The University Of Sheffield.

Animal Fiction in Late Twentieth-Century Canada: Nation, Identity, and Species

Alice Elizabeth Rose Higgs

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Sheffield
Faculty of English literature
Department/School of English

July 2020

Abstract

This thesis argues that the late twentieth-century in Canada saw a development in writing stories about animals in which emerged more critically engaged pro-animal fiction, centring on human-animal relationships. This development is visible through a process of de-mythologization in which there was a move away from the anthropocentric framework that underpins particular representational strategies in stories about animals, such as in mythological and symbolic understandings.

The novels it examines are *Never Cry Wolf* (1963) by Farley Mowat; *Surfacing* (1972) and *Life Before Man* (1979) by Margaret Atwood; *Bear* (1976) by Marian Engel; *The Wars* (1977) and *Not Wanted On the Voyage* (1984) by Timothy Findley; and finally *The Cure for Death by Lightning* (1996) by Gail Anderson-Dargatz. Through a chronological tracing of a process of de-mythological development it argues that Mowat supplants one anthropocentric mythic understanding of wolves for another, reconfiguring myth. Atwood uses mythic understandings of animals to interrogate heteronormativity and although there is momentary empathy with animals in her novels, this is finally put in service of the recognition and incorporation of victimhood into her protagonists' identity. Then there is a distinctive critical development in the thesis, as Engel resists mythic configuration of animals through the construction of a story that centres on the incomprehensible materiality of a bear. Building on this resistance to myth, Findley's novels demonstrate a pastiche of myth in which he subverts and camps versions of mythic narratives to emphasise moments of defiance to hierarchy and an ethics of care that characterises his perception of more caring relations. Finally, Anderson-Dargatz's novel demonstrates a successful de-mythologized engagement with animal representation and Indigenous stories. She constructs a story in which building relations with animals based on empathy and care involves moving away from colonial practices and the privileging of settler knowledge systems towards the incorporation of Indigenous concepts.

The thesis adopts a framework that triangulates questions of species, nation and personal identity, the last of which is made up three aspects: Indigeneity, gender and sexuality. These intersections demonstrate that through engagement with animal stories it is possible to produce a way of thinking about human-animal relations that is radically anti-hegemonic, enacted through a critique of the kinds of binaries and hierarchies that have upheld systems of oppression and have contributed to a fixed concept of both personal and national identity. Finally, it argues that in the development of these critically engaged stories about animals, animal fiction in late twentieth-century Canada began to focus on representing reciprocated interspecies relationships that are built on empathy and care.

Declaration

I, the author, confirm that the Thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means (www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means). This work has not been previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

Acknowledgments

When I envisioned finally finishing my PhD thesis, I never could have predicted that it would be during lockdown in a global pandemic. It is testament to the people around me and to their support, in both my academic and personal life, that I have been able to weather the stress and unpredictable nature of life during both this pandemic and more generally across the course of my PhD.

I would like to say thank you to Dr Robert McKay, who has been an unwavering pillar of support throughout this process. Bob has supported me throughout my time at Sheffield and has nurtured the pro-animal literary interest that led me to the interests behind my MA and PhD research.

I am so grateful for the time and effort that Bob has put into supervising my research, and for encouraging me to take breaks when I couldn't recognise I needed them.

I would also like to thank Dr John Miller, who has always found time to meet and discuss any issues I have had, related to both the specifics of my work and the pastoral side of PhD life.

I have and will always admire the work of Bob and John, and I am so grateful to them both for allowing me to conduct this research under their supervision.

Thank you also to the Canada-UK Foundation and The University of Sheffield for their sponsorship of this research.

I am so grateful to have had an immensely supportive group of friends around me during my time at the University of Sheffield. Thank you to Jessica Hannington, Dr Alex Mason, Tamsin Crowther, and Sophie Maxwell, who have all kept me going through the years. I may have lost count of the number of bottles of Prosecco, the cocktails, and the coffee that have been drunk between us, but I'm so proud of everything we have achieved as a group, and I wish them all the best with completing their PhDs.

My thanks must also go to Charlotte Ketteringham and Holly Roper, my wives, my rocks. I'm so grateful that this experience brought you into my life.

I want to thank Rommell Miller, who has been there for every crisis of confidence, and has always been my cheerleader. I am grateful for every occasion that you listened to the details of my thesis despite never having studied literature or animals. I hope this thesis serves as evidence of the value I found in those conversations, and in you.

I owe a huge thank you to my family. To my siblings, Charlie, Owen and Marise, thank you for putting up with the argumentative side effects of my overly analytical PhD brain over the years. To my parents who have invested so much in my education, without you this wouldn't have been possible. I am eternally grateful for the opportunities your support has afforded me, and for your unwavering confidence in my ability to finish this PhD. This thesis serves as a testament to you both. It is yours as much as it is mine.

Finally, this thesis is for Digby, Mila, Zara, Whizzy and Harry, and for all of the animals that have touched my life. May we strive for relationships that centre care and empathy with those around us, both human and animal, now more than ever.

