and solutions" (8). Whether these problems are insurmountable or not, as "literary citizens" it makes sense "to write, read, teach—even in recognition of the mediated contextuality at work—with more attention to the biological and ecological context than has been previously evident in dominant nature-sceptical thinking" (8). This position of practicality leads him toward:

> ecological, naturalist, scientifically grounded arguments that recognize human connection with nature and the rest of organic life and acknowledge the biological sciences as not just another cultural construction. Rather, they are the necessary basis for a joining of literature with what has proven itself to be our best human means for discovering how the world works. (7)

Thus, we can begin to seen the potential for "literary citizens" to join the allegiance between the natural sciences and advocacy for the protection of nature. Indeed, rather promisingly, Copeland also promotes such interdisciplinarity. She comments that the arguments of scientists, environmentalists, and advocates may prove more useful than "the insights of canonical literary critics whose homo- or anthro-pocentric universe seems to find little value in art that unlocks the door to the realm of the nonhuman" (277).

A similar tone of practicality can be found in Huggan and Tiffin's *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* (2010). Their notion of "postcolonial ecocriticism"

performs “an *advocacy* function both in relation to the real world(s) it inhabits and to the imaginary spaces it opens up for contemplation of how the real world might be transformed” (13, emphasis original). Significantly, they also emphasize the role of the *imagination* here; arguing that social and environmental advocacy can “turn imaginative literature into a catalyst for social action and exploratory literary analysis into a full-fledged form of engaged cultural critique” (12). Huggan and Tiffin also extend their postcolonial ecocriticism to the animal in the form of ‘zoocriticism.’ Although it is encompassed within their primary focus of ecocriticism, they do specify that “zoocriticism—as we might term its practice in literary studies—is concerned with animal *representation* but also with animal *rights*” (17-8, emphasis original). From the perspective of Huggan and Tiffin’s postcolonial ecocriticism, the practical use of zoocentric literature as a catalyst for engagement is likely to be an aspect of this concern. Thus, I borrow ‘zoocriticism’ to designate animal-endorsing, advocacy-orientated literary analysis. Although the scope of this thesis necessitates the omission of postcolonial analysis from practical zoocriticism for now, Huggan and Tiffin’s work demonstrates what a valuable contribution it could make to a more fully-fledged iteration of my model. It should also be noted that the zoocentric commitment of this framework prohibits the interpretation of nonhuman protagonists as metaphors or allegories. As a reflection of the zoocentric aims of the genre, I will endeavour to read all animal characters *as animals*.

Practical Zoocriticism and the Wild Animal Story

Practical zoocriticism studies the intersection between: literary representations of nonhuman animals; the theoretical and practical work of

animal advocacy (animal ethics, welfare, and conservation); and the scientific study of animal minds. It recognizes that all three factors—literature, advocacy, and science—are in constant flux, as are their relationships with each other. The practical zoocriticism model acknowledges, as best as possible, that these relationships are often complex, obtuse, and not necessarily favoured by all of their practitioners. For instance, an author may represent animals in literature without developing a scientific understanding of animal minds. An animal cognition researcher may have no interest in animal ethics. And a welfare campaigner may see no value in literary representations of animals. Even within animal advocacy, the relationships between differing approaches can be fraught; wildlife conservation and animal ethics are often at odds. These diverging attitudes can be quite common, but the work of practical zoocriticism is to pursue the instances in which all three factors are in alignment and explore the practical possibilities of their interaction. It is my belief that the wild animal stories of Seton and Roberts constitute just such an alignment of literature, science, and advocacy.

In the preface to his first collection of realistic wild animal stories, *Kindred of the Wild* (1902), Roberts writes that, whether avowedly or not, "it is with the psychology of animal life that the representative animal stories of to-day [sic] are first of all concerned" (16). Seton's own first collection, *Wild Animals I Have Known*, was published four years earlier, but it is in Roberts' preface that we find the first attempt to define their new genre. Aware that they were attempting a literary innovation, both authors often wrote such self-conscious prefaces to their collections. However, Roberts proposed aims and characteristics for the genre, whereas Seton merely discussed his own work. As I will demonstrate in my third chapter, based on my observations, I contend that Seton was the

original innovator, but it was Roberts who influenced the final shape of the wild animal story. The men worked separately (though they had some contact) and I believe that it was their different backgrounds that contributed to the implicit establishment of these two discrete roles. Seton lacked formal education, and worked variously as a wildlife artist, naturalist, and hunter (collecting bounties on the heads of predators), before becoming a writer; Roberts was educated at the University of New Brunswick, taught English and French literature, and edited literary journals. Roberts emphasized the wild animal story's relationship with scientific research, whilst Seton made passionate pleas on behalf of animals. Indeed, he concludes the final story of *Wild Animals I Have Known* with one such declaration: "Have 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" (357). Although Seton and Roberts expressed their priorities differently, the work of both men contained the same commitment to producing imaginative speculations regarding the life and psychology of individual animals in order to promote the improved treatment of animals generally.

I argue that the prefaces Seton and Roberts wrote for each collection of stories provide invaluable insights into this misunderstood and poorly-defined genre. Where many critics choose not to do so, I take their words seriously and approach the wild animal story on those terms. In his article "From Within Fur and Feathers" (2000), John Sandlos observes that Seton and Roberts "attempt […] to create animal characters that are at least partly accurate and real is precisely the creative objective that is so often overlooked" (76). Moreover, he adds that, "this is the *unique innovation* of these early Canadian animal stories" (79, emphasis added). Without going into further detail here, I argue that we can

roughly define the wild animal story as a scientifically-informed, zoocentric speculation; a sustained attempt to imagine the lives, experiences, and unique perspectives of one or more nonhuman protagonists, living independently and autonomously from humans. Through the study of animal protagonists in the six twentieth-century texts that I have identified, I will investigate the ways in which each author engages with this endeavour in a post-Nature Fakers context. It is worth noting that, at present there are no sustained analyses of Seton's and Roberts' influence on subsequent representations of animals in Canadian literature. Nor has literary studies produced any major investigations concentrating solely on nonhuman protagonists.

Most established interpretations of the wild animal story undermine Seton's and Roberts' commitment to representing nonhuman minds and perspectives, prioritizing anthropocentric readings instead. Even within more recent literary animal studies work, efforts to read their work as a sincere zoocentric endeavour have been minimal. Recalling Bergman's comments above, we might attribute this to the general negligence towards real animals, which seem "almost an embarrassment, a disturbance to the symbolic field" (Bergman). Here, then, we can begin to detect some factors contributing to the aura of embarrassment and discomfort attached to the wild animal story. In literary animal studies, this is exacerbated by Seton's and Roberts' preoccupation with notions of fact, accuracy, and truth, which drew considerable attention during the Nature Fakers controversy. Understandably, these claims are especially problematic for animal-sceptical critics. From the animal-endorsing perspective of practical zoocriticism, however, I propose that we must accept some damage to the agency and alterity of the *imagined animal* (its ability to resist interpretation and representation), if it can be of benefit to the

living animal. Indeed, I have observed that authors of wild animal stories—both the original and post-Nature Fakers iterations—all share a commitment to seeking some form of practical engagement: raising awareness of ecological and conservation issues; encouraging empathy and moral concern for animal exploitation; facilitating the imaginative exploration of nonhuman perspectives; or speculating on the upper limits of animal cognitive, social, linguistic, emotional, or cultural complexity. Hence, in order for such endeavours to be productive, we must reconcile our embarrassment with the 'fantasy of knowing the animal.'

This issue of 'knowing' was much-debated in the Nature Fakers controversy, but not from an animal-sceptical perspective. In the article that instigated the debate, "Real and Sham Natural History," (1903) John Burroughs derides Seton's work by modifying the title to "*Wild Animals I ALONE Have Known*" (129). Indeed, Burroughs' criticism was not that Seton had claimed to know these animals, but that the abilities and behaviours depicted in the book were previously unknown: "There are no stories of animal intelligence and cunning on record, that I am aware of, that match his" (132). Although the controversy is remembered in terms of Seton's and Roberts' sentimental anthropomorphism, it is crucial to observe that these accusations were made on the grounds of *specific* depictions that indicated nonhuman cognitive, social, or emotional complexity. Thus, the conflict was not based on 'true' or 'false' representations, but differing perceptions of animal intelligence. As such, it is highly significant that, at this time, dominant theories of animal psychology were transitioning from explanations based on *intelligence* to those based on *instinct*. I contend, therefore, that by pursuing the relevant historical contexts in depth, we find that the accusation of 'nature faker' signifies more about the changing

states of natural history and animal psychology at the turn of the century, than the anthropomorphic errors of the authors.

Through the framework of practical zoocriticism, I will explore the interconnected discourses that shaped both the wild animal story and Nature Fakers controversy, as well as the contextual and ideological factors that led to the success of Burroughs and his fellow accusers over Seton, Roberts, and their stories. For this interdisciplinary approach, I will investigate the historical evolution of the following: Canadian wildlife conservation and animal welfare; the study of animal psychology; the widening gap between science and literature; and the representation of animals in Canadian literature. As such, the unusual interplay between literature, science, and advocacy brought together by the wild animal story should also provide valuable insights for practical zoocriticism. Moreover, using this original analytical framework, I hope to demonstrate a potential method for engaging with the literary nonhuman in a way which incorporates both the sciences and animal advocacy.

In the second chapter of this thesis, “Knowing Other Animals: Nonhumans in Twentieth-Century Canadian Literature,” my objective is to demonstrate that the wild animal story is not representative of Canadian fiction in general. At present, however, there is no accepted theory of animal representation in Canadian literature. Critics have asserted the importance of animals in the Canadian context, but none have presented a satisfactory characterization of (or explanation for) their role. In consequence, the secondary purpose of this chapter will be to evaluate the current theories of Canadian animal representation, and use environmental history and a survey of twentieth-century texts to propose a potential alternative. It is here that I explain my model of

animal representation (the fantasy of knowing, the failure of knowing, and the acceptance of not-knowing) in-depth, and provide a range of literary examples. Nonetheless, it must be clear that I am reluctant to impose a single, homogenizing interpretation onto Canada's complex and varied relationships with nonhuman animals. Thus, I assert that my characterization of Canadian literary animals works in opposition to theories that are based on an imagined 'Canadian psyche' (such as Margaret Atwood's in *Survival*) and resists any attempt to subsume First Nations, Inuit, Métis, Francophone-Canadian, and Anglophone-Canadian cultures into one unifying perspective.

The subsequent two chapters address the re-contextualization and re-evaluation of the wild animal story and Nature Fakers controversy. The former, "Practical Zoocriticism: Contextualizing the Wild Animal Story," begins with a review of previous work on the topic in order to demonstrate the need for my investigation. I argue that anthropocentric interpretations have often attempted to sever the wild animal story's connections to science and advocacy as part of analyses which undermine the nonhuman presence. By discussing the ways in which the genre's poor definition has exacerbated these issues, I establish the necessity for a coherent set of characteristics. Then, I propose a more cohesive definition of the genre, situated within an explanation of its origins. After which, I use the practical zoocriticism model to contextualize the wild animal story and Nature Fakers controversy. For the sake of clarity, I divide this part of the chapter into three sections, titled 'Literature,' 'Advocacy,' and 'Science,' each of which provides an overview and discussion of the relevant contexts.

In "Wild Animals and Nature Fakers," I use the groundwork laid in the previous chapter to provide my interpretations of the wild animal story and Nature Fakers controversy. Thus, the chapter is divided into two sections. In the

first, I use the practical zoocriticism framework to discuss Seton's and Roberts' stories and highlight the impact of each contextual factor ('literature,' 'advocacy,' and 'science') on different characteristics of the genre. Rather than a separate analysis of each story, I take a holistic approach across the genre using Seton's collections *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1898)*, Lives of the Hunted* (1901)*,* and *Animal Heroes* (1905), and Roberts' *Kindred of the Wild* (1902)*, Watchers of the Trails* (1904), *and The Haunters of the Silences* (1907). Where appropriate, I also draw distinctions between what I perceive as the differing styles of Seton and Roberts. In the second section, I re-evaluate the events and debates of the Nature Fakers controversy in light of the previous chapter. In particular, I deconstruct the arguments of Burroughs and Roosevelt in the two articles that opened and closed the debate respectively: "Real and Sham Natural History" (1903) and "Nature Fakers" (1907).

The chapter "Realistic Representations: *Return to the River*, *Last of the Curlews*, and *The White Puma*" will contain close readings of three novels, the authors of which were all prolific writers of fiction and nonfiction about Canadian wildlife. Moreover, as all three authors were also involved in the study or protection of animals, each text conveys an overt conservation message on behalf of a particular species: Pacific salmon, Eskimo curlew, and the North American puma (or cougar). Their style of realistic representation makes the influence of Seton's and Roberts' work quite clear, but in their cautious (sometimes awkward) writing, we can also detect the legacy of the Nature Fakers controversy. These texts all attempt to balance depictions of cognitive, emotional, and social complexity in their protagonists whilst avoiding any claims that may attract accusations of anthropomorphism. Thus, I will note that these novels provide a useful gauge for tracing the influence of behaviourism. In *Last*

of the Curlews (1965), for instance, Bodsworth repeatedly comments on the "curlew's instinct-dominated brain" (Bodsworth 9), whereas in *The White Puma* (1990), there are almost no references to instinct. Given this cautious negotiation of animal psychology discourses, their authors resist any temptation to 'translate' or interpret nonhuman communication, and remain relatively detached from their protagonists, seeming to observe and narrate from a slight distance. Thus, I suggest that they share more in common with Roberts' careful detachment than Seton's tendency to push the boundaries of his representations by imagining the perspectives of his protagonists more intimately or 'translating' the language of their species.

"Speculative Representations: *Consider Her Ways*, *The White Bone*, and *White as the Waves*" will focus on three novels frequently classified as anthropomorphic fantasy, but each demonstrates sustained, scientifically-informed, imaginative exploration of nonhuman experience. These somewhat problematic texts may seem to have a tenuous relationship with the wild animal story, but I have selected the six twentieth-century texts (whether realistic or speculative) because they express all of the genre's characteristics, as defined by my framework. The three speculative novels all utilize innovative literary techniques to create complex, zoocentric perspectives that offer defamiliarizing representations of the violent or exploitative activities of humans. I contend that their classification as 'fantasy' is due, in part, to the strategies employed for avoiding the issues of fact and accuracy that were so contentious during the Nature Fakers controversy. Instead, these texts engage with scientific research in highly imaginative ways by pushing the boundaries of what is known about each species (leafcutter ant, African elephant, and sperm whale) and speculating on the upper limits of their intelligence. I believe that each author's

choice of species is significant, here, as each text imagines the possibilities of nonhuman language and culture.

The use of animals known to have high levels of co-operation and social complexity indicates the speculative rather than fantastical function of these texts. (Likewise, it is worth noting that these speculations resemble Seton's attempts to use 'translation' to demonstrate the complexity of nonhuman communication.) Although the potential for scientific engagement may seem unlikely in the less realistic texts, their potential contributions for the study of animal minds has already been noted. In *Sperm Whales: Social Evolution in the Ocean* (2003), biologist Hal Whitehead (another Canadian, incidentally) describes "two remarkable novels" published in the late 1990s, which are in fact *White as the Waves* and *The White Bone* (370). He perceives their significant potential for fostering collaboration between science and storytelling:

> Both novels use what is known of the biology and social lives of their subject species to build pictures of elaborate societies, cultures, and cognitive abilities. […] A reductionist might class these portraits with *Winnie-the-Pooh* as fantasies on the lives of animals. But for me they ring true, and may well come closer to the natures of these animals than the coarse numerical abstractions that come from my own scientific observations […] These books are built on what we have found out about sperm whale society and similar, but more detailed, work by elephant scientists. […] I think the communication should be reciprocal. We need to take these constructions, note the large parts that are consistent with what we now know, and use them as hypotheses to guide our work. Sperm whale culture may be restricted to coda types and movement patterns. But it could also include whole suites of techniques for making a living from an unpredictable ocean and relating to other sperms. (370-1)

In the concluding chapter of this thesis, I will consider the possibilities of this reciprocal communication as part of my final re-evaluation of the wild animal story.

CHAPTER TWO

KNOWING OTHER ANIMALS: NONHUMANS IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY CANADIAN LITERATURE

Canadians and Animals

"Canadian literature is full of claims made on behalf of animals," (1) begins Janice Fiamengo's introduction to *Other Selves: Animals in the Canadian Imagination* (2007). As indicated by this remark, I would add that Canadian literary criticism is full of claims about animals made on behalf of a nation. Three influential texts by Canadian critics Alec Lucas, James Polk and Margaret Atwood have supported the assumption that Canadian literature is 'full' of animals, and have continued to shape studies in this area.[1] In *The Wacousta Syndrome* (1985), Gaile McGregor epitomises the attitude shared by these critics and makes one such claim on behalf of the nation: "Canadians are fascinated by animals" (192). Until recently, little serious critical attention had been paid to the presence of animals in Canadian literature, and yet influential critics continued to identify this presence as unique—perhaps even "distinctively Canadian" (Atwood 73). Hence, the representation of animals in Canadian literature was simultaneously recognized as significant, yet unworthy of any rigorous scholarly consideration.

This oversight was of course due to the general anthropocentrism of the humanities discussed in the previous chapter, but it was exacerbated by the perception of the wild animal story as a national literary embarrassment following the Nature Fakers controversy. For instance, Polk opens his famous

[1] In the *Literary History of Canada* (1965), Alec Lucas' survey "Nature Writers and the Animal Story"; James Polk's "Lives of the Hunted" published in issue 53 of *Canadian Literature* (Summer 1972) and Margaret Atwood's *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972).

article “Lives of the Hunted” with a quote from E.O. Wilson in which the American biologist imagines the Canadian wilderness to be full of the animal characters from Ernest Thompson Seton’s stories. With obvious resentment, Polk responds: “Typically American, we sigh, to see Canada as a hunters’ game park and to hold firmly to the legends transmitted by an *outdated, scarcely respectable* branch of our literature” (51, emphasis added). Yet, as a genre almost exclusive to Canadian authors, the wild animal story came to be seen as representative of *all* depictions of animals in Canadian literature. If the genre was “distinctively Canadian” (Atwood 73), the thinking went, then it must have sprung from some distinctively Canadian way of perceiving animals. Indeed Atwood, influenced by Polk, proposed a theory about the importance of animals to ‘the Canadian psyche’ based entirely on the stories of Seton and Charles G.D. Roberts (73). It is perhaps unscholarly to make such claims on behalf of the nation based on the work of only two authors, both of whom wrote at the same time and were undoubtedly influenced by each other. Trends for the type of criticism shared by Atwood, Polk, and the others—mostly thematic and nationalist—faded somewhat and interest in the presence of animals in Canadian literature seems to have correspondingly diminished. As the diversity of essays in *Other Selves* suggests however, the rise in literary animal studies signals that it is less embarrassing to take seriously that ‘scarcely respectable’ aspect of Canadian literature. The emerging field of Canadian literary animal studies does of course recognize works beyond Seton and Roberts, and the diversity of attitudes to animals represented.

Nonetheless, despite obvious changes in the style of critical analysis, claims about animals are still being made on behalf of the nation: “Animals are so fundamental to our [Canadian] writing that it might indeed be said that our

literature is founded on the bodies of animals—alive or dead; anthropomorphized or 'realistic'; indigenous or exotic; sentimental, tragic, magical and mythical" (Fiamengo 5-6). So whilst this has been acknowledged both broadly and repeatedly, there have actually been remarkably few attempts to either characterize or explain this apparent 'fascination'. To do so would require a comprehensive survey of animals in Canadian literature, and whilst Fiamengo's collection demonstrates the potential heterogeneity of representations, it is by no means a survey. On the other hand, Lucas' survey is undoubtedly comprehensive, but it is now out-of-date and does not consider the depiction of animals outside the genres of nature writing and the animal story. This omission is highlighted when we consider John Sandlos' comment in his detailed article, "From Within Fur and Feathers" (2000): "perhaps the most important development in the Canadian animal 'story' in the last three decades is the attempt by many authors (even poets) with no strong ties to natural history tradition to write about animals" (83-4).

The majority of the novels addressed in this chapter were produced during the period that Sandlos identifies, motivated no doubt by the gradual progression of animal and environmental politics from the margins towards mainstream public concern. The development he identifies is also particularly significant for my own argument that, after the Nature Fakers controversy, two strands of the wild animal story developed from Seton's and Roberts' work: 'realistic' and 'speculative'. The realistic works are written by those with some background in natural history, tending to write about animals regularly in both fiction and nonfiction (Roderick Haig-Brown, Fred Bodsworth and R.D. Lawrence), whereas the speculative narratives are by authors without this expertise, and for whom this is their only work of animal literature (Frederick

Philip Grove, Barbara Gowdy and Alison Baird). Sandlos' comment also challenges the misconception that Seton's and Roberts' style of animal representation is the 'Canadian style' of animal representation, and reminds us that, as Fiamengo states: "important encounters with animals abound in [Canadian] canonical works" (5). Hence, I suggest that this is the significant point about Canadian literature: there is an abundance of narratives about animals, yet there is also an abundance of animals in narratives about humans. Even as minor characters, Canadian literary animals are still 'fascinating'.

To demonstrate the uniqueness of the wild animal story, then, it is necessary to place it in relation to these other representations of animals in Canadian literature. This chapter provides a brief literary survey of these representations. As my research and thinking behind it has developed, however, it has also become an attempt to hazard an explanation for this seeming abundance of fascinating animals in Canadian literature. As practically the only existing alternative, I have of course used Atwood's argument as a starting point for my own opposing stance and in the following section I begin with a thorough critique of her 'Canadian animal victims' theory in *Survival*. I then outline my position and the three broad categories of animal representation that I have identified, before proceeding with the literary analysis itself. Since the focus here is still the wild animal story, the survey will be restricted to depictions of wild animals. I do propose, though, that it is the 'wildness' of these animals that makes them 'fascinating.' As I argue below, wildness and wild animals seem to hold a significant position in Canadian culture. The definition of 'wild' can be blurred however, and like a few of Seton's and Roberts' stories, there are crossovers with domesticated animals behaving in (or being perceived in) 'wild' ways. Since this fascination does not seem to apply to pets or farm

animals, it is more than likely that the individuals in these narratives only become 'fascinating' when they become 'wild'. The texts covered here are restricted to novels from the twentieth century written in English, and again this is to reflect the nature of this project. Nevertheless, I will allow for a few crucial texts from the beginning of the twenty-first century—Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* (2001) being an obvious inclusion, for instance.

Unlike the rest of the thesis, however, and unlike the other studies of Canadian literature mentioned here, this chapter also includes texts by Aboriginal authors. In doing so, I will attempt to avoid tokenistic engagement, these texts will not be unthinkingly assimilated into my framework neither will they be 'othered' and forced into a reductive Native/non-Native dichotomy.[2] Due to the size of the task here, however, practical considerations must be acknowledged, and realistically none of the texts in this chapter can be given the thorough attention and detailed analysis they deserve; a certain amount of brevity is to be expected. Feasibility means that the abundance of animals in other forms of literature cannot be addressed here; notable exclusions being poetry and non-fiction genres, in particular nature writing; autobiography and travel accounts. Inevitably, the discussions in this chapter are by no means exhaustive, but hopefully they can be starting points from which future research, and perhaps a more holistic theory of animals in Canadian literature, may develop.

[2] I use the terms 'assimilation' and 'othering' knowingly to reflect Canada's colonial status, the legacy of which can often unwittingly be repeated in academic practices.

Canadian and Animal Victims

In “Lives of the Hunted,” Polk compares the animal stories of British, American and Canadian literature, providing the foundation of Atwood’s argument that the realistic wild animal story is “distinctively Canadian” (Atwood 73). He states:

> The British writer, steeped in the social order, is doomed to transform his animals into miniaturized people: thus the moles, toads, rats, weasels and bunnies in Kenneth Grahame and Beatrix Potter have class accents, wear clothes and own houses. Whether dressed or not, the British animal usually inhabits a domestic world of farmyards and happy endings. (52)

There is no “wildness” to British animals, he argues since, regardless of species, they are always socially stratified humans in disguise. Likewise, he finds similar anthropocentrism in American literature, in which nature

> exists to challenge man, to jolt him into self-discovery, to reveal the truths of a transcendental universe, to shout out sermons from stones. […] the animal […] has a way of turning into a furred or finned symbol, a cosmic beast whose significance transforms the insight of the hunter. (52)

By comparison, he suggests that in Canadian writing this anthropocentrism seems “almost inverted” where “the emphasis is not on man at all, but on the animal” (53). Of course Polk’s method of interpretation is anthropocentric itself (it is possible to read animals in British and American literature without resorting to allegory) as well as highly generalizing, but I do agree to an extent. Inevitably our positions diverge when Polk argues that this emphasis on the animal expresses surprisingly anthropocentric concerns. The “persecution” of the “hunted” animal is nothing more than a manifestation of Canada’s own sense of “persecution” and anxiety over its own “survival” (58). This anxiety comes from Canada’s “perennial questioning of its own national identity,” and is increasingly coupled with “a suspicion that a fanged America lurks in the bushes, poised for

the kill" (58). It is with this image of Canada as a threatened animal victim that Atwood begins her argument in *Survival.*

As stated above, until the development of literary animal studies, the stories of Seton and Roberts were broadly seen as representative of animals in Canadian literature. Both Polk and Atwood extrapolate from the wild animal story to generalize and make claims on behalf of the nation, whereas I argue the opposite. As Lucas explains, "[a]nimal stories like Roberts's and Seton's have not been especially numerous," and between them "they have made the history of the wild animal story almost entirely the history of their work in it" (403, 398). Thus, I define the unique characteristics of the wild animal story *against* the majority of Canadian literature, instead of defining the characteristics of Canadian literature *through* this minor genre as Atwood does. From this position, then, she proposes that animals in Canadian literature are always victims, and they are always victims because Canadians themselves feel victimized. I take issue with this premise both for its inherent anthropocentrism and for its homogenizing inaccuracy. Animal victims are not restricted to Canadian literature, as Marion Scholtmeijer's *Animal Victims in Modern Fiction* (1993) attests.[3] Likewise, not every animal in Canadian literature is a victim, as Susan Fisher indicates in her article "Animalia" when describing the elephants of *The White Bone*: "[they] certainly suffer at the hands of human beings, but they are not animal victims in the pathetic sense Atwood described, nor are they particularly Canadian" (160). I propose here then, that the instability at the core of Atwood's argument lies in the following assumptions: "Canada is a collective victim" (36); animals in literature are

[3] She argues that the "conception of the animal as victim" has become so "universal" that "the modern person is most likely to accept the animal's status as victim as definitive" since "it has become difficult to separate the animal from that particular role" (11).

"always symbols" (75); Canadian literature always presents "animals as victims" (75).

Atwood poses an "easily guessed riddle" to her readers: "what trait in our national psyche do these animal victims symbolize?" (75). If each culture has a "single unifying and informing symbol at its core," then America's is "The Frontier," "England is perhaps the Island," and for Canada it is "undoubtedly Survival" (31-2). She explains:

> Like the Frontier and The Island it is a multi-faceted and adaptable idea. For early explorers and settlers, it meant bare survival in the face of 'hostile' elements and/or natives: carving out a place and a way of keeping alive. But the word can also suggest survival of a crisis or disaster, like a hurricane or a wreck […] what you might call 'grim' survival as opposed to 'bare' survival. (32)

Whilst anxiety over survival is understandable for any peoples affected by extreme geography and climate, Atwood argues that the issue is the survival of Canadian culture too:

> For French Canada after the English took over it became cultural survival, hanging on as a people, retaining a religion and a language under an alien government. And in English Canada now while the Americans are taking over it is acquiring a similar meaning. (32)

Here we can see the return of Polk's 'fanged America.' Considering the nation's colonial history and America's cultural dominance, this sense of cultural instability is perhaps to be expected. Again though, Atwood takes this idea further: "Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that Canada as a whole is a victim, or an 'oppressed minority,' or 'exploited'" (35). This victim theory becomes the core of her argument but without her fully engaging with or explaining *how* Canada is victimized, beyond its obvious colonial history: "Let us suppose in short that Canada is a colony" (35). Although currently more evident in Australia, I concur with Helen Tiffin and Graham Huggan's assertion in *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* (2010) that the concepts in Ghassan Hage's *Against*

Paranoid Nationalism (2003) could be applied to the Canadian context (129). We can perhaps recognize in Atwood's language the "self-perpetuating victim rhetoric of a 'paranoid nationalism' in which majority culture is seen, and depends on being seen, to be under permanent threat" (129). Indeed Roy Miki's critique of this attitude in *Broken Entries* (1998) does make such a connection. He argues that "Canadian nationalists," like

> Margaret Atwood in *Survival*, […] adopted the language of victimization to place 'Canadian' cultural identity in opposition to its external enemies, American and British imperialisms. This triadic model justified a reductive 'Canadianness'—a cultural lineage linked to an essentialized British past—that elided the relations of dominance inside the country. (131)

It is with perhaps uneasy recognition of *this* element of her argument that the literary animal studies critics who borrow Atwood's analysis of Seton and Roberts tend to ignore her claims that Canadians themselves are victimized animals too.

Considering Atwood's words, and particularly those of Polk in his opening to "Lives of the Hunted," there is perhaps a further connection between a 'fanged' America and 'persecuted' Canadian animals. Although none of the critics here make any overt reference to it, I suggest that the subtext of the Nature Fakers controversy could be a factor. We cannot overlook the significance of the fact that the two most vocal and influential detractors of the wild animal story were John Burroughs and Theodore Roosevelt—both enormously powerful authorities on nature in North America at the time. And whilst the work of American authors Jack London and William J. Long were criticized alongside Seton and Roberts, the wild animal story nonetheless remains a *Canadian* genre, and so making the literary debate into a debate across national borders as well. Polk's embarrassment at E.O. Wilson's fantasy of a Canada populated with Seton's characters surely demonstrates some

residue of post-Nature Fakers anxiety. Likewise, I suggest that the impulse to turn these characters into complex allegories for the Canadian psyche is Atwood's way of emulating a degree of the American anthropocentrism Polk describes; animals in literature are "always symbols" (75) she claims, and nature poetry is "seldom just about Nature" (49). It is useful here to recall Glen A. Love's argument in *Practical Ecocriticism* discussed in the previous chapter:

> It is one of the great mistaken ideas of anthropocentric thinking (and thus one of the cosmic ironies) that society is complex while nature is simple [...] That literature in which nature plays a significant role is, by definition, irrelevant and inconsequential. That nature is dull and uninteresting, while society is sophisticated and interesting. (23)

From this perspective then, the embarrassment of these Canadian critics is unsurprising, and we must not forget that *Survival* and "Lives of the Hunted" were published long before ecocriticism or literary animal studies had developed. Now, however, critics interested in anti-anthropocentric depictions of either animals or the natural environment would do well to look to Canadian literature. For instance, writing in the late 1990s just as these areas of research were beginning to gain ground, Susan Glickman introduces her monograph, *The Picturesque and the Sublime: a Poetics of the Canadian Landscape* (1998), by justifying her topic:

> Writing a book about the poetics of Canadian landscape presupposes that landscape is a legitimate subject for literature. In Canada, this has always been taken for granted; we have assumed that engagement with the land is a subject of intense interest and depictions of its grandeur, immensity and variety a primary source of aesthetic pleasure. (3)

As literary criticism continues to extend its interest beyond the merely human, perhaps the Canadian fascination with the 'non-human' (both animals and the natural environment) could become a source of pride rather than embarrassment.

Knowing Other Animals

So far I have argued that whilst there is general agreement that "Canadians are fascinated by animals," (McGregor 192) and that "animals abound in canonical [Canadian] works" (Fiamengo 5), there has been no consensus about *how* or *why*. As I have shown, the combined theories of Polk and Atwood are insufficient, yet surprisingly no real alternatives have been offered. I propose here that a solution may well lie in this very inability to answer the question. In her review of Steve Baker's *The Postmodern Animal* (2000), Susan Fisher responds to the postmodern troubling of the animal-human divide and its resulting ambivalence by suggesting (perhaps with pride?) that it is not necessarily a new phenomenon: "Canadians, of course, have always been confused by the animals among us—are they victims, friends, predator, prey?" (259). I believe that Fisher's remark can be used to help us to understand both the abundance of 'fascinating' animals in Canadian literature and the inability of literary criticism to explain this presence, but her words must first be expanded upon for a more nuanced understanding.

First, we need to consider the sense of *proximity* in her words. The foreword and introduction to Tina Loo's *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (2006) demonstrates that Canada's 'wilderness' and 'wild animals' cannot be constrained physically or imaginatively; the wild is not 'out there,' it is "*among* us". Graeme Wynn opens his foreword, aptly titled "Troubles with Nature," by considering a recent incident in which a coyote was "seen loping, in the middle of the day, through an old established residential area in Vancouver" (xi). Predictably, the presence of this wild animal—"an intruder, a wild thing that did not belong [...] *Its* place was far away" (xi, emphasis original)—unsettles notions of human and animal spaces,

natural and unnatural environments, 'wild' and 'domestic(ated)'. Indeed, he explains that coyotes "have been fairly common in the city of Vancouver since the 1980s," and bears "sometimes wander from the forests of the North Shore mountains into the wealthy hill-slope suburbs of West Vancouver," and to the "delight of camera-toting tourists, deer wander the streets of Banff" (xi, xii, xx). The imaginative construction of human spaces as safely enclosed and separate from nature triggers surprise and confusion when the 'incongruous' proximity of 'the wild' is suddenly felt. Yet curiously at other times, we choose to impose an exaggerated sense of its proximity, as Loo's introduction demonstrates.

Living in Vancouver, "surrounded by tall buildings," she notes the irony that postcards do not reflect the reality of the city:

> Instead of buildings, most feature the word 'Vancouver' or 'Canada' emblazoned over photographs of Stanley Park and the North Shore mountains, and more incongruously, over portraits of moose, marmot, and beaver—creatures which, despite the city's considerable diversity, are hardly common sights on the streets. (1)

Evidently the legacy of 'imperial eyes' continue to shape perceptions of Canada and the belief that what is unique to the country is not people or culture but the *natural environment*—its wild animals, its abundant resources, its aesthetic beauty. Loo suggests that such postcards are no doubt found in every Canadian city because images of Canada are almost always synonymous with images of 'wildness':

> Wildlife has been emblematic of the country from the days of the fur trade, when beaver pelts were a medium of exchange, to the present, when the 'proud and noble creature' sells Molson Canadian beer, emblazons Roots clothing, and can be found burrowed in every pocket and change purse, adorning the country's coins, along with the caribou, loon, and polar bear. The extent to which wildlife is common currency in Canada is one manifestation of the central place that *nature*, and particularly *wilderness*, holds in defining national identity. Canada's cultural producers literally 'naturalized the nation'. (1, emphasis added) [4]

[4] The cultural producers Loo indicates are the early twentieth century landscape painters known as the Group of Seven, as well as some of the writers of animal literature I discuss here and

Imperial ideologies shape the production of culture so that a preoccupation with 'nature' and 'wilderness' (imagined as 'pristine' and 'empty,' echoing *terra nullius* fantasies) perpetuate and continue to shape a naturalized national identity. Yet, despite awareness that images of nature in Canada will always be loaded with colonial history, there remains also the inescapable reality of the stark contrast between the landscape's "grandeur, immensity and variety" (Glickman 3) and the nation's "sparse [human] population" (Crane 21). As Kylie Crane explains in *Myths of Wilderness: Environmental Postcolonialism in Australia and Canada* (2012), Canada is the second largest country in the world but one of the ten *least* densely populated, with a population density of 3.4/km^2, most of which is concentrated in the South leaving "vast stretches of relatively uninhabited regions" in the North (8). Hence if one looks at a map illustrating Canada's population density, it is not surprising that one might feel as though these pockets of humans are scattered *amongst* much larger populations of nonhumans.

It becomes clear then, that imperialism's fantasies of 'emptiness' are not only complicated by the obvious existence of Aboriginal cultures throughout Canada, but also the existence of wild nonhuman populations as well. Unlike the domesticated animal categorized almost exclusively as 'food' or 'pet,' the wild animal conveys a sense of nonhuman autonomy, agency and alterity; both separate and beyond human control. Of course the realities of environmental destruction and species loss complicate this further, but our focus here is the presence of animals in Canadian literature not the actual presence of animals in

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elsewhere in the thesis: Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G.D. Roberts of course, as well as Fred Bodsworth, Roderick Haig-Brown and R.D. Lawrence (in Chapter Five), and Farley Mowat and Marion Engel who will be discussed later in this chapter.

Canada, and literary representations do not necessarily reflect reality. Like Wynn and Loo's examples, the presences of 'the wild' and 'wild animals' are always felt in Canada, whether implicitly or explicitly: the beaver, caribou, loon and polar bear are always with you in your wallet, whether you ever see their living counterparts or not; and although you may see your city represented on a postcard with pictures of the moose, marmot or beaver, your domestic(ated) space is much more likely to be threatened by the intrusions of bears, coyotes or deer. The proximity of the animal presence in Canada, as implied by Fisher's words and demonstrated by the examples given, seems to demand human response. How do we understand, categorize or act towards these animals? The inability to sufficiently answer this question and the resulting *confusion* that Fisher describes can be understood in two ways: first, the Canadian animal's wildness conveys an impression of alterity and autonomous agency, such that Fisher's categories—"victims, friends, predator, prey" (259)—seem inadequate and reductive. Secondly, the history of Canada's complex and often contradictory, relationship with the natural environment, which oscillates between exploitation and protection, compounds the difficulties of understanding wild animals and results in ambivalence about our relationship with them. I begin by addressing the former concern, which seems to be expressed throughout Canadian literature.

Although the agency of 'the wild' takes various forms, both negative and positive, there seems to be a sense of confusing unpredictability which manages to disrupt our ability to know, understand or predict the natural world. Even Atwood's "dead and unanswering" nature seems nonetheless to convey a sense of agency: "Canadian writers as a whole do not trust Nature, they are always suspecting some trick [...] that Nature has betrayed expectation" (49).

This expectation is of course Eurocentric in origin, as Christoph Irmscher demonstrates in his analysis of early Canadian nature writing for *The Cambridge Companion to Canadian Literature* (2004). He suggests that, from the perspective of these authors, the natural environment in Canada "follows none of the established rules," posing both a "physical challenge" and a "challenge to the powers of the writer" (95). Like Fisher he also utilizes the idea of confusion: the vast Canadian wilderness, "often confuses the human observer" leading to our feeling "uncertain" about our presence in the environment (95). Interestingly though, this effect seems to have continued both in Canadian literature and literary criticism. I argue that this Eurocentric settler anxiety has shaped what Irmscher calls the "stubbornly anthropocentric" models of Canadian identity like Atwood's "survival" or Northrop Frye's "garrison mentality" (95). He asserts that this anthropocentrism is a "striking limitation, given the rather marginal presence of humans in a territory that includes such vastly different landscapes as [...] mountains, lakes, grasslands, forests and seashores" (95). I suggest however, that Eurocentrism and anthropocentrism are so closely linked that this oversight hardly surprising. Both of these writers position the agency of the wild as problematic because it undermines the anthropocentrism of their Eurocentric settler mentalities; whereas from the perspective of Aboriginal cultures in which the dichotomy between humans and nature does not exist, the anti-anthropocentric agency of nature is less of a concern. Indeed, as I will argue later in this chapter, the alterity of the wild animal is accepted and often celebrated in novels by Aboriginal authors, typically using trickster figures like Coyote or Raven.

Whether represented positively or negatively, Canadian literature by both Native and non-Native authors tends to recognize the agency of 'the wild,' and

particularly of wild animals. This agency undermines anthropocentrism and the belief that humans can easily understand, categorize, predict, or represent the alterity of the wild nonhuman presence. If we return to Atwood and Polk's comparisons between Britain, America and Canada then, we can see that there is little unconquered wilderness in Britain, and in America there is wilderness but it is always seen as conquerable. As Polk asserts, Canadian "attitudes towards the natural world are less confident; much serious Canadian literature seems to express a jittery fear of the wilderness, as a place which threatens human endeavour and self-realization" (Polk 51). Thus, we can now perceive both the anthropocentrism and Eurocentric settler mentality in Polk's statement. Nonetheless, in anti-anthropocentric Canadian literature, which Polk would probably not deem 'serious,' the *confusion* of recognizing the autonomy, agency, and alterity of wild animals is not necessarily a negative experience. Indeed, at the end of her article, Fisher remarks that novels like Barbara Gowdy's *The White Bone* "provide reassuring evidence that there is still something wild out there, something mercifully indifferent to our human concerns" (261). This autonomous 'wildness' is to be celebrated.

As I have suggested previously, though, all of this is complicated further by the second concern I have identified in Fisher's sense of 'confusion'—the history of Canada's fluctuation between exploitation and protection of the natural environment. To return to Loo's examples above, the beaver is an animal with a presence both ubiquitous and confusing. In beer commercials, or on coins, clothes and postcards, the beaver is used to create Canadian identity; yet the mass slaughter of beavers for the fur trade means that, quite literally, they were used to *create* Canada itself. In *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: a History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (2001), J.R. Miller explains how the

hunting of beavers shaped the colonization of Canada: “Without the fur trade there would have been no stimulus of competition to search out new lands, and without the profits to underwrite the voyages there would have been no means to carry out the search” (52). The ironies of Canada’s material and imaginative use of animals may best be understood through the beaver:

> The rodent is Canada’s national animal not because of its earnest industry, but because its pelt was a valuable commodity. When Canadians celebrate the beaver then, they are celebrating the fur trade—and its mass slaughter of wildlife in the name of fashion. (Loo 3)

Of course, animals everywhere are used materially and imaginatively in confusing and contradictory ways but, as the beaver demonstrates, this dynamic seems to be exaggerated in Canada. The ambivalence of such attitudes is illustrated again by Atwood. She imagines the fur trade from “the animal point of view” and concludes that, from this perspective, “Canadians are as bad as the slave trade or the Inquisition” (79). She then contrasts this with seemingly contradictory attempts to protect wildlife: “in Canada it is *the nation as a whole* that joins in animal-salvation campaigns such as the protest over the slaughter of baby seals and the movement to protect the wolf” (79, emphasis added). Again, we see here a claim made on behalf of the nation, but whether accurate or otherwise, she interestingly asserts that anyone would be “mistaken” to see this as “national guilt,” since “it is much more likely that Canadians themselves feel threatened and nearly extinct as a nation” (79). Again, she does not fully explain why this is the case, but such a complicated displacement of anxiety and concern seems unlikely to me. Instead, using Neil S. Forkey’s arguments in *Canadians and the Natural Environment to the Twenty-First Century* (2012), I would argue that the contradiction Atwood identifies is due to the nation’s continued oscillation between the two major impulses that shape its experience with the natural world: “the need to exploit

natural resources" and "the desire to protect them" (3). As economic prosperity increases, Forkey explains, the *inherent* value of animals and the environment is protected, but as it decreases the country is compelled to protect itself, and the *financial* value of animals and the environment are exploited. Throughout its history, the nation has alternated between these positions, but if the nation's identity and iconography are so heavy with images of wilderness (thriving autonomous animals and grand pristine landscapes) then perhaps a resulting sense of confusion and ambivalence is to be expected.

The diversity of First Nations, Inuit, Métis, French-Canadian and English-Canadian cultures means that, for all I have ventured here, the 'Canadian' relationship with nature is one to which *no single perspective* can be applied. As I have argued, those who have attempted over-arching theories of 'the Canadian psyche' and its relationship with nature and animals can only ever be reductive and insufficient, particularly since no single homogeneous Canadian psyche even exists. The loose model that I have proposed here based on Fisher's idea of *confusion* should hopefully be able to account for this heterogeneity of attitudes, since this very confusion illustrates the absence of any single easy or clear-cut perception of nature and animals in Canada. I argue that the abundance of fascinating animals in Canadian literature is not the consequence of any single factor but a range of changing (sometimes correlating, sometimes contradicting) influences, resulting in diverse and varied representations which express equally diverse and varied responses to the idea of 'wildness': savage or serene; pristine or populated; threatening or threatened. Early Canadian works in the form of travel accounts, settler narratives and nature writing engage with and explore *attempts* to know 'the wild,' but as we have seen, these writers encountered ambivalence and confusion. I have

identified three broad responses to the agency of the wild animal developing as Canadian literature has progressed: the *fantasy* of knowing; the *failure* of knowing; and the *acceptance* of not-knowing, which can take the form of a celebration of animal alterity or an uncomfortable recognition of human ignorance.

The wild animal story is unlike the majority of Canadian literature because it performs a fantasy of knowing the wild animal. This nonhuman presence is no longer a confusing or unknowable other; it is a Darwinian relative with whom we can connect across the species divide. The fantasy of knowing is intended to facilitate our empathetic imaginations for increased understanding, respect and concern for nonhuman life. Likewise, the wild environment may not be unfathomable or inhospitable; perhaps it is a place of solace, a refuge from industrial modernity and something to be protected. In this fantasy of knowing, the anti-anthropocentric qualities of nature are embraced, the imagined nonhuman perspective is prioritized, and there is often a moment of defamiliarization in which the violent human who exploits nature becomes seen as the confusing or unknowable other. The agency and alterity of the literary animal (its ability to resist signification) are sacrificed in order to better imagine the real agency and alterity of its flesh-and-blood counterparts.

The Nature Fakers controversy condemned the anthropomorphism of this fantasy of knowing and so stigmatized the stories of Seton, Roberts and the others. In response, many authors have accepted our inability to know the animal and thus use literature to explore the process of this failure. In fact, I suggest that the majority of twentieth-century Canadian literature about animals enacts this failure, representing the elusive and confusing but all the more fascinating qualities of the wild animal's alterity. This categorization is

distinguished from the ‘acceptance of not-knowing’ because it emphasizes the human character’s gradual realization of this failure, usually after indulging in a fantasy of knowing. These texts perform a critique of the wild animal story by exploring the anthropomorphism and naivety of this fantasy, as well as reinforcing the intrinsic danger of ‘savage’ wild animals. One of the best-known examples of this category would be *Bear* (1976) by Marian Engel, which provides a clear response to wild animal stories and anthropomorphic representations:

> She had read many books about animals as a child. Grown up on the merry mewlings of Beatrix Potter, A.A. Milne, and Thornton W. Burgess; passed on to Jack London, Thompson Seton or was it Seton Thompson, with the animal tracks in the margin? Grey Owl and Sir Charles Goddamn Roberts that her grandmother was so fond of. […] Yet she had no feeling at all that either the writers or the purchasers of these books knew what animals were about. *She had no idea what animals were about*. They were creatures. They were not human. (59-6, emphasis added)

Engel’s position on the fantasy of knowing is clear, and she emphasizes the character’s failure to know the animal through a rather misguided belief that she is in a romantic, sexual relationship with a male bear. The character indulges in this fantasy and presuming that the feeling is reciprocal, decides to consummate the relationship. For most of the novel, the bear has been largely disinterested but here he finally attacks, leaving a bloody wound across the characters back and shocking her into realization. The character feels (quite literally) her failure to know this animal and the dangers of her anthropomorphic fantasy. This failure of knowing in *Bear* will be explored in more detail below, along with Robert Kroetsch’s *Studhorse Man* (1969), Graeme Gibson’s *Communion* (1971) and Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi* (2001).

These narratives explore the process of failure and the realization of our inability to know, but do not take their consideration of ‘the animal’ further.

Others utilize an acceptance of not-knowing to play with the animal-human divide. This mode of representation is often found in Aboriginal literature, as well as magic realism, both of which resist objectifying scientific discourses about animals, and accept the unknowable alterity of the nonhuman. Here the acceptance of not-knowing is often celebrated, and trickster figures in particular are used by both Native and non-Native authors to unsettle anthropocentrism. The 'confusing' and 'unrepresentable' alterity of tricksters challenges dominant discourses in works by Aboriginal authors, like Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993), Lee Maracle's *Ravensong* (1993) or Thomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen* (1998). While magic realist narratives like Timothy Findley's *Not Wanted on the Voyage* (1984) or Douglas Glover's *Elle* (2003) not only utilize this celebration of not-knowing but also adopt pseudo-trickster figures to trouble human 'superiority' and the animal-human divide. Curiously, rather like the fantasy of knowing, these texts often involve a sense of defamiliarization when human characters are 'othered' by animal characters who possess greater knowledge or understanding. By utilizing the acceptance of not-knowing productively and disrupting the animal-human divide, however, these texts avoid any charges of anthropomorphism.

With all of these texts in mind then, we can see that the Canadian literary animal cannot be reduced to Atwood or Polk's idea of the victimized animal, nor are all of these animals necessarily symbolic of 'the Canadian psyche'. The examples that I have given here demonstrate the heterogeneity of representations I will explore in the following section, but it is already clear that 'the animal' in Canadian literature is ubiquitous, confusing and irresistibly fascinating.

Knowing and Not-Knowing Animals

Communion explores the inability of the human protagonist, Felix Oswald, to understand the needs of a terminally ill husky dog. As Atwood observes, Felix "feels more for the diseased animals at the veterinarian's where he works than he does for anyone else" (83). His repeated (failed) attempts to comprehend the dog, its suffering, and its illness become an obsession. He fantasizes about "taking the dog out into the winter bush and freeing it, thereby freeing—perhaps—a part of himself" (83). Although I do not read *Communion* through Atwood's victim theory, I suggest that the 'failure of knowing' narratives do expose the fantasies human characters incorrectly apply to animals. By associating 'the wild' with some sense of revitalization for both himself and the dog, Felix demonstrates his complete misinterpretation of the animal's *own* needs. There is no "returning" a domesticated animal to "the wild," as was Felix's intention and certainly not an extremely ill one (Gibson 275). Inevitably, when he makes the attempt, Felix's 'altruism' is exposed as a delusion and the husky tries to remain in the car: "This isn't the way it's supposed to be" (290). Demonstrating his fundamental inability to empathize with the dog, Felix forces it out of the car. When he tries to drive away, the dog runs alongside, and is accidentally killed; his fantasy of rescuing the animal results in its gruesome, painful death (293). The husky's efforts to remain with the car communicate an intense desire and a supreme assertion of agency in spite of severe illness. It is clear that the fault lies not with the animal's inability to express itself, but with the human's failure to comprehend.

Other 'failure of knowing' narratives also use an act of nonhuman agency to expose the human character's misunderstanding or misinterpretation. Unlike

in *Communion*, however, the animal's actions are often violent. As I have discussed, *Bear* demonstrates the human protagonist Lou's failure to interpret the actions—or rather the *inaction*—of a male bear: "she mounted him. Nothing happened. He could not penetrate her and she could not get him in. She turned away. He was quite unmoved" (Engel 122). As Gwendolyn Guth remarks in her chapter in *Other Selves*, "the bear remains a bear, a mystery, an inscrutable other. He is neither toy nor ogre but 'lump,' placidly unmoved by Lou's attempts to dance with him or mount him" (37). I argue that, like Felix, Lou is unable to decipher the animal's inaction as a form of communication. Rather than understanding their stationary bodies on the animal's *own terms*, Lou and Felix see them as blank states upon which they can inscribe their own fantasies. When the husky and the bear act unexpectedly, Felix and Lou begin to comprehend the errors in their perceptions, yet both remain unable to understand the animal's meaning:

> Slowly, magestically, [sic] his great cock was rising. […] She took her sweater off and went down on all fours in front of him, in the animal posture. He reached out one great paw and ripped the skin on her back. At first she felt no pain. She simply leapt away from him. Turned to face him. He had lost his erection and was sitting in the same posture. *She could see nothing, nothing, in his face to tell her what to do*. (Engel 131-2, emphasis added)

Significantly, however, Gibson and Engel do not provide insights into the husky or the bear's perceptions of these human-animal relationships. They remain unknowable to both human characters and readers.

I suggest that *The Studhorse Man* depicts another human character's attempts to fantasize and create meaning through a distorted perception of a nonhuman. In Kroetsch's picaresque adventure, man and horse travel in search of females (human and equine) with whom to copulate. The novel's opening words are "Hazard had to get hold of a mare" (5). As Aritha van Herk remarks in

her introduction, “The cock that Hazard Lepage peddles is presumably that of his stallion, Poseidon; but the cock that gets the most action is his own” (vi). Hazard’s efforts to perpetuate his rare breed of horse, which carries his own name, becomes entangled with his own identity and sexuality. As indicated by references to the “Lepage stud,” I argue that Hazard attempts to construct himself as a *stud horseman* (77). As the novel progresses, the distinctions between man and horse become increasingly blurred. Hazard even encourages horses to share his decrepit mansion, in which the headboards of beds are decorated with the names of Lapage stallions: “The sixth, without sheets or a pillow, bore the name POSEIDON” (187). Yet, at the end of the novel, Poseidon attacks Hazard without warning:

> [T]he first cry came from the rooms beyond the library: the exquisitely piercing mortal cry, the cry half horse, half man, the horse-man cry of pain or delight […] the two heads were together, the man’s, the stallion’s. The stallion’s yellow teeth closed on the arm of the man. And Hazard Lepage flew upward through the air as if he were a spirit rising to the sky; but his body came back to earth, under the sickening crunch of the stallion’s hoofs. (198, 201).

Hazard lies “crushed,” while Poseidon disappears with a “crash” through a bay window (201). Poseidon severs the connection between studhorse and studhorse man (or stud horseman), whether intentionally or not. Again, however, the animal’s actions are both unexpected and incomprehensible.

The abrupt disappearance of the tiger, Richard Parker, at the end of *Life of Pi* also follows this pattern: “I still cannot understand how he could abandon me so unceremoniously, without any sort of goodbye, without looking back even once” (Martel 7). After spending months stranded in a lifeboat together, Pi’s confusion indicates that he still does not know the tiger, the nature of their relationship, or the tiger’s perception of him. In “Lick Me, Bite Me, Hear Me, Write Me,” Travis Mason observes: “During the closing chapters especially, *Life*

of Pi concerns itself with problems of anthropomorphism more overtly than *Bear*" (118). Here, rather than the attribution of human characteristics onto animals, anthropomorphism is used to describe *any* human attempts to know or understand the nonhuman. Early in the text, for instance, assertions are made against the danger of *"Animalus anthropomorphicus*, the animal as seen through human eyes […] we look at an animal and see a mirror" (Martel 39). This statement is certainly true of the 'failure of knowing' narratives, at least. In each text, one or both participants in a human-animal relationship experience some form of violence as a consequence of the human's inability to understand or interpret the animal. As such, there is often also a sense of loss or disappointment associated with the animal's defiance of human expectations, hopes, and fantasies. There is no doubt, however, that in these extreme (sometimes obsessive) relationships, the nonhuman presence is both fascinating and confusing for the human protagonist.

Alternatively, the 'acceptance of not-knowing' attaches no such negativity to the nonhuman's ability to resist categorization. In "The Coyote Came Back," for instance, John Sandlos describes Coyote's subversive strength as a trickster figure:

> The ancient myth-character of Coyote is an enigmatic paradox whose 'nature' is both multi-faceted and constantly shifting. […] His contradictory nature and locally-coloured personality resists universalizing academic interpretations, but is, in each of his manifestations, merely one aspect of an elusive protagonist. (101)

Thus, there is no 'failure' of knowing the animal here; the acceptance of not-knowing is to be expected from both characters and readers. For instance, one of the ways King uses the trickster figure in *Green Grass, Running Water* is to subvert and lampoon the Christian hierarchy of God, man, and beast. When a dream of Coyote's becomes personified, he calls it Dog, but the dream

disagrees: “I am god says that Dog Dream. ‘Isn’t that cute,’ says Coyote. ‘That Dog Dream is a contrary. That Dog Dream has everything backward.’ But why am I a little god? Shouts that god” (King 2). It is in the inexplicable or unexpected that we find the strength of the trickster’s agency. Coyote cannot be made to satisfy expectations of ‘animals’ because he cannot be contained in that category. As Sandlos remarks, he “is not merely an aspect of reality; reality is instead an aspect of Coyote” (112).

Likewise, in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, Highway depicts the Cree trickster figure Weesageechak. The novel follows the lives of two brothers, Champion and Ooneemeetoo Okimasis, as they survive and attempt to heal from the abuses they suffer within the residential school system. Weesageechak makes many subtle and varied appearances in the novel, the first of which is as the “Fur Queen,” a beauty queen dressed in “a floor-length cape fashioned from the fur of arctic fox, white as day. She had her head crowned with a fox-fur tiara” (9). Operating as a somewhat ambiguous guardian spirit for the boys, she makes herself known in different guises. At one point, looking like a voluptuous singer, an “arctic fox,” she introduces herself to Champion (renamed Jeremiah in residential school) as “Maggie Sees. It used to be Fred but […] I changed” (231). After which she proceeds to list her many names: “Miss Maggie Sees. Miss Maggie-Weesageechak-Nanabush-Coyote-Raven-Glooscap-oh-you-should-hear-the-things-they-call-me-honeypot-Sees, weaver of dreams, sparker of magic, showgirl from hell” (233-4). As Highway explains in his author’s note, she is: “‘Weesageechak,’ in Cree, ‘Nanabush’ in Ojibway, ‘Raven’ in others, ‘Coyote’ in still others” (np).

Indeed, in *Ravensong,* Coyote/Weesageechak/Nanabush oversees and orchestrates events as Raven:

> Change is serious business—gut-wrenching, really. With humans it is important to approach it with great intensity. Great storms alter earth, mature life, rid the world of the old, ushering in the new. Humans call it catastrophe. Just birth, Raven crowed. Human catastrophe is accompanied by tears and grief, exactly like the earth's, only the earth is less likely to be embittered by grief. Still, Raven was convinced that this catastrophe was planned to execute would finally wake the people up, drive them to white town to fix the mess over there. Cedar disagreed but had offered no alternative. (14)

Raven's plan is to heal the gulf between the Native and white communities through an influenza epidemic. Sandlos describes Coyote's appearance in *Green Grass* as that of "an anti-fixer who makes the world right by unleashing his destructive energy" (109). Despite the vastly differing tone of these two books, we can see that Raven also attempts to heal through destruction. Moreover, through these contrasting appearances of Coyote/Weesageechak/Raven, we can also perceive that each manifestation is "merely one aspect of an elusive protagonist" (101). Recognition of the trickster as all of these figures simultaneously, requires our fundamental acceptance of 'not-knowing.'

The human-animal subversions of *Elle* and *Not Wanted on the Voyage* are somewhat less complex, although both are used to deconstruct European, Christian hierarchies. In a novel heavy with postcolonial criticism and satire, Elle explores the experiences of a young French woman in the sixteenth-century who is abandoned on a small island off the coast of Canada. Removed from her Calvinist uncle's ship for her 'uncivilized' behaviour, she is left to survive in a harsh, 'New World.' In a parody of nineteenth-century topes of 'going Native,' however, Elle gains both an Aboriginal lover (Itslk) and the shamanistic ability to transform into a bear. As she shifts between woman and bear, she finds herself increasingly unknowable to other humans. This becomes a form of power, however, facilitating her survival and enabling her to finally seek revenge on her

uncle, the General. Back in France, she and a 'fellow' bear kill him, but her physical form during the attack is unclear. She appears to be partway between woman and bear: "Hairy one, ain't she? Coming right out of her clothes. Always knew there was something uncanny about her" (201). Moreover, her attacks seem particularly ursine: "I swat my uncle […] I slash the General's moaning form […] I lift my nose and grunt, shake my head till my lips slap together" (201). The ambiguity of the scene is simultaneously disturbing (for both the witnesses and reader) and empowering (for Elle and the previously imprisoned bear). After the General is dead and they leave the scene, Elle questions the awareness of the crowd: "What do the grave-haunters see? Two bears loping through a gate, disappearing into the night" (201).

In *Not Wanted on the Voyage* the alterity of nonhuman experience also defamiliarizes the animal-human divide and, most importantly, the illusion of human superiority. "As a postmodern re-writing of Noah's ark," Fisher explains, the text "considers things from the beasts' point of view, and paints Noah / Dr. Noyes as a grim, lustful patriarch-not the benign father I remember from the Sunday School flannelboard" (4). She observes, moreover, that while the animals do suffer on the ark at the hands of Dr. Noyes, "their cool observation of his crimes gives them narrative power" (4). They do not suffer in silence like Atwood's victimized animals. Indeed, Mottyl the cat (the main nonhuman character) and the other animals of the ark can talk. Fisher perceives this ability in a "postmodern" context, in which the talking animals not only "challenge the rightfulness of human dominion," but also enables the reader a temporary illusion of "the slipping away of human subjectivity" (4). Ultimately, however, Dr. Noyes' supreme acts of violence—upon both humans and animals—silence the nonhumans. Scholtmeijer argues:

> At the novel's conclusion, the ark's '*no*' has become literal, one sign of its triumph being the loss to the animals of their voices. The sheep, which used to sing hymns, can only repeat 'Baaaa's,' and the whispers which had produced dialogue in the mind of the cat Mottyl have died. Since God, Yaweh, has also died earlier in the novel, the silencing of the animals' voices leaves humankind alone in a mute world just like that which anthropocentrism gives us. (244-5)

The ambiguity and alterity of the Canadian literary animal increases the anti-anthropocentric strength of these narratives. As each demands acceptance of our inability to know the animal, the errors and arrogance of human-centred thinking are exposed.

Indeed, if we return to Fisher's description of the confusing Canadian animal—"are they victims, friends, predator, prey?" (259)—we can see that both the trickster and postmodern pseudo-tricksters are all of these things at once, and much more. In fact, even the realistic animals of the 'failure of knowing' narratives tend to occupy two or more of these categories simultaneously. Her use of the phrase "the animals among us" (259) also helps to illuminate the ubiquity of these nonhuman characters. These texts are not *animal fiction*, as such; they are human narratives into which the animal presence intrudes unexpectedly. Like the 'incongruous' wild animals who enter human environments, these nonhuman characters cannot be contained physically or imaginatively. As I have demonstrated, attempts to control them, to force their compliance with our anthropocentric expectations, cause great harm to all the animals of the text, whether human or nonhuman. It should be clear, therefore, that such representations hold little in common with the fantasy of knowing the animal. Indeed, each text seems to expose the very impossibility of this fantasy. Nevertheless, as I will demonstrate in a following chapter, a different form of anti-anthropocentric potential can be found in these fantasies. Moreover, I argue that their ability to act as a conduit between the living animal and the

human reader *may* be worth the sacrifice of the literary animal's imagined agency.

CHAPTER THREE

PRACTICAL ZOOCRITICISM: CONTEXTUALIZING THE WILD ANIMAL STORY

Critical Responses

Having defined practical zoocriticism in Chapter One, I will now demonstrate how this new model can help us to re-evaluate and re-contextualize the wild animal story and Nature Fakers controversy. In the same introductory chapter, I argued that there has been very little research intersecting the two fields of 'literary animal studies' and 'studies in literature and science.' It is my position that both of these emerging fields would benefit from the kind of cross-fertilization that practical zoocriticism could provide. Both literature and scientific research seem to hold a broadly anthropocentric focus and yet have shown little interest in the relationship between literature and the animal sciences. Likewise, the majority of literary animal studies work remains bound to the conventional practices of cultural studies, embodied by the 'animal-sceptical' position. In the previous chapter, I argued that many Canadian authors writing about the 'failure of knowing' and the 'acceptance of not-knowing' the animal reinforce this sceptical approach. To most of these authors and critics, the 'fantasy of knowing' the animal indicates human arrogance or naivety, but I maintain that the sacrifice of the literary animal's 'unknowability' and resistance to signification is acceptable if it can be beneficial to the *living* animal. Such 'animal-endorsing' positions are more likely to be associated with advocating animal protection and engaging with the animal sciences. It is difficult for animal-sceptical literature and criticism to facilitate similar practical interactions. I propose that if the field of literary animal studies

is to demonstrate a committed engagement with the radical, cross-disciplinary progress of the broader human-animal studies project then it must learn to prioritize the living animal over the literary animal. In other words, it must reconcile its embarrassment with the fantasy of knowing the animal.

Practical zoocriticism's three-point model—examining interactions between literary representations of animals, scientific studies of animal minds, and advocacy for animal protection—offers a prototype of what engaged literary animal studies might look like. I suggest that the wild animal story operates at an intersection between these three factors and can, therefore, serve as an appropriate case for the application of this framework. In this chapter I will use it to re-evaluate and re-contextualize the wild animal story, as the genre's reputation as an 'embarrassment' has meant that its aims have rarely been taken seriously. As discussed in the previous chapter, this view stemmed from arguments produced during the nature fakers controversy, and later perpetuated by James Polk's description of the wild animal story as an "outdated, scarcely respectable branch of our literature" (51). When properly re-contextualised, however, this marginalization seems undeserved. We can see that it is based on overlapping anthropocentric discourses and assumptions that were compounded by changes to the sciences developing over Seton's and Roberts' lifetimes. I propose that using the practical zoocriticism framework, we can re-evaluate the wild animal story and recognize that it is not a literary embarrassment, but a valid literary *innovation*. This novel approach necessitates pursuing the relevant contexts in depth and with care but, perhaps due to the disciplinary biases I have outlined previously, it has remained overlooked.

Decades after Polk's exclusion of the wild animal story from the "respectable" works of Canadian literature, the genre's reputation has improved very little. Again, however, I assert that this is not due to the inherent foolishness of Seton's and Roberts' endeavour, nor the validity of Polk's position. In fact, only seven years previously, Joseph Gold had described Roberts' animal stories as "literature worthy of our attention," constituting "an important body of Canadian writing" (22). He even called for Roberts' work to be brought back into print and placed "in the forefront of Canadian letters, where he rightfully belongs" (32). I suggest, then, that continued dismissal of the wild animal story with "barely a wave of the debonair critical hand," (22)—as Gold puts it—has been exacerbated by the repetition and reinforcement of Polk's original interpretation. Margaret Atwood's appropriation of his work in *Survival* (described in the previous chapter) may have been instrumental in this preservation. As an interpretation that is both beguilingly simple and satisfyingly broad, Atwood's chapter on "Animal Victims" is the most frequently cited analysis of Seton's and Roberts' work. Moreover, it is often used as a shorthand method of discussing the wild animal story in arguments that have little to do with the texts themselves. For instance, in *States of Nature* Tina Loo relies entirely on Atwood and Polk while discussing the ways in which Canada's wildlife has been "saddled with the burden of national identity" (2). In her account, Seton's and Roberts' animal protagonists are little more than "statements of Canadian identity [...] allegories for Canada's precarious position in the world" (2). Despite their efforts to represent animals realistically *as animals*—not to mention their work to spread the message of wildlife preservation across North America—Seton's and Roberts' stories are dismissed as yet more fiction that reduces animals to anthropocentric symbols. Loo's use

of Polk's quasi-humorous description of Canada's "suspicion that a fanged America lurks in the bushes, poised for the kill" (Loo 2, Polk 58) adds a sense of the absurd to their work. With this vision of the two nineteenth-century Canadians writing stories about tragic animal victims while cowering from a fanged America, it is indeed difficult to see their work as 'respectable.' Such shorthand use of Polk and Atwood has resulted in this widespread perception of Seton's and Roberts' work as anxious allegory, anthropomorphic sentimentality, and misguided national embarrassment.

Yet those who do not subscribe to Polk and Atwood's victim theory can still be hesitant to take seriously the aims of the wild animal story. Despite his celebration of Roberts' stories, even Gold does not engage with the genre's scientific aspirations. In fact, he uses Roberts' statements about the relationship between animal stories and animal psychology as a way of separating his work from the rest: "Roberts clearly does not see himself as writing this kind of story at all" (Gold 24). This is a curious interpretation, particularly in light of Roberts' frequent reiteration of this relationship when introducing his own books: "I have dared to hope that I might be contributing something of value to the final disputed question of animal psychology" (*Haunters of the Silences*, vi). Nonetheless, Gold makes this claim in order to justify his own anthropocentric reading: "Roberts' animal stories constitute, as far as I can ascertain, the only sustained attempt to use the materials of the Canadian Wilderness for the purpose of expressing *a coherent view of the world that man inhabits*" (23, emphasis added). By claiming that Roberts is creating a "Canadian mythology" with "animals, rather than gods," (23) Gold demonstrates the validity of Glen Love's observation that anthropocentric approaches to literature are usually based on the belief that "nature is dull and uninteresting, while society is

sophisticated and interesting" (Love 23). By reading Roberts' interest in 'dull' and 'uninteresting' nature as allegorical, and *really* about humans, Gold makes it 'sophisticated' and 'interesting' and, therefore, "worthy of our attention" (Gold 22). Due to the anthropocentric biases and prejudices that I have already mentioned, this strategy is quite common. For instance, although their value-judgements might be different, it is clear that Polk, Atwood, and Gold are all sidestepping the wild animal story's stated aims in order to re-centre the human.

As indicated here, this approach tends to sever the wild animal story's connections to science and advocacy, weakening Seton's and Roberts' attempts to prioritize the imagined, nonhuman presence. Whilst details of the arguments may differ, all seem to express the same discomfort or embarrassment at this fantasy of knowing the animal. In "The Revolt Against Instinct" (1980), for example, Robert H. MacDonald claims to "take Roberts at his word, and to examine his and Seton's stories in the light of his crucial distinction between instinct and reason" (18). Rather than pursuing the implications for animal representation, he takes a distinctly anthropocentric position:

> The animal story, I shall show, is part of a popular revolt against Darwinian determinism, and is an affirmation of man's need for moral and spiritual values. The animal world provides models of virtue, and exemplifies the order of nature [...] This theme, inspired as it is by a vision of a better world, provides a mythic structure of what is at first sight, realistic fiction. (18)

Moreover, by focusing on this supposed post-Darwinian anxiety, MacDonald—like Gold—undermines the wild animal story's engagement with science. As will become clear later in this chapter, however, a more accurate contextualization of the genre cannot sustain the idea that Seton and Roberts were part of a "popular revolt" against Darwin's work. Indeed, Thomas R. Dunlap's "The Realistic Animal Story" (1992) emphasizes the genre's relationship with animal

psychology and provides a thorough consideration of scientific context. Thus, it positions Seton and Roberts accordingly:

> They presented their vision of an ordered, but Darwinian, nature [...] The stories allowed people to accept evolution and struggle without losing the vision of nature as an ordered realm. Seton and Roberts made an apparently hostile theory the vehicle for emotional identification with nature. (56)

Although occasionally anthropocentric, Dunlap's analysis of Seton's and Roberts' different approaches to the Darwinian depiction of animal life is insightful. Despite an ostensibly similar approach in "Looking at Animals, Encountering Mystery" (2010), however, Janice Fiamengo's argument places less emphasis on scientific context and, ultimately, less emphasis on the animal: "focus on the animals per se has obscured the extent to which Seton and Roberts were also speculating, in Darwin's wake, about the moral nature of the cosmos [...] the mysteries of the natural order and the human place within it" (36, 37).

Alternatively, in "Political Science" (1996) Misao Dean acknowledges the scientific aspirations of the wild animal story, but views it as little more than a political masquerade (14). She suggests that "[f]ar from 'reflecting' reality, 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" (1). Of course, I agree with Dean's readings to an extent but I do not believe that this issue warrants a wholesale rejection of Seton's and Roberts' work. For instance, Dean's position is strengthened by the fact that she overlooks the animal advocacy function of these stories. Since Seton was more outspoken about animal rights and conservation, and Roberts more vocal about science and animal psychology, it is easy for critics who study the authors in isolation to separate their stories from one or both of these

factors. Like Dean, Marian Scholtmeijer is dismissive of the wild animal story and its aims in *Animal Victims* (1993), yet rather than disconnect Seton and Roberts from each other, she cuts them off from their twentieth-century successors. Drawing a line between these different iterations of the genre, she does not position Seton and Roberts on the side of animal protection: "A willingness to denounce the exploitation of wild animals is a pivotal distinction between the narrative approaches to animal victims of the early tales and those of the later works" (95). Instead, she reads considerable anthropocentrism in their work: "The feelings they seek to elicit in readers serve human rather than animal ends. These writers persist in trying to draw messages to humankind out of a wilderness that is equally determined to remain silent" (101). This interpretation is less surprising, however, when we consider the fact that Scholtmeijer frames it using MacDonald, Atwood, and Polk.

John Sandlos responds to these critics in "From Within Fur and Feathers" (2000) by suggesting that there is "something missing" in interpretations that "attempt to impose contemporary critical concerns on the animal stories" (75). Indeed, as Dean herself notes, the problems she identifies are endemic to the historical period, and however much "nationalistic and masculinist discourse might be inferred from their work, it is clear from their writings that Seton and Roberts were more concerned about writing accurate natural history" than creating "political allegories [...] out of the basic material of animal lives" (Sandlos 75). I would also add that Dean and Scholtmeijer's positions suffer from the same insufficient historicization as others; whilst *they* underestimated the complexity of Seton's and Roberts' scientific context, *these* two fail to take into consideration the rudimentary state of wild animal protection in Canada at the time. As I mentioned in another chapter, the nation's wealth

was built on the exploitation of wild animals, and as Seton and Roberts were writing, much of the population (both rural and urban) were still reliant on that continued exploitation. It is unsurprising, then, that efforts to protect wild animals were negligible. This chapter will go on to demonstrate the vital roles that Seton, Roberts, and their wild animal stories played in the promotion of both conservation and animal protection.

As I have demonstrated, critics have tended to underestimate, overlook, or directly undermine the wild animal story's complex interactions with the scientific study of animals and the work advocating their protection. Yet Seton and Roberts were clear and direct about their wishes to engage and educate the public on both these fronts. For instance, Seton dedicated *Lives of the Hunted* (1901) to "the preservation of our wild creatures" (3), and I have already mentioned Roberts' hope that *Haunters of the Silences* (1907) might contribute "something of value" to the "question of animal psychology" (vi). Thus, using the practical zoocriticism framework outlined in Chapter One, I will now re-contextualize the wild animal story in relation to each of the three key factors, loosely collected under the terms 'literature,' 'advocacy,' and 'science.' For the sake of coherence, and despite my interest in their complex interactions, I will handle each in a separate section of this chapter.

Although rather cumbersome, I use the specific title *'realistic' wild animal story* intentionally to help reinforce the parameters of a poorly-defined genre. On the whole, there is little consensus about how to classify these texts. Should it be restricted to Seton's and Roberts' stories, or is it a whole genre? Should it include the other authors targeted in the Nature Fakers controversy? If so, is it still a Canadian form of writing? Even the critics that I have discussed here do not consistently designate Seton's and Roberts' work as 'wild animal stories.'

For instance, Dean and Gold's treatment of Roberts' writing in isolation leads to its identification as simply "animal stories" (Gold 22). Likewise, Scholtmeijer does not acknowledge the genre; instead she describes North American "[s]tories about animals in the wild" (94), which allows her to broaden the classification considerably. Alternatively, Atwood opts for the specific title, as I have done and yet she uses it to encompass a long list of authors—including Graeme Gibson, whose 'failure of knowing the animal' narrative, *Communion*, I discussed in the previous chapter. Unsurprisingly, Atwood sees the wild animal story as "[t]he Canadian genre" (73), and yet she is one of the few to do so. Most critics acknowledge Seton's and Roberts' shared nationality, but discuss the genre and its environment as American. Dunlap and Lutts, for instance, consider a range of cultural contexts and attitudes to nature, yet they only refer to America, effectively subsuming Canada's culture and history into that of the United States. However, Dunlap concludes by recognizing a mid-twentieth-century rival of the genre and listing only Canadian authors. Lutts tends to lump all targets of the Nature Fakers controversy together. Moreover, despite his use of the title 'realistic' wild animal story, like Atwood, Lutts extends its future iterations to include an array of American, Canadian, and English nature writers.

While these observations might seem pedantic, the issue here is not accuracy for its own sake. For a misunderstood genre with a poor reputation, the development of a concrete definition is vital if we are to understand *how* and *why* it was a unique innovation worthy of recognition. Therefore, it is just as necessary to recognise the lack of common ground between Seton's writing and Gibson's writing, as it is to understand the differences between the authors involved in the Nature Fakers controversy. Jack London's narratives are reassuringly anthropocentric, for instance, because his 'wild' animal

protagonists are never truly autonomous. There is always a moment in which the animal protects, reveres, or avenges a human life, thereby reaffirming *their* value to *us*. Lutts identifies the genre's pioneering resistance to this type of utilitarian attitude as one of its defining characteristics: "wild animal stories presented a new view of wildlife—they revealed nature as experienced by animals who lived for their own ends. The animal's worth was not measured by how they satisfied or thwarted human expectations" (*Wild Animal Story* ix). Although idealised through narratives of animal-human companionship, London still tended to validate his 'wild' protagonists through their ability to satisfy our anthropocentric fantasies. On the other hand, the stories of William Long might *seem* to resemble those of Seton and Roberts, they were written from a very different perspective. Although Burroughs described Long as Seton's "awkward imitator" (printed in Lutts, *Wild Animal Story* 129), his stories were not written to engage with science, but to *resist* it. His clear opposition to the scientific view of nature can be seen in his response to Burroughs:

> The study of Nature is a vastly different thing from the study of Science [...] Above and beyond the world of facts and law, with which alone Science concerns itself, is an immense and almost unknown world of suggestions and freedom and inspiration [...] In a word, the difference between Nature and Science is the difference between a man who loves animals, and so understands them, and the man who studies Zooology; it is the difference between the woman who cherishes her old-fashioned flower garden and the professor who lectures on Botany. (Printed in Lutts, *The Nature Fakers* 60)

Despite his extremely narrow view of science, there are merits to Long's thinking and his stories. He writes eloquently regarding the reductive, objectifying use of 'instinct' to undermine animal intelligence, and of the ways in which animal psychology is unable to account for individual differences. Nonetheless, as I will demonstrate, his 'anti-science' attitude is at odds with the scientific core of wild animal story. As such, it seems as though the arguments

of Gold, MacDonald, and Fiamengo might be more suited to Long's animal stories than those of Seton or Roberts. Perhaps due to his hostility towards animal psychology, however, Long's stories are considerably more anthropomorphic and romanticized, often tending towards the didactic, moralizing style of the children's animal story (which I will discuss in the "Literature" section of this chapter).

Furthermore, I have a suspicion that there is some confusion regarding Seton, Roberts and Long, and as a result their stories and reputations have often been merged together. Both Long and his work have been almost entirely forgotten, and today (rather ironically) he is known only to those who study the Nature Fakers controversy. Since Seton and Roberts had avoided getting too involved in the debate, Long's outspoken defence of his own work eventually shifted the focus of the controversy onto himself, and away from the others. In fact, Burroughs identified Long as the real target of the article that started the debate: "It is Mr. Long's book, more than any of the others, that justifies the phrase 'Sham Natural History'" (129). As I will discuss later in the chapter, Burroughs is undoubtedly derisive of Seton's work, and he reprimands Roberts (albeit briefly), but he does not mention Jack London at all. Thanks to his solid position in the American canon, and only tentative association with the wild animal story, few people today are aware of London's involvement in the controversy. Thus, with the Americans effectively either pardoned or forgotten, it is to the two Canadians that the stigma of 'Nature Faker' has been attached ever since. We can begin to see the error in disregarding the wild animal story as an 'embarrassment' to Canadian literature.

As argued in the previous chapter, the wild animal story *can* be understood as a Canadian genre—just a very minor one. In 1965 Lucas

observed that wild animal stories “have not been especially numerous,” and indeed that Seton and Roberts had “made the history of the wild animal story almost entirely the history of their work in it” (398). Today, little has changed. Rather than a widespread national literary tradition, as Atwood would have it, the wild animal story is the work of a few authors—individuals who either wrote animal stories consistently over a lifetime of interest in natural history and conservation, or else poets and writers of fiction who experimented with the genre and the creative task of imagining a nonhuman perspective. As I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, this means that the genre may *appear* to resurface at random throughout the twentieth century, but its embers have always been kept alive by the overlapping careers of these few writers. The fact that they are Canadian owes something to the nation’s complex relationship with animals, but also to the cultural legacies of Seton, Roberts, and the Nature Fakers controversy. As a Canadian genre, it was a Canadian embarrassment; yet before and after the controversy, it was also an immensely popular form of writing that shaped the childhoods of many. Whether loved or hated, it is in response to the wild animal story that a certain proportion of twentieth-century Canadian literature has been written. Based on my own observations, I have developed a definition of the wild animal story that recognizes its distinctiveness as a unique innovation, whilst also allowing room for those few writers who have kept the form alive.

The wild animal story is a scientifically-informed, zoocentric narrative; a sustained attempt to imagine the life, experiences, and unique perspective of one or more nonhuman protagonists, living independently and autonomously from humans. These individuals experience the world through networks of meaningful nonhuman interaction, exchange, and companionship—revealing an

animal existence that is valued for its own sake and on its own terms, not for how useful it is to humans. Whilst the occasional human character may be used as an observer (essentially a conduit for the human reader) these animal protagonists tend to encounter humans only through moments of struggle or violence, allowing the author to provide a defamiliarizing, nonhuman account of our exploitative practices. Moreover, through dramatic irony, these narratives resist the objectification and erasure that is necessary for an anthropocentric disregard for animal life. An animal killed in a human-centred narrative is not given a second thought; in the wild animal story, the reader has the prior knowledge of this unique individual's history, personality, and relationships. In other words, the animal death always has *meaning.* As such, the authors of these narratives all seek some form of practical engagement: whether raising awareness of ecological and conservation issues; encouraging empathy and moral concern for animal exploitation; facilitating the imaginative exploration of nonhuman perspectives; or speculating on the upper limits of animal cognitive, social, linguistic, emotional, or cultural complexity.

Based on my own surveys, I have developed a set of wild animal story characteristics, through which I will analyse the later twentieth-century texts in the following chapters of this thesis:

- Animal characters represented *as animals*, as *individuals*, and as living *autonomously* from humans
- Animals characters shown to possess a *biography* and unique life history
- Animals characters are seen existing in *meaningful networks of nonhuman interaction*

- *Defamiliarization* is used to challenge *violent and exploitative practices*, as well as the *species stereotypes* that legitimize them (for example, this species is 'vermin,' therefore human violence against them should be accepted and encouraged)
- Scientifically-informed representations that may either *demonstrate* the current understanding or *speculate* on the upper limits of each species' cognitive, emotional, social, cultural, and linguistic complexity
- Representations that may seek to challenge our definitions of *human uniqueness* (such as the use of language, the use of tools, showing altruistic behaviour and so on)
- Authors may reinforce their representations through *evidence* of some form (for instance anecdotes, archive materials, research, or first-hand observation)

In the next chapter, "Wild Animals and Nature Fakers," I will explain these characteristics in detail and reveal their presence in Seton's and Roberts' stories. I will also demonstrate the ways in which they relate to the contextual factors discussed in the current chapter: 'literature,' 'advocacy,' and 'science', using the zoocentric framework.

In the biography, *Charles G.D. Roberts* (1923), James Cappon asserts that the "honour of originating" the wild animal story belongs to Roberts, although "it has been said that [he] was an imitator of Kipling, Thompson Seton and others in his treatment of the nature story" (16, 18). Cappon explains:

> In the first place he contributed "Do Seek Their Meat from God" to *Harper's Magazine* in the late eighties, and from then on provided a constantly increasing number of similar stories in *Lippincott's Magazine*, *Youth's Companion* and many more. If, therefore, there was any imitating it must have been by someone else. (18-9)

Yet, in a short piece for *The Bookman* (1913), Roberts makes no such claims for himself, stating instead that Seton "is chiefly responsible for the vogue of the modern 'Animal Story'" (147). The publication dates would seem to confirm this, and in the preface to *Lives of the Hunted* (1901), Seton comments that the story of the "Chickadee" is "one of a series of stories written in the period from 1881 to 1893, and published in various magazines. It is inserted [here] as an example of my early work" (10). Crucially, however, Seton recognizes a difference between these stories and those written from the mid-1890s onwards. In the earlier form, he admits to using "the *archaic* method, making the animals talk [...] Since then I have adhered to the more *scientific* method of which 'Lobo' is my earliest important example. This was written in February, 1894, for 'Scribners Magazine,' and published November, 1894" (10-11, emphasis added). Despite his work as a naturalist, it is rare for Seton to describe his own stories in scientific terms; instead it is Roberts who emphasizes this relationship with animal psychology. In the same *Bookman* article, Roberts comments: "there is another side of these stories and it is the pre-eminently distinctive side. They aim above all to get at the psychology of their subjects. [...] From observed actions they strive to deduce motives and emotions" (147). Hence, I see Seton and Roberts as co-creators of the realistic wild animal story and I suggest that they played very different roles. Whilst Seton had been working as an artist, naturalist, and occasional hunter, Roberts had been editing literary journals and teaching English and French literature (Cappon 8-9). In 1896, however, Roberts resigned his professorship and moved to New York, where he met and befriended Seton, and the two even discussed collaborating on a collection of stories (Cappon 16, Fiamengo 38). Thus, I would contend that whilst Seton made the original innovation, Roberts defined and refined the

genre. Like the talking animals that he mentions, some of Seton's stories can be considered as uncharacteristic of the wild animal story; being more anthropocentric and autobiographical than is usual, for instance. Alternatively, although Roberts' stories can border on the formulaic, he is consistent and utilizes the preface of each book to reinforce the aims and parameters of the genre. When both bodies of work are read together, however, what emerges is a clear picture of the genre that I have described.

Literature

In his chapter "Nature Writers and the Animal Story" for Carl F. Klink's *Literary History of Canada* (1965), Alec Lucas sketches a history from the early nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. He identifies a range of genres, from the nature essay and sportsman's book, to the back-to-nature narrative and the farm story, as well as three major forms of writing about animals: the legend, the nature novel, and the animal story (383-393). The last of which, Lucas subdivides into the children's story, the biography, and the short story (394). Using his overview, which does not include Aboriginal literatures, it seems that the nature essay and sportsman's narratives are the oldest genres. The former originates with books like Catherine Parr Traill's *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836) and Philip Henry Gosse's *The Canadian Naturalist* (1840), and the latter with hunting anecdotes like those in Thomas Magrath's *Authentic Letters from Upper Canada* (1833) and Frederick Tolfrey's *The Sportsman in Canada* (1845). In fact, according to Lucas, we must turn to these early settlers for the first Canadian nature writers, many of whom found it necessary to become amateur field-naturalists:

> They had to live close to nature, whether or not they wished to. Most did not wish to and saw nature as an obstacle on the road to civilization. […]

> Man's kinship with the wild creatures was usually expressed with rod and gun. Yet some settlers laid these and the axe aside for their quills (383).

Whilst this view of the settler "surrounded by a hostile natural world" is true in some cases, Mary Lu MacDonald's analysis of nineteenth-century Canadian nature writing indicates that the majority were "content with their life in the Canadas" (48, 62). She states: "As far as the literature written and read by our ancestors is concerned, the fact is that before 1850, with few exceptions, all the evidence points to an essentially positive literary view of the Canadian landscape" (48). However, she notes that aesthetic appreciation of the landscape was to be found more often "in poetry than in prose" (49). Instead it is in prose that we tend to find appreciation of Canada's animals—although it seems that many settlers conveyed this sentiment by writing with their quill in one hand and their gun in the other.

Popular perceptions of Canada's 'wilderness' and 'superabundance' tipped the exploitation/protection dynamic (discussed in another chapter) firmly in the favour of humanity. For instance, Mary Lu MacDonald describes the levity with which W. B. Wells depicts the deaths of animals in "A Bear Hunt" and "Deer Stalking on the Branch" for *Barker's Magazine* in 1846 and 1847 respectively (51-2). She notes that the "ironic humour" in both works "contributes to the impression of a man in control of his environment" (51). Likewise in his own study of nineteenth-century Canadian nature writing, Christoph Irmsher comments that most of these authors "regarded Canada as a kind of gigantic self-serve store where they could hunt, shoot, and fish to their heart's content" (151). Although many were ostensibly producing 'nature writing,' and all tended to have at least "some basic understanding of natural history" (151), any scientific aspirations in their work seem to have been minimal. The "natural history" of John Keast Lord was "done with an axe, not

the dissecting knife" (152), while that of William Ross King seems to have been conducted on his plate: "Many remarks are about the tasty flesh of animals he has caught […] And thus he merrily eats his way through the Canadian fauna" (153).

In reality, these books were less 'natural history' and more "intended as bedside reading for the folks back home who were toying with the idea of roughing it out, fishing rod and breechloader in hand, in the wilds of a new country" (Irmscher 151). Yet, even in those books with a less violent and exploitative approach to nature, we still tend to find little engagement with animals as individuals. I suggest that Irmscher's characterisation of Traill and Gosse's work as the literary "stocktaking of Canadian nature" (145) can be understood at a deeper level. He proposes that this "patient" work, beginning with the early explorers and taken to new heights by Victorian writers, sought to answer the question: "What is here?" (145). However, if we take Irmscher's thinking further, we can see that these writers are indeed 'taking stock' of Canada's natural wealth of plants and animals, and perhaps attempting to answer the follow-up question: What is ours?

With the emergence of both the children's animal story and animal biography in 1850, we find that engagement with the animal as an *individual* does increase somewhat. Traill introduced the former in her collection of essays and stories for children, *Afar in the Forest* (1850), and in the same year her fellow pioneer nature writer, Susanna Moodie, experimented with the latter in *The Little Black Pony and Other Stories*. Neither showed much commitment to the genre, however; Traill's anthropomorphic, didactic stories were printed alongside nonfiction, and Moodie's animal biography was published in a volume otherwise dedicated to stories about human characters. Moreover, I have

observed that when these individual animals are present, they are almost always put to some *use*: either as domesticated companion animals for humans or as anthropomorphic literary devices to teach morals to children. Indeed, I find great significance in Lucas' observation that the "animal biography began as a story of domesticated animals" (396), because it touches on the fact that the life story of the *wild* animal (autonomous, separate, and independent from humans) seems to have been of little interest at this point. This deficit can be understood through both the general lack of public concern for wildlife in Canada at this time and broader anthropocentric trends across contemporaneous British and American literatures. In most writing of this period, the literary animal is not the subject of its *own* story, but an object of utility in a *human* one: as decoration in a natural landscape; as the aggressor in a narrative of human survival; as a stand-in for humans in a moral tale; as the trophy of a hunt; as saviour, companion, transport, entertainment, or assistant for human characters; and as an absence when human characters consume the bodies of animals. If we return to my models of animal representation in Canadian literature, we can see that neither the 'failure of knowing' nor the 'acceptance of not-knowing' is appropriate for this mid-nineteenth century context. Broadly speaking, I have observed a *disinterest* in knowing the animal instead. In the examples given here, it is clear that the animal presence has been relegated to either high anthropomorphism or mechanomorphic objectification. In the case of the former, the species' image is appropriated to clothe essentially human characters without much thought to their living counterparts, and the latter is so reductive that it assumes that there is nothing to 'know' about the animal anyway.

It is from this legacy of disinterest, exploitation, and anthropocentrism, that Seton's and Roberts' stories began to emerge a few decades later. Public interest in and concern for animals was growing, the atmosphere of human self-interest dissipated a little (although not entirely, of course) and, hence, more writers were turning to nonhuman beings for their protagonists. In his famous preface to *Kindred of the Wild* (1902), Roberts acknowledges the important contributions made during this period by Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty* (1877), Margaret Marshall Saunder's *Beautiful Joe* (1893), and "the 'Mowgli' stories of Mr. Kipling" (27).These authors saw animals as individuals and therefore made attempts to 'know' them, while also encouraging their readers to do the same. Hence, as Roberts observes, their "animal characters think and feel as human beings would think and feel under like conditions" (27). In other words, despite their efforts to increase the nonhuman presence in their respective genres (domesticated animal biographies and children's animal stories), these authors were still not representing their animals *as animals*:

> The real psychology of the animals, so far as we are able to grope our way toward it by deduction and induction combined, is a very different thing from the psychology of certain stories of animals which paved the way for the present vogue. [...] It is no detraction from the merit of these books, which have done great service in awakening a sympathetic understanding of the animals and sharpening our sense of kinship with all that breathe, to say that their psychology is human (24-7)

Although Sewell and Saunders' books were engaging with animal advocacy, they were not doing the same for animal psychology. Indeed, Lucas observes that narratives about wild and domesticated animals tend to differ on this point: "the story about the wild animal has a greater scientific bent" and "tries to avoid humanizing tendencies" (397). In some cases, it seems as though the perceived alterity and autonomy of the wild animal discourages easy anthropomorphism, (my own survey of twentieth-century texts in another chapter would seem to

support this, for instance) and yet this was not the case for Long's animal stories. Indeed, as Seton observed of his own early stories, engagement with animal psychology and use of the 'scientific' approach is fundamental to the genre's sincere commitment to imagining the lives of wild animals; hence Roberts' declaration that, "at its highest point of development," the animal story is a "psychological romance constructed on a framework of natural science" (24).

Advocacy

As I have hoped to demonstrate here, stories about domesticated animals preceded those about wild animals—and the same is true of work for animal protection. Yet, historically Canada has been surprisingly slow to act on both wildlife conservation *and* animal welfare. In *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights* (2011), Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka comment: "Our own country, Canada, lags woefully behind regarding even the most minimal reforms" (259). Likewise, the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies describes the nation's animal welfare policy as "in the Victorian era" (CFHS). This is hardly an exaggeration, Canada's *Cruelty to Animals Act* was established in 1869, two years after Confederation, yet remains virtually unaltered as the backbone of the nation's welfare legislation. In "Beastly Measures: Animal Welfare, Civil Society, and State Policy in Victorian Canada" (2013), Darcy Ingram explains:

> More than a matter of policy, the *Cruelty to Animals Act* stood as a statement of ethics and principles that pointed to the new nation's modern, progressive, respectable identity, and it received strong support because of this. [...] Then things stalled. Apart from a couple of substantive amendments, most of the changes to the act during the next three decades merely consolidated existing legislation. This pattern of inactivity has continued ever since. (222)

At this time, efforts to protect both wild and domesticated animals were fragmented, uneven, and halting; it was the work of scattered groups and committed individuals, often inhibited by conflicting interests and an unconcerned government. In addition, they lacked the "more radical edge" that informed animal protection movements in other parts of the Anglo-American world (222). I would suggest that in this conservatism, we can see (again) Canada's paradoxical need to both exploit and protect its animals. This is particularly clear in the nineteenth-century animal welfare movement, the upper and middle class supporters of which were all dependent on animal exploitation in some way: "so many of the men and women who supported it—from sportsmen and vivisectionists to cattle ranchers and owners of carting agencies—were connected to professional, industrial and recreational activities involving animals" (223). It is unsurprising, then, that "more complex interpretations of animal welfare" were unable to develop (223).

Likewise, we also find this tension represented in the wildlife conservation movement. Tina Loo asserts: "To observers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was little doubt that wildlife populations were declining. Nor was there much question about the reason for that decline. Extinction was a by-product of expansion" (16). Yet, the government showed little concern, there was no "crusade" for wildlife as there was later in the United States, and nor did public champions come forward to lead the cause (Foster 3-4). In addition to this tension between exploitation and protection, a number of other factors seem to have stalled progress, as Janet Foster explains:

> An uninhabited frontier, the myth of superabundance, an era of exploitation and lack of knowledge about wildlife, the political climate of the National Policy and the division of powers under the British North America Act—all of these factors and attitudes within the government and among Canadian people generally, obstructed and delayed the advent of wildlife conservation in Canada. (12)

In America, Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872 to preserve wilderness and wildlife; when Canada first reserved ten acres of land in Banff in 1885, it was to "preserve a valuable natural resource that could be exploited in the interests of the government and railway" (20). Two years later when Banff Hot Springs was protected as the country's first national park, it was not a wildlife sanctuary but a tourist resort (20, 25). Moreover, J. Alexander Burnett explains that, although Canada continued to establish national parks and there was even a "flurry of activity" in this area by the end of the century, the nation's efforts to protect wildlife remained "rudimentary" (7). This would start to change in the early years of the twentieth century, however, as public interest in this was on the rise and the back-to-nature movement was taking hold in both Canada and the United States.

Significantly, Burnett makes a brief interlude in relating the history of the Canadian Wildlife Service to detail the contributions made by Seton and Roberts: "Among the most influential participants in this popular groundswell were Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G.D. Roberts" (7). He notes that the stories of both of these "keen outdoorsmen," positioned "wildlife sympathetically in the public consciousness;" although he specifies that Seton was the "serious naturalist" and "active lobbyist for conservation" (7-8). Moreover, not only does Burnett make these connections between their writing and efforts to encourage public concern for Canada's wildlife, he also reveals their collaborations with Americans. For instance, he lists Seton and Roberts as key figures—amongst John Macoun, John Muir, and Jack Miner—in a group who strongly influenced the signing of the Migratory Birds Convention in 1916. As spokesmen for this unofficial, but powerful, coalition of naturalists, writers, hunters, and scientists from both sides of the national border, Seton and Roberts worked to "replace

the frontier myth of limitless wildlife," and "succeeded in arousing public opinion to a degree that commanded the respect of political leaders in Canada and the United States" (29). Again, although Burnett echoes the attitudes of Polk and others by describing the wild animal story as "the most Canadian of literary genres" (7), it is clear that Seton and Roberts were not representing *typically Canadian* attitudes towards animals. I suggest then, that their new genre may have been a product of dissatisfaction with their nation's anthropocentric attitude towards animals. It is also useful to remember, here, that at a pivotal stage in the wild animal story's development, the two men met for the first time while they were both living in New York. I think we can safely infer that, at some point, Seton and Roberts were probably exposed to the "more radical edge" of animal protection that Ingram describes (222), which seems to have been so lacking in their own country.