Contents

List of Figures in Thesis

Introduction

After the publication of Canadian novelist Barbara Gowdy's *The White Bone* in 1998 Gowdy stated in an interview with Jana Siciliano that 'everything my elephant characters do lies within the realm of the possible. As a novelist I have taken observed behaviour and credited it with a high level of intention.'[1] The determination she exhibits to emphasise that her representation of elephants is underpinned by 'the possible' but also animals' 'intention' is a nod to the 'Nature Fakers' criticism of a number of Canadian writers of animal stories in the late Nineteenth Century, lodged in a 1903 article in *The Atlantic Monthly* written by John Burroughs. This article took to task stories by authors like Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G. D. Roberts, and sparked a long debate in the public eye in Canada, particularly amongst the scientific community, concerning the use of anthropomorphism and sentimentalism in animal stories, and the potential for these types of narratives to problematize the 'truth' within nature writing. The very fact that Gowdy feels she has to emphasise that she has built her representation upon observed behaviour, and that it is 'within the realm of the possible', indicates the type of conversations surrounding contemporary novels about animals in Canada during the last third of the twentieth century are still being conducted in terms set by nineteenth-century arguments.

A significant problem with these types of critiques concerning the notion of 'truth' is that they are anthropocentric in focus. They neglect to consider the representational politics that underpin particular representations of animals or to offer a resolution for the anthropocentric nature of representation. The solution, this thesis argues, is to consider what it means to take animals seriously within literature. As Susan McHugh states, there is a 'growing sense of responsibility to relate critical practice to the (inter)disciplinary consequences of taking literary animals seriously.'[2] Situating itself in the field of Animal Studies, this thesis aims to offer such a serious engagement be made with the critical potential of literary representations to engage affectively with forms of interspecies social agency:

> Particularly by furthering the investigative work of animal studies into new and old means of representing animals, literary animal studies can contribute

[1] Ella Soper-Jones, 'When Elephants Weep: Reading *The White Bone* as a Sentimental Animal Story', in *Other Selves: Animals in the Canadian Literary Imagination*, ed. by Janice Fiamengo (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2007)) pp. 269-290 (p. 273-4).

[2] Susan McHugh, Animal Stories: Narrating across Species Lines (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011) p. 23.

> to broader understanding of narrative as modelling more porous forms of species and social agency. But this can happen only if scholars forgo the politics and privileges of knowledges conceived in exclusively disciplinary terms and train their attention to the biopolitical implications of affect. (23)

Only by taking animals seriously are we able to cultivate a politics of species relations that moves beyond the anthropocentrism that is conventional in responses to literary animal narratives and begin to develop stories about reciprocated human-animal engagements and relationships.

In light of this understanding, this thesis moves beyond an acknowledgement that there is a cultural attachment to particular conversations surrounding writing about animals in Canada, such as the 'nature fakers' debate. Resisting the urge to perpetuate such conversations, it argues that the late twentieth century in Canada saw a configuration of writing stories about animals. It argues that it is possible to identify a development within fictional writing about animals in Canada in the last third of the twentieth century, which saw the emergence of more critically engaged representational strategies for depicting consciously pro-animal stories about reciprocated human-animal relationships. Specifically, I argue that this development is visible through a process of de-mythologization in which literary stories came to take animals seriously within a complex triangle of species, Canadian nationalism and the idea of nation, and personal identity; moreover, these stories began to focus on reciprocated interspecies relationships that are built on empathy and care.

The thesis examines the development of stories about animals written by settler Canadian authors across the last third of the twentieth century. The novels in focus are *Never Cry Wolf* (1963) by Farley Mowat; *Surfacing* (1972) and *Life Before Man* (1979) by Margaret Atwood; *Bear* (1976) by Marian Engel; *The Wars* (1977) and *Not Wanted On the Voyage* (1984) by Timothy Findley; and finally *The Cure for Death by Lightning* (1996) by Gail Anderson-Dargatz. It is the first systematic study of Canadian settler animal writing across the period 1960-2000.

Although it takes a chronological approach, my analysis does not simply survey the animal writing of the each of these decades and argue that each author is the most exemplary figure of that period. Rather the intention is to explore the forms of social identity-based, critical de-mythologizing that takes shape across this period. I am arguing, through the inclusion of these authors, that the literary history of animal writing in Canada in the final third of the twentieth century follows a developing de-

mythologizing trajectory, and that it is possible to see it at work through these texts across this time frame.

The definition of myth that this thesis adopts is based upon Roland Barthes' understanding in *Mythologies*. He states that 'myth is a type of speech' and that it is 'speech stolen and restored.'[3] As such, it is 'a pure ideographic system' (152) and 'is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters this message: there are formal limits to myth, there are no 'substantial' ones.' (131) It is, in the context of this thesis, then, a way of writing that engages in a particular language and types of ideas that surround animals and the way in which these influence and pervade literary representations. Using this definition of myth, this thesis argues that this period saw a development of a de-mythologized representational process.