Although I have had to piece together the dual histories of Canada's animal welfare and wildlife conservation efforts—there has been shockingly little scholarship on both these fronts—it is clear that they did not progress evenly. Efforts to protect domesticated animals were in place long before the same concern was given to wild animals. We can see this legacy in Seton's and Roberts' direct application of animal rights thinking to their wild animal characters. For instance, their language of 'rights' and 'kinship' closely resembles that of English animal rights campaigner, Henry Salt, whose many books—including *Animals' Rights* (1892), *The Logic of Vegetarianism* (1899), and *The Creed of Kinship* (1935)—were published on both sides of the Atlantic. Seton's emphatic conclusion of "Redruff" gives a clear message: "*Have 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?" (*Known* 357, emphasis added). In *Animals' Rights* (1892), Salt provides an answer: "wild animals, no less than domestic animals, have their rights [...] it is not to owned animals merely that we must extend our sympathy and protection" (45). He adds, however, that the rights owed to wild animals are less easy to define.

This ambivalence around our duties to wild animals can also be seen in Roberts' writing. On the whole, he seems more tentative than Seton about making declarations on behalf of animals. Yet he uses the language of kinship frequently, as indicated by the title *Kindred of the Wild*. Moreover, in concluding the book's preface, he asserts that the wild animal story can lead us "back to the old kinship of the earth," and an "intimacy" between humans and animals that would encourage in us all a more "humane" heart and a greater "spiritual" understanding (29). The language here is clearly gesturing towards a less exploitative relationship with animals. However, it is easy to sense Roberts' uncertainty about how to proceed. Nonetheless, Salt asserts that the "central cause" of animal exploitation is "the disregard of the *natural kinship* between man and the animals, and the *consequent denial of their rights*" (122, emphasis added). In other words, Salt suggests that a full recognition of animal-human kinship will necessarily result in our acceptance that animals have rights. He explains, however, that

> if we desire to cultivate a closer intimacy with the wild animals, it must be an intimacy based on a genuine love for them as living beings and fellow-creatures, not on the superior power or cunning by which we draft them from their native haunts, warp the whole purpose of their lives, and degrade them to the level of pets, or curiosities, or labour-saving automations. (53)

Again, we can see the connection between Roberts' and Salt's discussions of 'kinship' and 'intimacy.' Moreover, both men emphasize the importance of trying

to gain a "sympathetic understanding" (Roberts, *Kindred* 27) of all "animals, both wild and tame" (Salt 53).

As I have stated, however, I have found no evidence of Seton or Roberts' direct contact with Salt. Nevertheless, there is an unmistakable similarity of language and ideas here, and it would not be wholly unsurprising if the two Canadians were unaware that they originated with Salt. In his preface to a 1980 edition of *Animals' Rights*, Peter Singer describes the book as "the best of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century works on the rights of animals" (viii). It was not the first, of course, but it was the most complete. Indeed, Singer adds: "Defenders of animals, myself included, have been able to add relatively little to the essential case Salt outlined in 1892" (viii). Despite his pioneering work in this and other areas, he remains relatively unknown. At the time, although *Animals Rights'* went through multiple prints in both London and New York, "it had no real impact outside humanitarian and vegetarian circles" (ix). Singer observes that, despite Salt's secluded, rural lifestyle, he maintained friendships with a range of important artistic, literary, political, and philosophical figures of the day.[1] It is often through them that his ideas reached the public, "rather than his own name" (vi). Thus, my aim here is not to imply that Seton and Roberts necessarily read Salt's work, but to trace the core similarities in their attitudes to animals—individuality, rights, kinship, sympathy, intimacy—all of which were at odds with conservation practices at the time. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the "fragmentary localized practices concerned with controlling the

[1] Amongst Salt's friends, Singer lists "George Bernard Shaw, William Morris, G.K. Chesterton, the Labour Party leader H.M. Hyndman, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Ramsay MacDonald—later to be the first Labour Prime Minister of Britain—and Havelock Ellis [...] More momentous still was his influence on Gandhi, whom Salt had befriended when Gandhi first arrived in England, alone, unknown and unable to find vegetarian food. Gandhi later wrote that he owed his thoughts about civil disobedience and noncooperation to Salt's book on the then little-known American radical, Henry Thoreau" (vi).

kinds and numbers of animals killed" were transforming into a "centralized and bureaucratic set of policies" which "conceptualized trees, fish, and wildlife as *'resources'* to be scientifically managed" (Loo 12, emphasis added). These policies were only concerned with two 'categories' of wild animals:

> Until the mid-twentieth century, the law's bestiary contained references to 'game' and 'vermin' only. 'Game' was an ever-shifting, diverse assortment of creatures, some of which were not even native to the region, but were introduced by local sportsmen as 'exotics.' [...] Moose became game in 1843, followed by pheasants and robins in 1856, caribou in 1862, non-indigenous American elk in 1894, and *'animals valuable only for their fur'* in 1896.
>
> 'Vermin' were a smaller and somewhat more constant collection of predators, consisting most commonly of wolves, bears, coyotes, and cougars. Their undiscerning carnivorous palates, which favoured wild game as well as domestic livestock, literally earned them a price on their heads and the undying animosity of lawmakers. (14)

It is clear, then, that like the creation of Banff National Park, this was not nature preservation but *resource* preservation. Part of Seton's and Roberts' crucial intervention into these discourses was to defamiliarize common perceptions of wildlife; not only representing them as *individuals,* as we have seen, but challenging the reductive categorizations of 'game' and 'vermin.' On the surface it may seem that only charismatic mammals hold interest for Seton, but his protagonists are almost always members of these two hunted categories.

Science

When Seton and Roberts were born in 1860, the word 'scientist' had existed for less than thirty years. 'Natural philosopher' had been the general term, until Reverend William Whewell made the new suggestion during the third annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1833 (Chapell 3). It was initially unpopular because the title was seen as too restrictive. The nineteenth century brought forth an explosion of new sciences

and sub-sciences, and the creation of unique names for these subjects (for instance, seismology in 1858 or embryology in 1859) signalled a new air of professionalism. Yet it was not until the close of the century that the term 'scientist' finally gained credibility (Chapell 3, Richardson 3). Interestingly, this acceptance coincided with the rise of laboratory science—a fact that, as I suggest below, may be of consequence to the early history of animal psychology research. More importantly, however, I find significance in the fact that Seton and Roberts were born in the middle of this process; roughly thirty years after Whewell made his suggestion and thirty years before it took hold. Moreover, these two writers who blurred the boundaries between fact and fiction were both in their twenties and beginning to write when T.H. Huxley and Matthew Arnold had the famous debate that signalled the emerging disciplinary gap between the sciences and humanities. Thus, I argue that, despite being born into an age of relative flexibility between science and literature, by the time that Seton's and Roberts' animal stories gained popularity at the end of the century, the professionalization of the sciences meant that their approach now lacked the authority to be taken seriously. It is clear that the changing scientific contexts of the wild animal story and Nature Fakers controversy demand serious critical attention, and yet until now they have been almost entirely ignored.

Laura Otis observes in *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century* (2002) that "the notion of a 'split' between literature and science, of a 'gap' to be 'bridged' between the two" had never been a "nineteenth-century phenomenon" (xvii). In the "popular press," the "two commingled and were accessible to all readers;" scientists "quoted well-known poets" and writers "explored the

implications of scientific theories" (xvii). She describes the work of Edgar Allen Poe and Mark Twain, for instance:

> As science gained prestige, literary writers in turn gained credibility by incorporating the voices of scientists. This strategy worked particularly well in the American 'tall tale' genre. Writers like Edgar Allan Poe and Mark Twain consciously imitated scientists' styles and use of evidence, exploiting their own writing techniques to play with scientists' ideas and encourage readers to rethink them. If readers mistook the fiction for science, it was merely part of the game. (xxiv)

There is an obvious difference, however, between this playful challenge and appropriation of science, and Seton's and Roberts' sincere attempts to contribute to the study of animal minds. I suggest that by carefully negotiating this appropriation, writers like Poe and Twain ensured that their works were still obviously *fictional* and that, most importantly, they were not seen to 'overstep' the bounds of the author. This would be increasingly important, as the processes of scientific specialization and professionalization over the second half of the century made it more and more difficult to claim the authority to speak about science. As indicated by Bernard Lightman's study, *Victorian Popularizers of Science* (2007), this was not simply elitism for its own sake. Not only did those "who could claim to speak on behalf of science" gain "immense cultural authority and intellectual prestige," they were responsible for shaping and defining 'science' itself (5). As the "modern, professionalized body of scientists was still in the making," a number of crucial questions were still unanswered: "What, exactly, was proper scientific method? For that matter, what was science? Which groups could participate in the debates on these questions?" (5). Lightman concludes that the "stakes were therefore quite high in the fight to be recognized as an intellectual who spoke on behalf of science" (5). It was perhaps somewhat inevitable, then, that Seton's and Roberts' attempts to engage with the sciences were not taken seriously. In fact, as we

shall see in the next chapter, Burroughs' original condemnation of the wild animal story was on the basis that it was 'sham' natural history. And so, as I will suggest, we might now read this criticism as Burroughs' attempt to reinforce the parameters of the field, as well as his own authority within it.

The impact of Charles Darwin's work is, inevitably, the one aspect of the wild animal story's scientific context that *has* received critical attention. He published *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, one year before Seton and Roberts were born, meaning that both authors would have grown up in a world immersed in the excitement, uncertainty, and controversy of the theory of evolution. Indeed, Marian Scholtmeijer uses the publication date of *Origin* as the "beginning of the modern period in thought about animals" (7). In *The Literary Imagination from Erasmus Darwin to H.G. Wells* (2012), Michael R. Page describes its publication as "perhaps *the* watershed moment in the narrative of modern science," which was followed "twelve years later by the even more controversial *The Descent of Man*" (1). It sent "shockwaves throughout nineteenth-century Western culture, dismantling the outmoded religious view of human origins and presenting a new picture of how life on earth formed and developed over time" (1). For our understanding of the relationship between science, literature, and perceptions of animals, it seems that we cannot overstate the impact of Darwin's work (which also included the publication of *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* in 1872). There can be no doubt that the Darwinian revolution shaped Seton's and Roberts' work, since they were born at the beginning of the "modern period" that Scholtmeijer describes. Such an analysis is not my purpose here. Instead, I would argue that another scientific revolution—albeit a somewhat quieter one—had a much more intimate relationship with the wild animal story: the birth of animal psychology.

Its origins lie in the 1860s and the questions arising from Darwin's work, but it did not begin to coalesce into a scientific field until the 1880s. Nonetheless, its Darwinian legacy can be seen in the fact that it was first known, not as animal psychology, but *comparative* psychology.

In the later decades of the nineteenth century, the great leap between animal instinct and human reason demanded explanation in order for human evolution and animal-human continuity to be entirely accepted. Thus, the 'comparison' of comparative psychology is between human and nonhuman beings. The exciting and controversial implications of Darwin's work galvanized public interest very quickly, and suddenly the question of the animal minds gained a new significance. In *From Darwin to Behaviourism: Psychology and the Minds of Animals* (1984), Robert Boakes explains that in the 1860s and 70s, the topic of animal intelligence became so "extraordinarily popular" that "[c]ountless letters flowed in to scientific and popular journals, reporting striking observations of animals that suggested unsuspected mental capabilities" (25). It seems that both amateurs and experts alike had anecdotes to share. Whilst writing *Origin*, Darwin had "collected many observations—some his own, some supplied to him by colleagues—documenting the mental and emotional similarities of humans and animals" (Morell 11). In 1874, two years after the publication of *Expression*, Darwin was visited at his home, Downe House, by a young man whose papers on evolutionary biology he had read and with whom he had shared some correspondence. George Romanes [2] was "virtually anointed" as Darwin's successor (Richards 332). From this visit began a "brief, but psychologically intense relationship between Romanes and the man who would become his mentor, hero, paragon, and father substitute" (336). Darwin

[2] Incidentally, Romanes was also a Canadian, but spent the majority of his life in England.

gave his forty-year collection of notes and papers on animal intelligence to Romanes, who also gathered his own body of observations—first-hand, from his peers, and from the anecdotal letters flooding into periodicals (Morell 12, Boakes 25).

In 1882, shortly after Darwin's death, Romanes finally published his own monumental achievement, *Animal Intelligence*. He explains in the preface that he had intended to include "the facts of animal intelligence" and "their relation to the theory of Descent" in one volume, but there was so much material that he was forced to dedicate *Animal Intelligence* to the former and *Mental Evolution in Animals* (1883) to the latter (Romanes, *Intelligence* v). In the same preface, however, he observes the unforeseen negative impact of this intense public interest in animal intelligence. He reflects that "the phenomena of mind in animals, having constituted so much and so long the theme of unscientific authors," seems to be "now considered well-nigh unworthy of serious treatment by scientific methods" (vi). In other words, as the topic had not yet been included in this process of scientific specialization and professionalization, it had been almost entirely dominated by amateurs, and was thus unlikely to ever become a science. Indeed, he remarks: "Comparative Psychology has been virtually excluded from the hierarchy of the sciences" (v). Demonstrating the common need to justify interest in animals through some anthropocentric objective, Romanes emphasizes the "new and profound importance" that the "facts of animal intelligence" have acquired "within the last twenty years" due to "the proved probability of their genetic continuity with those of human intelligence" (vi). As such, he declares that "no subject of scientific inquiry can present a higher degree of interest" for the "present generations" (vii). Indeed, he laments that the popular writers—who had held the "endeavour" of

determining each species' "particular level of intelligence" almost exclusively in their hands—had "merely strung together" innumerable anecdotes with "more or less inadequate" discrimination (v-vi). He is particularly careful to distinguish himself from these "anecdote-mongers," as the "only methods" at his disposal are equally reliant on anecdotal evidence (v, vii). At all times he reasserts his "sound scientific intention" that the *ultimate* purpose of this "mapping out of animal psychology" is for "subsequent synthesis" and to lay "a firm foundation" for a "future treatise on Mental Evolution" (vii). Nonetheless, he also defends *Animal Intelligence* on the grounds that there "should be something resembling a text-book of the facts of Comparative Psychology," and that the "systematic arrangement" of these facts is in itself "*a worthy object of scientific endeavour*" (v-vii, emphasis added). It is not necessary to describe here his complex method of selecting and verifying the credibility of both the anecdotes and their sources, but suffice it to say, as a biologist Romanes was hesitant about their use. It is important to remember this anxiety around anecdotal evidence, however, and particularly its association with unreliable amateurs and Romanes' preference for "observers well known as competent" (viii).

Like Darwin, Romanes believed that the distance between human and animal intelligence was only a matter of degrees, and hence that there was "no difference *in kind* between the act of reason performed by [a] crab and any act of reason performed by a man" (*Mental Evolution* 337, emphasis original). While the notion of nonhuman 'reason' carries connotations of anthropomorphism, Romanes uses it as a synonym for 'intelligence' and carefully defines it in relation to instinct and reflex action:

> Reflex action is non-mental neuro-muscular adjustment, due to the inherited mechanism of the nervous system, which is formed to respond to particular and often recurring stimuli, by giving rise to particular movements of an adaptive though not of an *intentional* kind.

> Instinct is reflex action into which there is imported the element of consciousness. The term is therefore a generic one, comprising all of those faculties of mind which are concerned in conscious and adaptive action, antecedent to individual experience, *without necessary knowledge of the relation between means employed and ends attained*, but similarly performed under similar and frequent recurring circumstances by *all the individuals of the same species.*
>
> Reason or intelligence is the faculty which is concerned in the *intentional adaptation of means to ends*. It therefore implies the *conscious knowledge* of the relation between means employed and ends attained, and may be exercised in adaptation to *circumstances novel alike to the experience of the individual and to that of the species.* (*Intelligence* 17, emphasis added.)

He identifies the criteria of "mind" as the ability to learn from "individual experience," and "if a lowly organized animal *does* learn by its own individual experience, we are in possession of the best available evidence of conscious memory leading to intentional adaptation" (4-5, emphasis original). Thus, in Romanes' view, the ability to respond to novel circumstances, remember and learn from the experience, and then intentionally apply or adapt that knowledge is 'reason.' In fact, in a table he created to illustrate the cognitive and emotional development of each species (published in *Mental Evolution*), he indicates that the 'lowest' species capable of reason are batrachia (frogs and salamanders), fish, higher crustacia (crabs and lobsters), reptiles, and cephalopods. Consequently, this means that he identifies reason in all mammals and birds, as well as hymenoptera (wasps, bees, ants and so on). Likewise he finds all animals from echinoderms (starfish, sea urchins, and similar) upwards to be conscious beings capable of pleasure, pain, and memory. According to Romanes, emotions develop in accordance with cognitive complexity; so, although he saw none in echinoderms, if we move up the table a few spaces, we find that spiders and insects (other than hymenoptera) have the potential for: secondary instincts, recognition of offspring, parental affection, social feelings,

sexual selection, pugnacity, industry, and curiosity. Interestingly, he also added a column for the corresponding stage of development in a human infant. For instance, according to Romanes, birds are capable of recognizing pictures, understanding words, dreaming, emulation, pride, resentment, aesthetic love of ornament, and terror—all of which require psychological and emotional development equivalent to an eight month old infant. Although this might seem oddly anthropocentric, it is clear that evolutionary continuity inspired this search for similarity and analogy in nonhuman beings.

Perhaps because *Animal Intelligence* verified many reader's perceptions of animals, it was extremely popular with the public. In the minds of his peers, however, Romanes' reliance on anecdotal evidence associated him too closely with the unreliable and unscientific popular writers. Although he did participate in the popularization of science, it was mostly to continue promoting Darwin's work after his death. Indeed, as Joel Schwartz observes in his study of Romanes' publications in Victorian periodicals, the biologist did not take eagerly to the task and did not alter his language or style for the public: "his articles were written very much as they were for scientific journals" (135). Despite Romanes' sincere efforts to forge comparative psychology into a respected scientific discipline, the success would be had by his own protégé, Conwy Lloyd Morgan. Unfortunately, this accomplishment was due to Morgan's efforts to steer comparative psychology *away* from Romanes' methods. He opposed the use of anecdotal evidence and the search for 'mind' and 'reason' in animals. Instead, he advocated the use of laboratory experiments to seek objective proof of the controlling force of instinct. To prevent the potential anthropomorphic bias of subjective observation and interpretation, he also developed a principle that became known as Morgan's canon. In *An Introduction to Comparative*

Psychology (1894), he asserted that "[i]n no case may we interpret an action as the outcome of the exercise of a higher psychical faculty, if it can be interpreted as the outcome of the exercise of one which stands *lower* in the psychological scale" (53, emphasis added). Unlike Romanes, Morgan's objective, experimental approach reflected everything valued by modern science at the time and, rather neatly, coincided with the rise of laboratory science and the final acceptance of the professional title 'scientist.'

Although this meant that comparative psychology was now accepted as a science, Morgan's canon would actually become the central tenet of *behaviourism*—a field that reached prominence in the 1920s and would dominate the study of animal intelligence for most of the twentieth-century. In "Animal Mind: Science, Philosophy, and Ethics" (2007), Bernard E. Rollin explains the legacy of behaviourism:

> From the time of Darwin the existence and *knowability* of animal mentation was taken as axiomatic through the early years of the 20th-century. But, after 1920, and even today, it is difficult to find British or U.S. psychologists or classical European ethologists, who would accept that view. (258, emphasis added)

Hence, we encounter a significant intersection of ideas. Despite their vastly differing perspectives, we find that the collision of anthropocentrism, behaviourism, and animal-sceptical thinking. The scientific discourses of instinct through which Seton's and Roberts' stories were ridiculed may have instigated the perception of animal 'unknowability' that informed their dismissal as anthropocentric in much literary animal studies work today. This suggests, therefore, that to some extent we can attribute Seton's and Roberts' 'fantasy of knowing' the animal to the absence of such animal 'scepticism' before behaviourism.

Thus, we can begin to perceive the value of practical zoocriticism's interdisciplinary approach. Through this detailed re-contextualization, I have demonstrated that, prior to Seton and Roberts, representations of animals in Canadian literature were based on the utility of the nonhuman character, whether as object or anthropomorphic prop. Likewise, their attempts to write about animals who lived *for their own ends* and *on their own terms*, can now be understood through Canada's ineffectual animal welfare and conservation laws. I have illuminated the shared language of Salt, Seton, and Roberts and indicated the possibility that they encountered his work (or its impact) while living abroad. I have also given examples of their direct engagement with animal advocacy. By exploring the scientific contexts of their work, I have elucidated the theory of animal mind that informed their stories. In the following chapter, I will argue that Seton's and Roberts' representations of animal minds are aligned with Romanes' work and that, if his criteria are used, they can even be described as 'accurate.' Finally, I have also demonstrated the crucial role of scientific professionalization in shaping the scientific and literary environments into which Seton's and Roberts' stories would be received.

CHAPTER FOUR

WILD ANIMALS AND NATURE FAKERS

By re-contextualizing the wild animal story in the previous chapter, I will now be able to provide a re-interpretation of the genre. Through the framework of practical zoocriticism, I will consider each of the wild animal story characteristics I have identified in relation to 'literature,' 'advocacy,' and 'science.' For coherence, I will attempt to discuss these features individually using examples from Seton's and Roberts' stories. It is impossible to separate them entirely, however, as some characteristics operate in conjunction with others.

Literature

In the previous chapter I argued that, in nineteenth-century Canadian literature, animals appeared most often as *objects* of utility, for example as a 'natural resource.' Whether as the trophy of a hunt or an anthropomorphic character in a moral tale for children, there was little engagement with the animal *as an animal*. Even when represented as an *individual,* the animal usually appeared in relation to humans, often as a companion or assistant who lacked their own *autonomy.* Thus, I contend that the *zoocentrism* of the wild animal story may be its most significant contribution to Canadian literature. Prior to Seton and Roberts, efforts to represent animals as *animals*, as *individuals*, and as beings who were independent and *autonomous* from humans, seems to have been negligible.

In "Toward a Critical Theory of Animal Issues in Fiction," Shapiro and Copeland question what roles exist for animals in literature, other than as symbol or reductive object (344). They offer a zoocentric alternative:

> An animal could appear as him or herself—as an individual with some measure of autonomy, agency, voice, character, and as a member of a species with a nature that has certain typical capabilities and limitations. Of course, there are problems with knowing an animal in this way but, like any other critical position, the degree to which an animal is presented true to himself or herself is an evaluative ideal. (344)

I suggest, then, that the wild animal story's fantasy of knowing the animal constitutes just such an alternative. Yes, these depictions *are* a fantasy, but they also demonstrate a sincere attempt to "empathize with the world-as-experienced by that animal" (345). It is worth noting, again, Sandlos' description of this creative objective:

> At the root, this is the unique innovation of these early Canadian animal stories: a realist depiction of nature as *a living terrain that contains many living, breathing, and interacting subjects*, as opposed to a purely imaginative nature that emphasizes picturesque or sublime qualities, as with the eighteenth-century landscape tradition, or one that emphasizes the creative experience of the human observer, as is common with Romantic literature. (*Fur and Feathers* 78-9, emphasis added)

Here, however, he omits a vital component of this "realist depiction." I believe that an equally significant aspect is the authors' attempt to engage with science. As Roberts observes in his preface to *Kindred*, books like *Black Beauty* and *Beautiful Joe* "have done a great service" in promoting animal welfare, but "their psychology is human" (27). It is crucial that we do not neglect the "framework of natural science" (24) upon which Seton and Roberts attempted to create their zoocentric narratives.

In this section I will consider the ways in which Seton and Roberts express the animality, individuality, and autonomy of their nonhuman protagonists. As I have stated above, I will endeavour to discuss them in separation as individual characteristics of the genre, although some crossover is inevitable.

The Animal *as Animal*

In *The Wild Animal Story*, Lutts suggests that Seton and Roberts were pre-empted in their endeavour to depict a nonhuman perspective by an American: “Charles Dudley Warner was perhaps the first North American writer to describe events from the point of view of a wild animal” (3). Although “A-Hunting of the Deer” (1878) does indeed depict “the hunt as the deer experienced it” (Lutts 3) and certainly conveys a message of sympathy for the hunted animal, Warner shows us little of the doe’s own perspective. His tone is humorous and playfully anthropomorphic throughout: “Of all wild creatures [the deer] is one of the most graceful in action, and he poses with the skill of an experienced model” (Warner 3). There seems to be little serious engagement with the animal *as an animal*. As in *Beautiful Joe* and *Black Beauty*, there seems to be no alterity, nothing specifically ‘nonhuman’ about this doe’s experience of the hunt. Of course, there is currently no consensus on what constitutes a ‘nonhuman perspective,’ although I suggest that Shapiro and Copeland’s phrase “empath[y] with the world-as-experienced by that animal” (345) might be a good start. I have observed that Seton, Roberts, and the writers of the six twentieth-century zoocentric texts all use *sensory experience* as a way of empathizing with their protagonists. These perceptions can be unique to both the species and the individual, and often convey scientific information. Moreover, they also indicate the combined operation of an individual’s sensory organs, cognitive faculties, and long-term memory.

For instance, in “The Master of the Golden Pool,” from *Watchers of the Trails* (1904), Roberts speculates on the underwater perspective of a trout:

> It was only to the outside world—to the dragonfly, and the bird, and the chattering red squirrel in the overhanging hemlock—that the deep water under the bank looked black. To the trout in his lair, looking upward toward the sunlight, the whole pool had a golden glow. [...] The sky of the

> big trout's world was the flat surface of Golden Pool. From the unknown place beyond that sky there came to his eyes but moving shadows, arrangements of light and dark. He could not see out and through into the air unobstructedly, as one looks forth from a window into the world. Most of these moving shadows he understood very well. When broad and vague, they did not, as a rule, greatly interest him; but when they got small, and sharply black, he knew they might at any instant break through and splash and become real, coloured things, probably good to eat. (27-8)

By contrasting these different perceptions of the pool, Roberts explores the specific world-as-experienced by a trout. He also indicates the unique perspective of this *individual* trout by demonstrating that he makes choices and has opinions. Sensory perception combines with prior knowledge to enable intelligent analysis; he knows what's *good to eat* and he knows what to ignore. Roberts' use of "good" suggests that this trout has preferences, that he prefers to eat some things more than others, and that they may taste *good* too (28). There is also a balance here between the familiar and the unfamiliar—a nonhuman perspective that is both 'alien' and knowable. Likewise, in *Animal Heroes* (1905), Seton uses the story of "Badlands Billy" to blend scientific knowledge and imaginative speculation:

> A Dog would have trotted right up to the carcass, an old-time Wolf might have done so, but constant war had developed constant vigilance in the Yellow Wolf, and trusting nothing and no one but her nose, she slacked her speed to a walk. On coming in easy view she stopped, and for long swung her nose, submitting the wind to the closest possible chemical analysis. She tried with her finest tests, blew all the membranes clean again and tried it ones more; and this was the report of the trusty nostrils, yes, the unanimous report. First, rich and racy smell of Calf, seventy per cent; smell of grass, bugs, wood, flowers, trees, sand, and other uninteresting negations, fifteen per cent.; smell of her Cub and herself, positive but ignorable, ten per cent.; smell of smoke, one per cent.; of sweaty leather smell, one per cent.; of human body-scent (not discernible in some samples), one-half per cent.; smell of iron, a trace. (126-7)

In describing this sensory experience of a dead calf's body, Seton depicts his protagonist as both *an animal* and *an individual*. Her perception is unlike a human's but it is also unlike that of a dog or even another wolf. Her unique

perspective has been gained through learned experience and interpretation of sensory input. Her decision not to approach the calf is based on her ability to both recall information and predict consequences. Hence, Seton does not just convey what it might be like to be *a* wolf; he explores the individual reality of *this specific wolf*.

Shapiro and Copeland assert that one function of zoocentric literary analysis is to evaluate "the degree to which the author presents the animal 'in itself,' both as an experiencing individual and as a species-typical way of living in the world" (345). Both the wolf and the trout demonstrate species-specific sensory perceptions. They can differentiate between different input they receive and know that certain shapes or smells relate to specific beings or objects. Based on their individual experiences and preferences, each can use this sensory information to *choose* how best to proceed. Thus, it is clear that, in the words of Roberts, both writers are building upon "a substantial foundation of known facts" to explore the "unknown world" of an individual animal's perspective (*Kindred* 24). It is worth noting, here, that Seton tends to restrict his speculations to species he can observe first-hand, mostly birds and mammals. Whereas, Roberts explores the unique experiences of an array of species, from an ant to a giant squid. As I will demonstrate below, I believe that these differences may be due to Roberts' treatment of the genre as a series of zoocentric thought-experiments and Seton's desire to campaign on behalf of particular species.

The Animal as *Autonomous*

In delineating their theory of animal rights, Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka provide a useful characterization of wild animals: "those animals who

avoid humans and human settlement, maintaining a separate and independent existence (insofar as they are able to) in their own shrinking habitats or territories" (156). Whist this does not apply to all the individuals or all the species depicted in the wild animal story, it does emphasize the *autonomy* of wildness. It indicates an *intention*, a desire to maintain independence and resist captivity.

For most wild animal protagonists, their autonomy is evident in their very existence. Yet Seton's and Roberts' narratives continually reinforce the wild animal's need for self-determination. Even Seton's more anthropocentric stories in *Wild Animals I Have Known* emphasize the wild independence of his semi-domesticated companions. Indeed, the narrative of the captured wild animal who attempts to regain freedom is common in both of their work. For instance, in Seton's *Lives of the Hunted* (1901), when Randy, a captive sparrow, is accidentally released from his cage, he escapes through a window and "readily" accepts the "new condition of freedom" (*Hunted* 133). With little memory of his life before capture, the sparrow is relatively comfortable in captivity. With freedom, however, his quality of life improves dramatically and within a week he is "almost as wild as any of his kin (113). It seems that, given the opportunity, Seton's and Roberts' animals almost always choose independence. In Roberts' "The Return to the Trails" from *Watchers*, a bear is captured as a cub and brought up to perform in a circus. He is possessed of a "fierce restlessness" and "vague longing," which is heightened when a "faint fragrance" that would be "imperceptive to nostrils less sensitive than his" draws down from the "spruce-clad hills" of his home (49-50). Like Randy, the bear reacts as soon as his chain is momentarily unclasped; he knocks down the trainer and is soon back amongst the "spicy glooms of the spruce woods" (51).

Roberts' captive animals often struggle for freedom and autonomy, although this is taken a stage further in "The Homesickness of Kehonka." A goose raised in captivity watches the yearly migrating flocks of his species and feels the urge to join them each time. When his "clipped wing-primaries" eventually begin to re-develop, however, he manages to attain "an inch or so of effective flying web" and forgets "his captivity and clipped wing" (130-2). Inevitably, he struggles to keep pace with the other geese:

> He would not lag behind. Every force of his body and his brain went into that flight, till his eyes blurred and his heart seemed on the point of bursting. Then, suddenly, with a faint, despairing note, he lurched aside, shot downward, and fell with a great splash into the channel of the Trantramar. With strong wings, and level, unpausing flight, the flock went on to its North without him. (135)

It is unclear whether the force of Kehonka's determination lies in his *decision* to join the rest of his species or an *instinctual* drive to migrate. Both explanations have profound implications for Roberts' depiction of animal autonomy. Nonetheless, the combination of the tragic narrative and the goose's desperation offer powerful criticisms of wild animal captivity. Indeed, these stories are highly reminiscent of Henry Salt's condemnation of the ways in which "we draft [wild animals] from their native haunts, warp the whole purpose of their lives, and degrade them to the level of pets, or curiosities, or labour-saving automatons" (53). When understood in this way, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain anthropocentric illusions that the animal eventually accepts and prefers their 'comfortable' imprisonment. Although these escape narratives can become rather exaggerated at times, the nonhuman individual's ability to resist and evade their human captors contributes to an impression of nonhuman autonomy that challenges our expectations. Moreover, the individual's struggle for independence and autonomy epitomizes the wild animal story's depiction of protagonists who live to satisfy *their own needs*, rather than those of humans.

The Animal as *Individual*

It is clear from these few examples that Seton's and Roberts' nonhuman protagonists are *individuals* with unique perspectives, experiences, abilities, desires, and motivations. Yet both writers have been accused of producing archetypal 'animal heroes.' Thomas Benson, for instance, describes Seton as "a storyteller with few rivals in the representation of animals as moral heroes" (84). Whilst it is true that some protagonists are the 'fastest,' 'smartest,' 'strongest,' and so on, it would be reductive to claim that this is always the case. In fact, Lori Jo Oswald concludes her study of animal stereotyping by admitting that she "did not intend to write a defence of the so-called nature fakers," and yet

> what I discovered was that the founders [of the wild animal story] deserve much more credit than they have received for their realistic portrayals of animals [...] Because they focused on the *individuality* of their animal characters, even their animal heroes, *they avoided stereotyping the members of a given species.* They also avoided representing animal characters as mere victims, unlike several recent writers. (148, emphasis added)

Thus, we find that the wild animal story's emphasis the individual animal produces a curious tension. Does the writer depict his or her protagonist as a typical member of the species or a unique individual with a distinct set of characteristics? In a much-quoted passage from his preface to *Wild Animals I Have Known*, Seton remarks:

> I believe that natural history has lost much by the vague general treatment that is so common. What satisfaction would be derived from a ten-page sketch of the habits and customs of Man? How much more profitable it would be to devote that space to the life of some one great man. This is the principle I have endeavoured to apply to my animals. *The real personality of the individual and his view of life are my theme,* rather than the ways of the race in general, as viewed by a casual and hostile human eye. (9-10, emphasis added)

It may be possible that this is where Seton's 'awkward imitator,' William Long, found his argument for science's inability to account for animal individuality, discussed in the previous chapter. However, it can also be found in Salt's

description of natural history in *Animals' Rights*. As I have stated, I can find no evidence of their interaction, yet Seton and Salt seem to echo each other, nonetheless:

> For consider the dealings of the so-called naturalist with the animals whose nature he makes it his business to observe! In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, he is wholly unappreciative of the *essential distinctive quality, the individuality, of the subject of his investigations*, and becomes nothing more than a contented accumulator of facts, an industrious dissector of carcases. (91, emphasis added)

In these instances the wild animal story's conjunction of science, advocacy, and literature can feel uneasy. What is the difference between "stereotyping the members of a given species" (Oswald 148) and depicting an individual's "species-typical" (Shaprio and Copeland 345) behaviour? Is there, as Seton suggests, little to be gained from a "sketch of the habits and customs" of animals, compared to the study of one "great" animal (*Known* 9)? How can the writers of such individual stories become "assiduous contributors" to animal psychology (*Kindred* 24), as Roberts would suggest?

I contend that we can address these issues by considering both the sheer number of Seton's and Roberts' stories and the diversity of species they represented. For instance, despite Seton's description of *Wild Animals I Have Known* as "Being the Personal Histories of Lobo, Silverspot, Raggylug, Bingo, the Springfield Fox, the Pacing Mustang, Wully and Redruff" (1), it is clear that with each story he is contributing to a broader depiction of avian and mammalian life. Likewise, Roberts' story "The Lord of the Air" from *Kindred* is the narrative of an individual eagle's capture and escape. However, when read in context with the rest of the volume—and, indeed, with the rest of the genre—it can be understood as one investigation, among many, on the topics of nonhuman cognitive, emotional, and social complexity. We might even compare it to "Kehonka," from the same volume, to consider whether conscious desire or

instinctive urges were responsible for these individuals' efforts to regain their autonomy.

In concluding his book *The Exultant Ark* (2011), cognitive ethologist Jonathan Balcombe explains the importance of perceiving animals *as individuals*:

> Species and populations are useful concepts, but they don't take into consideration animals' *sentience*. Species and populations don't feel pains or pleasures; only *individuals* do. *So when we consider animals with regard to their capacity to feel, we must consider them as separate and unique*. As surely as they each have a biology, each also has a *biography*. (192, emphasis added)

Here, then, we can see the difference between natural history (as described by Seton and Salt) and the modern, scientific study of animal minds. Indeed, in *The Emotional Lives of Animals*, fellow ethologist Marc Bekoff writes: "We must make every attempt to maintain the animal's point of view. We must repeatedly ask, 'What is that individual's experience?'" (125). Thus, as I will demonstrate later in this chapter, I suggest that Seton and Roberts were producing a form of *anecdotal cognitivism.* This is a phrase Dale Jamieson and Marc Bekoff use to characterize Romanes' method of using observations of individuals to infer the cognitive states of a species (Jamieson and Bekoff 111). As Romanes explains, his efforts to synthesize anecdotes and stories led him to "cast as wide a net as possible," fishing "the seas of popular literature as well as the rivers of scientific writing," (*Animal Intelligence* vii). Similarly, in his preface to *Kindred*, Roberts observes that "'anecdotes of animals' came to form a not inconsiderable body of literature" (22). It seems fair to suggest, therefore, that the vast number of wild animal stories became their own *not inconsiderable body of evidence* for their authors' perceptions of animal cognition. Indeed, I contend that like Romanes, Seton and Roberts attempted to use their stories "to determine the upper limit of intelligence reached by this or that class, order, or species of animals" (*Animal*

Intelligence viii). Just like Romanes' anecdotes of animal behaviour, the story of a unique individual's rare abilities becomes subsumed within the general depiction of the species. Moreover, the juxtaposition of their stories within each volume means that the figure in the background of one narrative is the 'hero' of another, and vice versa.

I have observed an additional issue, however, which perhaps ought to be of greater concern to literary animal studies: does the use of 'animal heroes' suggest that only *exceptional* animals deserve our attention and respect? Would we extend the same concern to both the typical and atypical members of the species? For instance, would Kehonka's story stir the same sympathy if he had not summoned the enormous strength required to fly? And, furthermore, how do we interpret Roberts' use of playfully grandiose titles like "Lord of the Air" and "Master of the Golden Pond"? On the whole, I interpret Roberts' use of 'lords' and 'masters' as an extension of his attempts to imagine nonhuman perspectives. Rather than speculating on the general abilities of a species, Roberts tends to create his thought-experiments on an individual basis. Could a goose with clipped wings regain the ability to fly? How might it feel to be the dominant individual in an area? Indeed, in "Lord of the Air," Roberts depicts both his protagonist's aggressive relationship with other birds of prey and the impact of his absence on their community. Nonetheless, the question of whether readers and writers are biased towards extraordinary members of a species is a significant question for zoocentric literature. Moreover, for truly "robust and respectful presentations of animals" (Shapiro and Copeland 345), we cannot force them into either role as 'hero' or 'victim.'

Advocacy

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated some of the ways in which efforts to provide advocacy on behalf of wild animals in nineteenth-century Canada were inhibited their perception as 'natural resources.' The legal protection of domesticated animals was first put in place to safeguard personal *property*, the defence of wild animals was shaped by the belief that they were essentially 'national 'property.' As indicated previously, this was reflected in anthropocentric, objectifying representations of wild animals in early Canadian literature. As J. Alexander Burnett observes, Seton's and Roberts' work for animal advocacy helped to replace "the frontier myth of limitless wildlife" in the mind of the public (29). I argue that this *defamiliarization* is one of the most important techniques any zoocentric text can use for the advocacy of animal ethics. Indeed, I suggest that it was fundamental to Seton's and Roberts' efforts to challenge the portrayal of animals as objects.

As indicated by Erica Fudge, however, we continue to dissociate the unique, living animal from the use of its dead body as an object:

> But there is a possibility of breaking out of this: if, as we put on leather shoes, we begin to think about the animal from which the leather came, and to recognize the kind of stories we tell ourselves to make it acceptable to wear them, then we are, perhaps, beginning to take those stories as just that: stories. From this basis it is possible to begin to seek another way of thinking. (16)

The thought process that she describes is essentially one of defamiliarization. Elsewhere in the book she defines defamiliarization (in the case of meat) as "the linking of the meat to the animal that it comes from" (44). This also extends to the language of *speciesism*—a set of discourses that enable the vastly unequal treatment of animals. In *Animal Equality: Language and Liberation* (2001), Joan Dunayer explains:

> The way we speak about other animals is inseparable from the way we treat them. Although nonhuman people don't perceive the disparagement and threat in speciesist words, those words legitimize abuse. By discounting nonhuman sentience, individuality, and worth, speciesist language sanctions cruelty and murder. (9)

Thus, we can understand the defamiliarization of speciesism as a challenge to established, anthropocentric perceptions of animals. These perceptions control the labels that we unthinkingly apply to the nonhumans who surround us (food, cute, tool, dangerous, companion, delicious, pest, exotic, decoration, ugly, companion and so on) and that govern our behaviour towards them. The wild animal story characteristics discussed in this section all utilize defamiliarization to challenge anthropocentric and speciesist thinking.

Animal *Biography*

I contend that one of Seton's and Roberts' most important defamiliarizing techniques is the wild animal *biography*. This is different to a biographical narrative structure; it is the demonstration that just as surely as each animal has a "biology," each also has a "biography" (Balcombe 192). Knowledge of the 'personal history' of an animal (to use Seton's phrase) aids our ability to see each as a "separate and unique" individual (192). As indicated by Fudge's defamiliarization of a leather shoe, evidence of an individual's biography—the *story* of "the animal from which the leather came" (12)—undermines and destabilizes perceptions of the animal as an *object*. This idea of animal biography is closely tied with Tom Regan's argument for the inherent value of nonhuman beings as subjects-of-a-life. In *The Case for Animal Rights* (1983), he explains:

> individuals are subjects-of-a-life if they have *beliefs* and *desires*; *perception, memory, and a sense of the future*, including their own future; an *emotional life* together with feelings of *pleasure* and *pain*; preference- and welfare-*interests*; the ability to *initiate action in pursuit of their desires and goals*; a psychophysical identify over time; and an individual welfare in the sense that their experiental life fares well or ill for them,

> logically independently of their utility for others and logically independently of their being the object of anyone else's interests. Those who satisfy the subject-of-a-life criterion themselves have a distinctive kind of value—*inherent value*—and are not to be viewed or treated as mere receptacles. (243, emphasis added)

From my analysis so far, it should be clear that Seton's and Roberts' autonomous individuals satisfy these criteria. Indeed, the nonhuman protagonists of the zoocentric texts discussed in the subsequent chapters of this thesis also qualify as subjects of a life. The strength of this concept lies, as Regan explains, in the fact that there is no hierarchy: "One either *is* a subject of a life […] or one *is not.* All those who are, are so equally" (245). Thus, I argue that one of the zoocentric functions of the wild animal story is to challenge objectifying perceptions of animals by using the individual's *biography* to prove that they are the *subject of a life.*

This process is particularly crucial for our ability to empathize with non-domesticated animals. By narrating the life histories of wild individuals, these stories create a fantasy of the "intimacy" and sympathetic understanding discussed by Salt (53). In other words, they make the 'distant' and 'unknowable' wild animal—seemingly identical and indistinguishable from the rest of its kind—into a knowable and irreplaceable individual. Hence, we can also see the relationship between the *fantasy of knowing* and the exercise of our empathetic imaginations. I suggest, however, that in the wild animal story, the defamiliarizing power of this biographical technique is connected to the death of the animal. It is the moment at which the nonhuman protagonist is transformed from *a subject of a life* to *an object of utility*. Perceiving only utilitarian value, not inherent value, the human character kills the protagonist without any knowledge or concern for the unique life history that is being erased. The privileged understanding that comes from knowledge of the animal's biography, however,

transforms an act that might pass without comment in an anthropocentric story into a distressing loss. Moreover, as I will discuss later in this section, Seton and Roberts often heighten this effect by demonstrating that the animal protagonist exists in a *network of meaningful relationships*. In many cases, readers are equipped with the knowledge that the abrupt death of the protagonist will inevitably result in the slow death of those who were reliant upon them (an injured companion or young offspring unable to fend for themselves, for instance).

Considering Seton's direct appeals on behalf of animals, it is unsurprising that the sudden deaths of his protagonists are always loaded with meaning and dramatic irony. As he declares in the preface to *Wild Animals I Have Known*: "The life of a wild animal *always has a tragic end*" (12, emphasis original). Hence, the tragic ends of his protagonists come, inevitably, after a youth being raised; defended; taught how to survive by a diligent parent; then evading capture during adolescence; struggling to find a mate and finally having offspring of their own. It is then, after the individual's survival seems to have been a success, that an accident, chance encounter, or the tenacity of a determined hunter, abruptly ends his or her life. Indeed this usually happens without warning and without the knowledge of their companions. There are countless examples of such animal biographies in both Seton's and Roberts' work, albeit each with some minor variation.

For instance, Seton's story of "Redruff" follows this structure at first, but the end is unusually tragic: his mate is shot, all but one of his children die whilst trapped in ice and snow. His surviving daughter is then shot by the same hunter who killed her mother, and then Redruff himself is finally caught in a trap set by this man; yet, after being stuck in the trap for two days of pain and agony, it is

not the hunter who kills him, but a passing owl (*Known* 343-357). Through such a set of events, it is unsurprising that this was the story in which Seton made the passionate declaration about the rights of wild animals (discussed in another chapter). Likewise, Seton's once-captive sparrow, Randy, whom I have already mentioned, also suffers an unexpectedly tragic end to his story. After the reader has followed the various struggles and experiences of his life, the sudden, accidental death of Randy's mate and his own re-capture to become another person's caged novelty, is shocking. Seton summarizes: "It was an accident that set him free originally. An accident had mated him with Biddy. Their brief life together had been a succession of storms and accidents. An accident had taken her away, and another accident had renewed his cage life" (*Hunted* 135). It is not the *accident* that is shocking; it is the way in which anthropocentric behaviour, driven by the belief that wild animals ought to be put to some *use*, exacerbates the random serendipity of survival in nature. The human's unthinking erasure of the animal's biography is instantaneous. In such narratives, the animal's abrupt transition from *the subject of a life* to *an object of utility* is clear.

In some stories, however, Seton and Roberts reinforce the role of animal *biographies* by allowing the human hunter to recognize his victim (and invariably, the hunters are male). If we return to the female wolf from "Badlands Billy," whose scent-analysis Seton described, we find just such an encounter. She spends many years learning to evade the increasingly complex attempts of wolvers to collect the bounty on her head, how to avoid guns and traps, and also teaching her young to do the same. Eventually, though, she is caught out by a new tactic: "Never had a trap been so baited before. Never was she so unsuspicious" (*Heroes* 138). As her biography comes to an end, Seton

continues to speculate on her perspective, providing a lengthy, rather disturbing, description of her experience of the trap—as indicated by this small extract: “She tore her legs that were held; she gnawed in frenzy at her flank, she chopped off her tail in her madness; she splintered all her teeth on the steel, and filled her bleeding, foaming jaws with clay and sand” (138). When she is eventually found, it is by a man who has spent a long time trying to kill her:

> The wolver rode up to the sorry, tattered, bleeding She-wolf in the trap. He raised his rifle and soon the struggling stopped. The wolver read the trail and the signs about, and remembering those he had read before, he divined that this was the Wolf with the great Cub—the She-wolf of Sentinel Butte. (140)

Although Seton does not depict the man’s reaction to this discovery, the encounter does allow the wolf, momentarily, to become an *individual* again; a *subject of a life*, even in death. Roberts employs a similar technique, although he takes it a stage further. In “The Return of the Trails,” the bear who escapes from a circus (discussed above) is later shot by men who encounter him in the wild:

> The men gathered about the body, praising the shot, praising the prize, praising the reckless audacity which led the beast to rush upon his doom. Then in the long, loose fur that clothed his bones they found the heavy collar. At that they all wondered. The boss examined it minutely, and stood pondering; and *the frank pride upon his face gradually died into regret*. (*Watchers* 62, emphasis added)

It is only by finding evidence of the animal’s *biography*, by recognizing him as an *individual*—“the b’ar that run away from the circus las’ fall [sic]” (62)—that the bear’s transition from subject of a life to object of utility becomes problematic for the men. They were proud of their “prize” before he was identified; now, instead, they “regret” their actions, and remember he was known at the circus for being “kind” (62).

Defamiliarizing Speciesism

In two connected stories from *Watchers*, “The Little Wolf of the Pool” and “The Little Wolf of the Air,” Roberts reinforces the fact that knowing something of an animal’s life allows us to contextualize the individual—to see a unique being, and not an ‘object.’ The two stories narrate the life of a female dragonfly, first as a naiad (the aquatic larval stage) and then as an adult. In the water, we observe her killing a tadpole and a minnow. The two deaths are fairly unpleasant, but they are not given much significance because our concern is for the young dragonfly, who Roberts playfully describes as the “little monster” (67). In the next story, however, we witness the fully-grown dragonfly being eaten by an adult frog. By introducing a human observer, Roberts illustrates the importance of both animal individuality and speciesism to our fickle sympathies:

> The dragon-fly had been at her business [laying eggs] for perhaps two minutes when the man saw a large frog rise to the surface just below her. He liked all dragon-flies,—*and for this one in particular he had developed a personal interest.* Suddenly and violently he jumped to his feet, hoping to chase her away from the approaching doom. But he was just too late. As he jumped, the big frog sprang, and a long, darting, cleft tongue clutched the busy [dragon]fly, dragging her down. (79-80, emphasis added)

The man’s concern for this *particular* dragonfly, who he has been watching for some time, mimics that of readers—since we, too, have been observing her. Roberts reminds us of the arbitrary nature of that concern (why do we not care for the frog instead?) with the final words of his story: “He [the frog] had *avenged* (though about that he cared as little as he knew) the *lives of a thousand tadpoles*” (80, emphasis added). By providing this wider perspective, then, Roberts challenges our subjective relationships with species, as well as individuals. After all, the man “liked all dragon-flies” and, as one of the more attractive and charismatic insect species, it is likely that the reader does too. Yet the moral ambivalence of this ending mimics our often illogical and uneven

approaches to species conservation. Indeed, his use of ‘wolf’ in both titles makes this connection difficult to ignore, as does his comparison between the impact of dragonfly and wolf predation: “With appetites insatiable, ferocity implacable, strength and courage prodigious for their stature, to call them little wolves of their air is perhaps *to wrong the ravening grey pack whose howlings strike terror* down the corridors of the winter forest” (74, emphasis added). In other words, the predator-prey relationships that cause us moral concern are often motivated by anthropocentric priories—whether it’s the preservation of a species useful as ‘game’ or as an ‘attractive’ curiosity.

Hence, these two stories contribute to Roberts’ attempts to unpack some of our speciesist attitudes, particularly towards ‘ugly’ or ‘uncharismatic’ animals. Although he seems to use emotive language that places value-judgements on individuals, these are almost always applied to his protagonists. Moreover, this is typically conveyed through the eyes of another animal. In the first story, when the attractive dragonfly is still a naiad, her description is delivered from the doomed tadpole’s perspective. He watches the “fantastic-looking creature” swim into view: “The whole front of its head—part of the eyes, and all the face—was covered by a smooth, cleft, shieldlike mask [...] giving the creature an expression both mysterious and terrible” (67). I suggest that, like his playfully grandiose titles, Roberts’ language of alienness and monstrosity may be an extension of his speculative explorations of different animal perspectives. For instance, the young salmon of “The Last Barrier” from *Haunters of the Silences*, encounters “gigantic creatures dashing hither and thither among” the salmon, “snapping them up greedily by twos and threes” (34). Yet these dangerous “monsters” are in fact “young redfins, a couple of inches in length” (34). Likewise, in “The Prisoners of the Pitcher-plant,” we receive an ant’s

perspective of mammals we see as fairly small and attractive: “An overwhelming cataclysm descended suddenly upon the tiny world of the pitcher-plant. The soft, furry feet of some bounding *monster*—rabbit, fox, or wildcat—came down amongst the clustered pitchers, crushing several to bits” (*Haunters* 90-1, emphasis added). I suggest, then, that what we find here is in fact a forerunner to the species-specific language we find in the speculative zoocentric narratives. The protagonists of those texts place similar value-judgements on other species, often deeming them ‘alien,’ ‘ugly,’ or ‘monstrous.’ Without providing any solid conclusions or easy answers, Roberts helps to unpack and defamiliarize our speciesism—both the differing values and stereotypes we apply to groups of individuals.

Dunayer explains that, when classified as ‘vermin,’ “unglamorous mammals” can be “legally killed in any number at any time, including when they have dependent young” (57). The word transforms “speciesist genocide into a public service” and a legitimate “punishment” for those animals. Unlike Roberts, Seton is unmistakable in his efforts to defamiliarize the category of vermin. At the beginning of “Badlands Billy,” for instance, he challenges the perception that this label is ‘natural’ by historicizing the human actions that have led to the demonization of wolves:

> In pristine days the Buffalo herds were followed by bands of Wolves that preyed on the sick, the weak, and the wounded. When the Buffalo were exterminated the Wolves were hard put for support, but the Cattle came and solved the question for them by taking the Buffaloes’ place. This caused the wolf-war. The ranchmen offered a bounty for each Wolf killed, and every cowboy out of work, was supplied with traps and poison for wolf-killing. The very expert made this their sole business and became known as wolvers. (*Heroes* 112-3)

He then briefly uses the perspective of a wolver to demonstrate the disturbing consequences of this label. For instance, although wolves were already commodified for their fur, the hunting was seasonal; bounties could be collected

all year round: “Pelts were not good in May, but the bounties were high, five dollars a head, and double for She-wolves” (114). This system means that killing nursing females can be particularly profitable if the wolver is also able to find her cubs:

> As he went down to the creek one morning he saw a Wolf coming to drink on the other side. He had an easy shot, and on killing it found it was a nursing She-wolf. Evidently her family were somewhere near, so he spent two or three days searching in all the likely places, but found no clue to the den.
>
> Two weeks afterward, as the wolver rode down an adjoining cañon he saw a Wolf come out of a hole. The ever-ready rifle flew up, and another ten-dollar scalp was added to his string. Now he dug into the den and found the litter, a most surprising one indeed, for it consisted not of the usual fix or six Wolf-pups, but of eleven (114-5).

The wolver’s determination to find them and add “their scalps to his string of trophies” (115) demonstrates the realities of speciesism. As their species has been labelled *vermin*, these young wolf cubs are condemned to death even before they are old enough to hunt. As Dunayer observes, use of the word vermin “blames the victim.” Again, however, Seton allows his human character to catch a momentary glimpse of the history of these individuals. As he kills the cubs, the wolver notices differences between members of this unusually large litter:

> these, strange to say, were of two sizes, five of them larger and older than the other six. Here were two distinct families with one mother, and as he added their scalps to his string of trophies the truth dawned on the hunter. One lot was surely the family of the She-wolf he had killed two weeks before. The case was clear: the little ones awaiting the mother that was never to come, had whined piteously and more loudly as their hunger-pangs increased; the other mother passing had heard the Cubs; her heart was tender now, her own little ones had so recently come, and she cared for the orphans, carried them to her own den, and was providing for the double family when the rifleman had cut the gentle chapter short. (115)

Once more, Seton does not reveal whether the man experienced any emotional reaction to this discovery; certainly, it does not seem to alter his behaviour. Of

course, the fact that evidence of such altruistic behaviour in the species he is being paid to exterminate does not seem to stop him, aids Seton's defamiliarization of 'vermin' and 'wolving.' Moreover, the fact that one cub manages to survive the slaughter and is able to find a new "foster-mother" (118) suggests that the female's altruism may not be an isolated incident, hence reinforcing the challenge to species stereotypes. The fact that the wolver seems unaffected demonstrates the strength of such prejudices.

Similarly, Seton opens the story of Tito, a coyote, by illustrating the way in which speciesism subsumes all other ways of perceiving the animal:

> Wolver Jake, the cow-boy, had awakened from his chilly sleep about sunrise, in time to catch a glimpse of the Coyote passing over the ridge. As soon as she was out of sight he got on his feet and went to the edge, there to witness the interesting scene of the family breakfasting and frisking about within a few yards of him, utterly unconscious of any danger.
>
> *But the only appeal the scene had to him lay in the fact that the county had set a price on every one of these Coyotes' lives.* So he got out his big .45 navy revolver, and notwithstanding his shaky condition, he managed to somehow get a sight on the mother as she was caressing one of the little ones that had finished its breakfast, and shot her dead on the spot. (*Hunted* 267-8, emphasis added)

Like the wolver in "Badlands Billy," Jake is only able to see the coyote as a commodified object, and treats her cubs the same. They flee into the den, but he blocks all the entrances, walks to the nearest ranch, collects assistance and equipment, and gradually digs out the entire structure:

> After an hour or more the diggers came to the end of the den, and here were the woolly, bright-eyed, little ones, all huddled in a pile at the farthest corner. Their innocent puppy faces and ways were not noticed by the huge enemy. One by one they were seized. A sharp blow, and each quivering, limp form was thrown into a sack to be carried to the nearest magistrate who was empowered to pay the bounties. (268-9)

Perhaps because coyotes tend to attract greater prejudice than wolves, Seton emphasizes the similarities between these cubs and domesticated dog puppies. More effective for defamiliarization, however, is the fact that he emphasizes

their individuality and personality: “Even at this age there was a certain *individuality of character* among the puppies. Some of them squealed and some of them growled when dragged out to die. One or two tried to bite” (269, emphasis added). Although they are being seen and treated like objects, Seton reveals to us the fact that they are already *autonomous, subjects of a life*. Unusually, the wolvers decide to keep the final cub alive to be a pet for the children at the ranch. And yet, by throwing her into the bag with the bodies of her dead family, it is clear that they still see her as an object. Importantly, however, Seton’s continued prioritization of her perspective defamiliarizes her objectifying treatment: “bruised and frightened, [she] lay there very still, understanding nothing” (270).

Science

As noted previously, George Romanes was mentored by Charles Darwin and had numerous books and articles published widely on both sides of the Atlantic. It is not known whether Seton and Roberts read his work directly. Nevertheless, it is evident that their perceptions of animal intelligence, and methods employed for its study, are exceedingly similar. Indeed, in their article, “On Aims and Methods of Cognitive Ethology” (1992), Dale Jamieson and Marc Bekoff suggest that Darwin and Romanes’ methods could be better understood as “anecdotal cognitivism,” which they describe as the attribution of “cognitive states to many animals on the basis of observation of particular cases rather than controlled experiments or manipulations” (111). It is also worth noting that Romanes was, and continues to be, the target of criticisms very much like those faced by Seton and Roberts—anthropomorphism, credulity, and perpetuating ‘sham’ science. All three men used a combination of first- and second-hand

anecdotal evidence to build a larger picture of the range of cognitive and emotional capacities of each species. Moreover, not only were Seton's and Roberts' stories informed and supported by anecdotes and observations, I propose that when they claimed they were accurate and factual, they were implicitly constructing their narratives *as* anecdotal evidence. In essence, then, Seton and Roberts were producing a form of anecdotal cognitivism—dramatized anecdotes that were judged during the Nature Fakers controversy, not as fanciful stories, but as evidence for the authors' claims about animal intelligence and reason. By disentangling this complex interplay between science, literature, and perceptions of animal minds, we can be begin to see that this so-called 'literary debate' was not about literary devices or artistic differences, but the cognitive abilities applied to the protagonists. Furthermore this re-contextualization exposes the impact that competing discourses in early animal psychology research had for both the wild animal story and the Nature Fakers controversy.

In this section, I will begin with an analysis of Seton's and Roberts' use of anecdotes and evidence as part of their efforts to contribute to animal psychology and produce stories with realism and veracity. I also suggest that this emphasis on 'evidence' was used to legitimize their attempts to engage with the sciences. Roberts synthesized his research seamlessly into coherent narratives whereas Seton exposed his gathering of evidence and anecdotes. I suggest that these differences have had a considerable impact on responses to their work. Whilst Roberts received less criticism in the Nature Fakers debate, his stories were more easily dismissed as anthropomorphic fiction. Although Seton divided opinions and faced greater controversy, but his authority as a naturalist was usually still respected. I have provided already examples in this

chapter to indicate that Seton and Roberts represented their animal protagonists as intelligent, autonomous individuals. Hence, I will now consider some of the more complex, and potentially more controversial, cognitive abilities that they attribute to their animals such as learning and communication, before sketching a final overview of their depictions of animal intelligence. I will re-contextualize a few core examples by reading them alongside Romanes' table of emotional and cognitive development. As should be clear from my summary of his work in the previous, Seton's and Roberts' protagonists are likely to be in accordance with Romanes' criteria. Therefore, we should not be surprised (nor should we declare them anthropomorphic) if they are capable of 'reason,' learning, and an array of complex emotions.

Anecdotes and Evidence

As I have discussed, Roberts sketches a history of animal representation in his preface to *Kindred* but also gives an account of both the growing popular and the scientific interest in animal minds. Echoing the observations made by Romanes in his preface to *Intelligence*, Roberts acknowledges the early curiosity of amateurs and pet-owners who "were observing, with the wonder and interest of discoverers, the astonishing fashion in which the mere instincts of these so-called irrational creatures were able to simulate the operations of reason" (22). Like Romanes, he emphasizes the relationship between these observations and the establishment of anecdotal evidence for animal intelligence:

> The results of this observation were written down, till 'anecdotes of animals' came to form a not inconsiderable body of literature. The drift of all these data was overwhelmingly toward one conclusion. The mental processes of the animals observed were seen to be far more complex than the observers had supposed. (22)

The narrative Roberts constructs is so similar to the early history of comparative psychology that the only omission seems to be Romanes' name. He continues this account by explaining that, although some observations were dismissed as instinct or coincidence, there still remained a "great unaccounted-for body of facts," and thus

> men were forced at last 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 later days been reduced to a very narrow psychological fissure. (23)

The language and ideas Roberts uses indicate, quite plainly, that the basis for his understanding of animal psychology lies in the work of Darwin and Romanes; there is no hint of Morgan's canon here, for instance. He also adds the qualification, "in these latter days," demonstrating that it is indeed the post-Darwinian, late nineteenth-century emergence of interest in animal minds to which he is referring. Indeed, he describes this change at length: "We have suddenly attained a new and clearer vision. We have come face to face with personality, where we were blindly wont to predicate mere instinct and automatism" (24). Crucially, however, he constructs the author as a valid contributor to this otherwise scientific endeavour:

> Our chief writers of animal stories at the present day may be regarded as explorers of this unknown world, absorbed in charting its topography. They work, indeed, upon a substantial foundation of known facts. They are minutely scrupulous as to their natural history, and assiduous contributors to that science. But above all they are diligent in their search for the motive beneath the action. (24)

As he identifies "the psychology of animal life" as the primary concern of the genre, he creates the potential for a writer of wild animal stories to become an active, legitimate participant (24).

By emphasizing that we have so far "grope[d] our way" toward "the real psychology of animals" by "deduction and induction combined" (24-5), he also

identifies a space of the 'unknown' in which the writer may speculate and imagine what we cannot *know.* Citing Seton's story "Krag, the Kootenay Ram" as an example of such work, he asserts: "The field of animal psychology so admirably open is an inexhaustible world of wonder. Sympathetic exploration may advance its boundaries to a degree of which we hardly dare dream" (28). It is necessary to recognize here that Roberts is positioning the wild animal story in a facilitating role—opening both the animal mind and the field of animal psychology for the reader—and not as a replacement for scientific investigation. Sympathetic exploration can imagine the lives of animals in a way that natural history or animal psychology alone cannot. Yet, it cannot authenticate possible knowledge in the same way as either discipline. It is clear that Roberts envisages reciprocal communication between the wild animal story and animal psychology, yet (as discussed in another chapter) the distance between science and literature at the beginning of the twentieth century could not facilitate such a relationship. Although Romanes died in 1894, prior to the genre's peak popularity and long before the Nature Fakers controversy, we might infer that he would not have encouraged such contributions from popular writers. Surely this was just the unscientific approach to animal psychology that he was resisting with his work? Nonetheless, Roberts' wish for the genre was not an unfounded one. I suggest that 'anecdotes of animals,' to use Roberts' phrase (22), form a bridge between comparative psychology and the wild animal story—a shared foundation upon which both are built. In fact, as even his choice of words is indicative, anecdotes are both "data" and "literature" (22), midway between science and stories.

Seton's and Roberts' approaches to 'evidence' in their stories reflect their differing relationships with wild animals. Having spent more time studying and

observing animals in their own environments, Seton uses a combination of his own experiences, the anecdotes of people he encounters (often giving details like names, dates, and the circumstances of their meeting), and various forms of material or archive evidence (physical objects, newspaper articles, and so on). Significantly, Seton tends to emphasize the gathering of this evidence by placing himself into the narrative. As a result, humans tend to feature more prominently than usual in such stories. On the other hand, although Roberts encountered plenty of animals in the woods of New Brunswick, he was not a naturalist. Some stories draw on “a foundation of personal, intimate, sympathetic observation” (*Haunters* v), but the majority are constructed through research and anecdotes collected from a range of sources. As a consequence, the human presence in his stories remains minimal, and he restricts any discussion about the sources of his evidence to the preface of each book. However, whilst Seton's stories may overemphasize the human presence, he does at least expose the presence of the subjective human interpreter. Roberts’ stories, on the other hand, can give the illusion of an objective, omniscient observer. He does write each preface self-consciously, however, being careful to disclose the construction of his narratives.

In the preface to *Watchers,* Roberts states: “The stories of which this volume is made up are avowedly fiction. They are, at the same time true, in that the material of which they are moulded consists of facts,—facts as precise as painstaking observation and anxious regard for truth can make them” (vii). He differentiates between the stories of a “single incident” within “the scope of a single observation” that “are true literally,” and the biographies following a protagonist “through wide intervals of time and space” that are built from “observation necessarily detached and scattered” (vii-viii). Of the latter, he adds

that “it is obvious that the truth of that story must be of a different kind,” although the careful writer of the wild animal story “may hope to make his most elaborate piece of animal biography no less true to nature than his transcript of an isolated fact” (vii-viii). Hence we can see that the stories of a “single incident” or “isolated fact” are most closely associated with anecdotes of observation; Roberts even refers to it as a “transcript” of the observation. Although the biographies are still constructed from the ‘evidence’ of multiple observations, there is no way to identify the anecdote from the invention—this is where Seton’s pseudo-autobiographical method is useful. Roberts considers these issues again in the preface to *Haunters*, where he concedes that it is “not easy for any observer to be intimate” with animals that live underwater (v). He explains: “when I write of the kindreds of the deep, I am relying on the collated results of the observations of others. I have spared no pains to make these stories accord […] with the latest scientific information” (v). Thus, he makes the subtle distinction that, although he is presenting observations and anecdotal evidence woven into scientifically-informed stories, he is not *producing* science. Here again, we can perceive that he is not attempting to usurp the role of the comparative psychologist, but instead acting as a facilitator and popularizer. If we turn to Seton’s work, however, this line between presenting and producing ‘science’ is much less clear.

The first words of *Wild Animals I Have Known*—”These stories are true”—have become rather infamous, but rarely are the subsequent sentences quoted as well:

> These stories are true. Although I have left the strict line of historical truth in many places, the animals in this book were all real characters. They lived the lives I have depicted, and showed the stamp of heroism and personality more strongly by far than it has been in the power of my pen to tell. (9)

Although he claims to be reproducing the “Personal Histories” (1) of real animals, as Roberts does, he concedes that they are not necessarily true in their entirety. He specifies that he had “pieced together some of the characters” when the “fragmentary nature of the records” made it necessary (10). Unlike Roberts, however, Seton provides the vital details. For instance, Lobo lived in the Currumpaw region from 1889 to 1894, “as the ranchmen knew too well,” and “died precisely as related, on January 31, 1894” (10). Along with these dates and locations, Seton also includes details of other human observers:

> Bingo was my dog from 1882 to 1888, in spite of interruptions, caused by lengthy visits to New York, as my Manitoban friends will remember. And my own friend, the owner of Tan, will learn from these pages how his dog really died.
> The Mustang lived not far from Lobo in the early nineties. The story is given strictly as it occurred, excepting that there is a dispute as to the manner of his death. According to some testimony he broke his neck in the corral that he was first taken to. Old Turkeytrack is where he cannot be consulted to settle it.
> […]
> 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. (10-11)

He explains that Wully is a compound of two dogs: “The first part of Wully is given as it happened […] The details of the second part belong really to another” (11). Likewise, he adds: “Silverspot, Raggylug, and Vixen are founded on real characters. Though I have ascribed to them the adventures of more than one of their kind, every incident in their biographies is from life” (12). By highlighting these inventions or amalgamations, Seton enables readers to identify the fiction, thus bolstering the credibility of the ‘facts.’ Moreover, the ‘proof’ that these animals were real strengthens Seton’s authority as an accurate observer and interpreter of animal life. In other words, he has the ability to *know* animals. Likewise, it identifies Seton as a reliable collector of anecdotal evidence. One problem, however, is that this blend of anecdote and

autobiography favours animals with which humans can have sustained contact, usually captive or semi-domesticated animals. Roberts' use of single incidents or multiple but separate anecdotes maintains the wild animal's autonomy and its distance from humanity.

As an example, in *Animal Heroes*, Seton is able to provide *material evidence* of animal life histories. Although he admits that some stories in the volume are "more or less composite" (9), the least so are those of Arnaux the homing pigeon and the coursing hare (or jackrabbit) known as Warhorse. Inevitably, however, this veracity is due to their captivity and exploitation. Both are anthropocentrically defined as 'heroic' by human observers based on their ability both to survive and to continue providing a service. Seton explains that, it is "less than ten years since the 'Jack Warhorse' won his hero-crown. Thousands of 'Kaskadoans' will remember him, and by the name *Warhorse* his coursing exploits are recorded in several daily papers" (9-10) Indeed, in the story itself, he includes such reports:

> Next day there was a paragraph in all the papers: 'WONDERFUL FEAT OF A JACKRABBIT. The Little Warhorse, as he had been styled, completely skunked two of the most famous Dogs on the turf,' etc. [sic] […] It is so seldom that a Rabbit crosses the track at all, that when Jack did it six times without having to dodge, the papers took note of it, and after each meet there appeared a notice: 'The Little Warhorse crossed again today; old-timers say it shows how our Dogs are deteriorating.' (244, 246)

Similarly, Arnaux the homing pigeon sets a record—"*Two hundred and ten miles in fog over sea in four hours and forty minutes!*"—and so it is "duly inscribed in the roll of the Homing Club" (86). Moreover, after Arnaux's death, Seton specifies that the peregrine nest in which his body was found "is now to be seen in the American Museum of Natural History in New York," and he even specifies the identification numbers of several other homing pigeon "badges" that the "museum authorities" found (10). As we might expect, Seton also

narrates the discovery of the nest in the story: “And none knew the fate of the peerless Bird till deep in the dust and rubbish of that pirate-nest the avenger found, among others of its kind, a silver ring, the sacred badge of the High Homer, and read upon it the pregnant inscription: ‘ARNAUX, 25900 C.’” (104-7). This validation of the ‘heroic’ exploited animal is problematic, particularly when we consider the fact that Seton utilizes this material proof of their exploitation, not only to aid the veracity of the stories, but to construct himself as a the historian of animal lives gathering his sources. Nonetheless, fortunately both stories do include strong criticism and defamiliarization of the anthropocentric practices in question.

There are countless examples of this pseudo-autobiographical style in which Seton depicts himself gathering anecdotes and evidence, often directly from the human observers. In the story of “Johnny Bear” from *Lives of the Hunted*, Seton describes one such encounter:

> I first heard the story from three bronzed mountaineers. As they were very sensitive about having their word doubted, and very good shots with the revolver, I believed every word they told me, especially when afterward fully indorsed [sic] by the Park authorities. (*Hunted* 176-7)

Whether these meetings and conversations actually took place, they are treated in the same way as the material evidence, bolstering the reliability of both Seton and his ‘true’ stories. Of course, the strongest such support comes from Seton’s own training as an artist and naturalist. Each story is accompanied by several of his own illustrations, reinforcing his presence as an ‘eye witness’ in a way that is lacking from Roberts’ work, whose illustrations were provided by the wildlife artist, Charles Livingston Bull. This is particularly effective in “Johnny Bear,” for instance, as Seton also depicts himself taking photographs of the bears, which (the reader might assume) increases accuracy of his illustrations: “Having photographed this interesting group from my hiding-place, I thought I must get a

closer picture at any price" (171). Many stories are also accompanied by sketches of maps or animal tracks in the margins, connoting the image of Seton as a naturalist recording events and turning the volume into his field notebook. However, in no story does Seton cultivate this appearance more carefully than in "The Kangaroo Rat," also from *Hunted*.

Whilst living in the Currumpaw region, Seton discovers unfamiliar bipedal animal tracks near his home. He remarks how "delightful" it would be to imagine that they were the footprints of fairies—"Christian Anderson would have insisted on believing in it, and then made others believe it, too"—but that this would be "impossible" for Seton (238-9). In mock lamentation of his commitment to science and rationality, he declares: "long ago, when my soul came to the fork in the trail marked on the left 'To Arcadie,' on the right 'To Scientia,' I took the flinty, upland right-hand path" (239). Thus, Seton depicts himself commencing a scientific investigation to discover the source of the tracks. Eventually he captures a male kangaroo rat and excavates his burrow: "It may seem a ruthless deed, but I was so eager to know him better that I determined to open his nest to the light of day as well as keep him a prisoner for a time, to act as my professor in Natural History" (242). Seton makes a detailed study of the captive rat—"I watched, sketched, and studies him as well as I could"—as well as his burrow and habitat, and further included: a "scaled diagram of the landscape concerned, for science is measurement, and exact knowledge was what I had sought;" an investigation of its predators and survival tactics; and after hours of digging and measuring, "a map of the underground world where the Perodipus passes the daytime" (242-252). Unusually, the events of the entire story are restricted to Seton's investigation and observation of the kangaroo rat. Thus, we find here the most direct example of the blurred

distinction between wild animal stories and anecdotes of observation. If Seton's account is to be believed, the story is the anecdotal evidence of a naturalist's investigation, accompanied by measurements, sketches, and diagrams. Most interestingly, this effort to bolster his scientific credibility came *before* the start of the Nature Fakers controversy. Whether he anticipated or had already received criticisms, or merely hoped to maintain his new genre's relationship with science, Seton's motivation is unclear. It is significant, however, that the majority of the Nature Fakers controversy was dedicated to debating who had the *authority* to speak on behalf of science, rather than who wrote the most realistic stories.

Animal Psychology: Demonstrating and Speculating

Romanes, Seton and Roberts all understood animal minds to be a blend of instinct and intelligence. In the preface to *Haunters*, Roberts concludes 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" (vii). Here it is useful to recall that Romanes defined the ability to learn as the criteria of 'mind,' and the intentional application of that knowledge as 'intelligence' or 'reason.' In *Lives of the Hunted*, Seton specifies different elements of animal intelligence that echo Romanes' theory:

> A wild animal has three sources of wisdom:
> First, *the experience of its ancestors*, in the form of instinct, which is inborn learning, hammered into the race by ages of selection and tribulation. This is the most important to begin with, because it guards him from the moment he is born.
> Second, *the experience of his parents and comrades*, learned chiefly by example. This becomes most important as soon as the young can run.
> Third, *the personal experience* of the animal itself. This grows in importance as the animal ages.
> The weakness of the first is in its fixity; it cannot change to meet quickly changing conditions. The weakness of the second is the animal's inability freely to exchange ideas by language. The weakness of the third is the danger in acquiring it. But the three together are a strong arch. (284-5)

Interestingly these distinctions remain consistent across Seton's and Roberts' work. For instance, when the bear who escaped from the circus in Roberts' story faces his first winter in the wild, he does not know to hibernate. He was so young when he was captured that he had "not learned to sleep away the time of storm and famine;" now as an adult, no longer controlled by the force of instinct, "it failed him altogether" (*Watchers* 58). As such, the bear must learn from his own experiences, like an "experiment" with a poisonous toadstool that left him with "excruciating cramps" and taught him to "leave the whole race of fungi" alone (57). Seton's three stages of the learning process feature in almost every wild animal story (those without it are the short sketches of single incidents) because it demonstrates both nonhuman intelligence and the precarious nature of survival. If all animals were governed by instinct alone, the protagonists denied parental instruction—usually due to the interference of humans—would survive with ease. As such, they also reinforce the importance of knowledge exchange within nonhuman networks. Roberts' bear only eats fungi again after a female demonstrates the edible varieties for him (57). The solitary animal puts his or her survival at risk when 'experimenting' with these strategies, hence showing that nonhuman forms of communication and cooperation are an advantage to survival.

According to Romanes, the 'lowest' species capable of 'communication of ideas' are hymenoptera, for whom it must be necessary for survival in hives. Thus, all birds and mammals should also be capable of information exchange. The most unusual examples of such communication can be found in Seton's speculations around language and teaching. On the whole, he was much more willing to experiment with his representations than Roberts. Perhaps due to the difference in how they gained their knowledge of wild animals, their willingness

to play and speculate tends to vary. Roberts' might explore different situations (for instance, what happens if a semi-domesticated animal is returned to the wild?) but remains as realistic and close to the facts as possible. On the other hand, Seton's humour and playful language is often accompanied by speculations about the animal's mind and perspective. On these occasions, he often uses anthropomorphic metaphors or analogies to signal that he is in this more speculative mode. In "Raggylug," for instance, he imagines the story of the Brierpatch when the young rabbit is learning escape routes

> *Long ago the Roses used to grow on bushes that had no thorns. […] So the Brierbrush armed itself with spikes to protect its roses and declared eternal war on all creatures that climbed trees, or had horns, or hoofs, or long tails. This left the Brierpatch at peace with none but Molly Cottontail, who could not climb, was harmless, hoofless, and had scarcely any tail at all. […] Rose took the Rabbit into especial friendship, and when dangers are threatening poor Bunny he flies to the nearest Brierbrush, certain that it is ready with a million keen and poisoned daggers to defend him.* (130, emphasis original)

Such speculations about local knowledge, communication, and even myths and culture are forerunners to the more complex thought experiments that we find in the speculative zoocentric texts.

This speculation is perhaps most evident in "Silverspot" from *Wild* in which he imagines crow language and education. Throughout the story, for instance, he identifies and 'translates' the different crow calls with the accompanying musical notations. "Caw Caw" in the Key of F translates to "'All's well, come right along' as we should say" (65). He identifies the sound and meaning of ten specific calls from the "ca" for general "Danger" to the particular "Caw Caw" sound for a hawk (66-7). Playing with the language of the military, he also imagines the way that crows, as "our most intelligent birds," (63) must teach their young

> [O]ld Silverspot is an excellent teacher. Sometimes he seems to make a speech to them. What he says I cannot guess [...] Each morning there is

> a company drill, for the young ones naturally drop into two or three squads according to their age and strength. The rest of the day they forage with their parents. (79)

His anthropomorphic metaphors are inspired by the same search for analogy, similarity, and continuity that led Romanes to conclude that a bird's intelligence is equivalent to an eight month child. Indeed, Seton remarks that observing the group of crows communicate, instruct, and co-operate leads him to the conclusion that they are "a race of birds with a language and social system that is wonderfully human in many of its chief points, and in some is better carried out than our own" (65). Such statements, along with his playful speculations, drew much criticism in the Nature Fakers controversy. As I will discuss below, Burroughs, in particular, took issue with Seton's depictions of crow language and education.

Seton's anthropomorphic language aside, however, these depictions do not deviate substantially from Romanes' view of avian intelligence. Indeed, without going into unnecessary detail, we can see that Seton's and Roberts' representations do conform to Romanes' theory of animal cognitive and emotional capacities. Thus, the female ant in Roberts' "Prisoners of the Pitcher-Plant" demonstrates the curiosity, fear, and surprise that one might expect, based on Romanes' table of emotional and intellectual development:

> a little black ant was running about with the nimble curiosity of her kind […] she started to explore her new surroundings […] To her terrified amazement, it was water she fell into. […] The ant had never been in any such surroundings before, and was bewildered by the strangeness of them (85-7)

Likewise, Romanes stipulates that fish are capable of play and pleasure (an idea that remains controversial today, but is starting to be supported by research) and hence, Roberts' trout in "Master of the Golden Pond" is "playful" and experiences "enjoyment" (*Watchers* 28-9). Since Romanes attributes the

'aesthetic love of ornament' to birds, it should be entirely possible that the once-captive sparrow in Seton's "A Street Troubadour" could have different nest-building preferences than his mate. Since the only 'nest' he had known was in his cage and made of basketwork, Randy becomes obsessed with gathering twigs (113-4). His mate, on the other hand, chooses from a variety of materials she encounters, from hay, string, and ribbon, to the fallen feathers of other birds (115-8). Again, although Seton describes it in the playful language of anthropomorphism, it is a reasonable speculation to make. Romanes finds 'grief' and 'benevolence' in all mammals. Thus, the actions of Seton's wolf and Roberts' moose are not beyond the cognitive, emotional, and social complexity of Romanes' framework:

> All that day we heard him wailing as he roamed in his quest […] There was an unmistakable note of sorrow in it now. It was no longer the loud, defiant howl, but a long, plaintive wail […] At length he seemed to find the trail, and when he came to the spot where we had killed her, his heart-broken wailing was piteous to hear. It was sadder than I could possibly have believed. […] He seemed to know exactly what had taken place, for her blood had stained the place of her death. (*Known* 46-7)

> Dropping awkwardly upon her knees in the snowy bushes, with loud, blowing breaths, she reached down her head to nose and comfort him with her sensitive muzzle. The calf leaned up close as possible to her caresses. Under their tenderness the tremblings of his gaunt, pathetic knees presently ceased. And in this position the two remained almost motionless for an hour, under the white, unfriendly moon. (*Kindred* 100-1)

The Nature Fakers Controversy

When introducing Seton's work at the beginning of his article, Burroughs amends the title of *Wild Animals I Have Known* to "Wild Animals I ALONE Have Known" in order to "correspond with the facts" (129). He goes on to declare that: "Such dogs, wolves, foxes, rabbits, mustangs, crows as he has known, it is safe to say, no other person in the world has ever known. Fact and fiction are so

deftly blended in his work that only a real woodsman can separate them" (129). Again, it is noteworthy that Burroughs repeats that only a *real* woodsman can recognize Seton's deception. Simultaneously, he validates the knowledge of the non-scientific expert, excludes the public from the category of 'real' woodsmen, and reasserts his own authority to identify both 'sham' naturalists and 'sham' natural history. He implies, moreover, that any defence of Seton's work would indicate an inability to distinguish between fact and fiction. Of course, all of these qualifications are necessary because Burroughs cannot dismiss Seton's animal protagonists in the same way as Roberts'. Seton writes with his own authority—he is not 'just' a writer like Roberts—and so his claims of truth are more problematic. For instance, when dismissing Roberts' supposedly anthropomorphic representations, Burroughs almost enters into a discussion about animal psychology. He concedes that it is "mainly guesswork how far our psychology applies to the lower animals," yet also asserts that there can be "no doubt" that animals "experience many of our emotions," but there is "grave doubt" about whether "they have intellectual and reasoning processes like our own, except in a very rudimentary form" (131). He acknowledges the difficulties and ambiguities of studying animal minds, yet is compelled to maintain the absolute terms of the debate. Hence he declares: "I need not go into that vexed subject here" (131). Burroughs evades the rhetorical quandary by emphasizing the fanciful anthropomorphism of Roberts' work. He "need not" enter into a discussion of animal psychology because neither Roberts' animal characters nor his authority justify it. As we will see, however, it is a different case for Seton.

In the January 1899 edition of the journal *Science*, there is a review of *Wild Animals I Have Known*, which opens: "Rarely are the qualities of naturalist,

writer and artist combined in one person, but Mr. Ernest Thompson Seton has won distinction in all three roles" (T.S.P, 26-7). The reviewer, identified only as "T.S.P.," continues:

> As a naturalist he has enjoyed opportunities for study and observation both in Canada and the United States, chiefly in Ontario, Manitoba and New Mexico. As a writer he is known as the author of 'Birds of Manitoba,' 'Mammals of Manitoba,' and numerous articles contributed to magazines and scientific journals. As an artist he is perhaps still more widely known through his 'Art of Taxidermy,' and work in illustrating several popular book on natural history, more especially on birds. (27)

As one might expect, from the tone of this opening, the review is a highly favourable one. T.S.P. describes the book as "original in conception and execution," "entertaining and instructive," and with "many things of interest" for the "student of natural history" (27). The reviewer recognizes that Seton "describes his friends from what might be termed the human standpoint, *i.e.*, not as mere objects, but as individuals endowed with personality and reason," but there is no mention of anthropomorphism or sentimentality here (27). Again, the tone indicates that the reviewer approves. S/he explains that the book "is not intended" to be "a scientific treatise on mammals" and, hence, is not concerned by Seton's assertions of truth:

> The reader is assured that the stories are true, but this does not necessarily imply that every detail was based on actual observation. In fact, it would be practically impossible to observe some of the scenes depicted in the biographies [...] In describing the habits of a particular animal there is little more than a skeleton of fact on which to build. The record is so fragmentary that an author is compelled to fill in the gaps from his general knowledge of the species and to represent the characters as he conceives them to be. Such descriptions are of necessity composite and subject to personal equation and imagination. (27)

We can see in this response the grounds for Roberts' belief that wild animal story could contribute to the study of animal psychology. The reviewer sees the book's "insight into the habits and daily lives" as a valuable departure "from the beaten path of natural history," (27) yet also understands the context of these

representations and that Seton's claims of 'truth' cannot be taken entirely literally. To those who only know of Seton as a 'Nature Faker' and 'sham' naturalist, this approval from a scientific journal might seem incongruous. At this time, however, the controversy had not started and Seton was simply a naturalist, writer, and artist who had produced a book of animal stories (with accompanying illustrations) based on some of his observations. Favourable responses to Seton's work such as this challenge the absolute terms of Burroughs' criticisms and also indicate the perceived threat that Seton posed to the eminent naturalist's authority.

Thus, when criticizing *Wild Animals I Have Known*, Burroughs could not just dismiss Seton's animal protagonists as anthropomorphic, as he had done with *Kindred of the Wild*. Seton claimed that they were *real* and that he had *known* them. As he was, in effect, presenting his stories as anecdotal evidence, Burroughs challenged Seton's authority as a naturalist and the validity of his observations and interpretations. He began by undermining Seton's claim of 'truth':

> Mr. Thompson Seton says in capital letters that his stories are true, and it is this emphatic assertion that makes the judicious grieve. True as romance, true in their artistic effects, true in their power to entertain the young reader, they certainly are but true as natural history they as certainly are not. (132)

Here, Burroughs tries to depict Seton not as a naturalist, but as an author of fiction (like Roberts) capable only of romance and entertainment. Again, however, Seton's credentials make such a portrayal difficult, and so Burroughs attacks them directly:

> Are we to believe that Mr. Thompson Seton, *in his few years of roaming* the West, has penetrated father into the secrets of animal life than *all the observers who have gone before him?* There are no stories of animal intelligence and cunning on record, that I am aware of, that match his. (132, emphasis added).

Of course, this was not the case. As I have demonstrated, Seton's representations are in accordance with Romanes' theory of animal intelligence. This was based on the vast number of anecdotes and observations that both he and Darwin had collected—in other words, what we might call "stories of animal intelligence [...] on record." Interestingly, Burroughs goes on to list "expert students and observers," including Darwin, who "have nothing to report that comes close to what appear to be Mr. Thompson Seton's daily experiences" (132). Although he calls upon these important names from science, natural history, and nature writing (including Gilbert White, John Muir, and Henry David Thoreau for instance), it is clear that Burroughs implicitly includes himself in this collection of "all the observers that have gone before" Seton. Once more, Burroughs' need to reassert his authority is clear. He cannot simply condemn Seton for overstepping the boundaries of the author, because he has already established himself as an artist and a naturalist. Hence, Burroughs must construct him as a profiteering 'sham' naturalist instead.

Yet, we find that the majority of Burroughs' criticisms focus not on fundamental errors in Seton's natural history, but his representations of animal intelligence—unique survival strategies developed by particular individuals, observations of unusual problem-solving, parental instruction, and communication (132-8). As such, he isolates the story of "Silverspot" in particular: "how much of the real natural history of the crow is here? According to my own observations of more than half a century, there is very little" (133). He asserts that "they do not drill their young" and "have no calls that […] answer to our words, 'Mount,' 'Bunch,' 'Scatter,' 'Descend,' 'Form line,' 'Forage,'—on these and other points my observations differ radically from Mr. Thompson

Seton's" (133-4). Unsurprisingly, he argues for the dominance of instinct over intelligence or instruction:

> Nature has instilled into them all the fear of their enemies and equipped them with different means in different degrees to escape them […] The young of all the wild creatures do instinctively what their parents do and did. They do not have to be taught; they are taught by nature from the start. (136-7)

Despite his omission of contemporary debates in animal psychology, it is clear that Burroughs' perception of animal cognition is aligned with Morgan and the behaviourists. Just as we can detect the traces of Darwin and Romanes' work in the animal protagonists of Seton and Roberts, we can also recognize the scientific discourses that influenced their accusers. There is a rigid, mechanomorphism to this perception of instinct that does not allow for individual flexibility or adaptability. Yet at the same time, we find it treated as an almost supernatural ability, entirely unique to animals, and used to both encompass and to explain a vast range of activities and behaviours. Of course, the supremacy of anthropocentrism will always lend greater weight to ideas that validate the human intelligence and uniqueness, and undermine it in nonhuman beings. For instance, it is worth noting that reductive, mechanomorphism is deemed to be a minor error compared to anthropomorphism. As such, Burroughs' perception of Seton's over-estimation of crow intelligence seems to justify *reductio ad absurdum*. He declares that, "crows do not train their young. They have no fortresses, or schools, or colleges, or examining boards, or diplomas," and continues with such examples at length (136). So once more, rather than acknowledging competing discourses, Burroughs labels Seton's representation of crows as false, insists upon the controlling force of instinct, and ridicules him at length.

In the force of the criticisms and mockery that Burroughs and Roosevelt deliver, we can detect their reliance on the associations between anthropomorphism, sentimentality, effeminacy, childishness, ignorance, amateurism, and the perceived weakness of the urban middle-classes. Given his cultivated public image of active, white American masculinity, it is unsurprising that Roosevelt is particularly reliant on these discourses. In 1907, he dealt what Lutts describes as the "killing blow" of the Nature Fakers controversy (*Wild Animal Story* 127). He had been involved from the start, but had refrained from any direct interventions into the debate. Roosevelt phrased his article in fairly general terms, but his meaning was clear: "real outdoor naturalists, real observers of nature […] naturally felt a half-indignant and half-amused contempt both for the men who invented the preposterous fiction about wild animals, and for the credulous stay-at-home people who accepted such fiction as fact" (192). Again, we find the debate framed in terms of truth and falsehoods, real naturalists and gullible readers, rather than competing movements in animal psychology. He continues:

> The modern 'nature faker' is of course an object of derision to every scientist worthy of the name, to every real lover of the wilderness, to every faunal naturalist, to every true hunter or nature lover. But it is evident that he completely deceives many good people who are wholly ignorant of wild life. (193)

We can recognize here an extension of Burroughs' implication that to believe Seton's depictions of animal intelligence was to be unable to distinguish between fact and fiction. Likewise, considering the history of the title, it is interesting to note Roosevelt's appropriation of 'scientist.' We can see that by 1907 the word had taken on its modern connotations of authority, objectivity, rationality, and prudent scepticism—in other words, the antithesis of sentimental or childish anthropomorphism. There is a certain irony, however, that both

Burroughs and Roosevelt co-opt ‘scientist’ and even the names of particular scientists (as Burroughs had done, Roosevelt also provides a list) without any acknowledgement of the scientific discourses and debates relevant to the controversy. Instead, Roosevelt pursues the anthropocentric prejudice against belief in animal intelligence further by relying on stereotypes of rural and Native peoples:

> Sometimes he draws on his own imagination for his fictions; sometimes he gets them secondhand from irresponsible guides or trappers or Indians […] As for Indians, they live in a world of mysticism, and they often ascribe supernatural traits to the animals they know, just as the men of the Middle Ages, with the almost same childlike faith, credited the marvels told of the unicorn, the basilisk, the roc, and the cockatrice. (193-4)

Playing on a relationship between scientific rationality and Eurocentric prejudices, Roosevelt adds connotations of primitivism and the noble savage to the traits associated with anthropomorphism. It is unsurprising that this article ended the controversy and permanently branded Seton and Roberts as ‘nature fakers.’ When we consider that the President of the United States was making such accusations to support one of the best-known nature writers of the age, it is small wonder that the wild animal story has been remembered as an ‘embarrassment’ to Canadian literature. As I have demonstrated, the label ‘nature faker’ had more to do with bolstering the authority of the accusers, than any intentional or unthinking deception from the accused.

Of course, Roosevelt’s presidential authority is not the only reason that ‘nature fakers’ lost the debate; I contend that the emergence of behaviourism is an extremely influential factor. The early years of the twentieth century were a pivotal moment both for the scientific study of animal minds and for the rise of modern agriculture. Burroughs, Roosevelt, and the others picked the ‘winning side.’ In other words, I suggest that they were so successful because Morgan's

canon was starting to dominate interpretations of animal cognition. Behaviourism remained dominant, particularly in North America, for most of the century, and its legacy still inhibits and obstructs cognitive ethology today. Anthropomorphism and mechanomorphism can be considered as equally erroneous, with the former carrying a far greater anxiety for scientists, even today.

As I will demonstrate in the subsequent chapters of this thesis, much of Seton's and Roberts' representations have since been validated by recent cognitive ethology research. Burroughs' and Roosevelt's criticisms, therefore, cannot be understood in terms of 'truth' or 'accuracy,' 'natural history' or 'nature faking.' In other words, the category of 'anthropomorphism' is not fixed—it is culturally and historically determined. I believe that by investigating these scientific contexts in depth, it becomes clear that the controversy was motivated by the changing state of animal psychology at the time. If Romanes' approach had become dominant, it is possible that the debate would have turned out quite differently—or, perhaps, never happened at all. Indeed it is the twenty-first-century prominence of cognitive ethology that leads me to believe the time is right for their re-evaluation. It may be possible, at last, for them to perform the scientific engagement they intended. Similarly, the rise of ecocriticism and literary animal studies indicates the potential formation of a nature-endorsing, anti-anthropocentric literary canon. As my re-interpretation and re-evaluation of the wild animal story indicates, anyone seeking robust, zoocentric representations would do well to look to the work of Seton and Roberts.

CHAPTER FIVE

REALISTIC REPRESENTATIONS: RODERICK HAIG-BROWN'S *RETURN TO THE RIVER*, FRED BODSWORTH'S *LAST OF THE CURLEWS*, AND R.D. LAWRENCE'S *THE WHITE PUMA*

Introduction

The three texts that form the focus of this chapter have been chosen for their close resemblance to Seton's and Roberts' original genre. All possess the wild animal story characteristics that I outlined in Chapter Three, although I will resist the temptation to demonstrate, laboriously, the ways in which each text satisfies my criteria. My separate discussion of each book will form an individual, close analysis from which I will draw attention to certain similarities or features. If I do not discuss a genre characteristic, its existence can usually be taken for granted and ought to be apparent in my discussion. To simply produce a list of the ways in which each text justifies my belief in Seton's and Roberts' influence would leave little room for engagement with the texts on an individual basis. Within the chapter, it is useful to compare the differences between the mid- and late-twentieth-century texts. The rise and fall of behaviourism is particularly apparent, as is the spread of ecological concern. In these texts the animal protagonist is not an isolated individual but part of an endangered population. Each author draws comparisons between the suffering individual and the suffering species.

The similarities between these texts and the original wild animal stories may also demonstrate the direct influence of the Nature Fakers controversy. Whether stated or implied during discussions of anthropomorphism and sentimentality, the legacy of the debate can be detected with ease. As such,

these authors of realistic texts use careful strategies to avoid association with 'nature faking.' In the mid-century texts, this results in a curious tension between committed, zoocentric representations and reductive, objectifying language. I argue that this is due to the dominance of the advocates of behaviourism in mainstream science. Indeed, merely tracking the use of the word 'instinct' across these texts can indicate its influence. Where possible, I have also included review of the texts that were published in scientific journals. These provide an effective gauge for perceptions of the texts' 'anthropomorphism' or 'accuracy,' as well as measuring the success of the author's attempts to engage with science.

Return to the River: A Story of the Chinook Run

In the March 1942 edition of *Copeia* (the journal of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists) Willis H. Rich's review of *Return to the River* (1941) describes it as "the sort of hybrid that ought to be sterile" (59). As we might expect, the 'hybridity' he describes is the wild animal story's characteristic blend of science and literature. Indeed, the legacies of both the genre and the controversy are unmistakeable in Rich's words:

> [Haig-Brown] writes too biologically for the layman and too much in the grand manner of the nature-faker for the biologist. His salmon are full of urges and repressions and emotions but they live in a world peopled with Hydropsyche, Callibeatis, euphausids and chironomids. Constitutionally your reviewer objects to that sort of thing. (59)

With obvious reluctance, however, Rich admits that *Return* is not "sterile" at all. His "initial prejudice was completely broken down" by the "success of the author's attempt to give the 'feel' of life within the waters" (59). Although such an "interpretation" can "only be anthropomorphic," Rich finds it "pleasing" and "entirely legitimate" nonetheless (59). He also praises the "sound" biology and

the “interestingly presented” information on the Columbia River Chinook salmon “conservation program” and “research work” (59). As indicated by Rich’s language, *Return to the River* forms a ‘bridge’ between Seton’s and Roberts’ stories and the six twentieth-century wild animal narratives. I argue that the work of Roderick Haig-Brown provides solid evidence that both the wild animal story and Nature Fakers controversy directly influenced realistic animal representations in subsequent Canadian literature.

In 1931 Haig-Brown published his first salmon book, *Silver: The Life of an Atlantic Salmon*. It is dedicated to “Master Dickie P.” and, as the author’s note suggests, originated as a bedtime story (5). The resemblance to some of Seton’s and Roberts’ wild animal stories is extremely strong. Haig-Brown uses the biographical structure and constructs his protagonist as an ‘animal hero,’ even indulging in playfully grandiose titles: “He was Silver, King of the River, mightiest of the salmon” (87). Indeed, like Seton he also attempts to explain the salmon’s behaviour through anthropocentric metaphors: the “song” of the river and the “wife” of the salmon (22, 75). Thus, it is clear that as a children’s book *Silver* educates and entertains, but lacks the scientific and ethical engagement of the wild animal story. Interestingly, in an interview with Ernest Schweibert in 1976 (only a few months before Haig-Brown’s death), he explains: “*I wasn’t too happy with my story of the Atlantic salmon*” (xi, emphasis original). The legacies of both Seton and the controversy are prominent in their discussion:

> *Well*, he chose his words thoughtfully, *I wanted to write about animals without faking anything—without any of the anthropomorphic tricks that portray animals made to think and feel like people.*
> *Bambi books?* I laughed.
> *Bambi is not alone,* Haig-Brown agreed. *There’s the Fortescue books about red stags, and a lot of Ernest Thompson Seton—there’s been plenty of nature faking* (xi, emphasis original).

It is worth observing that, as I have discussed elsewhere, only Seton's name appears in connection to the controversy. Apparently Long, London, and Roberts have been forgotten. This dismissal of Seton provides a useful distinction, however. As Haig-Brown' attitude indicates, although an author may write in the style of the wild animal story, there is no guarantee that they do so in *support* of Seton and Roberts. Authors of the twentieth-century zoocentric texts may be writing with the same sense of *opposition* as the 'failure of knowing' writers such as Marian Engel.

Haig-Brown's dissatisfaction that he did not sufficiently distance himself from Seton (or the association with nature faking and anthropomorphism) provides valuable insights into his motivations for writing *Return*. As Schweibert's interview explains: "worried that armchair observers might challenge his knowledge of salmon and their ecology," Haig-Brown "stopped working on *Return to the River* to write another book about fish and fishing on the Pacific Coast, seeking to establish his expertise beyond question" (xii). As indicated by the interview, the publication of *The Western Angler* (1939) seems to have been a calculated move:

> *You mean it was written,* I interrupted him incredulously, *just to make future book critics accept your story about salmon?*
> *That's about right*, he laughed softly.
> *But it's still the standard work on the fish and fishing techniques and fisheries of the entire Pacific Northwest.*
> *Perhaps it is*, he smiled. (xii, emphasis original)

In this strategy we can perceive some of the self-consciousness of Seton and Roberts—the writer's need to justify their credentials and avoid the accusation of 'nature faker.' Indeed a certain awkwardness is apparent in all three of the mid-century zoocentric writers. Evidently the dominance of behaviourism necessitated some caution from those who wished to represent the inner lives of animals. Indeed, Haig-Brown also employs techniques to avoid making any

unfounded claims or assertions of ‘fact’ on behalf of his salmon. Rather than declaring the cognitive, emotional, or social abilities of salmon, he explores their possibilities through conversations between human characters. Likewise, he engages with contemporary debates around “Home Stream Theory” (Rich 59) by constructing his narrative as an experiment on that hypothesis. Hence, I argue that although Haig-Brown consciously established his legitimacy to write on behalf of salmon, he defers his own authority within the text.

Interestingly, Rich does not dismiss Haig-Brown’s attempts to engage with home stream debates in his review; instead, he seems enthusiastic:

> But the author disappointed us in the end—very, very sadly. For nigh onto 200 pages we anticipated the successful completion of the *one experiment that will satisfy my friend A.G. Huntsman on the validity of Home Stream Theory*—and this author took us right up to the very last page only to fail in the end. Never shall I forgive him because I fear that *never again will that crucial experiment be so close to consummation*. (59, emphasis added)

As one might expect, home stream theory is the hypothesis that salmon return to the waters of their birth to spawn. Rich explains his disagreement with Huntsman in an article for the journal *Science* published in 1937:

> He states, in effect, that it is necessary to prove ‘for the individual fish’ not only that it has returned to its home stream, but that it has been far from the ‘zone of river influence’ of that stream. […] So far as I can see such rigid observational proof could only be provided by marking young fish in their ‘natal river,’ recapturing them in the sea at a point sufficiently distant to satisfy every one that the fish was beyond the ‘zone of river influence’ tagging or marking them at the point and again releasing and, finally, to recapture them at a second time in their ‘natal river.’ Needless to say, it will be some time before such proof will be accumulated. (478)

Rather remarkably, using the observations and interventions of two human characters, Haig-Brown does indeed construct his narrative as a home stream theory experiment. The biographical structure enables the narrative to follow the protagonist, Spring, through her migration. Haig-Brown even uses the methodology Rich proposes, by using one of the humans to ‘tag’ Spring’s

adipose fin. From the records, it is difficult to ascertain whether Haig-Brown had direct contact with either Rich or Huntsman but it is clear that he was responding to contemporary debates within salmon behaviour research. However, the fact that Haig-Brown does not provide any finite conclusion to his 'experiment' (to the displeasure of Rich) demonstrates his hesitancy to assert his own authority within this field.

The conversations between Senator Evans, an interested amateur, and Don Gunner, a biologist, explore contemporary scientific debates. Yet they also reveal the continued anxiety of anthropomorphism. When Evans watches a dying female remaining with her eggs after she has finished spawning, he wonders if she is being held by "nearly a maternal urge to protect" (6-7). Yet even the possibility of anthropomorphism is an anxiety and he chastises himself: "He was afraid of his love of the fish, afraid of reading things that were not really there" (7). Indeed, he calls himself an "[i]ncorrigible old sentimentalist," and when Gunner arrives, he exclaims "I've been watching and praying for you, Don. You're just in time to save me from my romantic self" (7). It is clear that the influence of behaviourism reinforces this stigma of anthropomorphism. Evans is even hesitant to ask about the possibility of "maternal instinct," and he does so "almost timidly," afraid of the "cold-blooded […] rationalizations" of science (8). His language implies simple, automatic responses—"urge," "instinct"—yet even this seems to suggest the romance of the "sentimentalist" (7-8). Indeed, the biologist seems wary of even these words:

> "Maybe," he said. "We'd have to be very cautious and call it 'evidence of post-spawning parental care' or something of that sort. My best guess would be that it is a persistence of whatever stimulation it is that produces the egg-laying and redd-making activities. (8)

It is clear to see that this guarded hesitancy is a consequence of both avoiding the criticism of behaviourists and the consequences of the Nature Fakers controversy. In the original wild animal stories and the late twentieth-century texts, such as R.D. Lawrence's *The White Puma* (1990), we find much more confident representations of nonhuman cognitive, emotional, and social complexity. Authors, Fred Bodsworth and Haig-Brown, who wrote at the height of behaviourism's influence, however, seem highly conscious of anthropomorphism. Whereas the other writers disparage the concept of 'instinct,' these two use it as protection against accusations of nature faking.

We can also detect the impact of the controversy in Haig-Brown's depictions of 'expertise' and 'authority.' As an amateur, Evans defers to the biologist and seeks validation. Significantly, though, this scientist spends more time "beside the river" than in the "laboratory—white-coated, with notebooks, microscopes" (7). As indicated by his name, Don Gunner, is the masculine, down-to-earth, 'every man' biologist. He is thoughtful but plain-speaking, disassociated from the effeminate lab scientist who speaks in jargon and abstractions. Thus, he is the embodiment of *both* the "scientist *worthy* of the name" and the "*real* outdoor naturalist" evoked in Theodore Roosevelt's "Nature Fakers" article (192-3, emphasis added). Indeed, these are the very figures to whom, as Roosevelt asserts, the "modern 'nature faker' is […] an object of derision" (193). As such, it is through the voice of such an expert that Haig-Brown reminds readers that the sciences are not static or unchanging: "You know, there's often a lot in ideas like that. But they aren't easy to prove. Nothing about fish is easy to prove when you come right down to it. Look how many 'proven' things have been disproved in this century" (9). In this careful, strategic manner, Haig-Brown opens up a small space of the 'unknown' in which the

author might speculate. Moreover, as indicated by Rich's articles, home stream theory is just such an idea "about fish" that is *not* "easy to prove." Thus, in order to know the mysteries of the salmon's life and migration, we must follow Spring where the scientist cannot.

Wild animal migrations are inherently difficult to observe; even more so for aquatic species. It is evidently in recognition of this challenge to knowing *anything* about the lives of salmon that Rich validates Haig-Brown's 'experiment' as worthwhile. Through the human characters and their experiment, however, we can detect the problematic nature of this desire to *know* the animal. Observing young salmon (the offspring of the dying female he had watched previously), Evans becomes preoccupied with the mystery of their migratory journey: "[He] looked hard at the little fish in the eddy. He was thinking of the big female, wondering if any of them might have come from her eggs. He felt that he wanted to know more about them, if possible somehow make them his *own*" (26, emphasis added). To achieve this 'ownership,' Evans decides to "mark" some of the fish (26). He asks Don for advice and his reply is disturbingly blunt: "Use a good sharp pair of nail clippers and take the adipose fin and the left ventral right off at the base. That's the combination they are using for this stream in this year's experiment" (26). With an anthropocentric disregard for the maimed individuals, the only concerns are whether this combination of 'marking' will get confused with those of the other experiments. Evans expresses no anxiety about the possibility that this could hurt or harm the fish. Indeed, Haig-Brown seems reluctant to describe the potentially painful or distressing experiences of his salmon protagonist. In instances of a human inflicting harm on a fish, Haig-Brown's narrative remains with the *human* perspective. For instance, when Spring is 'marked' it is from Evans' point of

view: “he fumbled in his pocket and brought out a small pair of clippers […] Holding her firmly, but with a slow, almost an awed gentleness, he clipped off the little fatty fin above her tail, turned her in his hand, and clipped away he left ventral” (33). Haig-Brown emphasizes the care and caution with which Evans mutilates the young fish, rather than exploring the possibility of her pain. Indeed, it is only when the ordeal is over that the narration returns to Spring’s perspective: “her panic returned and she swam off, a little queerly, towards the bottom. She found a place between two stones […] and lay there, still as a stick, her head in the shade” (33).

The question of whether fish feel pain remains a surprisingly contentious issue. Detection of painful stimuli requires “nociceptors,” which are present in birds, mammals, amphibians, and invertebrates such as leeches and sea slugs (Morell 68). Nociceptors can be found in fish around their upper and lower lips, chin, gills, and eyes (68). Recent studies into the responses of rainbow trout to painful stimuli (an injection of bee venom or acetic acid into their lips) have found:

> The trout rocked back and forth, something that primates do when they are distressed. Those injected with acid rubbed their lips on the gravel and against the sides of the tank […] Tellingly, for three hours afterward, the injected fish didn’t touch a morsel of food. (68)

For two or three days after her fins have been clipped, “Spring’s movements” are “awkward and uncertain” and she “scarcely” feeds at all (*Return* 33). Although she makes “small tentative movements from her hiding place,” she remains hidden until the fourth day (33). The change in her behaviour indicates distress and an emotional response to the pain she suffered. Again, however, Haig-Brown is strategically vague here. In the description of the long-term effect, he is simultaneously reductive and empathetic:

> The loss of her adipose fin affected her not at all—the little fin was nothing more than a degenerate survival from some earlier state of evolution and served no useful purpose. But she had to readjust her whole body to the loss of the one ventral fin, and the short journey from the old Senator's hand to the shelter of the rocks at the bottom had been enough to destroy her *easy confidence* in her power of movement through the water. The exact balance that held her evenly poised in the water at all times was destroyed; and her power of quick and certain movement up or down was impaired. (34, emphasis added)

Whilst unwilling to speculate on her pain, Haig-Brown does imagine that she feels "confidence." Likewise, although he refuses to enter her perspective whilst in the hands of a human, Haig-Brown is strikingly zoocentric when he considers the impact on her movements and self-assurance in her environment. Again, I attribute this to the influence of the proponents of behaviourism as we will find similar contradictory representations in Bodsworth's *Last of the Curlews*.

Moreover Haig-Brown's reluctance to prioritize the salmon's perspective when she is in pain illustrates some of the factors inhibiting our ability to empathize with fish. It is particularly difficult for us to engage with non-mammalian individuals because we cannot read emotions or expressions in such 'alien' faces. As Balcombe explains in *The Exultant Ark*:

> Because fishes don't make facial expressions, because they don't scream or shout, many people continue to deny that they are capable of pain or suffering. But fishes manifest their fear and pain in other ways, including the release of fear and pain chemicals. Fishes have long-term memories, they recognize familiar individuals and have social preferences, they even cooperate, and they have disputes and then reconcile. Rapidly mounting scientific evidence shows them to be sentient like other vertebrates. (190)

The difficulty we experience in recognizing this sentience is exacerbated by a number of factors: the 'alterity' of a fish's underwater existence; the common perception of their face as 'ugly' (barring those few exceptions whose bright, tropical colouring combines with high levels of neoteny, like clownflish, the species chosen for the protagonist of *Finding Nemo*); the fact that we most often see them in large, apparently homogeneous groups, which makes it easy

to dismiss *individuals* as simply one *object* among many. Evans' awareness that he cannot distinguish between individual salmon leads him to impose an anthropocentric mark that he can interpret. His act signifies her as an *individual* but also as an *object* without sensation or autonomy over its own body. She is separate and independent from humans yet somehow *owned* as part of his 'experiment.'

Despite the violence of Evans' act—both the physical mutilation and the desire to 'own' a wild animal—it is helpful for our understanding of empathy in a number of ways. Spring is not an 'animal hero,' she is 'average' and 'ordinary.' Our concern for her is arbitrary. She is simply one of the fish Evans happens to catch and mark. She is the one whose journey we follow. This suggests, then, that there is nothing extraordinary about her to 'justify' our empathy. If we recall Roberts' story, "Little Wolf of the Air," we find a similar emphasis on biography in the contextualization of a wild animal. In common with the human who watches the dragonfly, we (and Evans) observe Spring and learn something of her history. There is no reason, therefore, why we cannot extend the same concern to any of the 'unknown' fish around her. Just as in Roberts' story, the human character is unaware of the arbitrary nature of this concern; however when Spring is threatened by a looming heron, Evans intervenes:

> she had a thousand such dangers to face before she could return to the pool to spawn. She would survive or not survive and to give her life once might be little enough gain. It was interesting to watch, to have followed it thorough its series of chances […] *Yet Spring was a special fish, not merely one that he had marked but one that he had watched many times since marking*. She was completely deceived, utterly unconscious of the danger. (37, emphasis added)

Evans' sense of ownership, his concern for this "special fish" is arbitrary, but (most importantly) it is not recognized as such. Now that he has marked her, and knows her, his moral concern has been roused. The urge to protect is hard

to resist. Yet in the meantime, he will no doubt continue to catch other unmarked, non-special fish without concern for their lives and its "series of chances." The arbitrary nature of human concern is at the core of our relationship with nonhuman beings. Our fickle sympathy for one animal over another is usually predicated on our ability to sense their *biography* in order to perceive their *individuality.*

Yet the 'ordinary' nature of Spring is crucial for Haig-Brown's efforts to advocate on behalf of all salmon of the Columbia river system. In the foreword written in 1974, he reflects:

> The lives and deaths of Spring and the other chinook salmon described in this book occurred more than thirty year ago, in the early stages of the orgy of dam-building that transformed the Columbia from a magnificent river to a series of freshwater impoundments. There never has been another such river on the face of the earth; there never will be again until all the dams have rotted out and washed away and some thousands of years of healing time has passed—perhaps not then. (iv)

Here, then, we encounter the first of the overt, directed conservation messages of the twentieth-century texts. Rather than a general plea against hunting or abuse, Haig-Brown writes in response to a *specific threat*. This indicates both the changing focus of the genre and the steady public recognition of environmental degradation. Now the wild animal story offers advocacy on behalf of the suffering individual *and* the suffering species:

> The Columbia system was at the very heart of the chinook salmon's range and so favourable to the species that chinooks ran to it every month of the year […] There was nothing random or capricious about these runs; each was a sub-race precisely adapted to the conditions of its own watershed […] Many, very many, of these stocks have been wiped out and it is unlikely they can ever be replaced. Dams have blocked off more than 60 percent of the Columbia's spawning areas; pathetic remnants of the runs still struggle up past some of the dams and into the distant headwaters (iv).

He explains that, for the remaining individuals, migration delays at the dams "take their toll," and young fish are "destroyed in the turbines and spillways and

by increased numbers of predators in the impoundments" (iv). There are also "heavy losses" in the "nitrogen-saturated waters below the dams" (iv).

I suggest that, uniquely, Haig-Brown's conservation message hinges on the idea of the salmon's *quality of life*. As a wild animal that can also be farmed, salmon will not become truly endangered whilst humans still have an appetite for them. Again, he uses Evans as a mouthpiece. This time he reflects on the reasons why the continued survival of salmon in the wild is so important:

> In a way it didn't really matter; there was the big flat-bottomed scow tied to the far bank and they would come and gather the fish into that, take them up to the ponds, hold them to ripeness and strip the eggs from them. The result probably wouldn't be much less good than natural spawning and it might be better. He thought of the cost and weighed it against the acres of good spawning upstream, but he knew that was not what disturbed him […] The salmon were the river, they were the country, of and helping to make it. In words, he told himself, it becomes meaningless, merely sentimental. *But you can feel it, know that this is right, the other wrong. The river is there for their use, they are its yield, growing from it, growing on it, giving themselves back to it in a cycle* no mere human farming has yet been able to match. (105-6, emphasis added)

Although Evans struggles to verbalize why life in the wild is "right" and the other is "wrong" (106), I would argue that Haig-Brown demonstrates the *inherent value* of the salmon's quality of life. When Spring begins her migration, he sets up a historical juxtaposition that continues throughout the narrative: "But the three hundred mile way they had to follow to the sea was not the clear, clean way of their ancestors. There were poisons in it and obstructions across it and false ways leading from it" (40). The qualitative comparison emphasizes the *experiences* and *wellbeing* of the migrating salmon:

> Douglas firs stood tall and straight on the hills above the river […] all the way from the mouth of the Willamette to Cape Disappointment. The cities were not cities then, the Hume canneries were not built, there were no irrigation ditches to trap downstream migrants, no haphazardly constructed damns to shut off thousands of acres of spawning grounds from ascending fish, no factories to foul the water with their wastes. (50)

He also emphasizes both the size and diversity of the salmon population whose journey "made a mark that no one could miss, even in that wide, full-flowing river […] the splashings of Spring's ancestors whitened the broad river from shore to shore" (50). Whereas, after his protagonist has struggled through polluted water with little food, her stomach "empty," and her gills "clogged and hot," much of her "fine energy" has been spent (49). As Haig-Brown explains, "she had barely won through a journey that had been *glad* and *easy* for her ancestors, a *joyous* prelude to the fullness and strength of the sea" (49, emphasis added).

In light of his hesitancy to depict the pain of his salmon, it is curious that Haig-Brown imagines Spring's *pleasurable* experiences with such richness. Indeed, he produces the most detailed, zoocentric description of nonhuman pleasure encountered in any of the core texts that I discuss in this thesis. Therefore, I quote him at length:

> There had been, all through her life, strong physical satisfactions. There had been strong pleasure in feeding to repletion in the Canyon Pool, stronger pleasure of feeding near Astoria and among the massed Euphausids of the oceans, a vibrant ecstasy in driving time after time upon the schools of silver herrings. There had been the pleasure in the drive of her muscles through the water, in the free curved leaping that eased the irritation of the sea-lice that held their sucking grip on the tenderest part of her belly, perhaps even a pleasure of speed and strength in the terror of flight from her enemies. There was pleasure, or at least an ease of security, in the closeness of other salmon about her, and there had been an ease in the response to condition within her and around her that led her down her rivers to the sea. But none of these had been strong as the thing that ruled her now. It turned her from feeding, huddled her on the bottom, then flowed into her, stirred her, at once drove her and drew her in sudden change of current or light. In responding there was pleasure, pleasure of release, delight in the use of her strong body to stem the force of water against her, pleasure in the gradual shifting of pressures and changing of shapes within her body cavity. (89)

Haig-Brown's speculation combines both familiar and unfamiliar sources of pleasure: food, companionship, and exhilarating physical activity, as well as the

different sensations of moving water and the less definable pleasure that draws her to the spawning grounds. Although the existence of nonhuman pleasure remains a controversial topic, as Balcombe argues (and as these experiences indicate) "pleasure is adaptive" (6). He explains:

> Pleasure […] is nature's way of improving survival and reproductive output. Pleasure evolves in sentient organisms as a consequence of behaviours (e.g., feeding, mating) that generate 'good' outcomes (e.g., sustenance, offspring) and/or as a motivation to engage in these behaviours based on past rewarding experience. (6)

Thus, despite his hesitancy with some aspects of nonhuman representation, Haig-Brown speculates on the intrinsic role of pleasure in animal life. Indeed, rather than relying on instinct to explain the unknown aspects of migration, he imagines a zoocentric alternative. As Gunner declares: "'Homing instinct' doesn't mean a thing anyway. If you do use the phrase you simply mean that something you can't explain or name brings a salmon back to its home stream" (11). With distinct subtlety, therefore, Haig-Brown suggests that *pleasure* may be the thing that we cannot "explain or name."

There is, of course, a further implication for Spring's pleasurable experiences. Balcombe states: "Because animals feel good things, their lives are worth living. Pleasure gives their lives *intrinsic value*—that is, value to themselves beyond any utilitarian worth they have for us" (191). As discussed in the previous chapter, this intrinsic value relates to Tom Regan's concept of nonhuman being as *subjects of a life*. Hence, although he is reluctant to imagine her experiences of pain, Haig-Brown's representation of Spring's rich, pleasurable feelings demonstrates that she is the subject of a life with a unique perspective and individual set of interests. Moreover, her familiar sources of pleasure aid our ability to empathize with the 'alien' experience of a fish, whilst those that are unfamiliar reinforce her realistic *animality*. Finally, if we return to

Balcombe's words again, it is useful to remind ourselves that only *individuals* feel pains and pleasures, not species nor populations (192). By demonstrating that Spring is capable of intensely pleasurable feelings and that it has *inherent value*, Haig-Brown is able to emphasize the suffering she experiences as a consequence of the "orgy of dam-building" (iv). For her ancestors it was "joyous" but for Spring it is an unpleasant, distressing ordeal that almost kills her (49). By demonstrating this damage to her quality of life, Haig-Brown makes a plea on behalf of all salmon in the Columbia River system who deserve the 'joy' of their ancestors. Moreover, if we recall Haig-Brown's anxieties around anthropomorphism and nature faking, it seems clear that speculating that fish are capable of pleasure is worth the risk to convey this vital conservation message.

Last of the Curlews

John Sandlos remarks in "From Within Fur and Feathers" that the "direct influence" of Seton and Roberts on Bodsworth's work is "readily apparent in his first novel, *Last of the Curlews*" (83). Indeed, like *Return*, *Last of the Curlews* (1956) closely resembles the original wild animal story. As such, in common with Haig-Brown, Bodsworth engaged in a range of strategies to avoid the charges of sentimentality or anthropomorphism. Similarly to Haig-Brown, he does not make explicit claims regarding the abilities of his species. Instead, he uses vast amounts of biological information to bolster his representations without asserting *himself* as an expert. Nonetheless, the statements that he does make about the Eskimo curlew are strikingly reductive. Paradoxically, Bodsworth depicts an intelligent, emotional Eskimo curlew, yet insists on the rudimentary nature of the bird's instinct-dominated brain. As the novel has

received little serious critical attention, these contradictions have been overlooked for the most part. I argue that they require notice, however, as evidence of the problematic task of writing zoocentric literature in a post-Nature Fakers context.

As the title suggests, Bodsworth's novel follows the 'last' Eskimo curlew. Excerpts from a variety of historical materials, each presented under the heading "The Gauntlet," separate chapters and provide a record of the Eskimo curlew's decline from one of the most prolific birds of the Americas to extinction in less than two centuries. These extracts range from the "Philosophical Transactions of The Royal Society of London" (Bodsworth 19) to "The Proceedings of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union" (73). Their publication dates span 1772 to 1955. Bodsworth's combination of historical materials and fictional biography describes the death of the curlew at the levels of species and individual simultaneously. Furthermore, his dual narratives demonstrate that, as Dunayer states, the "way we *speak* about animals in *inseparable* from the way we *treat* them" (9, emphasis added). As the historical excerpts progress chronologically, the reader witnesses the changing status of the curlew correlating with its decreasing population: from prolific 'new species' to abundant 'game bird,' followed by the gradual decline from 'endangered' to 'extinct.' The extinction of any species is a tragedy, but it is the *individual* curlew protagonist with his intelligent, passionate inner-life that lends the real emotional weight to the novel. Without the curlew's heart-wrenching narrative of loneliness and eventual loss, *Last of the Curlews* would be a dry collection of facts and statistics. As such, Bodsworth's message would no doubt fail to engage readers' sympathies for the curlew or concern for endangered species in general.

Each year Bodsworth's protagonist, a five-year-old male Eskimo curlew "flies the long and perilous migration from the wintering grounds of Argentine's Patagonia, to see a mate of its kind on the sodden tundra plains which slope to the Arctic sea" (7). Each year he returns to the exact same patch by the "familiar S-twist of the ice-hemmed river" (8) to claim his mating ground. This behaviour demonstrates the curlew's sophisticated ability to memorize and recognize minute details of an apparently featureless territory. He "knew every rock, gravel bar, puddle and bush" despite the fact that in the empty landscape, "there wasn't a thing that stood out sufficiently to be called a landmark" (12). It is with seeming admiration, and perhaps respect, that Bodsworth describes how, without any overt markers, "the curlew knew within a few feet where his territory ended" (12). The novel opens as the curlew completes his migration back to the Arctic and experiences the "ecstasy of home-coming" (9). Bodsworth states that the curlew "was drawn by an instinctive urge he felt but didn't understand to the dry ridge of cobblestone with the thick mat of reindeer moss at its base where the nest would be" (18). Whilst the drive to mate may be instinctual and the choice of nesting ground could be based on instinctual needs—shelter, proximity to food, safety—the *selection* itself is tactical. Likewise, the curlew's ability to recognize and return to the same territory each year is based on an accurate memory and detailed knowledge of geography. It seems that, not only does the Eskimo curlew hold in his mind an incredibly precise image of the specific boundaries of his carefully-chosen territory, he may also possess a strong emotional attachment to it.

As the curlew approaches his territory, he is so overcome with emotion that he hardly remembers "he had been mysteriously alone" (9) during each mating season. The "lonely weeks passed and, inexplicably, no female had

come" (9). At this point, in the opening pages of the novel, Bodsworth begins to insist upon the controlling force of *instinct*, claiming that the "curlew's instinct-dominated brain didn't know or didn't ask why" he had been alone so long (9). Yet in the following pages, when the female fails to arrive for another year, the curlew does start to ask *why*:

> somewhere in his tiny, rudimentary brain the simple beginnings of a reasoning process were starting. 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 to come, why in the myriads of shorebirds and other curlews, were there none of the smaller and lighter-brown curlews he could recognize as his own kind? (25)

Despite Bodsworth's description of the curlew's brain as "tiny" and "rudimentary," the ability to assess a situation and compare it to an imagined expectation requires some fairly sophisticated mental processes. The speculative, questioning nature of the curlew's confused loneliness is arresting. Such moments of cognitive and emotional complexity demonstrate the curlew's vitality; he is not an instinct-dominated automaton but an *imaginative* and *curious individual*. Moreover, his *awareness* of species loss becomes a defamiliarizing address to readers. The strength of zoocentric narratives can often lie in the nonhuman's ability to observe and communicate the consequences of human behaviour back to us.

Beginning with early sightings of Eskimo curlews by Europeans, the first historical account quoted in "The Gauntlet" is from the Royal Society of London in 1772: "New Species. *Scolopax Borealis*. Eskimaux Curlew. This species of curlew, [sic] is not yet known to the Ornithologists" (20). The excerpt notes that the curlew "breeds to the northward, returns in August, and goes away southward again the latter end of September in enormous flocks" (20). Bodsworth includes these descriptions in the extract to ensure that the reader is

aware that in 1772 the Eskimo curlew population was “enormous,” a stark comparison to the solitary life of his lonely protagonist. The following “Gauntlet” section states that in 1884 the Eskimo curlew was still plentiful: “Here an immense flock of several hundred individuals were making their way to the south” (30). As the accounts continue, however, the death toll rises and the population diminishes:

> Annual Report of the Board of Regents for the year ending June 30, 1915. . . . [sic] In Newfoundland and on the Magdalen Island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, for many years after the middle of the nineteenth century, the Eskimo curlew arrived in August and September in millions that darkened the sky. . . . In a day’s shoot by 25 or 30 men as many as 2,000 curlews would be killed for the Hudson Bay Co.’s store at Cartwright, Labrador. (49)
>
> The Committee on Bird Protection desire to present herewith to the Fifty-fifth Stated Meeting of the American Ornithologists’ Union the results of its inquiries during 1939 […] the most dangerously situated are unquestionably the California condor, Eskimo curlew and ivory-billed woodpecker. They have been reduced to the point where numbers may be so low that individuals remain separated. (77)

In less than two centuries, the Eskimo curlew population reduces from “millions” (49) to scattered individuals. The time-scale aligns with the colonization of North America, and as the dates of each extract progress chronologically, their locations move geographically: from the first published by “The Royal Society of London” in 1772 (19) to the last published by “University of Toronto Press: 1955 in co-operation with the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology and Palæontology” (123). It is significant also that the Hudson’s Bay Company is mentioned frequently throughout “The Gauntlet.” Initially a fur-trading business known as “the Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson Bay” (Miller 149), the Company was instrumental in the colonial exploitation of Canadian wildlife. Here, then, we see the consequences of the extremely anthropocentric thinking encountered in the early Canadian nature writing. By the twentieth-century, however, the myth of North American superabundance has finally been

exposed. For instance, Bodsworth states that “the Eskimos once waited for the soft, tremulous, far-carrying chatter of the Eskimo curlew flocks and the promise of tender flesh that chatter brought to the Arctic land” (7). He implicitly reveals that although some indigenous peoples of the Arctic used curlews for meat they did not drive the species to extinction. That is to be blamed, Bodsworth suggests, upon European colonizers and their descendants.

Bodsworth’s use of historical materials demonstrates the catastrophic real-world consequences of speciesism. Bodsworth opens the novel with a short introductory statement, providing an overview of the curlew’s migration patterns and gradual extinction: “the Eskimo curlew, originally one of the continent’s most abundant game-birds, flew a gauntlet of shot each Spring and Autumn” (7). The identification as ‘game’ spells the death of the Eskimo curlew population, just as ‘vermin’ had done for Seton’s wolves and coyotes. One extract in “The Gauntlet” mentions that the curlew was also called “Dough-bird” by gunners (57). This name derives from the bird’s technique of overfeeding and gaining weight prior to migration in order to endure the gruelling journey. It is a tragic irony that a survival mechanism honed by evolution should accelerate the death of the species because humans find “the thick layer of fat […] so soft that it felt like a ball of dough” so delicious (57). The same extract goes on to demonstrate the devastation caused by this label:

> two Massachusetts market gunners sold $300 worth from one flight . . . boys offer the birds for sale at 6 cents apiece . . . in 1882 two hunters in Nantucket shot 87 Eskimo curlew in one morning . . . by 1894 there was only one dough-bird offered for sale on the Boston market. (48)

The Eskimo curlew’s extinction was not caused by seemingly ‘indirect’ human actions, such as loss of habitat. The exact correlation between the name ‘dough-bird’ and the extreme proportions of the species’ slaughter demonstrate the direct link between anthropocentric discourse and anthropocentric violence.

If the Eskimo curlew had not fitted into the category assigned to it by humans, it might have been allowed to survive like many other nonhumans we choose not to kill. Bodsworth does not explicitly state that the label 'game-bird' spelled the curlew's destruction, but he demonstrates it through his introductory overview of their extinction and the historical materials selected for "The Gauntlet. As Scholtmeijer states, "[t]he facts speak for themselves; as presented, they disallow authorial condemnation, but nevertheless illustrate human culpability on a vast scale" (130).

R.Y. Edwards' review of *Last of the Curlew* for *The Murrelet* in 1995 states: "here is a good example of the fictitious narrative, carefully told, which will reach a wider audience with a far more powerfully told and palatable message than the scraps of fact available ever do" (13). Just as Edwards argues that the bare science would have lesser impact without the story, the historical extracts alone would be less moving without the curlew. It is the combination of the archive evidence and the curlew's defamiliarizing questioning which drives the force of Bodsworth's critique. The male Eskimo curlew poses an unspoken question and "The Gauntlet" provides the answer. Moreover, the curlew's sympathetic narrative would be less intense if he were not the *last* of his species. His solitary life is all the more distressing for his strong emotional responses, loneliness dominating above all. On a grand scale, the extinction of a species is terrible but without the individual narrative the loss is reduced to statistics and dates, and the inconceivable mass of deaths. Again, as in *Return*, we find an emphasis on the connection between the suffering individual and the suffering species. Bodsworth takes the general extinction of the Eskimo curlew and transforms it into a unique individual's story of isolation and grief. He also demonstrates that those individuals each have a *biography*.

Scholtmeijer notes that the "sense of the tragic in *Last of the Curlews* is held somewhere between the vision of the world in which there will be no more curlews and the experiences of the lone remaining individual" (128).

If these experiences were bare biological facts—the insignificant movements of an instinct-driven automaton—the 'tragic' quality of the tale would be lost. Despite Bodsworth's repeated claims that the curlew possesses a "simple" (28) and "slow-working brain" (92) the reader is presented with the proof of his intense, wide-ranging emotions: "feverishly" (9); "passion" (9, 14, 16, 117); "ecstasy of home-coming" (9); "excitedly" (14, 90, 115); "tormenting" (14, 73); "frenzied" (14); "a fury as passionate as his love" (16); "maddened" (17); "a pressing desire for companionship" (25); "hope" (33); "torn between the two torturing desires" (45); "restlessness" (46); "nostalgic yearning for home" (74); "love-making" (80); "felt as if he had been reborn and was starting another life" (80); "love display" (81); "their own companionship was so complete and satisfying" (83); "agony of loneliness torturing him again" (86); "frightening" (92); "mounting emotion" (114); "frantic display of love" (114); "tenderly" (116); "satisfied them emotionally" (117); "passion became a fierce, unconstrainable frenzy" (114); "terrified and bewildered" (120); "frantic pleas" (121); "plaintive cries" (121); and "fear" (121). Evidently, the actions and feelings of Bodsworth's protagonist are at odds with his reductive descriptions. Whilst she enters into no in-depth discussion, Janice Fiamengo mentions that Bodsworth claims that the brains of curlews have little capacity for conscious thought or memory, yet "ascribes to his main character a passionate emotional life" characterized by "emotions seemingly inseparable from thought and memory" (1). The emotions listed above demonstrate the validity of Fiamengo's statement. Nonetheless, I suggest that Bodsworth's insistence on 'instinct' may, paradoxically, strengthen

the effect of the curlew's autonomy. Driven by Bodsworth's repetitive assertions that the curlew possesses only a "rudimentary brain" (24), the reader's expectation of a simplistic, instinct-driven bird is disrupted by his intense, heart-wrenching emotions, as well as his defamiliarizing interrogation of his own loneliness. The effect is startling and, again, reinforces the curlew's status as a *unique, autonomous individual*. It is difficult to ascertain whether the vitality of the curlew's emotions, thoughts, and memories are strong enough to undermine Bodsworth's repetitive insistence on instinct.

As the narrative progresses, an unlikely meeting with a female Eskimo curlew ends the male's solitude. The two become companions and develop a loving, emotional bond. As Balcombe remarks, love confers a survival advantage since emotional attachment encourages cooperation and protection; yet on the question of "love's existence in the hearts and minds of animals, science has been mainly mute" (Balcombe 107). He argues that there are two reasons for this: "First it is difficult, if not impossible, to prove feelings of love in another individual, even a human" (107) and "Second, our sense of superiority over other animals has made us loath to accept the idea that they can have such presumably complex feelings as love" (108). Nonetheless, regardless of the stigma, Bodsworth's curlews *do* love each other. If we return to the list of emotions above, he does use the word "love" multiple times. Again, this emotional attachment is at odds with his reductive statements regarding instinct; it seems an extreme contradiction to insist that Eskimo curlews possess only a "rudimentary brain" yet are capable of "love" nonetheless (Bodsworth 25, 16). Furthermore, the concept of nonhuman love is still exceedingly controversial. On the whole, biologists use the terms 'bond' or 'attachment' rather than 'love' to "avoid anthropomorphism" (Balcombe 108). Yet in 1954, amidst his claims

that curlews are simplistic, instinct-dominated birds, Bodsworth made an assertion regarding nonhuman love that would remain controversial over fifty years later.

In accordance with the title, unfortunately, the love of the two Eskimo curlews cannot last. Just as the pair are finally about to mate, the female is shot by a farmer. The irony of this random chance is highly reminiscent of Seton's and Roberts' stories in which, as soon as the individual's survival seems to have been a success, death befalls them or their family. Scholtmeijer comments that the intensity of the curlew's love "strengthen[s] the impact of the death of the female curlew. The death is tragic, as I have suggested, not because it means the extinction of the species, but because of its effect upon the lone individual curlew left behind" (131). I would add to Scholtmeijer's reading here; the sense of the tragic is *compounded* by the female curlew's death precisely because it is both the death of an individual and a species *simultaneously*. Likewise, the effect on the remaining curlew is the *double* loss of both his beloved companion and his entire species. Significantly, it is a farmer—whose role is constructed and legitimized through anthropocentric discourses—who commits the most horrific act of the novel. As the label 'game-bird' is replaced with "at the verge of extinction" in "The Gauntlet," readers can no longer tolerate the death of a single curlew, despite having 'witnessed' the supposedly inconsequential deaths of other birds in the book. Again, here we find evidence that arbitrary human concern is dictated by our ability to *contextualize* an animal. The joint histories of the male, female, and their near-extinct species intensifies our sense of the nonhuman's *biography*.

There is a defamiliarizing horror attached to the female's death, which is absent from the deaths of previous individuals who were members of

homogeneous flocks: “Behind him, the great wave lunged into the plover flock […] There was no cry. The wave arched upward momentarily and the birds disappeared from sight” (55). Furthermore, whist these deaths are random accidents, the killing of the female is the conscious and deliberate actions of a human. Again, as in both Seton’s and Roberts’ stories, these narratives demonstrate the ways in which anthropocentric perceptions of animals as *useful dead objects* exacerbates the serendipity of survival in the wild. The farmer violates the discourse currently dominant in our understanding of the curlew; ‘game-birds’ can be exploited but ‘endangered’ birds deserve protection. Thus, Bodsworth defamiliarizes an act that that would be depicted as a victory or cause for celebration in an anthropocentric narrative, as demonstrated by the accounts of successful shoots in “The Gauntlet.” Indeed, Scholtmeijer describes the act of “the only human who appears in the curlew’s story” as “incomprehensible” (130). She observes that he is characterized as “boorish” through his “repulsive” “eagerness” as he “jumps off his tractor and runs to get his gun” and in his “wanton pleasure of shooting a bird” (131). How would readers react to this scene without the emotional weight of the female’s death and the knowledge that the species is doomed to extinction? How would readers react if this scene was from a different story narrated from the farmer’s perspective, expressing his pleasure at shooting a valuable bird? For once, our concern is not for the human character. Bodsworth has effectively—if temporarily—marginalized anthropocentric concerns within his zoocentric narrative. Thus, on this rare occasion, the life of a nonhuman outweighs the pleasure, financial gain, or hunger of a human.

The female’s death is the tragic culmination of the male curlew’s silent interrogation. Bodsworth’s nonhuman protagonist has questioned his position

as the last of his species but will never receive an explanation. Instead, the answer is provided for his human readers, complicit directly or indirectly in the extinction of this species. We are all complicit in the speciesist discourses that legitimized both the slaughter of a species and the tragic isolation of a lonely individual—the *last* of his kind. We are the answer to the male Eskimo curlew's unspoken question, and the death of his companion reminds us, inescapably, of this terrible fact.

Scholtmeijer remarks that Bodsworth's description of the curlew's grief, loneliness, and suffering "never steps out of line with natural behaviour" (132). That Bodsworth does not seem to anthropomorphize the emotions of his protagonist is significant and may be crucial to understanding his repetitive insistence on instinct. In a statement rather reminiscent of both Seton's and Roberts' descriptions of their *own* work, Edwards states: "Bodsworth takes facts for foundation, then builds with plausible fictional materials a dramatic yarn" (13). The influence of the wild animal story is clear. Indeed, Bodsworth reinforces the representation of his curlew *as an animal* using a solid repertoire of scientific knowledge regarding the biology and behaviour of the species:

> The outer half of the curlew's wing, composed largely of the stiff, overlapping flight-feathers, was the propeller that drove the bird forward, producing the airflow which give lift to the inner wing. With every stroke, each individual feather in the out half had to be twisted through a complex series of positions. With the down-stroke, the flight-feathers twisted, front edged down and rear edges up, so that each feather was an individual propeller blade pushing air to the reader and driving the bird ahead. (Bodsworth 31-2)

Reviews of *Last of the Curlews* in Ornithological journals commend the accuracy and detail of such descriptions. One review published in the *Journal of Field Ornithology* in 1988 states: "Biological details come alive before your mind's eye and you look at familiar phenomena with a new perspective.

Scientific detail is presented concisely and accurately, but one hardly thinks of that as you picture the elemental struggle" (Burtt 425). Another reviewer comments that the novel is "a touching story told by a biologist with a deep understanding of shorebird biology" (Davis 394). Each reviewer praises the balance between fact and fiction, yet they also feel the need to assure the reader that they need not fear anthropomorphism in the book: "Science usually frowns on fiction in its field" (Edwards 13); "The skilful avoidance of anthropomorphism is quite remarkable" (Davis 394); "His narration is neither anthropomorphic nor overtly sentimental" (McGrath 269); "We rarely use fiction to put the case of an endangered species before the public, yet this is exactly what Bodsworth has done […] Don't get the wrong idea. This is not a *cute, anthropomorphic story*" (Burtt 425, emphasis added). It seems, then, that Bodsworth 'succeeded' in his realistic wild animal story where Seton and Roberts did not. By repeatedly and overtly undermining the cognitive complexity of his protagonist, he has avoided the accusation of *nature faking.* Here, then, we can see quite clearly the relationship between the controversy and the rise of behaviourism as a model of animal behaviour.

Nonetheless, with great subtly, Bodsworth does engage with one of the most controversial techniques of Seton and Roberts. Scholtmeijer observes that, all the "details are historically and scientifically accurate, with the exception of the hope that the last mating pair of curlews could save the species as a whole" (130). I suggest, therefore, that there is an implicit suggestion that Bodsworth's narrative could be accurate too. The curlew's journey matches with the recorded sightings presented in "The Gauntlet." An edition of *The Auk* provides the account of "[t]wo Eskimo curlews which appeared to be a mated pair" seen in "March at Galveston, Texas" (111). This extract is located in the

novel at the same point as the pair “waited three weeks” in “the Texas prairies” (109). By interweaving his narrative with this piece of evidence, Bodsworth echoes Seton’s techniques in the stories of “Arnaux” and “Warhorse” from *Animal Heroes*. All that is lacking, of course, is the assertion that the story is *true*. In this tentative, guarded manner, therefore, Bodsworth is able to produce an ‘accurate,’ ‘factual’ wild animal story without causing a controversy. Moreover, as in Haig-Brown’s depiction of a pleasure-seeking salmon, Bodsworth creates a distance between the claims he makes on behalf of his Eskimo curlew and the ways that they actually behave. While it might seem paradoxical, I contend that it is only through his insistence on instinct that Bodsworth is able to write a ‘true’ narrative about an Eskimo curlew capable of cognitive, emotional, and social complexity—including *love*—without it being dismissed as “a cute, anthropomorphic story” (Burtt 425).

The White Puma

Although R.D. (Ronald Douglas) Lawrence’s *The White Puma* (1990) was published a century after Seton’s *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1889), it bears a striking resemblance to the original wild animal story. Indeed, it seems closer than even *Return* or *Curlews.* The biographical narrative of a rare albino puma being pursued by the same hunters who killed his mother and sister almost could have been lifted from one of Seton or Roberts’ stories. Unusually, however, when it becomes clear that his efforts to evade these men are insufficient to secure his permanent protection, the white puma begins to *hunt* the hunters—an act of resistance absent from the protagonists of other wild

animal narratives.[1] I contend that, whilst *The White Puma* resembles Seton's and Roberts' original stories more closely than any of the other core texts, it also presents one of the most significant departures from that format by defying the 'tragic animal' and 'animal victim' tropes.

Although the eponymous puma is not born until the third chapter, the prologue identifies him as both the autonomous subject of a unique biography, and the target of hunters who view him as an object with parts to be disassembled and sold. As such, the novel's structure resembles Seton and Robert's defamiliarizing technique of juxtaposing perceptions of the protagonist as *a subject of a life* and *an object of utility.* Likewise, in the first chapter, the white puma's mother is introduced, wounded and bleeding, trying to escape the same hunters, Walter Taggart and Steve Cousins. Hence, it is twice that Lawrence introduces his protagonists by describing their individual experiences of being perceived as 'objects,' before narrating their unique life histories over the following chapters. Most significantly, however, both are described escaping the hunters and attempting to resist victimization.

As I have discussed previously, both Margaret Atwood and James Polk described the 'animal victim' as the defining characteristic of the wild animal story; even Seton declared that his narratives were tragic because "the wild animal *always has a tragic end*" (*Known* 12, emphasis original). For all its similarities with Seton's and Roberts' work, *The White Puma* seems to set out to challenge these expectations. In fact, Lawrence uses the prologue to establish his protagonist's unique response to a lifetime of pursuit by hunters: "Had he lived in a region undisturbed by human activity, the puma would never have

[1] The exception being Alison Baird's hunted sperm whale in *White as the Waves* (1998). As the novel is a reimagining of *Moby Dick*, however, her protagonist's response is as inevitable as his tragic death.

been given cause to experience hatred. […] He had been goaded by those men and their dogs. […] Of late, however, the cat had begun to hunt the hunters" (4-6). Lawrence makes it clear that the puma is seeking the specific humans, Taggart and Cousins, *not* humans in general, and that the humans instigated this violent relationship. He ensures that the reader is not mistaken; this is not the random action of a 'savage' beast, it is the white puma's unique act of resistance against a lifetime of persecution by these two men. Thus, Lawrence's protagonist is not a victim, and nor is his end tragic. In Seton or Roberts' hands, the narrative might conclude with the white puma's death (either by ironic accident or deliberate attack). *The White Puma* ends with the puma's legal protection; increased wildlife conservation efforts in the region; the reform of Steve Cousins from hunter to conservation officer; the deployment of dedicated researchers to study the pumas; and a sighting of the protagonist with a mate and cubs. These measures suggest the puma's ongoing protection from *all* hunters beyond the end of the novel, not just Cousins and Taggart. *The White Puma* becomes problematic, however, as the focus shifts increasingly from the pumas' perspectives to those of the hunters and conservationists. Inevitably, this introduces some ambiguity around who *actually* resists the animal's victimization—the pumas or the humans who want to protect them.

Lawrence's inclusion of this secondary human narrative is reminiscent of Seton's and Roberts' slightly more anthropocentric animal stories. Although Roberts prioritized action, tension, and dramatic irony, Lawrence—as Seton does—uses the human perspective to strengthen and nuance his defamiliarization of hunting. For instance, after an encounter with the tawny puma in which Taggart's arm gets caught in his own trap, the two hunters distort the event and use it to construct the puma (and later, her son) as a "man-eater"

(85) in the local media. This enables them to make more money by bypassing the region's hunting regulations under the pretence of public safety, despite the fact that the puma caused no harm to either man. These diversions from the puma's story allow for a more complex critique of recreational hunting than we encounter in the other texts, revealing the ease with which Canada's hunting industry may exploit regulation loopholes and insufficient conservation laws. In the final quarter of the book, Lawrence also introduces a conservationist, Heather Lansing, and a biologist, David Carew. As in the conversations between Haig-Brown's characters in *Return*, Carew and Lansing provide information to enrich the text's engagement with science and animal advocacy. Unlike Seton or Haig-Brown's characters, however, these two are repeatedly confronted with the insults "nature freaks" (240), "bleeding hearts," and "bloody activists" (250), demonstrating the continued stigma against concern for animals. Thus, Lawrence emphasizes the continued potency of this prejudice, despite the fact that, by the late twentieth century, recognition and acceptance of human responsibility for environmental degradation, species loss, and harm to animal wellbeing, had spread considerably.

I contend that the hundred years or so between the publications of *Wild Animals I Have Known* and *The White Puma* have shaped this divide between animal protagonist as 'victim' and 'survivor.' As indicated by the figures of Lansing and Carew, Lawrence's book suggests an atmosphere of both optimism and frustration. The prominence of both animal rights and environmental movements in the decades prior to *The White Puma*'s publication, enable a degree of hopefulness that is entirely absent from *Return to the River* or *Last of the Curlews*. At the end of the novel, the white puma, his mate, and their offspring are safe. However, the frustration expressed through

both the verbal abuse received by the conservationists and the hunters' easy exploitation of insufficient protection laws demonstrates that the 'exploitation and protection' paradox (which inhibited animal advocacy in Seton's and Roberts' day) continues to impact progress. As such, Lawrence uses the secondary human narrative of *The White Puma* to promote the importance of animal protection and conservation work; both its current limitations and future potential. In other words, the intervening century has enabled the writers of wild animal stories to propose *a human solution* to a *human problem.*

Although Lawrence abandoned his biology degree at the University of Cambridge, he dedicated his much of his later life to working as a conservationist, nature writer, and field biologist. At Cambridge he had refused to adopt the required forms of academic and scientific writing, on the grounds that they were elitist and inaccessible. This was a stance that he maintained throughout his career, often conveying extensive biological, ecological, and ethological information to popular audiences through both fiction and nonfiction. It seems fair to suggest, then, that as a prolific but unqualified naturalist who wrote for non-specialists, Lawrence shares certain characteristics with Seton. For instance, he also cared for and rehabilitated wild animals, and spent long periods conducting his own field work and studies, including "one ten-month stint in British Columbia's Selkirk Mountains where, in total isolation, he stalked out and then observed a puma through three seasons of its life" (*White Puma* 331). These experiences fuelled Lawrence's writing (just as similar encounters had for Seton), as a result, his published works span not only natural history, wildlife conservation, and environmental science, but also autobiographical nature writing, factual animal narratives, and book-length wild animal stories.

Significantly however, self-conscious assertions of scientific accuracy and credibility, like those made by Seton, are absent in Lawrence's work. While Haig-Brown and Bodsworth made no such assertions either, I have demonstrated that their careful strategies for engaging with the sciences reveal a certain hesitancy**.** Lawrence, on the other hand, writes with the expertise and authority of a biologist, regardless of whether he is officially recognized as such. Having already published at least twenty books, most of which were natural history and nonfiction, it is unsurprising that the back matter for *The White Puma* describes Lawrence as a "field biologist and naturalist" (331) with no trace of Seton's awkward or self-justifying tone. Indeed, in the preface for one of his earlier nonfiction books, *Wildlife in North America: Mammals* (1974), Lawrence identifies himself as an amateur naturalist without undermining the credulity of his work or incurring criticisms such as those made during the Nature Fakers controversy: "For more than twenty years I have been following the trails of North America's mammals, an occupation that began as a hobby and turned into a commitment as the years passed" (9). I would suggest that, due to the continuing specialization of the sciences, Lawrence's claim poses no threat to the professional, scientific establishment; he does not assert himself as a biochemist or theoretical physicist, for instance. We can see, then, that by the late twentieth century, there was no need to police the boundaries of natural history as Burroughs and Roosevelt had done—the role of 'naturalist' had possibly returned to the hands of amateurs once again. Indeed, the vastly different receptions of Seton's and Roberts' work make this clear. Seton's helped to instigate a long, well-publicized controversy; while Lawrence's caused so little debate that it is almost impossible to find *any* articles written about his books.

Hence, rather than using a self-justifying preface to establish the scientific credibility of his work, Lawrence opens *The White Puma* with a brief note, titled simply “The Puma (Felis concolor)” (xiii). The note provides information on the puma’s anatomy (including the average weight and measurements of adult males and females), mating behaviour, habitats and geographical spread, local name in different languages, and widespread population loss due to hunting (xiii-xiv). Here, Lawrence demonstrates the foundation of his novel in both the sciences *and* advocacy for animal protection, as well as indicating the solid factual basis for his representations. Likewise, in the prologue, he emphasizes scientific explanations for the puma’s behaviour: “his keen sense of smell even allowed him to recognize the individual odours of each of its [human, canine, and equine] participants. As he watched, listened, and sniffed, his emotions fired heavy charges of endocrine hormones into his bloodstream, especially adrenaline, the chemical that prepared his body for immediate and strenuous action” (4). With a little more subtlety than Seton, Roberts, or Haig-Brown, then, Lawrence uses this blend of sensory experience, memory, emotional response, and neurochemical reaction to signpost the specific animal psychology discourse informing his work: cognitive ethology. It is worth noting, for instance, that the sharp division between instinct and intelligence (seen in previous texts informed by comparative psychology or behaviourism) has been replaced by a balance between hormonal input and cognitive complexity. Moreover, Lawrence’s unapologetic depiction of protagonists with cognitive, emotional, and social complexity also indicates a post-behaviourist return to the confident style of animal representation found in the late nineteenth-century wild animal stories.

I suggest, then, that the similarities between *The White Puma* and the original wild animal stories owe something to the fact that Seton, Roberts, and Lawrence were not writing at the height of behaviourism's influence. Despite the century separating them, we can perceive, quite clearly, the common attitudes to animal minds that they express. In ways reminiscent of Seton and Roberts, Lawrence demonstrates the obvious survival advantages of an individual who is able to identify and memorize different sensory input, recall and interpret that information later on, and use this knowledge and experience to guide future decisions. Indeed, Lawrence provides a long and detailed description of the careful tactics the tawny puma used when choosing a new den. The following is a condensed extract:

> The cougar stood in front of the opening and sniffed intently, her ears pricked forward, as sensitive to sound as her nose was to scent. When she became satisfied that the den was not already occupied by a large and powerful animal—such as a bear or another cougar—she advanced […] The cat was, of course, aware that the influences reaching her ears and nose were the normal and unchallenging signatures of a given home site: the smells and noises made by small animals, the sound of the wind passing through particular trees or over rocks, and a number of other detectable but harmless stimuli of which, she had noted years earlier, each den site had its own special medley. […] Without conscious intent, the cat identified and memorized all the olfactory and sonic characteristics of this den […] The signals she monitored that night were familiar and long ago stored in her memory, but the puma did not relax until she completed her inventory. (117-9)

Likewise, he also uses encounters between the pumas and the hunters to reinforce the advantages of an animal mind capable of integrating sensory input with emotional memories:

> After she had recovered from the wound inflicted by Walt Taggart's bullet, memory of the shock, pain, and fear she had experienced made her more cautious than ever. [...] Had she scented Taggart and Cousins, her phenomenal memory for odors, upon which all predators depend for survival, would have allowed her to recognize her enemies. She would have then led her young to a new range. (120, 161)

Here, then, we can begin to the see difference between *The White Puma* and earlier wild animal stories. Rather than relying on instinct or metaphor to explain the actions of his protagonists, Lawrence does the (sometimes laborious) work of demonstrating the survival advantages of their cognitive, social, and emotional complexity. Of course, this would have been difficult for Seton or Roberts to achieve within the scope of a short story, whether they wanted to or not. By integrating the ability to *learn* (which, we might recall, was George Romanes' definition of having a mind) into his representations at all times, Lawrence also indicates that the rigidity and fixity of pure *'instinct'* is illogical. Like Haig-Brown's 'home stream theory' thought experiment, Lawrence essentially argues for the credibility of cognitive ethology as the most plausible explanation of animal intelligence. Although the Nature Fakers controversy, and early beginnings of behaviourism, led to an increased self-consciousness in Seton's and Roberts' work, it was generally restricted to their prefaces and not their representations. As we have seen, however, the mid-twentieth-century authors were rather more cautious. Yet the gradual decline of behaviourism towards the end of the twentieth century means that Lawrence can take this persuasive stance without the need to justify or explain his attitude to animal minds.

As discussed in Chapter Four, the question of nonhuman teaching drew some of the greatest ire during the Nature Fakers controversy. Yet, without hesitation or qualification, Lawrence states that the female puma teaches, instructs, and disciplines her young:

> [S]he was aware that if her kittens were to survive, they had to be taught to be cautious, to be keenly observant, and to exercise their memories, even while engaging in routine affairs. So [...] the puma led her kittens cautiously and taught them by example; patiently, and hour by hour she demonstrated the skills that would make them capable of identifying and storing a veritable cornucopia of environmental signals. (120)

In 1992, animal cognition researchers, Tim M. Caro and Marc D. Hauser, published a paper in the *Quarterly Review of Biology* in which they gave one of the most comprehensive definitions of animal teaching produced so far. In "Is There Teaching in Nonhuman Animals?" they stated:

> An individual actor A [the tutor] can be said to teach if it *modifies* its behaviour only in the presence of a naïve observer, B [the pupil], at some cost or at least without obtaining an immediate benefit for itself. A's behaviour thereby *encourages or punishes* B's behaviour, or provides B with *experience*, or *sets an example* for B. As a result, B acquires knowledge, or learns a skill earlier in life or more rapidly or effectively than it might otherwise do so, or would not learn at all. (153, emphasis added)

Of course, *The White Puma* was published two years before Caro and Hauser's paper, and yet Lawrence's depiction of parental instruction conforms to their definition. The tawny puma repeatedly modifies her behaviour in the presence of her kittens, and adjusts it in accordance with their development. When she deems them old enough, the puma leads them away from the den with the intent to "teach them to survive in the wilderness" (93), and when it is not safe, she instructs them to remain hidden:

> Before setting out, the puma turned to look at the kittens, her tail rigid and her eyes fixing a stare first on the male, then on his sister, telling them in these ways to remain within the concealment of the rocks and emphasizing her command by growling softly, as she had been in the practice of doing each time she left them in the den. (95)

They repeatedly attempt to follow her, and she punishes their disobedience until they comply:

> Snarling loudly, she reentered [sic] the clearing, meeting the kittens […] Continuing to snarl, the puma raised a front paw, toes spread, and threatened the recalcitrant youngsters […] But the young cats started to follow her […] The puma swung around anew. This time she charged them. […] Growling, the mother followed them a short way; then she stopped and, facing them, waited until they had crawled under an overhanging granite slab. The cat then repeated her command. […] She growled again. The kittens mewed distress; clearly unhappy about being left alone, they nevertheless obeyed. (95-6)

Moreover, when the young pumas display "for the first time the alert and eager sensibilities of true hunters," their mother encourages the behaviour, and allows them to continue following her example on a hunt:

> Despite her intense preoccupation with the task that lay ahead, she became aware of the change […] As soon as she had oriented herself, she moved forward without ordering the kittens to stay behind. She was tacitly allowing them to be her partners in the hunt. […] [T]he manner in which their mother was moving, and the fact that she was clearly allowing them to participate in the hunt further affected the behaviour of the kittens. (132)

Thus, she demonstrates all the core elements of Caro and Hauser's definition: modifying behaviour in the presence of her young, encouraging and punishing, providing experience, and setting an example. This is not to suggest any contact between Lawrence and Caro and Hauser, but to reveal the broad, late twentieth-century shift in attitudes towards animal intelligence that enabled these parallel depictions of nonhuman teaching to arise at almost the same time.

As such, it is useful to recall here Burroughs' comments regarding parental instruction: "The young of all wild creatures do instinctively what their parents do and did. They do not have to be taught; they are taught by nature from the start" (137). Of course, as I have suggested previously, Seton's speculations on animal teaching were shrouded in anthropomorphic metaphor; Lawrence's, on the other hand, seem more realistic, more *zoocentric.* Again, his detailed descriptions indicate cognitive and social complexity, as well as the obvious survival advantage for the young pumas. Furthermore, these interactions also allow for a more complex exploration of nonhuman communication. By prioritizing sensory experiences unique to the nonhuman perspective of a puma, Lawrence emphasizes communication by scent, body language, and vocalization. As I have demonstrated, the mother and her kittens

constantly observe and interpret the minute, shifting movements and positions of each other's bodies. Likewise, the tawny puma also uses a range of specific vocalizations, from "the special purr that summoned her children" (94) to the soft growl of the "alarm signal" (98). Yet, within the family, close proximity negates the requirement for scent communication—apart from the obvious bodily scents that aid identification and bonding. Outside, however, the longevity of odour enables a constant stream of information between individuals and across species.

Lawrence's repeated emphasis on this importance of scent as an entirely nonhuman form of communication aids his creation of the pumas' perspectives, whilst also demonstrating the potential complexity of nonhuman networks of interaction. When the tawny puma is "announcing her claim" to a new territory by "stopping to spray nearby vegetation with her urine," she is also stopping to catalogue "the messages left by her competitors" (43-4). The semi-permanence of scent (as opposed to communication by sight, sound, or movement) allows for the depiction of a bodily 'language.' Importantly, Lawrence differentiates between the odours left inadvertently by an animal's mere presence, and those left as intentional communication: "As the female entered the valley, she detected a number of other scents. Grizzly bears had recently travelled the male puma's trails; so had wolves, and wolverines. All had left their identifiable odors" (24). As these scents may have been messages between members of each species, the puma cannot decode them, and so she merely makes a catalogue of presences. Alternatively, Lawrence describes the format of the intentional messages left by individuals of her own species:

> As she herself did, members of her species invariably left markers that advertised their claim to a range. These included urine sprays on rocks and trees and fecal mounds, which were made by raking earth and debris over their droppings. Such mounds are always present at the

> junction of puma trails, a dozen or more being usual in such locations, the most recent giving off the most powerful scent. (147)

The careful positioning of urine sprays—and the construction and location of faecal mounds, in particular—indicate intentionality. For instance, the tawny puma protects her food by urinating nearby "to mark her ownership of the carcass," (96) while both mounds and sprays are essential communication for mating: "she entered the range of a large male lion, knowing of his presence by the debris-covered scent mounds," (23) "he backed off and sprayed urine against the hillock […] [She] sniffed at the urine intently" (25). This defamiliarizing use of excrement, which aids the construction of a nonhuman perspective, is largely absent from the earlier texts—although we do encounter it in Barbara Gowdy's *The White Bone*. It reveals a certain level of intelligence and autonomy, while also building the richest and most complex image of nonhuman networks seen in any wild animal narrative. Lawrence's animal landscape is not 'empty,' it is densely layered with animal messages in a variety of zoocentric, bodily languages.

It is significant that Lawrence's pumas cannot interpret the intentional, bodily messages of other species. He resists the anthropocentric myth that all nonhumans can communicate across species boundaries—as if all 'speak' a universal 'animal language'—and imagines how different animals would decode each other's scent, vocalizations, and body language. As indicated above, for instance, the tawny puma cannot 'read' the messages of bears, wolves, or wolverines, but she can still gain information from their scent trails. This cross-species communication becomes more complex, however, when we consider body language and vocalization. The abrupt silence of otherwise noisy birds, intended to signal extreme danger to each other, carries meaning for other species:

> The absence of their almost continuous melodies had been the signal to all animals in the area, for during the daylight hours the tiny and extremely cautious songsters still their collective voices only when they are greatly alarmed. […] The puma had been waiting for the birds to resume their calls. When they did so, she was totally convinced that all was well. (128)

While the birds have little intention of communicating with the puma, who certainly would be unable to understand the content of the calls, information necessary for survival is transmitted and decoded, nonetheless. This ability to observe and comprehend the signals of other species is also vital for the puma's success as a predator:

> His labored respiration, his thin body and stiffened legs, and the awkward way in which he bent his long neck to reach the water were all noted by the cougars as they sighted their quarry. The moose was obviously old and in poor condition. (162)

The puma's knowledge and experience allow her to 'read' the behaviour and body language of her prey, enabling her to target, directly, the ill or injured members of the herd:

> Taken as a whole, these signals caused the cat to select the laggard as her target, for, like all predators when given the choice of several prey animals at a time, she invariably chose the one whose behavior and condition demonstrated physical weakness or emotional distress. (135)

Interestingly, unlike the authors of other wild animal narratives, Lawrence indicates that the predator's ability to choose carefully can be beneficial to prey animal. After the death of the old moose described above, for instance, Lawrence explains he was "twenty years old," "arthritic," and riddled with parasites (164). Describing these in grim detail, as well as the long death that would have taken "seven or eight days," during which the moose would have been deprived of "reason, causing him to run staggering and aimless through the wilderness, smashing into trees and rocks and charging imaginary enemies," Lawrence concludes: "Death by the fangs and claws of three pumas, although violent and gory, released him quickly" (164). Thus, Lawrence

demonstrates that the inadvertent transfer of basic information across species—the moose's body language signalling his condition as "poor" to the pumas—can be beneficial to both predator and prey, as well as individuals and populations.

As such, Lawrence's rich networks of meaningful interaction yield a much more complex predator-prey relationship than we find depicted in the other texts. Indeed this is one of the few major differences between *The White Puma* and the original wild animal stories. Unlike Lawrence, Seton and Roberts emphasized the serendipity or random chance of natural selection—rarely did their predators make *choices*. Instead, Lawrence's more ecological perspective indicates the potential benefits of predators to both individuals and groups; almost every animal killed by his protagonists is old, diseased, or injured, for instance. Likewise, he explains the ecology of population fluctuations, the "cycles of feast and famine," in which the highs and lows of predator and prey species are interconnected: "In this way nature, when undisturbed by humans, has been attaining the natural balance for untold thousands of years" (55). Moreover, he also incorporates the relationship between prey, predator, and scavenger by providing details of all the animals able to feed from one deer killed by the tawny puma: "seven ravens," "a red fox," "two coyotes," "[t]wo weasels," "a striped skunk," and even "mice, shrews, and insects" (58). "By first light the next morning," Lawrence adds, "there was little left of the buck," and even his "marrow" and "sinew" were providing nourishment to these creatures. Of course, this ecological approach also aids our ability to empathize with a carnivorous protagonist, which (ironically) can be uneasy. Hence both Seton's and Roberts' tendency to objectify the prey animal when writing from a predator's perspective or else focus on the chase rather than the consumption.

Lawrence, on the other hand, describes his pumas killing and eating other animals with unflinching detail, and so his lengthy explanations of ecology and the benefits of predators are vital if he is to challenge the construction of pumas as 'vermin.'

Indeed, much of the human narrative is used to expose, and defamiliarize, the construction of the puma as 'vermin,' 'trophy,' and 'man-eater.' All three are used to legitimize the actions of humans wishing to hunt pumas but, most importantly, Lawrence reveals the ease with which these labels can be used interchangeably to suit the individual's needs. For instance, the fetishization of the white puma's albinism constructs his fur as a uniquely valuable trophy: "Now the usually taciturn man began to babble aloud to himself, alternately cursing and expressing wonder. 'Hol-ly hell! A *white* cat! . . . Jee-suss! Worth a fortune . . . a *fortune*! Hell . . . just wait till Walt hears;'" "Taggart, relaxed and beery, let slip that he knew where to find a pure white puma. […] 'What? A white puma? I must have that! I can pay well for it" (197, 221). Likewise, when the puma's tawny mother and sister are killed, Cousins and Taggart see only trophies to be sold:

> Just before entering the forest, he stopped and turned to look at Taggart, who was now standing over the dead cat, one booted toe under her head, lifting it. 'I'm going to get the mounts. You want to start skinning, go ahead.' […] When Cousins returned with the horses, Taggart had already skinned the young puma. The pelt, with paws and head attached, was folded up, a blood-stained bundle that lay beside the naked and bleeding corpse. The younger man paid but scant attention to the dead animal's mutilated remains. (174)

Their casual tones juxtapose the gruesomeness of the scene. Having spent so much of his narrative constructing these pumas as *unique, individual, autonomous subjects of a life*, Lawrence's use of the hunters' perspectives to construct them as *objects* is disturbing. To the humans the pumas were never

subjects of a life with inherent value. As Lawrence's narration indicates, the hunters can only perceive them as objects with financial value.

The label 'trophy' is replaced, however, when the puma is categorized as 'pest' or 'vermin.' The puma's autonomy (so easily erased when seen only as an object) is now a *threat* to human interests. Taggart and Cousins' economic motivations do not change, however. They understand how to exploit the speciesist power of the label:

> The cat, he explained, was not actually protected by law in that region, although it was not legal to hunt at this season. 'But they're pests, those cats. They take sheep and calves and even our own horses. And they kill a whole lot of game. So nobody really gives a darn if one of them gets to eat a nice lead pill, you know?' (14)

> Following the spoor, they were led to the cave and from there to the by-now-sparse remains of the moose. Excited by their discovery, they radioed the news to the lodge, reporting the moose kill and giving it as their opinion that unless the adult puma was not killed, she would continue taking the ungulate prey, which, in the view of the guides, rightfully belonged to the High Country Safaris clients. (123)

Thus, they construct the puma as both an object and an animal. The hunters exploit the category of vermin, which relies on the autonomy of wild predators, in order to remove restrictions on their ability to keep killing pumas whose body parts they can sell.

This contradictory representation is exaggerated further when they construe the tawny puma as a 'man-eater.' Now the autonomy of this *'object'* apparently positions *humans* as victims and prey. Cousins and Taggart fabricate the story of an encounter with the tawny puma, which they know will feed into speciesist fears:

> The next morning, an exaggerated report of the affair appeared in a leading daily newspaper under the headline SAVAGE LION ATTACKS MAN. The story as quickly picked up by the wire services and flashed across the continent. The attendant notoriety turned Walter Taggart into something of a heroic figure, with Steve Cousins lauded as the 'daring rescuer.' (37)

Stereotypes of dangerous predators enable the story to escalate quickly:

> Andrew Bell, delighted with so much publicity, took one of the television reporters and his crew for a flight over the country, circling the area where the cave was located and flying a wide search over the puma's presumed territory.
>
> Filming and recording in flight, the fast-talking, deep-voiced commentator concluded his report: **'**Somewhere beneath our wings skulks the vicious mountain lion that cunningly ambushed Mr. Walter Taggart and mauled him so savagely that doctors had to cut off his right arm. Even as we are flying over this limitless wilderness during what has turned out to be a hopeless search for the killer cat, the few hardy people who live scattered across this inhospitable county are keeping to their homes, their doors locked and their guns at the ready, fearful of their lives.' (37)

Exploitation of the label 'man-eater' benefits Taggart, Cousins, and their boss Andrew Bell:

> Quick to take advantage of the unexpected and totally free publicity, Bell had immediately applied for, and easily obtained, official permission to expand his licensed hunting area; he was also allowed to construct three new lodges strategically located in his new territory. As a result, he obtained exclusive guiding rights to a region of wilderness that was 150 miles in width and 250 miles in length. With money readily loaned to him by the bank, Bell set about expanding his wilderness empire. He hired building crews and bought another Cessna. Construction of the lodges had been started three weeks after Taggart was flown to the hospital. […] Bell had received so many applications from would-be clients that had had been forced to turn down many. All of the applicants were wealthy men and women who ostensibly wanted to hunt and fish, but who were just as eager to experience the vicarious thrill of visiting the region where lived the puma that the press had labelled as a man-eater. (85-6).

Lawrence defamiliarizes myths of the hunter as a 'heroic outdoorsman' by exposing the cynical economic motivations of these three characters. He also reveals the ease with which Taggart and Cousins can construe the puma as trophy, pest, or man-eater with ease. As revealed by Seton and Bodsworth, a single speciesist label can 'justify' the deaths of countless individuals. The use of all three labels enables Cousins and Taggart to legitimize almost *any* action.

As we can see, the nature of the animal advocacy message has transformed since Seton and Roberts created the genre. Whilst they made

general pleas on behalf of all hunted animals, and Haig-Brown and Bodsworth demonstrated the specific causes of species loss, Lawrence explores the consequences of Canada's complex relationship with its wild animals. The exploitation/protection dynamic, discussed previously in this thesis, is epitomized by Bell's relationship with the "Victoria headquarters of the fish and game department" (250). As he boasts to Cousins and Taggart: "'I've decided to call the fish and game people in Victoria and ask them to declare open season on all cougars in our region. I'm sure they'll agree . . . I've some influence there, you know" (242). A century after Seton and Roberts created the wild animal story to advocate on behalf of wild animals, it seems that the country's nonhuman population is still considered an economic resource: "Politically, the outfitters [like Bell] had a lot of clout […] for they employed local people as guides and in other capacities and were thought to contribute to the economic well-being of isolated northern regions" (242). Thus, although it is necessary for Lawrence to incorporate a secondary human narrative, he produces a more nuanced conservation message than other texts. Indeed, this complex interplay of motivations and discourses is entirely absent from the twentieth-century, speculative zoocentric narratives.

However, this leads us inevitably back to the question: who saves the puma? Towards the end of the novel, Lawrence introduces Lansing and Carew as they begin "their own campaign, condemning the open season and, especially, calling for the full protection of the white puma" (243). They succeed, and the white puma is one of the few wild animal protagonists to survive his or her own story. If the puma's security is so reliant on human intervention, can it still be said that he resists victimization? I suggest that, when read carefully, it becomes clear that he *does.* As Lawrence indicates, both the near-extinction of

pumas in North America and the persecution of the white puma (and his family) are *human problems* which can only be resolved through *human solutions*. While campaigners like Lansing and Carew can make progress in the short term, a true change requires the ethical transformation of those who committed (or were complicit in) the violence. Through an act which makes his *autonomy* and *individuality* knowable to humans, the white puma triggers the conversion of Steve Cousins.

As part of their campaign, Lansing and Carew attempt to find proof of the white puma. When Lansing is out searching, the puma finds her. Perhaps due to his specific experience with Taggart, Cousins, and their dogs, the puma perceives Lansing as a curiosity rather than an enemy: "her body odor telegraphed *neutrality*" (271, emphasis added). Over the following days, the two meet again in a few wary, but nonviolent encounters. After one such interaction, the puma flees at the sound of the hunters and Cousins accidentally shoots Lansing in the leg. After Taggart and the dogs move away, the puma returns to investigate the cries and yells:

> Suddenly from somewhere above and behind Lansing, the deep, menacing growl of the enraged mountain lion burst on the silence. Almost in the same instant, the white puma's body appeared as if in flight. The cat was so fast, Lansing was barely aware of its leap. […] Instinctively, she screamed at the puma. "*No! Don't do it!*" Perhaps it was the unexpected sound of the woman's now shrill voice that caused the puma to land short of his target, instead of striking Cousins in midleap. Perhaps the highly intelligent animal understood the meaning of Lansing's cry. […] Instead of hitting the man squarely with this lethal paws, he give Cousins a heard blow with his right shoulder before touching down in the water. (294-5)

By allowing the puma's motivations to remain unknown, Lawrence avoids any reassuring anthropocentric fantasies. His decision not to attack the man he had been hunting suggests something of the puma's *individuality* and *autonomy*. Indeed, Cousins' interpretation of the events enable him to see the puma as the

subject of a life for the first time: "*I saw him turn away*. But I can't believe it. Never reckoned an animal could think. […] Reckon I'm done hunting. I just don't reckon I can go and kill animals if they can *think*. It ain't right!'" (304). Within a week, Cousins is sworn in as a deputy conservation officer for the area and persuades Taggart to stop hunting for anything but his own consumption.

The differing representations of nonhuman cognitive, emotional, and social complexity in these texts demonstrates the close relationship between animal psychology research and the 'realistic' representation of animals. If we use these novels to further contextualize the wild animal story we can detect the changing state of this scientific field. Indeed, the practical zoocriticism approach of reading the texts in conjunction with the relevant scientific discourses enables us to trace the simultaneous evolution of the scientific investigation of animal minds and the realistic representation of animals in literature. Moreover, we can perceive the role of science in definitions of 'anthropomorphism' or 'nature faking.' The fact that none of these twentieth-century authors faced any such accusations is a testament to this relationship. Indeed, it is also further evidence that the wild animal story's reputation as an 'embarrassment' to Canadian literature is unjust.

CHAPTER SIX

SPECULATIVE REPRESENTATIONS: FREDERICK PHILIP GROVE'S *CONSIDER HER WAYS*, BARBARA GOWDY'S *THE WHITE BONE*, AND ALISON BAIRD'S *WHITE AS THE WAVES*

Introduction

The close relationship between the scientific study of animal cognition and the literary representation of animal protagonists, discussed in the previous chapter, develops into a more complex (and perhaps less hierarchical) interaction in these speculative texts. Although each author produces a scientifically-informed depiction of nonhuman experience, they challenge what is known of their specific species through *speculative* acts of the imagination. Although they maintain a sustained zoocentric perspective, by pushing the boundaries of plausibility these authors avoid the issues of 'accuracy' or 'truth' that preoccupied the Nature Fakers controversy. Consequently, however, these texts are often read as 'anthropomorphic fantasy' or exaggerated 'science fiction.' As such, I suggest that both the original wild animal stories and the speculative narratives addressed in this chapter rely on paratext to reinforce their zoocentric commitment. Due to the emphasis on nonhuman perspectives within the text itself, introductions, prefaces, and afterwords can be necessary to shape readers' interpretations. The marginalization of these texts means that there has been very little scholarship published on any of them. Hence, my close analysis must be of a different kind to that of the previous chapters. In the final section, I will use my reading of *White as the Waves* to reflect back on the wild animal story and the other zoocentric texts. Using practical zoocriticism, I

will consider the possibilities for their reciprocal communication with scientific researchers.

Consider Her Ways

As Seton and Roberts did, Frederick Philip Grove uses his introduction to *Consider Her Ways* (1947) to influence the readers' acceptance of his zoocentric narrative. The book was his last publication but he was able to revise the introduction before he died (Proietti 362). It is significant that he was able to do so as I argue that this is crucial to the possibility of reading the novel as an animal story. Moreover, it emphasizes the plausibility of Grove's speculative representation. The book has not attracted much serious critical attention, the current scholarship generally regards it as allegory, science fiction, or the "most outrageous work of the Canadian fantastic imagination" (Columbo 35). Despite the fact that *Consider* is a rare example of nonhuman first-person narration (or first-animal narration), it has not caught the attention of those in the field of literary animal studies either. Previously in this thesis, I have suggested that anthropocentric readings of Seton's and Roberts' work that undermined engagement with the nonhuman animal, relied on a dismissal of the author's stated aims in each preface. Likewise, interpretations of *Consider* that discount the introduction undermine the zoocentric, imaginative challenge set by the author.

I contend that readings that undermine the nonhuman presence do not connect *Consider* to the wild animal story or to the Nature Fakers controversy. As demonstrated in my discussions of *Return to the River* (1941) and *Last of the Curlews* (1956), both of these texts were strongly influenced by the legacies of Seton and his supposed 'nature faking.' Hence, I offer a new reading of

Grove's book by placing it within this wild animal story framework. As Robert J. Sawyer's foreword states, Grove conceived of the idea for *Consider* in "1892 or 1893, when he was a schoolboy" (6). The fact that Grove was considering writing a narrative from the perspective of ants *at the same time* as the wild animal story was beginning to emerge seems a context that cannot be overlooked. Whether he read Roberts' ant story, we cannot know. Likewise, we cannot be sure of the similarities between *Consider* and Grove's original idea. Nonetheless, from the perspective of this framework, we can read Grove's new form of *speculative* animal representation as perhaps a parody of Seton's work. He challenges the pseudo-scientific aspirations of the original wild animal story, along with the associated claims of 'fact' and 'realism.' These were, of course, the issues which drew considerable attention and ridicule during the Nature Fakers controversy. Rather than allow such accusations, Grove *intentionally disrupts* the 'realism' of his text. As such, any attempt to criticize his inaccuracy or anthropomorphism are already pre-empted. Yet by building his speculations upon a solid basis of fact, he maintains a playful scientific engagement. As with the other speculative texts in this chapter, Grove's zoocentric imaginative challenge pushes the boundaries of what is *known* about the species he represents. As indicated by Hal Whitehead, the authors of speculative animal narratives validate their contribution by raising questions in ways that science alone cannot (371).

Much of Grove's parody and disruption of 'realism' relies on a layering of authorship. The author's note and introduction declare that an ant is the *author* and that F.P.G. is merely the editor and translator. As such, the author's note echoes and subverts the claims of 'fact' made in Seton's and Roberts' prefaces:

> Certain human myrmecologists to whom the present book was submitted in manuscript—the editor wishing to make sure of his *facts*, from the

> human point of view—suggested that *definite individuals* had served as models for the characters of the story.
>
> As a matter of fact they have—to the ant. The publication is sponsored by an ant, namely, Wawa-quee, who, for reasons unknown to the editor, wished humankind to become acquainted with her work. […]
>
> If the editor's private opinion is asked for, he can only say that, while he believes the *picture of antdom* given in these pages to be *essentially true to fact*, and while he can vouch for the *veracity* of the introduction, he suspects the remaining five chapters to be the *product of an ant's imagination* and, therefore, *pure fiction*. (8, emphasis added)

Here we can detect the wild animal story's self-conscious relationship between fact and fiction, as well as its attempts to explore the nonhuman mind. Not only does Grove's text provide a 'factual' "picture of antdom," it is apparently the *product of a nonhuman mind*. Likewise, the references to "definite individuals" evoke Seton's declarations in *Wild Animals I Have Known* and *Animal Heroes* that his stories describe the lives of *real* animals, or else that a composite of individuals served as *models* for his narratives. Indeed, as the introduction demonstrates, we might (as Burroughs did) playfully amend Seton's title to apply to Grove's parody: *Wild Ants I Have Known*.

The introduction is written from the perspective of F.P.G., a fictional editor who shares Grove's initials. It narrates the editor's encounter with the 'ant author,' but also includes a discussion of animal psychology somewhat in the style of Seton or Roberts. He explains: "It has long been a question interesting to both the zoologist and the animal psychologist how to interpret the social life of certain members of the order Hymenoptera" (12). Echoing Roberts' prefaces, he asserts: "The present book, I believe, will settle that question. The Formicarian author […] reveals a world of which, I venture to say, few men have ever dreamt" (12). Grove's language is particularly reminiscent of the preface for *Kindred of the Wild*. He also criticises the concept of 'instinct' as reductive:

> A good deal of literature has been written to account for the seemingly automatic functioning of the ant-state. How does the queen know what to do? How do the first minims learn to go out and cut leaves? On the whole, instinct has been held to explain it all. […] Instinct is a convenient word without real meaning which, for that very reason, serves admirably to veil the ignorance of those who use it. There can be no doubt any longer that, as with us, not instinct, but tradition and education furnish the true explanation of the facts: that much this book settles beyond question. (17-8)

In this statement we can perceive Grove's complex engagement with both science and the wild animal story. By challenging interpretations of ant behaviour based on instinct, Grove assists the reader's acceptance of his zoocentric, imaginative challenge. He emphasizes what we do not know in order to evade accusations that his speculation is 'inaccurate.' What if our perceptions of ants are wrong? What if they are capable of much more than the simple, automatic functioning of explanations based on instinct? His emphasis on learning and intelligence connotes the writing of George Romanes, as well as Seton and Roberts. Indeed, recent research would suggest that these assertions are not so unrealistic:

> I had come to Frank's lab because in the course of asking questions like these, he had discovered that his rock ants teach. […] Franks's idea that ants teach each other fit in with a wealth of studies over the last decade showing that insects' cognitive abilities are surprisingly rich. (Morell 34-5)

It is important to recognize, however, that these claims regarding instinct are made using the voice of F.P.G. and not Grove himself. Indeed, he layers the text using two first-person narrators: first the editor and then the ant author. Thus, these dual narrators enable Grove to distance himself from the text and disrupt its reliability. Where Seton, in particular, asserted both the reliability of his factual stories and himself as the scientific investigator, Grove destabilizes his authority and authorial voice. As such, we learn little of Grove's own perception of ants.

In the introduction, F.P.G. identifies himself as an “amateur myrmecologist” and narrates an expedition to Venezuela for “the purpose of hunting down one or two colonies of the leaf-cutter ant of intertropical America” (12-3). This section is highly reminiscent of Seton’s tendency to insert himself into the narrative as the amateur naturalist. As I have discussed previously in this thesis, these semi-autobiographical stories positioned Seton as the observer and constructed the stories as anecdotal evidence. Hence, they implied that the animals depicted were real and that Seton had *known* them. Likewise, Grove’s introduction narrates F.P.G.’s observations of the ants he sets out to study as well as his interactions with one *individual* ant. In a potential reference to Seton’s story of himself investigating the kangaroo rat, F.P.G. asserts:

> I never dug into the burrows of the colony. I felt I had no right to destroy their elaborate works just because I had the physical power to do so; and that, I believe, was one of the reasons why I was singled out for the mission with which I am entrusted. (16)

Seton, we may recall, destroyed and mapped the entire burrow of the kangaroo rat. When F.P.G. first disturbs travelling lines of ants, they linger for a moment “surveying the scene” and the narrator asserts that he was “much impressed with their air of deliberation” (18). He adds that they seemed “oddly intelligent” (19). The scene and the language that Grove uses to describe it, are reminiscent of Derrida’s encounter with his cat in “The Animal That Therefore I Am.” He describes the cat’s gaze as “uninterpretable, unreadable, undecideable” (381). Indeed, Grove’s narrator expresses this same sense of the unknowable, of *something* behind the look: “I was being surveyed and appraised by alien eyes connected with an intelligence beyond my mental grasp” (Grove 19). He experiences “shivers” and “confusion” (19) and feels “unbalanced” (20). Nonetheless, he continues to observe the ants: “Often

nothing worth recording happened for many days. Yet even uneventful hours served to establish a certain relationship which led to most extraordinary events" (13).

Eventually he has an encounter with a single ant, Wawa-quee, who climbs a tree so that she is at eye-level with him. Her positioning equalizes the relationship, disrupting the usual dichotomy between human observer and observed animal. Instead she establishes herself as a *unique*, *autonomous*, *individual*. She watches him, "waving her antennae eighteen inches from [his] face," holding him "motionless". The narrator sits eye-to-eye with the ant for more than an hour:

> Involuntarily, my attention had become centred on the black, polished stemmata or median eyes in her head. Their glint and glitter seemed so human. With all the intensity of which I was capable *I wished to understand what this ant was about*; but her shining eyes and unceasing motions of her antennae slowly had a confusing effect […] I was bewildered and puzzled as I returned to the plantation. Something uncanny had unbalanced me. (22)

Thus, F.P.G. experiences the uncanny gaze of the nonhuman; familiar and almost 'human' yet simultaneously unfamiliar and 'alien.' As an ant, she may be difficult to empathize with but through her actions, F.P.G. gets an impression of her as a fellow *subject of a life.* Indeed, as Mark Payne observes, "there is an archive of hunting narratives that focus on this moment of eye contact between hunter and hunted" (3). This moment often results in some form of change or conversion, during which the hunter reconsiders his/her actions. We might interpret the ethical transformation of the hunter in *The White Puma* as such an encounter. According to Derrida, this is the effect of being "*seen seen* by the animal" (382). To be *seen seen* by the animal is to feel the nonhuman gaze turned upon the human. It is the abrupt recognition of an animal's consciousness, *a unique autonomous nonhuman perspective*. As Derrida

states, it is a human's acknowledgement that "an animal could, facing them, look at them, clothed or naked, and in a word, without a word, *address them* […] and *address* them from down there, from a wholly other origin" (382). In *The White Puma*, the animal-human encounter enabled the hunter to recognize that animals are sentient, for the first time. As noted these visual exchanges often result in the human's increased empathy or sense of kinship with the nonhuman, although it takes an exaggerated form in Grove's book.

In a quite literal '*fantasy of knowing the nonhuman'*, Wawa-quee chooses to communicate with F.P.G. *telepathically*. Grove does not give the details of how this exchange operates but after the encounter the narrator seems to hold the knowledge of Wawa-quee's life:

> I knew that I was not yet I. I walked and acted like a human being; but my mind was that of an ant; I had lived her life; and her memory was mine. I could look back upon all she had gone through; and it devolved upon me to put down a record of what, by some miracle, had been communicated to, or infused into, my consciousness. I cannot, therefore, claim that what follows is my work. *It is the work of Wawa-quee, the ant; and it must be read in that sense*. I merely set it down under compulsion. (Grove 25, emphasis added)

Here, again, we find an emphasis on the role of nonhuman *biography* as a means of enabling empathy. By *knowing* her life, he has acquired a new zoocentric perspective. In the ultimate act of the empathetic imagination, F.P.G. is human with the "mind" of an "ant" (25). She is no longer 'uncanny' or 'alien.' Recalling the similarities observed between F.P.G. and Seton's depiction of himself, it is possible to read this scene as a criticism of the fantasy of knowing the animal. By emphasizing the strangeness and alterity of the ant, Grove may be parodying Seton's impossible claims that he can *know* and *interpret* the lives of animals. Thus, there is the possibility that F.P.G. is simply deluded. Nonetheless, the practical zoocriticism framework prioritizes zoocentric interpretations of texts and I am compelled by the possible clue that the novel

"must be read in that sense" (25). If we accept the challenge to read Wawa-quee *as an ant*, our efforts are validated by the strength of her defamiliarizing zoocentric perspective. If we do *consider Wawa-quee's ways,* we are presented with a rich imaginative speculation that challenges anthropocentric and speciesist thinking. This depends, of course, on whether we allow ourselves to be *seen seen* by a fictional ant.

We must also consider how reading the novel "in that sense" impacts our understanding of the text as a whole: it is a "picture of antdom […] essentially true to fact," but also the "product" of an "ant's imagination" and "pure fiction" (8). It has also been "communicated to" and translated by a human (25). The mediation of the ant's story is explicit; it is not a *direct* expression of her consciousness but a human impression of it. The distinction cannot be overlooked as it provides a strategy for both disrupting the 'accuracy' of the text and maintaining the imagined agency of the ant. It is F.P.G. who claims to *know* the ant, not Grove. Again, he is protected from 'nature faking' accusations by distancing his authorial voice. In an essay otherwise preoccupied with allegory and anthropomorphism—disregarding wholly the possibility of reading these ants *as ants*—Salvatore Proietti remarks: "Only by feeling directly from inside the Other's experience, only by going beyond the mediation of language and the barrier of an irremediably mendacious subjectivity, can real knowledge be attained" (369). This is true of F.P.G. (if we read the novel "in that sense") but in order for the reader to experience this "real knowledge" it must return to the "mediation of language." Thus, it becomes an interpretation. Indeed Grove opens the introduction by stating that all knowledge of nonhumans is mediated by the bias of the human observer: "according as the human-race conceit of the investigator was strongly or weakly developed, the behaviour of these insects,

especially ants, was placed either in contrast or in comparison with the behaviour of man" (12). Therefore, we can regard *Consider* as a scientifically-informed speculation that makes no claims of 'truth' and reminds readers that all sciences are continually subject to revision and new research. In other words, he reinforces the possibility that our current understanding of nonhuman life is inaccurate.

The interaction between Wawa-quee and F.P.G. in the introduction constitutes the *only* nonviolent animal-human encounter in the text. All others are exploitative or hazardous to the ant. Repeatedly, various opportunities for interspecies relationships are thwarted and each time it is the *human* who transforms the potential interaction into violence. As the only nonviolent interaction in the text, it is significant that Wawa-quee instigates the communication. Indeed, she directs the whole encounter while F.P.G. is passive. He describes the "bond of sympathy" established between himself and the ants (20). This language echoes Roberts, Seton, *and* Salt. Apparently it is through patience and passivity that we might "cultivate a closer intimacy with the wild animals" as Salt suggests (53). Indeed, Wawa-quee's first encounter with a human constitutes the extreme opposite to this interaction. From her perspective, capture by a human is bewildering and distressing:

> To our amazement, he reached for us, not with the long, slender toes of his fore-feet, but with a pair of tongs. Before I knew what was happened, he has grasped me by the pedicel (of all the places to catch an ant: the pedicel!), lifted me and dropped me into a hollow cylinder. (Grove 46)

The ants are placed, to their "horror," with their "worst enemies," Eciton Hamatum or army ants (46). This error demonstrates either the human's ignorance of the relationship between these species or his inability to tell them apart; both could indicate myopic anthropocentrism. In the cylinder, the ants are carried to a different location: "our bearer was wildly shaking us up and down:

apparently he was running in that clumsy human way, using only his hind-feet" (46). The ants find themselves in a "chamber" (47) where they are shaken out of the cylinder and on to "a flat white surface of extraordinary smoothness […] The surface was circular and surrounded by a moat twelve antlengths wide and filled with water" (47). Across the room they see a woman "lying like one dead stretched out on a raised platform" (47). Lying with her "fore-foot" bared to the "upper-joint," she has "a wide, bleeding gash twenty antlengths long and gaping, with its ragged edged separated by at least four antlengths" (47).

A doctor then uses the Eciton ants to suture the wound on the woman's arm, a relatively well-known procedure, but one which would be unknown to Wawa-quee. Grove utilizes her zoocentric perspective to defamiliarize the scene:

> bending over the platform, [he] picked up a giant soldier Eciton, applying the *foreceps* to her pedicel. I distinctly remember how this individual opened her formidable and menacing sickle-jaws as though to attack her captor […] As it turned out, this gesture of menace was exactly what the human wanted to produce […] with the extended toes of his free forelimb, he pressed the ragged edges of the gaping wound in the human female's arm together, he approached, with the other, the head of the Eciton. At once the ant buried her jaws, on both sides of the red line, in the human flesh and drew them close together […] The process of closing the wound had been finished. Twenty-five Ecitons had buried their jaws in the human flesh and were holding the edges of the wound together. And now comes the most amazing thing of all: a thing so horrible that I can barely bring myself to relate it. The master had risen and was bending over the wounded arm. In one fore-foot he held a new instrument, a pair of scissors, of the same metal as the *forceps*. With this he severed the heads of the Ecitons from their bodies, allowing the latter to fall to the ground. I nearly swooned. (47-8, emphasis original)

Humans can make use of the convenient power of ant jaws to suture wounds without a second thought. Such an act is legitimized through the anthropocentric discourses of speciesism: a single human life outweighs the lives of countless nonhumans. Wawa-quee's defamiliarizing perspective provides an alternative view of human practices, one that emphasizes the

grotesque horror of the scene. Rather than a doctor performing an emergency suture, we witness something akin to a terrible alien conducting a cruel and arbitrary mutilation. There is a particularly striking juxtaposition between the ghastly severing of the Eciton's heads and the casual manner in which it performed. We are given a close-up, ant's-eye-view of the violence.

Throughout the novel, Grove demonstrates the contrast between the significance such casual acts of cruelty holds for the humans and nonhumans involved. Elsewhere, for instance, Wawa-quee observes that the "humans did not even seem to be aware of our presence" (175). At this moment she is noticed, however, and instantly becomes a target:

> For suddenly I *was* observed. A human hurrying along, with this head bent low, saw me and stopped. He stopped and, deliberately lifting his rear hind-foot, he brought it down on top of me in order to crush me out of existence! […] Fortunately he was too stupid to understand that his fell purpose was not achieved; and so he went on at once. (175-6)

Again, such a casual act of violence is widely accepted amongst humans, legitimized through speciesism and forgotten as quickly as it is committed. A man deliberately tries to kill a living being for no reason. As if the value of a life corresponded to the size of the subject of that life, he carries on walking: out of sight, out of mind. Grove presents the reader with the type of act that they may have committed and defamiliarizes it through zoocentric speculation. Nearly all humans are complicit, directly or indirectly, in the deaths of countless animals but rarely is this acknowledged openly. In *Consider,* violence against nonhumans is not allowed to remain out of sight or out of mind.

Such critiques of human cruelty occur throughout the book but the most harrowing does not involve interaction between ants and humans. Instead, Wawa-quee observes the encounters between a farmer and his animals. Like

many other animal-human encounters in the novel, it begins with the apparent potential for positive interaction:

> this man never mistreated the cows and horses […] he spoke kindly to them and patted their rumps […] What, however, at this stage, delighted me most was his relation to the pigs […] at the sight of their *beloved master* they would squeal […] The man would stop and laugh at their antics; and sometimes he would pat one of them […] This man, I thought, realizes that he is *dealing with a life like his own*; he knows that *even in a pig there lives happiness and joy, sorrow and pain, trust and anguish and dependency.* (83, emphasis added)

Grove creates an idealized image of farm life, where the animals are "not kept in one of those unspeakable enclosures to which they are confined on other farms," here they "run and roam at pleasure," a "cleanly, jolly bunch" (83). As Wawa-quee summarizes, the pigs did not fear the farmer: "Was he not their benign and gracious master who fed them and who had taught them to rely on him in all their needs?" (83). She notes, however, that there was "one old sow" who "never took part" in the antics of the other pigs: "She had a wistful look in her yellow, slit-like eyes and stood back, grunting angrily whenever this pleasant scene was enacted" (84). Ominously, Wawa-quee remarks: "She knew; and a little later I, too, was to know" (84). The truth known by the old sow and Wawa-quee, eventually, is the uncomfortable knowledge that the vast majority of human-animal interaction is always mediated (in the human mind) by anthropocentrism.

Human-dominated encounters with nonhumans occur largely for the human's benefit, usually at the expense of the nonhuman. Just as she was forced to witness the decapitation of the Ecitons, Wawa-quee witnesses the slaughter of a previously "high-spirited" pig:

> he fetched the axed [sic] which was clearly unknown to the pig, for, as he returned with it, the poor brute betrayed nothing but expectant curiosity. He raised the weapon aloft […] Then he brought it down with a tremendous, relentless swing, straight onto the centre of the pig's head. The pig did not fall but stood stunned; blood rushed into its eyes; it was

> completely taken by surprise. An immense, bottomless abhorrence was mingled with the agony of pain; it tried to take a step; but it reeled; and then it seem to awake to its purpose and tried to escape […] at last, when the pig, in a frenzy of fear, finding the door closed, rushed past him once more, [the man] brought the powerful weapon down on that head a second time. The pig collapsed; its legs went rigid, though still atremble […] the man plunged a sharp instrument resembling the sickle of an Eciton but much larger into its neck, so that blood rushed out like a fountain. Life ebbed; the joints relaxed; the brute lay limp. (84-5)

After witnessing the terrible scene, Wawa-quee and her companions "fle[e] in horror and it is "weeks" before they desire "to see any more of man's doings" (85). Throughout the novel Wawa-quee makes assertions regarding the nature of human behaviour or mentality, often mimicking the speciesist language of human observations of animals:

> Surely, man, as an animal endowed with reason, if reason it can be called, is a mere upstart. I would rather call him endowed with a low sort of cunning. His self-styled civilization is *a mere film stretched over a horrible ground-mass of savagery*. Man is no farther advanced in his own development than Ecitons or Ponerines are in theirs. (85, emphasis added)

Grove performs a reversal, not only of the observer-observed relationship, but of the dichotomy between human reason and animal instinct. Indeed, F.P.G.'s introduction remarks: "It is interesting to see, in the pages that follow, how much of man's activities ants ascribe to instinct" (18). The defamiliarizing, zoocentric perspective reminds readers that they are animals—relatives of those they squash with their shoe or eat for dinner—endowed with the ability to think, define, and self-style themselves as 'human.' The casual, thoughtless way in which each act of violence is committed undermines belief in uniquely human 'reason' and 'intelligence.' Wawa-quee's voice of nonhuman outrage breaks the 'civilized' silence of speciesism which enables the thoughtless, guiltless murder of all 'those' not designated 'human.'

The strength of this defamiliarization relies on Wawa-quee's zoocentric perspective. In order to be compellingly 'nonhuman,' however, Grove creates a

range of ant-centric terms and concepts. To do this effectively, he relies on knowledge of ant behaviour, for instance, the use of scent, touch, and body language in communication: one ant greets another by touching first “antennae, then […] thorax and head” (40); in ‘conversation’ an ant uses “the slightest motion of her antennae” or a precise “scent” (40); and, indeed, the ants transfer information using “scent-trees” (31), a real technique used by several species. Here, we can find surprising similarities with the ‘bodily-language’ of Lawrence’s pumas. In addition, Grove’s ants measure using “common ant-lengths” (37), a speculation that reinforces his zoocentric imaginative challenge. Nonetheless, Wawa-quee’s criticisms of humanity require knowledge of concepts and objects that would be unfamiliar to an ant. Taking, for example, the instances of violent human-animal encounters, we find a range of terms irrelevant and unknown to an ant: “tongs” (46); “cylinder” (46); “arm” (47) where she had previously specified ‘forelimb’; “instrument” (48); “axe” (84); “door” (85). Grove’s translation technique can, of course, account for this. Even so, he does draw attention to the problematic nature of the narrative’s translation on several occasions. It is significant that this failure of communication is only one way: Wawa-quee encounters an object unknown to her and F.P.G. must guess what it is. The situation is never reversed. In an end-note, the ‘editor’ remarks: “Whenever dealing with man, Wawa-quee’s consciousness became purely visual and was transferred to me in that form […] Whenever such a case arises in which I understand what the ant does not, I shall, in what follows, use italics” (208). Perhaps F.P.G.’s knowledge of Wawa-quee’s experience is so complete that he has no difficulty in translating “scent-trees” or “ant-lengths,” yet his assertion that he “understand[s] what the ant does not” seems strikingly anthropocentric. Using Wawa-quee’s first encounter with a human as an example, it seems

inconsistent that she would recognize “scissors” (48) but not “*forceps*” (47). Grove provides a potential, albeit rather unlikely, solution: Wawa-quee learns English.

During an expedition north, the ants seek shelter from the winter in the New York public library. Here, they encounter books for the first time. Azte-ca, “chief signaller and recorder” (9), teaches herself to recognize and understand human communication systems. Presumably this extraordinary feat is accomplished through her specialist expertise: “she could find ways and means of communicating with ants and other insects and even, as we shall see, with mammals which no one else could find” (130). In turn, Azte-ca passes her knowledge on to Wawa-quee, who learns to read exceptionally quickly:

> I found from man’s own records, that it takes his callows, according to the degree of initiation required, from six to sixteen years to acquire the art of deciphering such records […] On the other hand, it took me, once I had grasped the complicated principles involved, exactly one hour to learn to read any record of his. (181).

Here Grove is exceedingly close to straying into the absurd and unbelievable, almost pushing his speculative representations too far. Whilst still providing an alternative perspective on humanity, his ants are transformed into tiny, super-intelligent, anthropomorphic aliens and it becomes difficult for the reader to continue perceiving his ants *as ants*. Furthermore, Wawa-quee’s knowledge of human language implies that she could have communicated her narrative to F.P.G. in English. If so, such an act would negate the mediating effect of F.P.G.’s translation, implying that the novel’s instances of anthropomorphism are not merely the consequence of the editor’s anthropocentric bias. One could also read this scene as Grove’s strongest imaginative challenge to the reader. Throughout the novel, he tests our openness to his speculative representations of ant intelligence. In this final defiance of anthropocentrism, Wawa-quee

breaks the *language* barrier typically held as the strongest evidence for human uniqueness. Indeed, if she did communicate the narrative to F.P.G. in English, this would be an astounding act of nonhuman empowerment. A 'lowly' ant learns human language to create a voice for herself: she communicates her *biography* and *unique*, *individual perspective* to a human (albeit telepathically) so that she may appropriate his voice to use as a mouthpiece to convey zoocentric criticisms of humanity.

As a potential counter-balance to this stretch of the speculative imagination, Grove reinforces readings of his ants *as ants* with detailed, scientific information. The journey of Wawa-quee and her companions brings them into contact with different species of ants. This provides Grove with the opportunity to demonstrate the heterogeneity of all the different behaviours and social systems encompassed within the word 'ant.' Certain methods of collecting or cultivating food share similarities with human subsistence techniques, leading to critics' assumptions that these are not real behaviours but allegories:

> the other races they meet in the first four sections of the book function (not always successfully) as satirical allegories of some aspect of human history. Thus we have patronizing descriptions of slave-holding, cattle-raising, harvesting, and warlike races whose members include capitalists, robber barons, and parasitic intellectuals. (Proietti 372)

Indeed, Grove does demonstrate that Atta Gigantea cut circular disks of leaf from acacia trees to be "shredded by the minims and be inoculated with the hyphae or spores of the fungus which grows on them" (Grove 207). Thus, they harvest and cultivate food in a manner similar to human agriculture. He also illustrates the ways in with Cremastogasters "domesticate the aphids and coccids" and "build sheds for them in the shelter and protection" to "guard them more effectively" (76). We must recall, however, that Grove's previous

statement regarding human interpretation of nonhuman life: “as the human-race conceit of the investigator was strongly or weakly developed, the behaviour of these insects, and especially ants, was placed either in contrast or in comparison with the behaviour of man” (12). Proietti’s anthropocentric interpretation relies on the mistaken assumption that humans are the *only* animals capable of such behaviour. As our understanding of the complexities of animal existence develops, so too must our perceptions of both human uniqueness and ‘anthropomorphism.’ For instance, rock ants (*Temnothorax albipennis*) are one of the species found to satisfy Caro and Hauser’s definition of nonhuman teaching discussed in the previous chapter (Morell 44). A century after Burroughs’ outrage at Seton’s representation of crows teaching, researchers find scientific evidence of tiny rock ants laboriously teaching each other the routes between new nesting sites (39-45). We might indeed conclude that Grove’s “picture of antdom” is “essentially true to fact” (Grove 8). In the introduction he provides evidence of his research through F.P.G.’s reflections on scientists and naturalists whose work inspired his hobby (12-16). Likewise, in the appendix and notes, he demonstrates further evidence of his research by detailing the various behaviours and societies of the ant species he represents. Hence, Grove not only strengthens the ability of readers to interpret his ants *as ants*, but demonstrates that our reductive notion of ‘the ant’ is entirely inadequate to encompass the great heterogeneity of Formicarian life.

The White Bone

As with *Consider Her Ways* and Alison Baird’s *White as the Waves* (a zoocentric reimagining of *Moby Dick* from the sperm whale’s perspective), Barbara Gowdy’s *The White Bone* is often regarded as anthropomorphic

fantasy. I argue that such readings are reductive, however, and overlook the fact that Gowdy's speculative representation is rooted deeply in the behaviour of real African elephants. She was first inspired by a National Geographic documentary narrated by Cynthia Moss which depicted the mourning practices of an elephant family. In the film, the group comes across a skeleton they seem to recognize and begin sniffing, fondling, and cradling the bones with their trunks before performing a "mourning ceremony: they first cover the skeleton with dirt, sticks, and leaves, then turn their backs to it, each one passing a hind foot over the remains" (Soper-Jones 269). Gowdy was struck by the "almost religious practices" of the elephants and the "ritual fashion" in which they carried out the mourning (Sandlos 87). She explains that it was "so evocative" because it seemed to indicate an "awareness that we have no access to" (Gowdy/Reading Groups). We might characterize Gowdy's experience as her first recognition of the elephants as *subjects of a life* whose cognitive, emotional, and social complexities reach beyond our current knowledge. There is a hint of intelligent *autonomy* in the "awareness" she describes, as well as the impression that these deaths would impact the *unique biographies* of those individuals. The death would have a lasting impact. Gowdy describes an "awareness and a kind of reverence of the dead, a recognition that they themselves die" associated with these behaviours which might indicate that they possess "some consciousness as we understand consciousness" (Gowdy/Reading Groups). What is unexpected (and perhaps defamiliarizing) here is that this awareness means that the other elephants continue to recognize their companion as *the subject of a life*, even in death. For us, the nonhuman subject of a life is always poised to become a *useful dead object*. In this nonhuman encounter (albeit mediated through the documentary-making

process) Gowdy recognizes a gap between our perceptions of animal consciousness and their surprisingly complex behaviour. The implication is that our current understanding is insufficient.

As with Seton, Roberts, and the other zoocentric authors, Gowdy identifies the potential for sustained, committed speculative explorations of nonhuman life within this space of the 'unknown.' Her imaginative work extends beyond straightforward speculations on mental and emotional capacities. Gowdy creates a rich elephant culture with religion, myths, medicine and songs. More problematically, she also envisions elephants capable of prescience and telepathy. The more implausible aspects of her speculation risk disrupting our ability to read her elephants *as elephants*. Although I suggest that even these elements assist in her challenge to both our perception of the nonhuman world and our belief in human intellectual superiority. In *Consider*, these fantastical elements aid her rejection of 'realism' and the associated need for 'accuracy.' Gowdy's depiction of a herd of elephants struggling to survive drought and ivory poachers is not a human drama dressed-up in animal costume, it is "an attempt, however presumptuous, to make a *huge imaginative leap*—to imagine what it would be like to be that big and gentle, to be that imperilled, and to have that prodigious a memory" (Gowdy/Siciliano, emphasis added).

Despite the conventions signalling to us that *The White Bone* is 'anthropomorphic' (intelligent elephants with culture and religion) and 'fantastical,' (telepathy and prescience) John Sandlos comments that Gowdy's "rigor" and "attentiveness to natural science" matches that of Seton, Roberts, and Bodsworth (87). Indeed, in her acknowledgements Gowdy provides a list of the "[m]any books" which "proved helpful" during her research (Gowdy 329). As with Roberts, the authors of these speculative texts use a range of paratextual

features (introductions, appendixes, author's notes) to demonstrate the extent of their research and to reinforce their engagement with science. As we have seen, however, the scientific research of the 'realistic' text is made apparent within the narrative itself, as was usually the case in Seton's work. The sometimes 'fantastical' elements of the speculative representations make it all the more important to make their engagement with sciences *explicit*. As such, few critics take issue with Gowdy's representation of elephant biology and behaviour; it is her speculation on elephant culture and religion which invites the labels 'anthropomorphism' and 'allegory'. Onno Oerleman refers to *The White Bone* as "the most extreme and sustained example of anthropomorphism I have encountered" (184). Yet Sandlos claims that to label Gowdy's elephants as anthropomorphic "is to miss the point," instead we are challenged to "accept the *idea* that 'real' biological animals may have cultural experiences similar in kind to those of human beings" (88). Rebecca Raglon and Marian Scholtmeijer note the challenge to anthropocentric knowledge in Gowdy's speculations. Since it is in our own interest to skew knowledge of nonhuman animals in order to defend exploitation, Raglon and Scholtmeijer contend that, human "knowledge cannot be completely trusted" (135). The point is not to argue that animals actually share language or have mystical visions; it is "to challenge human 'knowledge' by imagining other possibilities" (135). Although not explicit, it is possible to detect in these authors' discussions of the 'ideas' and 'other possibilities' she imagines, an appreciation of the *speculative* nature of Gowdy's novel.

Whale-biologist Hal Whitehead develops this sense of speculation further however, and argues: "We need to take these constructions [in *White as the Waves* and *The White Bone*], note the large parts that are consistent with what we know, and use them as hypotheses to guide our work" (371). Here the

complex relationship between science and speculative animal fiction is evident. Gowdy's initial speculation was sparked by the research of Cynthia Moss and others. Intrigued by the potential similarities between humans and elephants, she researched elephant behaviour and cognition, as well as theories of the animal mind. In an explicit rejection of behaviourism, she imagines the limits of the elephant mind, envisaging language, abstract thought and culture. In order to encourage her reader's acceptance of this speculation, she disrupts our confidence in the human knowledge of the nonhuman throughout the novel. She opens the space of *possibility* within which scientists such as Whitehead make their own speculations and discover new avenues for research. Through disrupting and destabilizing certain forms of scientific knowledge—particularly those based on anthropocentrism—Gowdy reinforces others, those based on animal cognition and intellectual complexity. Whitehead argues that only a "reductionist" would "class these portraits with *Winnie-the-Pooh* as fantasies on the lives of animals [...] for me they ring true, and may well come closer to the natures of these animals than the coarse numerical abstractions that come from my own scientific observations" (370). Ultimately, he recognizes that these literary speculations are "built on" scientific research and have the potential to feed back into it; in other words "the communication should be reciprocal" (371).

Gowdy's original speculation was inspired by real behaviour, and so the structure of her imagined elephant society and the production of her imagined elephant culture, develop from our current knowledge of elephant life. Related female elephants and their infants travel together in herds led by the eldest, and whilst males might group together into a bachelor herd for a short time, they are largely solitary. Thus, in *The White Bone* male and female elephants assist in the construction of their culture in different ways; wandering males gather

stories, geographical information and news from other herds, whilst the females construct and sustain a matriarchal religion. Gowdy utilizes what we know of the social behaviour of elephants in order to imagine how these structures would impact the formation of culture. Whitehead summarizes: “Their females are concerned with religion and environment as well as the survival of calves; their males inhabit a rich social and ecological fabric of which mating is only a small part” (370). As such, it seems inevitably that Gowdy’s elephant culture is female-oriented; the elephants worship the She, “the mother of elephants” (19) and refer to themselves as ‘She-ones,’ which applies to elephants of either sex and is “comparable to ‘mankind’” (xv). Gowdy also reverses the typical Western gender connotations of sun and moon: the sun is “the eye of the She” whilst the moon is the eye of her son, the Rogue, who is “untrustworthy, mischievous and often malevolent” (19). This matriarchal elephant culture is perhaps the logical conclusion of a social structure in which females remain together and males are isolated.

Despite their isolation, the males perform a vital role in the elephant society. Due to their wandering nature, the males contribute to the culture through exploration and the acquisition of knowledge. A facet of elephant culture which seems deeply embedded in the nonhuman perspective is the system of superstitions known as the ‘links’. Whilst the idea of superstitious elephants might seem disconnected from nonhuman experience, I argue that it is a speculation rooted in animal cognition and is perhaps a clue to the formation of the elephant’s culture. Tall Time spends his life gathering knowledge and attempting to learn every ‘link’, earning him the nickname the Link Bull. Cow families, lone bulls and bachelor herds consult Tall Time’s knowledge frequently, providing him with “opportunities to confirm or discount

the power of certain superstitions and thereby refine his inventory of determinants" (50). I argue that these 'links' are not merely fantasy; they are links between cause and effect. The 'superstitions' are based on contextual learning shared between individuals, occurring with sufficient frequency to be reinforced and remembered. For instance, it is considered unlucky to come across a three-legged hyena, a one-eyed wildebeest, or a crazy warthog (254). It is not difficult to imagine the pragmatic reasons behind such superstitions; the hyena and wildebeest may have been injured by nearby dangers and the warthog may be diseased or may have eaten something poisonous. If a nearby elephant later becomes ill or injured, and does not correctly attribute cause and effect, a 'superstition' may be created. Although the process is not made explicit, it is presumably in this way that the elephants draw the 'links' between cause and effect as they experience the world. Furthermore, just as a 'superstition' might become part of religion, an individual experiment or accident can become part of medicine: "[Date Bed] would ask the cows why one treatment was chosen over another [...] and the answer was always a variation of 'That's what works.'" (107).

Rather than anthropomorphic fantasy, what Gowdy presents us with is a speculation on the production of nonhuman knowledge. It is particularly reminiscent of Seton's imaginative explorations on the subject. The story of the Brierpatch in "Raggylug" had a similar way of extending notions of 'myths' to aid zoocentric discussions of nonhuman knowledge exchange. As in "Raggylug," we can see that through individual exploration, trial and error, and the creation of links between cause and effect, nonhuman knowledge is produced and shared. Culture and language are frequently seen as the defining characteristics of humans but increasing numbers of studies however are

finding groups of animals that are sharing knowledge, skills or problem-solving techniques with their companions. The exclusive human claim to culture may be becoming increasingly destabilized. Drawing a link with Grove's 'agricultural ants,' it seems that anthropocentric interpretations shape what is 'unlikely' for nonhumans and, therefore, what is deemed *anthropomorphic*. From this perspective, then, we can see Gowdy's "extreme" and "sustained" anthropomorphism (Oerleman 184) as an imaginative exploration into the production of culture from an elephant's point of view.

In order to explore this production of knowledge and enrich her zoocentric, elephant perspective, Gowdy explores the learning process of an individual elephant when she encounters a car wing-mirror for the first time. In a reference to Tall Time's production of knowledge and 'superstitions,' Date Bed regards the place where she found the mirror as potentially "sacred" because "it yielded the amazing Thing" (162). She initially encounters the mirror (or Thing) during a confrontation with four lionesses:

> Her right foot came down on a stone. She snatched it up. Even in her terror she could feel how unnaturally cold and smooth it was. She swung it, and a pale beam of light flew over the ground. The lionesses stepped back from the beam […] And while Date Bed continued to trumpet and brandish the stone, her assailants disappeared. (164)

A mysterious object which frightens and deters lions is an obvious advantage to an elephant, particularly one alone, weak and wounded in a drought-stricken landscape; again, we can see that the construction of 'superstitions' is pragmatic (as in Seton's 'brierpatch' patch story). As soon as the lions are a safe distance away, when she can "no longer smell them," she examines her "weapon" (164). Reminiscent of *Consider Her Ways*, Date Bed uses her own frame of reference to explore the object:

> It was no stone. It was too cold and too symmetrical: flat on one side, curved on the other, about the size of an ostrich egg but heavier than

> that and more elongated; it was like an elongated egg sliced in half. The curved side shone like slime. The flat side shone like water, and like water she could see herself in it… if she held it at a certain angle, with the moonlight in her eye, and when she did that her image was so unclouded that she gasped. She pivoted the Thing and waved it where the lionesses had been. The beam appeared. (164)

Here, Gowdy begins to break down the dichotomy between nature and culture. A piece of human technology that enables human animals to travel at high speed through the natural environment is experienced by an elephant as part of *nature*. She compares it to a stone, an egg, slime, and water. It then becomes part of elephant *culture* when Date Bed learns to use it as a *tool.* Gowdy also disrupts the distinction between animal and machine when Date Bed detects "the faint stench of vehicle" and guesses that "the vehicle who had carried it must have lost it" (164-5). Anthropocentric, speciesist language objectifies animals (the elephant flaps *its* ears), but, in a parody of 'animal automatism,' the defamiliarizing zoocentric perspective of Gowdy's elephants construes *machines as animals.*

From their perspective, the elephants believe that vehicles are strange animals who carry humans in their stomachs. When Date Bed recognizes "the unnatural blue of a vehicle's skin" she realizes that the Thing must have been part of the vehicle's body: "a kind of gall perhaps or extrusion of bone—and she had a moment of disgust" (165). Although Date Bed's error is comical, it reinforces Gowdy's nonhuman perspective whilst providing further potential insights into elephant learning. Furthermore, the scene also functions as a naturalized version of a common self-awareness test for animals: "Again, she gasped to see her reflection. Look at that—a tick running along a fold under her eye! She couldn't feel the tick or smell it, but there it was" (165). In the mirror test, devised by Gordon Gallup, "a red dot is placed on the brow of an anesthetized animal, who is then put before a mirror to see if he or she will

touch the mark" and "doing so is thought to indicate self-consciousness" (Soper-Jones 276). Ella Soper-Jones notes that the "tick in this episode stands in for the red mark in Gallup's test: Date bed cannot feel or smell it, and she can only see it with the aid of the mirror" (277). When Date Bed first encounters the mirror, her recognition of her own reflection is instantaneous. Thus, Gowdy strengthens her speculative representation by asserting that elephants are self-conscious.

In the Nature Fakers controversy, it was easy to construct Seton's 'translations' of animal speech as a sentimental indulgence. Here, however, it can be understood as a speculative tool, "an accommodation of whatever actual elephant language might be, and if we accept the reality of the complexity of elephant behaviour and brain, it seems unimaginable that they do not somehow communicate" (Oerleman 192). Indeed, Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin add that whilst Gowdy's representation of elephant language may invite "infantilisation or ridicule," it is a crucial technique: "without a voice, without some direct speech, the readers' inhabitation of the elephants' world would be strictly limited" (156). They note the subtle sense of 'translation' at work when the elephants trumpet, bellow or rumble "reminding us that this is a form of translation from a very different vocal source" (156). This is another form of species-specific 'bodily language,' similar to those in Lawrence or Grove's texts. As Grove does, she renders the elephant language intelligible to us through a modified form of English. These modifications, mostly nouns, are a constant prompt to the reader that these beings are *not human*, and that this pragmatic 'anthropomorphism' is enacted from an elephant-centred point of view.

Gowdy provides a glossary of elephant vocabulary, for instance: a "Jaw-log" is a crocodile, a "Honker" is a goose and a "Howler" is a jackal (xiii). For a

few translations, she goes into detail, revealing insights into the elephant perspective on other species: a rhinoceros is known as a “Ghastly” because “it has short unsightly legs, and its ‘tusks,’ or horns, are arranged one on top of the other rather than side by side” (xii). Again, this is reminiscent of Roberts’ construction of species perspectives in his stories. These functioned to defamiliarize our speciesist labels (cats are cute, cockroaches are disgusting) and strengthen his imaginative speculation. Moreover, Gowdy’s use of paratext (not only the glossary, but also a preface, footnotes, family trees and a map) implies the presence of a human author or editor, akin to Grove’s F.P.G. character. On occasion, the ‘translation’ is made overt: “‘Father,’ [...] is neither a concept nor a word since bulls are not thought to be co-conceivers of life” (20). As in *Consider Her Ways*, this technique suggests that there is some room for human error in the translation and observation of the subject species. Furthermore, Gowdy uses an alliterative family naming system (the She-S family: She-Swaggers, She-Sees, She-Spoils; the She-D family: She-Deflates, She-Demands, She-Distracts) similar to that of researchers like Cynthia Moss. This alludes to the presence of an observing human and the possibility that the novel is a researcher’s study rather than a fictional story. Although subtle, we find the legacy of the wild animal story’s implicit construction as anecdotal evidence. On the whole, however, the omniscient narration would seem to undermine the presence of an external human narrator. So, whilst Gowdy does not employ the subjective human observer technique used in *Consider*, there is ‘translation’ at work, nonetheless. Indeed, we might perceive the whole novel as a translation; a translation of the nonhuman world into something palatable and comprehensible to the human reader.

As Tiffin and Huggan imply, although the 'talking animal' would seem to distance us from perceiving these elephants *as elephants*, the richness of Gowdy's zoocentric speculation might not be possible otherwise. As we have seen, it is difficult for the more realistic works of Bodsworth or Lawrence to critique anthropocentrism from *a nonhuman perspective*. The unspoken questions of Bodworth's curlew achieved some critique of human mistreatment of nonhuman life, but it is subtle compared to the overt condemnation of Grove's ants. Gowdy's complex talking elephants observe and judge humans to be savage, violent brutes. As I have demonstrated, the defamiliarization of speciesism and human violence is one of the wild animal story's crucial techniques. These scenes often rely on the disturbing juxtaposition between the protagonist (or their family) depicted as *subject of a life* and as *an object of utility*. Whilst in realistic texts these scenes still carry a strong critique, the animal victims of speculative texts are empowered to observe and judge the humans, providing a uniquely zoocentric defamiliarization. Gowdy's critique is strongest during the depiction of a massacre in which two different elephant families lose most of their members. The two families had been relaxing and enjoying a watering hole (a rare opportunity during a drought) when they first scent the vehicle, and whilst alert, they do not move off immediately. Suddenly however:

> [the vehicle] bellows over the bank in a swell of dust as though, despite being upwind, it scented them from the plain. Before it fully stops, the humans leap out. She-Scares gives a dreadful roar. She-Screams and the calves start screaming. There is the rattle of gunshot and She-Scares falls onto She-Demands. With hyena-like yells the humans gallop into the swamp, knees capering above the water, guns firing. (86)

Amongst the violence, the humans are disturbingly gleeful, playing and joking whilst killing, and abusing the infant elephants:

> The human that shot She-Stammers flings a rope after Blue's head [...] He yanks on the rope, and Blue thrashes and squalls. Her twin sister, Flow Sticks, rushes back to her. The human jumps astride Blue and kicks her so brutally that her forelegs buckle. He goes on kicking until she bolts. Her brief, bird-like screams alternate with her sister's quivering screams, and the human riding her kicks and whoops and holds one hand high. The other human howls. (87)

To the nonhuman perspective, the actions of the humans are inexplicable; humans become predators whose behaviours are unprecedented in animal experience, unpredictable and unknowable. Indeed, Tall Time confesses to another elephant that he has lost faith in elephant knowledge as a result of this unprecedented destruction: "'Torrent, what use are the links if they do not warn of such tragedies?' 'No link with which *you* are acquainted warned of such tragedies'" (157). With distressing dramatic irony, we know what the elephants do not: we as readers understand the trade in ivory, we understand that a car is a machine not an animal, we understand the hunter's imitation of a cowboy but through the defamiliarizing effect of the elephant view point, their actions become inexplicable to us too. There is no answer, no excuse 'good enough' for the unnecessary slaughter of so many unique individuals with whom the reader has become so closely acquainted. As with Bodsworth's confused, interrogating curlew and the horror of Grove's ants at the exploitative relationship between pig and farmer, we hold the guilty knowledge that the nonhumans do not. We sympathize with the animals but are uncomfortably complicit with the humans.

In contrast to the threat of ivory poachers—a plight faced by real elephants—the reader's intense sympathy for the elephants may be undermined by Gowdy's use of the 'supernatural.' Oerleman comments that the novel reveals "the horrors of butchering complex conscious beings," yet the "range of anthropomorphism can strain credulity to such a degree that it undermines the novel's seemingly serious ambitions about environmental ethics

and animal consciousness" (190). Whilst I agree with Oerleman to some extent, I would add that Gowdy's attribution of 'magical abilities' to some of her elephants serves a practical purpose. It is worth noting first that telepathy and prescience are rare in Gowdy's elephants. Typically each herd has one visionary and one 'mind talker.' Whilst telepathic elephants are able to hear the thoughts of their own kind, their primary function is to facilitate communication with other species. Gowdy states explicitly that the mind talker "understands the language of most other creatures," (23) demonstrating that her speculation extends beyond elephants. She even gives each species distinct 'voices' and styles of communication:

> Imparting any kind of general information, they [mongooses] tend to chorus out loud, everybody delivering roughly the same phrase and starting and stopping at roughly the same moment. Their speech is twittering in which words are repeated two and three times: 'Sing, sing, sing the song, song about, the song about the hot, the hot, the hot, hot, hot fight, fight, fight.' […] They and the martial eagles couldn't express themselves more differently. Thinking and speaking, the eagles use as few words as possible. 'There.' 'How long?' They prefer to gesture. (271-2)

Significantly, the elephants communicate with the greatest eloquence. Gowdy seems to imply an intellectual hierarchy, although it is possible that the languages of other animals are less coherent because we receive a 'translation' from an elephant; if they are confusing to Date Bed, they will be confusing to us.

Humans, insects, and snakes are excluded from the reach of elephant telepathy, however (23). It is significant that these nonhuman species are some of those with which we have the most difficulty empathizing and, therefore, we are least willing to recognize as intelligent, emotional beings. These specific rejections seem to be informed by speciesism and may betray the limits of Gowdy's own empathy. Similarly, I argue that the use of 'magic' in animal literature (also seen in Grove's use of telepathy and Baird's use of visions)

reveals the limits of human imagination and understanding. A complex plot appears to necessitate complex nonhuman communication. As discussed above, Gowdy deals with elephant language in a number of ways but it seems that these techniques are deemed insufficient for interspecies exchanges. This use of the supernatural is practical and allows for Gowdy's engagement with the minds of animals other than elephants, however, it also alludes to the mystical 'otherness' of animals. To suggest that nonhuman beings all have the magical power to communicate telepathically with each other reinstates the animal-human divide and homogenizes the great diversity of nonhuman life. Gowdy does not go this far since only one elephant per herd can 'mind talk' and only to certain species. It is also possible to see telepathy and prescience as part of her imaginative leap, her recognition of all that we do not know and the possibility that animals possess senses or abilities that we do not. To borrow Raglon and Scholtmeijer's words, as noted, Gowdy's inclusion of the supernatural could also be part of her "challenge [to] human 'knowledge' by imagining other possibilities" (135). The presence of the supernatural becomes more frequent, however, towards the end of the novel and is not restricted to rare cases of telepathy and prescience. Here Gowdy's use of the magical seems to suggests a diversion from her "attempt, however presumptuous, to make a huge imaginative leap" (Gowdy/Siciliano). As observed in my discussion of Seton's and Roberts' occasional emphasis on 'animal heroes,' this inclusion of the mystical may seem to reveal a problematic sense that the species-typical animal is 'not enough,' even for zoocentric fiction.

Oerleman's reading of the novel centres upon "the intrinsic embarrassment of the anthropomorphic act itself" and its ability to "force readers to recognize the limits of our belief about other animals, to draw and

redraw the boundary between human and other animals species, and individual animals" (195). Oerleman recognizes that there are different types of anthropomorphism: firstly, "the realistic (scientific), based on actual observation," which is categorized as anthropomorphism due to the high level of intentionality attributed to the behaviours; secondly, "the plausibly hypothetical (conjectures reasonably based on current knowledge)," which comes closest to my own concept of speculative representation; and finally, the "implausible and fantastical, which ultimately define the limits of anthropomorphism" (190). His notion of the speculative is much stricter than my own and as such, he regards the elephant culture and religion as part of the third category rather than the second. Nonetheless, in terms of Gowdy's use of magic, I agree with Oerleman: "there are almost certainly moments which will provoke disbelief, even scorn" (195).

Towards the end of the novel, Gowdy places increasing emphasis on the *mystical* and, in particular, the 'white bone'. A legend from a distant land, picked up by a wandering male, the mythical white bone is meant to lead the elephants to The Safe Place, "a paradise. No droughts there, ever. No perils" (71). This place seems to be some kind of nature reserve, where the only humans are "entranced," staring at the elephants peacefully (74). The elephants who know most about the white bone seem to be African forest elephants known as "the Lost Ones, or the Forest Dwellers," described as having "abnormally long narrow tusks, [...] small ears, sleek skin, luminous green eyes," and being "beautiful despite their size. And gifted. All of them visionaries" (64-5). Not only are their eyes luminous, they produce beams of green light. Eventually, Tall Time finds the Lost Ones. They are surviving the drought in a cave in which there is elephant art scratched into the rock. The drawings are rough and barely

visible, having been etched using tusks. It is not known when, how or by whom they were made but the elephants presume it was a Lost One long ago. Despite being fairly rudimentary, these drawings induce visions of that which they depict. Gowdy claims that "everything my elephant characters do *lies within the realm of the possible.* As a novelist I have simply taken observed behaviour and credited it with a high level of intentionality" (Gowdy/Siciliano, emphasis added). Whilst this is largely true, her depictions of the forest elephants evidently steps beyond the "realm of the possible". The white bone, the Lost Ones, and the magic in the novel undoubtedly stray into Oerleman's category of the "implausible and fantastical" (190). It is here that I feel his 'embarrassment' lies, although I argue that it is due to the suspicion that Gowdy has abandoned her "rigor" and "attentiveness to natural science" (Sandlos 87). Most importantly, there is the impression that her "huge imaginative leap" (Gowdy/Siciliano) has failed. Thus, it is the embarrassment of having accepted her challenge to read her elephants *as elephants*, to imagine and follow her speculation, only to encounter a disruption of zoocentrism. It is the same sense that the representation has been pushed 'too far' found in Grove's ants learning to read. Is it a speculative challenge or the failure of the author's zoocentric imagination?

Whether or not this is a true 'failure' or 'abandonment,' it nonetheless draws attention to the novel's *construction* in a profound way. To some extent, it functions in a way similar to Grove's disruption of his novel's accuracy. The reader is reminded of the fictional nature of the narrative—that it is a speculative exploration, not an attempt to depict *reality*. I suggest that we might consider these techniques in the context of Seton's and Roberts' claims of 'truth' and 'accuracy.' As suggested in the previous section, perhaps these strategies have

been developed in response to the perceived foolishness of attempts to 'realistically' represent animals after the Nature Fakers controversy. Intentionally or otherwise, the use of magic draws attention to the representation of elephants and what we, as the reader, take for granted. What do we truly *know* of the nonhuman? In *The White Bone*, Gowdy invites the reader to experience the richness of her speculation, to enter the being of an elephant, to glimpse elephant culture and society, to care about these elephants and to feel their pain. Nonetheless, through this disruptive use of magic, she reminds us of the *fantasy of knowing*. Oerleman remarks that the novel makes us "believe in the possibility that animals like elephants have complex emotional and spiritual lives, and equally, make us aware of all that we do not and cannot know about these lives, that they are rich beyond our imagining" (Oerleman 195). Gowdy opens possibilities and poses questions, but makes no claims on behalf of the elephant.

White as the Waves

Considering his expertise in sperm whale behaviour, it is useful to open analysis of Alison Baird's *White as the Waves* with a reminder of Hal Whitehead's interpretation of the text. He observes that in this "remarkable" novel, the depictions of "elaborate societies, cultures, and cognitive abilities" seem to "ring true" and "may well come closer to the nature of these animals than the coarse numerical abstractions" of the scientist (370). We must keep in mind his research on whale language and culture, when we consider the following statement:

> Sperm whale culture may be restricted to coda types and movement patterns. But it could also include whole suites of techniques for making a living from an unpredictable ocean and relating to other sperms. It might encompass abstract concepts, perhaps even religion. (370-1)

Placing *White as the Waves* and *The White Bone* within a post-Nature Fakers context increases the profound significance of Whitehead's validation of their work. Most importantly, he suggests that biologists could use these representations "as hypotheses to guide our work," and that "the *next phase* of sperm whale research *should include the possibility that these animals possess elaborate and multi-layered social relationships, societies, and cultures*" (371, 373, emphasis added). Indeed of all the authors covered in this thesis, Baird is the one to declare most overtly the "*speculative*" nature of her work and that it is not "a fantasy, like *Bambi* or *Black Beauty*" (275, emphasis added).

With the statements of Whitehead and Baird in mind, we can see that *White as the Waves* holds the most obvious potential for interdisciplinary communication. As such, I will use this section to consider the text in relation to: the wild animal story and other zoocentric texts addressed in this thesis; implications for zoocentric representation in a post-Nature Fakers context; the text's potential for facilitating productive, reciprocal engagement between literature, advocacy, and science. Considering the unique qualities of the text, it seems curious that *White as the Waves* is currently out-of-print. Apart from a few reviews and Whitehead's comments above, no scholarship has been published on this book. Although a thorough, close analysis of the text is needed, it is not the priority of my work here. *White as the Waves* and the other marginalized books in this thesis deserve sustained, committed interpretation that would distract from my overall argument. As I have stated previously, these six twentieth-century texts provide a further method of re-contextualizing the wild animal story and Nature Fakers controversy. Thus, due to the constraints of

the current project, I will have to reserve a more comprehensive analysis of *White as the Waves* for future publications.

As Grove and Gowdy did, Baird prioritizes her commitment to producing a *speculative, zoocentric* representation over 'realism' or plausibility. This is the fundamental divergence these authors have taken from the original realistic wild animal story. All three use their unique, species-specific perspectives to defamiliarize anthropocentric language and behaviour. They challenge perceptions of animals as *useful dead objects* by depicting an intimate, zoocentric experience of human violence. By representing their protagonists and their companions as *complex, individual, subjects of a life* they help to challenge the speciesist labels that legitimize exploitation. For Grove, the nonhuman perspective is used to criticize the casual, unthinking ways in which the majority of violence against animals is committed. Gowdy and Baird, on the other hand, convey species-specific conservation messages by using their protagonists as witnesses to the ravages of hunting on both *individuals and populations*. As discussed in the previous chapter, however, the zoocentric commitment of these authors does not enable nuanced interpretations of the discourses and institutions that facilitated the exploitation of their chosen species. Although the more 'detached,' omniscient narration of the 'realistic' texts enables these sophisticated critiques, the speculative representations of Grove, Gowdy, and Baird offer a uniquely visceral engagement with nonhuman suffering.

There is an obvious contrast between Grove's ant thought-experiment, and Gowdy and Baird's speculations about elephant and whale societies. For the latter two, there is a smaller gap between their representations and the current research. As such, a smaller leap of the empathetic imagination is

needed. Both species are ‘charismatic’ and known for high levels of cognitive and social complexity. In many nations there is considerable support for the protection of whales and elephants. Nonetheless, regardless of species, the speculative style of representation is still prone to receiving criticism for heavy anthropomorphism or else complete dismissal as ‘fantasy.’ Both Grove and Gowdy negotiate the potentially controversial nature of their texts by drawing attention to the ‘translation’ of the nonhuman perspective. Their use of the fanciful and absurd seems to intentionally disrupt illusions of ‘fact’ and ‘accuracy,’ thereby reinforcing the *fictionality* of their work. The questions of ‘truth’ that preoccupied the Nature Fakers controversy are negated by these attempts to highlight the construction and mediation of their work.

Bodsworth and Haig-Brown also employed methods of avoiding accusations of anthropomorphism or ‘nature faking.’ However, these tended to rely on deferring their authority to speak on behalf of their species or attempting to balance a contradictory attitude towards the sentience and complexity of their protagonists. Likewise, the complex disruption of ‘realism’ in the speculative texts can be awkward or heavy-handed at times (Grove’s ants teaching themselves to read, for instance). In *White as the Waves*, however, Baird presents an innovative solution to the wild animal story’s problematic relationship with ‘accuracy’ and ‘real animals.’ Unlike the others, she returns to the animal biography narrative structure, as well as the figure of the ‘animal hero.’ As in Lawrence’s *White Puma*, the fundamental plot is highly reminiscent of Seton’s and Roberts’ stories: the first part of the narrative is preoccupied with the formative years of the protagonist’s biography; then s/he experiences the sudden and dramatic loss of their family at the hands of human hunters; and the rest of the narrative depicts their attempts to escape or pursue those same

humans. Uniquely, however, Baird's narrative is also a zoocentric retelling of an anthropocentric, canonical novel. By appropriating the eponymous antagonist of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851), she turns the narrative on its head; the whalers are now the unknowable creatures and it is Moby Dick (renamed White-as-the-Waves) who seeks to understand *their* violent attacks.

This strategy is somewhat neater than those used by either Bodsworth and Haig-Brown or by Grove and Gowdy. Moreover, I suggest that it performs an important, additional role. First of all, we must recognize that the nonhuman identity Baird appropriates is both *real* and *fictional*. In 1839 Jerimiah Reynolds published "Mocha Dick: Or the White Whale of the Pacific" in *The Knickerbocker* magazine. It depicted an encounter with a vast albino sperm whale with multiple harpoons in its body, which indicated that it had survived previous attacks from whaling vessels. This report and the story of a whale sinking the *Essex* in 1820 are thought to have been Melville's inspiration. Interestingly, Baird explains in her afterword that she was "intrigued to learn that the Great White Whale was *not* a figment of Melville's imagination" and so was "tempted to write a life history of Mocha Dick [...] as a genuine historical figure," but "something" kept drawing her "irresistibly" to the fictional whale instead (274-5, emphasis original). Whilst undoubtedly there is a real whale *somewhere* in the various myths of Mocha Dick, the history is so heavily mediated that it is almost impossible to discern the truth. Baird's narrative holds only a tenuous connection to the "genuine historical figure," since the intertextual chain back to the real whale includes the work of both Melville and Reynolds, as well as the multitude of whalers' accounts of Mocha Dick and other albino sperm whales that were shaped by myths of monstrous leviathans in the ocean. Whilst it is "tempt[ing]" to write the biographies of real animals as Seton did, Baird's

decision to write the biography of an *already fictional* animal allows her to skirt the issues surrounding his 'true' stories.

As we have seen, Timothy Findley used a similar strategy in *Not Wanted on the Voyage* by re-telling the Biblical story of the Great Flood. He prioritized the voices of the people and animals 'not wanted' on Noah's 'voyage,' thus highlighting and challenging their silence in the original narrative. Likewise, Baird's zoocentric reimagining explores the *individuality* and *unique perspectives* of the slaughtered whales whose *biographies* were effaced in both Melville's narrative and by the whaling industry. In other words, she demonstrates that each of these *objects of utility* were irreplaceable *subjects of a life*. She also resists the erasure of Moby Dick's *animality* when he is read as a symbol and not *as an animal*. Baird explains that whilst he is "regarded by academics as a Metaphor [sic]," she could not help but read him as a character "as vital and as interesting" as any of the humans (275). By finding herself unable to participate in anthropocentric reading practices, she became "convinced" that there was "another story submerged within the narrative, lurking just below the surface as it were" (275). Uniquely, *White as the Waves* reveals the importance of 'recovering' these erased animal biographies. I want to emphasize the significance of such literary work, since every text containing even a *single nonhuman animal* must also contain a 'submerged' animal story. Zoocentric re-imaginings of anthropocentric, canonical texts can reveal the ways in which nonhuman objectification and exploitation are reinforced in literature. Illustrating the ubiquitous but often silent presence of animals demonstrates their speciesist depiction as *objects of utility* rather than *subjects of a life*. Moreover, I suggest that such work could pose a striking challenge to

anthropocentric literary analysis by exposing the ways in which reading animals as 'allegory' and 'metaphor' erases their presence.

In these ways, then, I suggest that we might consider one final element of our re-contextualization of the wild animal story. As I have demonstrated, the majority of nineteenth-century Canadian literature depicted animals as *objects*, rather than *individuals*. Thus, might we not think of Seton and Roberts as, in effect, reimagining these anthropocentric texts? Are their biographies of hunted animals not nineteenth-century Canadian hunting narratives reimagined from a zoocentric perspective?

Of course much of the 'recovered' biography in *White as the Waves* is predetermined both by Melville's narrative and the history of Mocha Dick, but I suggest that Baird's imaginative speculation helps to reveal the anthropocentric construction of the white whale's[1] 'monstrous' identity. His rare albinism shapes this perception through the very fact of making him memorable and recognizable to human eyes, that are usually unable to distinguish between members of the same species without forming individual relationships first. His distinctive whiteness prevents the whale's encounters with humans being attributed to multiple individuals. Indeed, one of the other sperm whales notes Whitewave's albinism and the multiple harpoons in his body, and thinks to himself: "*He is marked so they* [the whalers] *can find him*" (Baird 230, emphasis original). Like Haig-Brown's tagged salmon, Lawrence's white puma, or some of Seton's and Roberts' animal heroes, the white whale has an identity *imposed* upon him by human observers. This act of recognition gives these animals

[1] By 'the white whale' I am referring to the merged identities of Mocha Dick, Moby Dick and White-as-the-Waves, since all three share obvious essential characteristics.

apparent singularity, which we often signify through naming (‘Mocha Dick,’ ‘Spring’ and ‘Lobo’) to stop them being seen as simply an object amongst others. Once recognized and signified in this way, continued human observation leads to our acknowledgement of nonhuman intelligent agency but curiously enough, it can also lead to the belief that these observed individuals are somehow unique—in the white whale’s case, both more violent and more intelligent—than the unobserved mass of the species.

Hence, in the context of early nineteenth century whaling culture, the fact that the white whale has seemingly survived multiple attacks transforms his identity into something monstrous: “I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate” (Melville 157). Significantly, if we compare the white whale and the white puma with the protagonists in the other texts here, we can see that those animals are not *sought* individually. When they are caught or killed it is by chance, and to the hunter they are simply an object among many. This is not the case for the puma or the whale whose human-constructed identities make them the target for human attack. When they retaliate and are recognized, the hunter’s mandate changes; they are no longer hunting for personal gain, they are eliminating a dangerous ‘man-eater’. Both the whale and the puma become tangled in an ambiguous dichotomy of ‘hunter’ and ‘hunted,’ epitomised by Starbuck’s famous cry: “See! Moby Dick seeks thee not. It is thou, thou, that madly seekest him” (528).

Although Lawrence is not reimagining any particular text, he does refer back to stories and accounts of pumas attacking tourists, we can see that both authors use the biographical narrative structure to demonstrate the possibility that animals vilified as violent and dangerous, are responding to a threat posed

by humans. Seton's story of his hunt for Lobo and his pack never postulated any motivation beyond the wolf's unusually high enjoyment of killing; whereas the white puma and the white whale only begin their attacks after hunters kill their families. The defamiliarizing effect of this speculation is strengthened in Baird's case through her animal-centric reversal of a canonical novel.

It is difficult to date the precise setting of *White as the Waves* but it spans the life of the male sperm whale protagonist whose birth I approximate as at the end of the eighteenth century, since he is around fifty or sixty years old when encountering Ahab. We are able to witness the development of the whaling industry across the early nineteenth century and observe the change in whale societies before and after human contact. As in other speculative narratives, Baird's animal cultures are fully formed with histories, myths, origin stories, and unique dialects for the "nations of whales" (222). Unlike Grove and Gowdy however, Baird emphasizes the relationship between survival of the species and survival of the culture:

> the Lore of the cachalots—bulls gather it, the cows absorb it and transmit it like milk to the calves. It spreads through each cachalot generation, a vast resource of our knowledge, our culture—lost forever. Our social organization, even our rules of etiquette—all will disappear. It's happening now. The work of millennia is being lost, and once it is gone it may never be completely recovered. [...] Whole family pods have been devastated by the loss of their matriarchs. The pods split up and wander aimlessly, without purpose until they are killed too—because they've lost their survival skills, as well as all our cachalot wisdom and tolerance. Even if we do escape extinction and survive in small numbers, what kind of whales will we have become? (195)

We can see here not only the links between survival of the species and survival of culture but also the effects of species loss on both the population and the individual. In *Last of the Curlews*, Bodsworth makes a tentative gesture towards the profound question, what are the consequences of near-extinction for the behaviour, experiences, and survival chances of the remaining individual(s)?

Bodsworth postulates that there would be some impact on the lone curlew but his insistence that the bird is driven entirely by instinct prevents further engagement with this question. As I have argued, Bodsworth's awkward response to the stigma against anthropomorphism and 'nature faking' is to depict an individual capable of cognitive and emotional complexity but described with reductive, objectifying language. Writing forty years later about a species recognized for its intelligence, long-term memory, and multifaceted social relationships, Baird openly addresses this question. Indeed, she does not simply consider the possibility but explores the potential consequences at length. Moreover, the 'unspoken question' of Bodsworth's curlew is also expanded upon by Baird. Whitewave knows and understands that his species is threatened with extinction, and even that humans are the precise cause:

> This isn't just an act of Nature, like a red tide poisoning the sea, or an attack by orcas. This is—this is *wrong* [...] When have cachalots ever died in such huge numbers? [...] Everyone we know has been killed—everyone. [...] Nature has produced an aberration: a predator that is too efficient, an organism that evolves so rapidly its prey is too efficient, an organism that evolves so rapidly its prey is unable to adapt and survive. (180-1)

As addressed by many of the texts here, one of the defamiliarizing effects of the wild animal story is the possibility that animals we comfortably imagine to be 'dumb' and 'unthinking' are conscious, knowing witnesses to our acts of violence.

> The killing of animals is a structural feature of all human-animal relations. It reflects human power over animals at its most extreme and yet also at its most commonplace. (The Animal Studies Group, 4).

We might consider the possibility that in the whale's "inscrutable malice," Ahab may be detecting the uncanny potential of the conscious animal, witnesses the slaughter of their species, and it is the unsettling implications of this for our

collective guilt as a species that is the “inscrutable thing” he “hate[s]” (Melville 157).

Baird’s whales are not all-knowing, of course; her speculative depiction of cetacean cultures includes an exploration of the gradual accumulation and transmission of knowledge. Whitewave describes this process in the extract above, but the implications of this slow process for creatures without technology in a vast ocean are illustrated tragically when Whitewave encounters humans for the first time. Rumours of whaling ships circulate amongst cetaceans in the first third of the novel, but with no experience of humans and no reason to fear them, he (like many others) does not heed the stories: “No creature attacks without provocation” (Baird 94). Of course, this statement becomes darkly ironic when the whalers attack a nearby calf only moments later, and the graphic slaughter of a nursing pod begins. Amidst the violence, Whitewave’s mate goes into labour but is harpooned before the calf is born. Like Mocha Dick who was supposedly seen defending a mother and her calf, Whitewave guards the body of his mate for hours afterwards:

> He lifted his whole headcase out of the water and snapped his jaws repeatedly at the ship, as though it were another bull-whale he could challenge to a duel. It paid him no heed. [...] Taking up a defensive position by his mate’s body, he gave another aggressive jaw-clap and pounded the water with his flukes. He heard a sound like the chattering laughter of gulls rise in response from the man-creatures in the boat. A harpoon on its long line snaked out from the lead boat, and bit deep into his side. The pain shocked him back to his senses. (105)

Whitewave attacks the boats, killing “all that came within the range of his jaws” and “stationing himself beside Moontail” until the whalers give up and the ship moves away (106). Throughout the rest of the novel, he tries to spread knowledge of human violence but is only believed when the other whales begin to recognize the huge numbers in which their species are dying. We can approximate then, that Baird suggests it takes at least a few decades for

awareness of whalers to spread throughout the cetacean communities. Like Gowdy's speculations about the production of nonhuman knowledge through the elephant's 'superstitions' or Bodsworth's consideration of the impact of species loss on survivors, these ideas could make valuable "hypotheses" (Whitehead 371).

Interestingly, Whitewave's awareness of the whalers leads him to become obsessed with trying to comprehend their enigmatic behaviour. Baird reverses the discussion the debates of cetacean intelligence that shape *Moby Dick*, and like Grove and Gowdy, she presents a caricature of anthropocentrism and speciesism: "Men are animals, nothing more: you speak of them as though they are intelligent" (186). She strengthens her speculative representation and her defamiliarizing depiction of humans, whilst the humorous ignorance of the whales suggests the possibility that *we* too are ignorant of *their* intelligence. Yet on another level, whilst Baird reminds us of our own animality, she also supports a dichotomy between 'intelligence' and 'animality'. This begs the question, if the 'intelligent' species of the book are not animals, then what are they? Perhaps from their perspective, it is not 'humans and animals' but 'cetaceans and animals'. Whilst this is undoubtedly problematic and based on hierarchical, anthropocentric principles, the very fact that it is jarring and contradictory does reveal the arbitrary distinctions between humans and animals, sentient and non-sentient beings. This of course aids in the construction of a species-specific perspective, as well as Baird's disruption of human arrogance. As the novel progresses and Whitewave's attempt to understand humans is continuing, he decides to adopt as much of a non-violent life as a predator can:

> I moved with you [...] into the sphere of harmony and kindliness—the Sphere of Order; and from now on I will be part of it. The Sphere of

> Violence must claim only the smallest part of me, as much as I need to live and to save other lives. Everything I do, from my choice of prey to my relations with other whales, must be reflections of the higher sphere. (167)

This dichotomy between 'intelligence' and 'animality' develops into one between 'intelligence' and 'violence.' Based on his experience, it seems inevitable that human violence would constitute the opposite of his non-violent intelligence. From this perspective, his opposition to humans and intelligence is not surprising.

Whilst collectively humanity is complicit in violence against animals and the destruction of their habitats, it is undoubtedly problematic to homogenize this. All humans are culpable to differing degrees and many of the authors here reflect this, particularly those presenting a retrospective account of species loss. Haig-Brown, Bodsworth, Gowdy and Baird all provide historical perspectives of varying techniques and time periods. Bodsworth's scope is longest, using archive materials to provide an account from 1772 to 1955, although the narrative itself covers only a year or so. Apart from the tragic death of the curlew's mate, the thousands upon thousands of other dead curlews in the novel are restricted to the bland numbers of the historical records. Baird's novel is the only other to provide such a pronounced historical perspective. Her speculative depiction of Whitewave as a witness to the growth of the American whaling industry is of course much more intense than Bodsworth's carefully distanced perspective. In common with Grove and Gowdy, she incorporates a limited amount of magic as a plot device, but this is restricted to the visions that Whitewave experiences, partway between dreams and premonitions, used to juxtapose the status of whale populations throughout history:

> Visions came to him, crowding into his brain. He saw man-ships, but they had grown incredibly vast, larger than a whole pod of whales: and they were made not of land-weeds but of something harder and crueller,

> rock-solid and impenetrable, and they had huge mouths that gaped wide. Dead whales were drawn into these mouths [...] Nothing could escape them. Swift, hard-hulled ships raced through the sea at impossible speeds, but no boats were lowered: the whales were killed by lightning-harpoons that flew through the air from the ships' bows with a flash of fire and smoke, and when struck the whales died in agony, torn apart from within while they still lived. (196-7)

Unsurprisingly, considering her blunt and gruesome approach to achieving the effect of defamiliarization here, Teresa Toten's review of the novel for the May 1999 issue of *Quill and Quire* concludes: "*White as the Waves* left me with the uneasy feeling that there was a story somewhere in this lesson" (Toten). Yet Baird's heavy-handed critique is less controversial than Grove's for instance, since her whale conservation message would be widely accepted in 1990s Canada.

It is perhaps because she is communicating a lesson and encouraging support for cetacean protection, that her defamiliarizing negative representations of humanity are softened by a few reassuring exceptions. In common with some of the authors here, Baird does distinguish between the mass slaughter of industrialized whaling and Aboriginal subsistence hunting:

> few ship-men come to my ocean [...] We have native men, but these only use little boats. They have heavy shaggy pelts that cover them completely, except for their faces [...] The furry men have always killed our kind and the beluga's—but never in such numbers that we had any fear for our people's survival. These men are few in number and they respect the Balance, as do we. (120)

She does somewhat romanticize this narwhal's perspective, who seems hardly to mind the hunting of his species, which feeds into the idealized image of Aboriginal peoples 'in harmony' with nature. Yet she also romanticizes the modern activity of whale watching as well. Towards the end of the novel, one of Whitewave's visions presents "an alternative future to the nightmare visions he had seen before" (262). It describes a whale watching boat:

> a strangely-shaped boat moving alongside some spouting grey whales. He wanted to clang a warning, but suddenly he saw to his surprise that the humans aboard this boat had no harpoons in their hands. They were gesticulating and shouting, starting at the great grey backs that arched through the waves alongside them—looking, but not harming; extending limbs that were empty of weapons, that reached only to touch. [...] Longing filled him at this gentle scene. (262)

Yet organizations such as the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society cite extensive research on the detrimental effects of whale watching, which can result in both short and long-term consequences for the physical condition, behaviour, distribution, and reproductive success of targeted cetaceans. Baird's idealized human-animal encounter—rather like Gowdy's idyllic wildlife reserve at the end of *The White Bone*—reveals attitudes typical of her time, and indeed the majority of the research indicated by WDCS, was published after Baird's novel. Both authors express the need to envisage an optimistic future, a necessary exception to their profound criticisms of humanity's relationship with wild animals, even Grove gestures towards this by using the telepathic interspecies communication between F.P.G. and the ant Wawa-Quee. The idea that these animals will recognize our rare moments of benign behaviour, and perhaps even 'forgive' our violence and exploitation, provides a reassuring fantasy. It is nonetheless an act of guilt-soothing ventriloquism, and in these moments the alterity and autonomous agency of the nonhuman (already problematic in the wild animal story's 'fantasy of knowing') is undermined further. Here is the uncomfortable contradiction at the heart of these texts: the sacrifice of alterity and agency, together with the 'disrespectful' ventriloquizing treatment of literary animals, is used in the hope of garnering support for the respectful treatment of real animals.

Returning finally to *Moby Dick*, we can see this change in the white whale's agency when we juxtapose Melville's and Baird's texts. Interestingly, in

her comparison of English, American and Canadian representations of animals, Margaret Atwood seems almost to predict the writing of *White as the Waves*:

> English animal stories are about 'social relations,' American ones are about people killing animals; Canadian ones are about animal *being* killed, as felt emotionally from inside the fur and feathers. As you can see, *Moby Dick* as told by the White Whale would be very different. ("Why is that strange man chasing me around with a harpoon?"). (74)

The subtext here is that *Moby Dick* as told by a *Canadian* would be 'very different.' Of course, as argued in my chapter "Other Animals," I do not quite agree with Atwood's generalizations but her comparison demonstrates the wild animal story's fantasy of knowing the nonhuman. In *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity* (2008), Philip Armstrong argues that the "narrative, form and thematics of *Moby Dick* are all driven by the question: what do whales mean?" (101). Of course the complexity of the novel is in its multifaceted but ultimately frustrated considerations of this question. We might also add that literary criticism of the novel has largely been driven by the question: what does Moby Dick mean? As Armstrong correctly remarks, critics have tended to concentrate on "reading cetaceans as a screen for the projection of human meanings" (101) and, in other words, the now clichéd issue of whether Moby Dick is *really* a whale or not. Again, Baird's animal-centred retelling demonstrates the objectification of the character when his experiences and life history are erased so that he can become a 'screen' for human meaning. Such allegorical readings of *Moby Dick* are not straightforward though, and the question of the whale's meaning is often vexed by the issue of his agency. As an enigmatic literary animal, his agency lies in his ability to resist easy signification and the fact that he is a "vital" and "interesting" character (Baird 275). The difficulties of a coherent interpretation of Moby Dick are compounded

by the contradiction between the seemingly simultaneous expression of both sympathetic whale representations and nineteenth century whaling attitudes.

As Armstrong argues, this leads some critics to try to 'resolve' the novel by simply imposing anachronistic late-twentieth century whale protection arguments onto the text:

> Melville displays an attitude very different from the popular sentiment in present-day Western societies, which regard any cetacean as a peculiarly 'charismatic' animal [...] whales are protected collectively because the rarity of some species vividly embodies the fragility of ecological biodiversity. And individual cetacean lives are valued because their mammalian characteristics, along with their purported intelligence and benignity, invite in humans a sense of kinship all the more distinctive because it coexists with other features that embody a radical otherness: their sometimes colossal proportions; their morphological similarity to an utterly different order of creatures; their occupation of an 'alien world' in the oceans. Sympathy for whales has spread well beyond the countercultures of environmentalism and animal rights. *Moby Dick* was written at a time when such attitudes were conspicuously absent. (104)

Thus, Baird's novel, which expresses the perspectives Armstrong describes here, can perhaps also be seen as an attempt to reconcile *Moby Dick*:

> In Melville's day it was still possible to write of a conflict in which Man stood helpless against the vast, terrifying, enigmatic power of Nature. In this era of holes in the ozone layer; devastated rainforests and ravaged fish stocks—an era in which some whale species still have not fully recovered from the wholesale slaughter of previous centuries—humanity can no longer comfortably cast itself as the victim. We have ourselves become the vast and implacable force before which nothing can stand. (Baird 275)

In her anti-anthropocentric rewriting of the novel, humans become monstrous and unknowable, and the once-enigmatic White Whale becomes knowable as the heroic protagonist Whitewave. The possibility of Moby Dick's intelligent agency is tentative in Melville's novel and is often described (and interpreted) in terms of anthropomorphism, but critics like Armstrong recognize the agency of his 'animality' instead—that is, his ability to resist representation. In light of all that I have discussed here then, we have to consider whether the imaginative

speculations of Baird and the others are worth the sacrifice of an animal's literary agency. If researchers such as Whitehead use these representations to produce hypotheses to further our knowledge of nonhuman life, are these protagonists merely being used as 'tools' to aid an interesting thought experiment? More troublingly, we might also reflect on whether the nonhuman protagonists in all the different texts we have encountered here are just instruments of defamiliarization. Are we using these animals as 'props' for human meaning once again—this time to convey to each other different ideas about our relationship with other animals? Is Baird merely appropriating Whitewave's identity to critique nineteenth century attitudes to whales? If so, is she simply writing in order to reconcile this canonical text with our twentieth century perception of whales? Whilst we trouble over these issues, animals remain utterly indifferent until the consequences of our discussions impact their quality of life. If our preoccupation with imagined animals in all forms of cultural production does nothing to improve quality of life, then we might as well continue to see them as symbols and nothing more.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

The Wild Animal's Story

How do short stories about wild animals cause a controversy? My thesis has been driven by this unusual problem, which sits at the heart of the peculiar but fascinating history of both the wild animal story and Nature Fakers debate. The genre's simultaneous ubiquity and marginalization—fundamental to Canadian literary animal studies, yet disregarded as something of an embarrassment—stimulated a variety of questions for me.

Why did Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G.D. Roberts create this highly specific form of writing? What contemporary forces encouraged them to attempt speaking on behalf of animals? What influenced the genre's hybrid blend of science and storytelling? Why did Seton and Roberts feel the need to write such self-conscious prefaces to their collections? What inspired their claims of fact and accuracy? What made them state their ambitions for the wild animal story so often, and why have few critics taken them seriously? Why has their work been remembered as a "scarcely respectable branch of [Canadian] literature" (Polk 51)? Why has Seton's name become infamous, whilst the animal stories of the "father of Canadian poetry" (Verma 18) are so often forgotten? Why did the Nature Fakers controversy happen? Which contextual and ideological factors led to the success of the accusers (John Burroughs and others) and the steady diminishing of the wild animal story? (Indeed, why would such prominent Americans feel the need to criticize the animal representations of two Canadian authors?) Most importantly, how did the wild animal story and

the Nature Fakers controversy impact the representation of animals in subsequent twentieth-century Canadian literature?

After finding insufficient answers to these questions, the task of re-examining, re-contextualizing, and re-evaluating the stories and the debate became the primary focus of my thesis. Though admittedly ambitious, the study of twentieth-century, post-Nature Fakers Canadian literature was a necessary context for this re-evaluation; an original and effective gauge for the lasting influence of Seton's and Roberts' work. Moreover, the general marginalization of Canadian literature means that the exclusion of any forms of writing from the national canon may be detrimental. Likewise, if the burgeoning field of literary animal studies is to establish a zoocentric canon of what Kenneth Shapiro and Marion Copeland both described as "robust and respectful" animal representations (345), we must scrutinize our reasons for omitting any text that places nonhuman protagonists at the centre of their *own* stories. This is particularly crucial for any literature attempting the daunting (but imperative) task of imagining the lives, perspectives, and experiences of nonhuman individuals. What John Simons called "the imaginative and speculative acts of literature" (7) may be our greatest tool for promoting the ethical treatment of other animals, as well as increased understanding of their particular cognitive, emotional, and social complexities.

The framework that I have developed, practical zoocriticism, has enabled a reading of the wild animal story that prioritizes the imagined presence of the nonhuman animal. As such, I have been able to expose the ways in which anthropocentric interpretations have repeatedly undermined both the authors' commitments to imagining the lives of animals and their attempts to engage

with the contemporary discourses of animal rights, wildlife conservation, and animal psychology. Using an interdisciplinary investigation, I have uncovered the various contextual factors that influenced both the creation of the genre and the criticisms it received during the Nature Fakers dispute. The charge of 'anthropomorphism' was used throughout the controversy, and I have traced the continued stigma of its association with the wild animal story. These negative connotations have often been expressed by literary critics through the language of embarrassment, distain, anxiety, or discomfort, which perpetuate the genre's marginalization. By re-defining and re-contextualizing the wild animal story I have illuminated the unique contribution made by Seton and Roberts and their profound impact on subsequent Canadian literature. Through my framework, I have demonstrated that the innovative zoocentrism of the six twentieth-century novels (addressed in the latter chapters of this thesis) ought to be recognized as extensions of the wild animal story. Finally, I conclude that current cross-disciplinary work in animal studies allows us to appreciate the genre's potential for productive scientific-engagement, as originally envisioned by Seton and Roberts.

Practising Zoocriticism

In the "Knowing Other Animals" chapter, I argued that the wild animal story was not representative of Canadian literature. Using a survey of twentieth-century texts, I differentiated common forms of animal representation and characterized them as the fantasy of knowing the animal, the failure of knowing the animal, and the acceptance of not-knowing the animal. I demonstrated that the surveyed texts fell into the latter categories, whereas the wild animal story and the six core twentieth-century texts embodied the fantasy of knowing the

animal. Through analysis of Canadian environmental history, I suggested that the differences between these styles of representation may have been influenced by the nation's complex relationship with animals. Contradictory impulses to both exploit and protect the Canadian environment and its nonhuman inhabitants seem to be exacerbated by a national iconography dominated by images of animals, juxtaposed with the autonomous, unpredictable presences of living wild animals. I proposed that we might characterize Canada's relationship with wild animals as one of simultaneous fascination and confusion, but I emphasized that this was *not* intended as a homogenizing theory of a mythical 'Canadian psyche.'

In the following chapter, "Practical Zoocriticism," I demonstrated the prevalence of anthropocentric interpretations of the wild animal story. Such perspectives tend to undermine the zoocentric aims of the genre by dissociating the stories from Seton's and Roberts' attempts to engage with animal sciences and animal advocacy. These efforts to marginalize the presence of the nonhuman animal may have been influenced the "embarrassment" of the animal (Charles Bergman). Hence, these arguments inevitably overlooked what John Sandlos described as the "unique innovation" of the genre (79). I suggested that such analyses, combined with the general misunderstanding and poor definition of the genre, have contributed to the negative perception of the wild animal story. In order to illustrate the value of Seton's and Roberts' innovations, I proposed that their representations of autonomous wild animals may have been motivated by the anthropocentric, objectifying use of animals in other nineteenth-century Canadian literature.

Using the practical zoocriticism framework, I also speculated on the likelihood that the wild animal story developed in reaction to Canada's rather

marginal, fragmented efforts at animal advocacy. Investigating the history of animal protection and wildlife conservation movements demonstrated the contrast between those of Canada and its neighbours. The lack of a coherent response to animal exploitation in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Canada has been attributed to the nation's continued economic dependence on different animal industries. As I stated, however, there has been very little scholarship in this area, and none that attempts to track the dual evolution of *both* Canada's wildlife conservation and animal welfare movements. Nonetheless, I proposed that the nation's dichotomy between exploitation and protection impeded these movements, compared to the concurrent progress being made in Great Britain and the United States.

By examining the history of science, and the changing relationship between science and literature, I indicated the ways in which the nineteenth-century process of specialization and professionalization impacted the wild animal story and Nature Fakers controversy. Both Seton and Roberts were born in the middle of this transformation, and by the time that their stories became popular, the boundaries between disciplines were more distinct than ever before. As a consequence, areas like natural history and animal psychology experienced diminished credibility as sciences, and so it became increasingly important to maintain their validity by excluding amateurs and popular writers. Thus, I provided original insights into the motivations behind the Nature Fakers controversy by suggesting that, as influential figures in the field, John Burroughs and Theodore Roosevelt may have been attempting to reinforce the respectability of natural history by excluding Seton, Roberts, and the others. Similarly, my investigation into animal psychology revealed its origins in the anecdotes and popular writing of unscientific observers. George Romanes'

attempts to establish the first scientific theory of animal intelligence were undermined by Conwy Lloyd Morgan who questioned his reliance on anecdotal evidence. The implementation of Morgan's canon increased the importance of instinct in comparative psychology, and prompted its transformation into behaviourism in the early decades of the twentieth-century. In these preoccupations with professionalism and objectivity, we also find the anxiety and embarrassment of anthropomorphism. I argue that the stigma against anecdotal evidence that undermined Romanes' work, also contributed to the criticisms targeted at the wild animal story.

In "Wild Animals and Nature Fakers," I used the contextual information gained in the previous chapter to inform a survey of Seton's and Roberts' texts across three volumes of each author's work. This analysis demonstrated the validity of the genre criteria I established in the previous chapter, whilst also illuminating Seton's and Roberts' engagement with the core contextual factors of 'literature,' 'advocacy,' and 'science.' My readings explored the ways in which the wild animal story prioritized the animality, individuality, and autonomy of protagonists in contrast to the objectifying use of animals in other nineteenth-century Canadian literature. I then considered the genre's engagement with advocacy through the defamiliarizing use of nonhuman biography. I contend that by juxtaposing depictions of the animal protagonist as an autonomous, living *individual* and a useful, dead *object* the stories reflect Tom Regan's concept of nonhuman animals as the "subject-of-a-life" (243). The zoocentric defamiliarization of the wild animal story also extended to challenging the species stereotypes that legitimize exploitation, as well as depicting the violence of that exploitation from a nonhuman perspective. I proposed that both of these

techniques perform a valuable function in the relationship between literature and advocacy.

By drawing comparisons between the anecdotal cognitivism of Romanes, Seton, and Roberts, I explored the genre's unique engagement with scientific evidence. Here I encountered a difference between Seton's and Roberts' work. Whilst the former often depicted himself in his stories as the scientist gathering his observations, Roberts used his prefaces to describe his use of research and anecdotes from other observers. I interpreted this disparity as perhaps a reflection of their differing relationships with wild animals. Finally, I demonstrated the extensive similarities between Seton, Roberts, and Romanes' perceptions of animal minds. By reading the wild animal story *through* Romanes' theory of (and criteria for) animal intelligence, I provided a new, robust challenge to the genre's reputation for anthropomorphism and inaccuracy. From this perspective, then, Seton's and Roberts' representations were in accordance with the contemporary animal psychology research.

After providing this entirely original re-contextualization and re-evaluation of the wild animal story, I examined two of the articles Burroughs and Roosevelt contributed to the Nature Fakers controversy. By interpreting their criticisms through the context of nineteenth-century scientific specialization, I demonstrated the ways in which the most influential figures of the debate used it as a method of re-establishing and reinforcing the credibility of natural history, and their own positions within it. I also observed that in their mockery of the wild animal story, Burroughs and Roosevelt relied on the negative associations between anthropomorphism, sentimentality, childishness, effeminacy, ignorance, amateurism, and the perceived weakness of the urban middle-classes. Thus, I provided further evidence for the formulation of the genre's

reputation as ‘embarrassing.’ I also offered an innovative, new interpretation of the Nature Fakers controversy.

In the chapter, “Realistic Representations,” my analyses of *Return to the River, Last of the Curlews*, and *The White Puma* revealed the strategies involved in the post-Nature Fakers, ‘realistic’ mode of representation. The authors’ varying efforts to avoid the charge of anthropomorphism enable us to detect the influence of different scientific discourses. The disparity between *Last of the Curlews* and *The White Puma*, for instance, reflects the rise and fall of behaviourism. Whereas the similarity between *The White Puma* and the original wild animal story demonstrates the points of correspondence between nineteenth-century comparative psychology and modern cognitive ethology. For instance, Seton and Lawrence’s texts imitate the blend of instinct and intelligence upon which both theories operate. Likewise, the comparable depictions of particular abilities (such as teaching) validate the wild animal story by undermining previous accusations of ‘nature faking’ and anthropomorphism. The lack of controversy around these twentieth-century texts may owe something to their careful strategies, but I contended that it owes much more to the changing state of animal psychology research.

Each author’s experiences of studying or campaigning on behalf of their chosen species facilitates their textual engagement with animal sciences or animal advocacy. Both *Return* and *Curlews* perform ‘investigations,’ for instance; Haig-Brown argues for the validity of home stream theory by using his narrative as an ‘experiment,’ and Bodsworth provides evidence for the rate, and cause, of Eskimo curlew extinction using archive materials. Moreover, he also uses the figure of the last curlew to speculate on the impact of species loss for the remaining individual. How would he migrate, for instance? Each of the

authors use their work to communicate a specific conservation message, and makes evident the direct causes of their species' endangerment or extinction. As such, they all use a historical perspective to demonstrate the population decline, and the impact on remaining individuals.

My close analysis of the three novels in the "Speculative Representations" chapter revealed different strategies for disrupting notions of truth, fact, or accuracy in the text. The multiple narrators in *Consider Her Ways*, and the multiple re-writings of Mocha/Moby Dick in *White as the Waves*, both acted as a form of 'layering' that prevents any easy assertions of truth. The parodies of scientific investigations in *The White Bone* and *Consider* also complicated the issues of fact and accuracy. All three explored the concept of 'translation,' which draws attention to the mediation between animal and reader. Although their use of magic aided these techniques by pre-empting accusations of anthropomorphism or fantasy, it also indicated a failure in our speculative representations. Whereas the wild animal story and realistic texts were restricted to fairly simple (often biographical) formats, the use of magic facilitated more complex narrative structures. Yet this use of supernatural abilities to enable cross-species communication or the transmission of complicated information revealed the limitations of our zoocentric imaginations. Although their texts may appear less complex, Bodsworth, Haig-Brown, and Lawrence demonstrated a commitment to their realistic narratives by daring to offer detailed speculations and plausible solutions to the problems raised by sustained, nonhuman representation. For instance, this was particularly evident in the depictions of migrations in *Return* and *Curlews*, which are inherently difficult for humans to observe. In future practice, the use or avoidance of

supernatural abilities may be a way in which we assess a text's commitment to zoocentric representations.

Nonetheless, it is clear that the speculative texts succeeded in creating intensely nonhuman perspectives. These were instrumental in each author's defamiliarization of human violence, which relied on imagining the experiences and sensations of nonhuman witnesses. Such distressing representations may elicit greater emotional response, and stimulate increased moral concern, compared to the more nuanced critiques of exploitation and anthropocentrism performed in the realistic texts. Likewise, all three speculative texts offered strong and overt challenges to behaviourism and the reductive connotations of 'instinct.' Grove, for instance, openly rejected instinct, whilst Baird's protagonists applied it to the actions of the human characters instead. Most importantly, however, each author demonstrated a commitment to imagining the upper limits of their species' abilities, and speculating on how their specific form of language or culture might operate. Here, I believe, we find an extension of Seton's occasional attempts to 'translate' the communication of his characters—although the strategies these authors use to disrupt realism in their texts reduces the stigma of anthropomorphism. Moreover, if we recall the words of the whale biologist Hal Whitehead, we can perceive both the *speculative* function of these texts and its importance. These "pictures of elaborate societies, cultures, and cognitive abilities" are built on "what is known of the biology and social lives of their subject species," and for Whitehead at least "*they ring true*" (370, emphasis added).

Reciprocal Communication and Practical Zoocentrism

A century separates the publications of *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1898) and *White as the Waves* (1999). Although their styles may seem to differ, I have demonstrated their shared aims and characteristics, the most significant of which is the attempt to produce a scientifically-informed, zoocentric speculation. Comparing these texts illuminates the importance of the contexts in which they were written and received. Seton's realistic, "true" stories (*Known* 9) caused a four year controversy in which the President of America called him a "nature faker," an "object of derision to every scientist" (Roosevelt 193). Whereas, Baird's fantastical, "speculative" text (Baird 275) rings "true" for a whale biologist, who believes that it may "come closer to the natures of these animals than the coarse numerical abstractions" that come from his own "scientific observations" (Whitehead 370). The historical scope of practical zoocriticism enables us to perceive the exceptional nature of Whitehead's suggestion that the "communication" between writers and scientific researchers "should be reciprocal" (370). Moreover, my framework's foundation in animal studies helps to emphasize the productive cross-disciplinary potential in his proposal.

Likewise, Marc Bekoff concludes an article for the journal *BioScience* with a similar vision for cognitive ethology. He suggests that the resources required for the "rigorous study of animal emotions" could include: "researchers in various scientific disciplines who provide 'hard data' and anecdotes," "other scholars who study animals," and "nonacademics [sic] who observe animals and tell stories" (869). It is useful to recall, here, John Simons' remark that "the imaginative and speculative acts of literature" coming "closest to the animal experience itself" deserve recognition (7). I propose that reciprocal engagement

between literary animal studies and cognitive ethology would aid our assessment of successfully zoocentric texts, whilst providing imaginative and speculative tools for scientists. As indicated by Bekoff, the controversial study of animal emotions makes this exchange all the more important. In his introduction to *When Elephants Weep: The Emotional Lives of Animals* (1995), Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson states:

> Surely we can train ourselves to an *empathic imaginative sympathy* for another species. Taught what to look for in facial features, gestures, postures, behavior, we could learn to be more open and more sensitive. We need to exercise our *imaginative faculties*, stretch them beyond where they have already taken us, and observe things we have never been able to see before. We need not be limited by ourselves as the reference point, by what has already been written, by the existing consensus among scientists. What do we have to lose in taking the imaginative leap to broaden our sympathies and our horizons? (xxi-xxii, emphasis added)

I contend that the "imaginative and speculative acts" (Simons 7) of zoocentric literature can help us to "exercise our imaginative faculties" and "stretch them to beyond where they have already taken us" (Masson xxi-xxii). Through cross-disciplinary exchange, moreover, practical zoocriticism could indicate the direction of future speculations that would enable us to "observe things we have never been able to see before" (xxii).

For instance, a topic that remains surprisingly controversial is that of nonhuman pleasure. In an article for the journal of *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* entitled "Animal Pleasure and its Moral Significance," Jonathan Balcombe argues for the serious ethological study of pleasure, as it is currently "under-represented" (209). Pleasure is "beneficial," a "product of evolution" which rewards the "individual for performing behaviours that promote survival and procreation" (209-10). More importantly, perhaps, pleasure also indicates that a life has "intrinsic value," that it is "worth living" (214). The ethical

implications of pleasure are profound and thus, I suggest, its representation in zoocentric fiction is crucial. The wild animal stories, and realistic and speculative texts that constitute the focus of this thesis all include various depictions of nonhuman pleasure. A clear omission, however, is representations of sex as a pleasurable act. Indeed, it is difficult to find any depictions of non-reproductive sex in *any* zoocentric literature. Balcombe explains:

> Many animals routinely copulate or engage in other sexual activities outside of the breeding season, including during pregnancy, menstruation (in mammals), and egg incubation. Such non-procreative activity may even constitute a large proportion of the animals' sexual behaviour [...] Variations on non-copulatory mounting, include: mounts without erection, mounts with erection (but with no penetration), reverse mounting in which a female mounts a male, mounting from the side or in positions from which penetration is impossible […] Animals also engage in various forms of oral sex, stimulation of partner's genitals using the hands, paws, or flippers, and various forms of anal stimulation. (212)

Crucially, he also makes it clear that most biologists "recognize same-sex sexual interactions as being part of the normal, routine behavioural repertoire of the animals who engage in it" (212). So I propose that if zoocentric literature is committed to producing the imaginative acts that come "closest to the animal experience itself" (Simons 7), its authors must be willing to follow the animal's lead. If, as Marion Copeland asserted, they are to "interpret the stories of other living beings for human readers" (277), they must be willing to shrug off anthropocentric sensibilities in order to ponder the difficult questions of scientists: "What, then, might be said of the role of pleasure in animals' sex lives" (Balcombe 212)?

In closing, it is worth noting that the current structure of practical zoocriticism does not leave much room for the inclusion of other contexts. For instance, most of the twentieth-century realistic and speculative texts acknowledged (to differing extents) the relationship between North American colonization and species loss. The historical perspective of *Last of the Curlews*

make this abundantly clear, whereas others, like *Return to the River* or *White as the Waves*, juxtaposed small-scale, Aboriginal subsistence techniques with large-scale, commercial hunting and fishing. The investigation of such (post)colonial contexts would be of benefit to the practical zoocriticism framework, particularly when discussing Canadian literature. Yet this comes with the danger of inadvertently prioritizing human concerns. For instance, it is not the work of practical zoocriticism to produce allegorical interpretations of the kind in Brian Johnson's chapter for *Other Selves*. In "Ecology, Allegory, and Indigeneity in the Wolf Stories of Roberts, Seton, and Mowat," Johnson asserts that "when read in their national-postcolonial context, the representation of animal victims in these stories may in some cases evoke the indigenizing proleptic allegories of 'doomed races'" (339). To reintroduce such anthropocentric readings might undermine the purpose of practical zoocriticism, but perhaps there is no need to do so. The prominence of such analysis makes it less imperative for practical zoocriticism to contribute. Given the scarcity of scientifically informed analysis in literary animal studies, on the other hand, this must be where our priorities lie.

There may be no greater proof of the erroneous judgements of Burroughs, Roosevelt, and Polk than the wild animal story's genuine potential for scientific engagement. As more researchers and writers begin to understand the possibilities of this reciprocal, cross-disciplinary communication, it will become increasingly difficult to dismiss the genre as "outdated" and "scarcely respectable" (51). Perhaps, over a century after their publication, Roberts' words might finally begin to guide our way forward:

> We have suddenly attained a new and clearer vision. We have come face to face with personality, where we were blindly wont to predicate

mere instinct and automatism. It is as if one should step carelessly out of one's back door, and marvel to see unrolling before his new-awakened eyes the peaks and seas and misty valleys of an unknown world. Our chief writers of animal stories at the present day may be regarded as explorers of this unknown world, absorbed in charting its topography. (*Kindred* 24)

Appendix

Timeline of Relevant Contexts

1824 – Establishment of SPCA in London
1825 – *An Act to prevent the cruel treatment of Horses, Sheep or Other Cattle* passed in Nova Scotia, inspired by *Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act* commonly known as Martin's Act) in 1822 in Britain
1836 – Catherine Parr Traill publishes *The Backwoods of Canada*
1840 – SPCA becomes RSPCA with Queen Victoria's royal seal of approval
1848 – **George Romanes** born
1850 – Catherine Parr Traill published a children's animal story: *Afar in the Forest*
1851 – **Henry S. Salt** born
1852 – **Conwy Lloyd Morgan** born
1857 – Province of Canada passed *An Act to prevent the cruel and improper treatment of Cattle and other Animals* (aimed at cruelty, damage to property, demoralization of people)
1859 – **Charles Darwin** publishes *On the Origin of Species*
1860 – **Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G. D. Roberts** are born
1862 – Group meets in Quebec city to establish the Humane Society of Canada
1864 – *Act to incorporate the Humane Society of Canada*
1867 – CONFEDERATION: the colonies of Canada East, Canada West, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick united to form one Canadian Confederation
1868 – Formation of 'Canada First' movement (brainchild of W. A. Foster) to develop a Canadian national identity
1869 – Catherine Parr Traill publishes *Canadian Wild Flowers*
1869 – Canada passes the *Cruelty to Animals Act*
1869 – Establishment of the CSPCA in Montreal
1870 – Amendment to *Cruelty to Animals Act* to ban dog- and cock fighting.
1871 – CSPCA proposes, unsuccessfully, that the *Act* be extended to 'any living creature'
1872 – America establishes the world's first national park: Yellowstone
1870s – CSPCA*:* development of anti-cruelty legislation
1871 – **Charles Darwin** publishes *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*
1872 – **Charles Darwin** publishes *The Expression of the Emotions in Man And Animals*
1873 – CSPCA establishes the Ladies' Humane Education Committee
1875 – Amendment to *Cruelty to Animals Act* regarding transportation of cattle, limiting confinement times and establishing standards for feeding, watering, and the rest—all of which served to ameliorate the conditions of livestock, as well as to regular industrial labourers and to protect livestock owners' animal property
1877 – In England, Anna Sewell publishes *Black Beauty*
1880 – Amendment to *Cruelty to Animals Act* drafted by CSPCA solicitor

William H. Kerr, establishing stricter punishments for offenders, but made no other changes
1880 – W. Lauder Lindsay publishes *Mind in the Lower Animals*
1880 – Thomas Huxley's address at the opening of Mason College, Birmingham
1882 – Matthew Arnold's response at Cambridge, "Literature and Science"
1882 – **Charles Darwin** dies
1882 – **George Romanes** publishes *Animal Intelligence*
1883 – **George Romanes** publishes *Mental Evolution in Animals*
1883 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** experiments with the animal story in "The Life of a Prairie Chicken" published in *Canadian Journal*
1885 – Catherine Parr Traill publishes *Studies of Plant Life*
1886 – **Henry S. Salt** publishes *A Plea for Vegetarianism* published by the Vegetarian Society
1886 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes Mammals of Manitoba
1887 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** experiments with wild animal story in "The Drummer on the Snowshoes" in *St. Nicholas*
1887 – Canada establishes its first national park: Banff
1880s and 1890s – Nine bills to amend the *Cruelty to Animals Act* go before the House of Commons (only the one in 1895 was successful)
1880s – **Charles G. D. Roberts** writes articles for *Forest and Stream*
1890 – **Conwy Lloyd Morgan** publishes *Animal Life and Intelligence*
1891 **– Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *Birds of Manitoba*
1892 – **Henry S. Salt** publishes *Animals' Rights: Considered in Relation to Social Progress*
1892 – **Charles G. D. Roberts** publishes "Do Seek Their Meet From God" in *Harpers Magazine*
1893 – Margaret Marshall Saunders publishes *Beautiful Joe*, the autobiography of an abused dog—similar to *Black Beauty*
1894 – Catherine Parr Traill publishes *Pearls and Pebbles*
1894 **– Conwy Lloyd Morgan** publishes *Introduction to Comparative Psychology*
1894 – **George Romanes** dies
1894 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes "Lobo" in *Scribners Monthly*
1895 – Henry Williamson born
1895 – Amendment to *Cruelty to Animals Act*: list of animals covered by the act extended to 'any wild animal or bird in captivity'
1896 **– Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *Studies in the Art Anatomy of Animals*
1896 – **Charles G. D. Roberts** publishes *Earth's Enigmas*, which includes some animal stories
1898 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *Wild Animals I Have Known*
1899 **– Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *The Trail of the Sandhill Stag*
1899 – Edward L. Thorndike publishes "Do Animals Reason?" in *Popular Science Monthly* (55)
1900 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *The Biography of a Grizzly*
1900 – **Conwy Lloyd Morgan** publishes *Animal Behaviour*
1901 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *Lives of the Hunted*
1902 – **Charles G. D. Roberts** publishes *Kindred of the Wild*

1903 – **John Burroughs** publishes “Real and Sham Natural History” in *Atlantic Monthly*
1904 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *Monarch, The Big Bear of Tallac*
1904 – **Charles G. D. Roberts** publishes *The Watchers of the Trails: A Book of Animal Life*
1905 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *Animal Heroes*
1905 – **Charles G. D. Roberts** publishes *Red Fox*
1907 – **Charles G. D. Roberts** publishes *The Haunters of the Silences: A Book of Animal Life*
1907 – **Theodore Roosevelt** publishes “Nature Fakers”
1908 – **Charles G. D. Roberts** publishes *The House in the Water: A Book of Animal Stories*
1908 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** born in Sussex
1908 – **Charles G. D. Roberts** publishes *Kings in Exile*
1909 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *Fauna of Manitoba*
1909 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *Life-Histories of North Animals: an Account of the Mammals of Manitoba* (two volumes)
1909 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *Biography of a Silver Fox*
1910 – **Charles G. R. Roberts** publishes *Neighbours Unknown*
1911 – **Charles G. D. Roberts** publishes *More Kindred of the Wild*
1911 – Edward L. Thorndike publishes *Animal Intelligence: Experimental Studies*
1912 – **Charles G. D. Roberts** publishes *Babes of the Wild*
1912 – **Charles G. D. Roberts** publishes *Feet of the Furtive*
1913 – **Charles G. D. Roberts** publishes *Hoof and Claw*
1913 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *Wild Animals at Home*
1915 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *The Slum Cat*
1915 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *The Legend of the White Reindeer*
1916 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *Wild Animal Ways*
1916 – **Charles G. D. Roberts** publishes *The Secret Trails*
1918 – Fred Bodsworth born in Port Burwell, Ontario
1921 – **R. D. Lawrence** born aboard ship off coast of Spain
1922 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *Bannertail: The Story of a Gray Squirrel*
1922 – **Charles G. D. Roberts** publishes *Wisdom of the Wilderness*
1924 – **Charles G. D. Roberts** publishes *They Who Walk in the Wild*
1931 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *Silver: The Life Story of an Atlantic Salmon*
1932 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *Famous Animal Stories*
1932 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** Publishes *Pool and Rapid*
1934 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *Panther*
1934 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *Animals Worth Knowing*
1937 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** publishes *Biography of an Arctic Fox*
1939 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *The Western Angler*
1939 – **Henry S. Salt** dies
1941 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *Return to the River*
1942 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *Timber*
1943 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *Starbuck Valley Winter*
1943 – **Charles G. D. Roberts** dies
1946 – **Ernest Thompson Seton** dies

1946 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *A River Never Sleeps*
1948 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *Saltwater Summer*
1949 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *On the Highest Hill*
1950 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *Measure of the Year*
1950 – **Barbara Gowdy** is born
1951 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *Fisherman's Spring*
1954 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *Fisherman's Winter*
1955 – **Fred Bodsworth** publishes *The Last of the Curlews*
1959 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *Fisherman's Summer*
1959 **– Fred Bodsworth** publishes *The Strange One*
1961 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *The Living Land*
1962 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *The Whale People*
1963 – **Alison Baird** is born
1964 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *Fisherman's Fall*
1964 – **Fred Bodsworth** publishes *The Atonement of Ashley Morden*
1966 **– R. D. Lawrence** publishes *Wildlife in Canada*
1967 – **R. D. Lawrence** publishes *The Place in the Forest*
1967 – **Fred Bodsworth** publishes *The Sparrow's Fall*
1968 **– R. D. Lawrence** publishes *Where the Water Lilies Grow*
1969 **– R. D. Lawrence** publishes *The Poison Makers*
1970 – **R. D. Lawrence** publishes *Cry Wild*
1970 – **Fred Bodsworth** publishes *Pacific Coast*
1974 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** publishes *The Salmon*
1974 – **R. D. Lawrence** publishes *Wildlife in North America: Mammals* and *Wildlife in North America: Birds*
1977 – **R. D. Lawrence** publishes *Paddy*
1976 – **Roderick Haig-Brown** dies
1979 – **R. D. Lawrence** publishes *The North Runner*
1980 – **R. D. Lawrence** publishes *Secret Go the Wolves*
1983 – **R. D. Lawrence** publishes *The Ghost Walker*
1983 – **R. D. Lawrence** publishes *Canada's National Parks*
1985 – **R. D. Lawrence** publishes *The Shark*
1986 – **R. D. Lawrence** publishes *In Praise of Wolves*
1986 – **R. D. Lawrence** publishes *Trans-Canada Country*
1988 – **R. D. Lawrence** publishes *The Natural History of Canada*
1990 – **R. D. Lawrence** publishes *The White Puma*
1993 – **R. D. Lawrence** publishes *Trail of the Wolf*
1999 – **Alison Baird** publishes *White as the Waves: A Novel of Moby Dick*
1999 – **Barbara Gowdy** publishes *The White Bone*

Glossary of Terms

Advocacy – For the sake of brevity, I use this term to encompass the various work (practical, academic, political, and creative) involved in advocating for the conservation, ethical treatment, legal rights, or improved welfare of nonhuman animals.

Anecdotal cognitivism – The attribution of "cognitive states to many animals on the basis of observation of particular cases rather than through controlled experiments or manipulation" (Dale Jameison and Marc Bekoff, "On Aims and Methods of Cognitive Ethology" 111).

Animal psychology – I employ 'animal psychology' as an umbrella term for any scientific studies of animal cognition and emotions.

Anthropocentric – Human-centred; it can often be associated with notions of human uniqueness and superiority.

Anthropomorphic – "Anthropomorphism refers to attributing human qualities to animals. In the scientific community, using language that suggests animals have intentions, desires, and emotions has been severely criticized as lacking objectivity. […] The irony, of course, is that the more we have studied other animals, even in this detached way, the more we have learned about their complex cognitive and emotional capabilities" (Clifton Flynn, "Social Creatures: An Introduction" xv).

Behaviourism – "Behaviorism arose in part as an attempt to overcome the anecdotal approach [of Charles Darwin and George Romanes] and to bring rigor to the study of behavior. Controlled experiments rather than field observations provided the primary data, and basic concepts were supposed to be grounded in direct observation. Against this background, animal consciousness came to be seen as '... mystical, unscientific,

unnecessary, obscure, and not amenable to study'" (Jameison and Bekoff 111).

Classical Ethology – "Classical ethology developed in Europe with the work of [Konrad] Lorenz and [Niko] Tinbergen, and arrived in America in the post-World War II period […] The roots of classical ethology were in the investigations of Darwin, Charles Otis Whitman, and Oskar Heinroth. Classical ethology signified a return to some of the ideas of Darwin and the early anecdotal cognitivists, especially in its appeals to evolutionary theory, the close association with natural history, and the reliance on anecdote and anthropomorphism in motivating more rigorous study" (111).

Cognitive ethology – "The rise of cognitive ethology can conveniently be dated from the publication of Donald Griffin's *The Question of Animal Awareness*" published in 1976 (113).

"[Cognitive ethology] can be fined as the comparative, evolutionary, and ecological study of nonhuman animal minds, including thought processes, beliefs, rationality, information processing, intentionality, and consciousness" (Colin Allen and Marc Bekoff, "Animal Minds, Cognitive Ethology, and Ethics" 304).

Mechanomorphism – The opposite of anthropomorphism; the act of attributing the qualities of a machine to living being.

Speciesism – Richard Ryder coined the term *speciesism* in 1970. It refers to the different perception and treatment of individuals based on their species; "the failure to accord nonhuman animals equal consideration and respect" (Joan Dunyan, *Animal Equality* 1). Speciesist language "denigrates or discounts nonhuman animals. Conventional pronoun use,

for example, terms nonhuman animals, ‘it’ erasing their gender and grouping them with inanimate things” (1).

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