This notion of de-mythologizing stems from the understanding that in order to take animals seriously within literary representations there must be a move away from the anthropocentric framework that underpins particular representational strategies in stories about animals, such as mythological understandings of animals. Indeed, the thesis interrogates the application, reconfiguration and critique of mythic representations across this period in Canadian writing to identify a developing process of moving away from the continued implementation of mythic writing about animals, a de-mythologizing that occurs during this period. The thesis demonstrates that this noticeable change in the style of writing about animals configures these novels together in a critical project. The process of change is evident, I argue, in the way in which fictional writing became more self-consciously engaged with techniques of representation and of moving away from anthropocentric strategies towards the abandonment of mythic configurations.

There is, though, different emphasis placed on the concept of myth throughout the thesis. For instance Farley Mowat attempts to reconfigure mythic narratives of wolves by creating his own mythic story of interaction with the animal. Margaret Atwood's protagonists indulge in mythic imaginative conceptions of the animals they encounter, problematically depicting a return to the wilderness as an Indigenous endeavour that is portrayed through mythic language, and also bringing the animals on display in the museums to life through an imaginative and mythic conception of their former lifestyles. In contrast, Marian Engel rejects mythic understandings of animals in *Bear*, confronting the protagonist with an

[3] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Vintage, 2009) p. 131and p. 50.

underwhelming and smelly bear that falls short of her mythic and fetishized imagination of bears. Timothy Findley mobilizes myth, pastiching the melodramatic hero narrative and the Flood story, to offer a camped version in which the oppressive hegemonies that underpin the violence portrayed are radically challenged through an emphasis on care and empathy. And finally, Gail Anderson-Dargatz challenges the settler tendency to confine Indigenous stories to the mythic realm and instead demonstrates that, when taken seriously, Indigenous stories about human-animal relations can offer valuable sources for constructing more empathetic relations with animals. It makes sense to move from one use of myth to another because it demonstrates the way in which each author has utilised myth in different ways as a representational strategy that can be reconfigured, indulged in, challenged or subverted. It is therefore possible to trace this de-mythologizing trajectory and see that the authors in this thesis are critically engaging in the role of myth in telling stories about animals and the need to de-mythologize in order to create stories that emphasise human-animal relationships as empathetic sites of reciprocity and not merely as symbolic vectors for Canadian anthropocentric ideas of contemporary human identity.

The thesis moves away from nineteenth-century critiques, such as the 'Nature Fakers' debate and the focus it placed on the idea of 'truth' by way of asking new questions regarding the representational politics that underpin the construction of particular narratives about animals. Moreover, each chapter considers the process of de-mythologizing and the question of taking animals seriously from within a triangulation of species, personal identity and nation. To explain this triangulation, the angle of species relates to questions surrounding the animal in literature, strategies of depiction and the types of relationships represented. Personal identity refers to questions of gender, sexuality and Indigeneity, and the way in which these differing aspects of identity influence and intersect with the representation of species. Finally, nation refers to the idea of a single homogenized understanding of Canadian identity as being symbolically reflected through animal representation, an argument that has been drawn upon by critics of Canadian writing about animals, such as James Polk, who argues in 1972 that the motivation behind Canadian animal representation is a sense of 'victimhood' status inherent in the Canadian cultural psyche:

> As Canada's perennial questioning of its own national identity is increasingly coupled with a suspicion that a fanged America lurks in the bushes, poised for the kill, it is not surprising that Canadian writers should retain their interest

in persecution and survival.[4]

In a similar strategy of tying of Canadian nationhood to animals, Margaret Atwood writes in *Survival* (1972) that Canadian animal stories 'are about animals being killed, as felt emotionally from inside the fur and feathers.'[5] This, she explains, is because 'Canadians themselves feel threatened and nearly-extinct as a nation' (81) and so these stories tap into a Canadian cultural fear and need for survival.[6] The prevalence of this victimhood/survival thesis is such that John Sandlos argues: 'subsequent criticism of the animal story in Canadian literature is, in many cases, a direct response to Atwood's and Polk's survival/victimhood thesis.'[7] And so, the cultural infamy of Atwood's thesis, in addition to the lack of critical development in this area, means that criticism of writing about animals in Canada has been largely understood to be a nationalist subgenre. However, rather than buying into a connection between animals and the reflection of a Canadian cultural psyche, Sandlos states that Canadian animal writing has always been concerned with understanding the relationship that Canadians have to both the landscape and its animal inhabitants around them.

This tying of animals to nationhood within Canada is visible in particular through the figure of the beaver. Nicole Shukin argues that Canada's incorporation of the beaver into a nationalist sign functions as a form of animal fetishism:

> The beaver is Canada's fetish insofar as it configures the nation as a life form that is born rather than made (obscuring recognition of the ongoing cultural and material history of its construction) and insofar as it stands in for an organic national unity that in actuality does not exist.[8]

The sign of the beaver and its institutional circulation in the 1970s was, then, 'a means of affectively interpellating citizens into an ideal of national unity through the "innocent" appeal of the animal and of construing the nation as an indigenous

---

[4] James Polk, 'The Lives of the Hunted', *Of Heavenly Hounds and Earthly Men. Spec. issue of Canadian Literature,* 53 (1972) 51-59 (p. 58).

[5] Margaret Atwood, *Survival* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press Inc., 2012) p. 75.

[6] I acknowledge that there are other reasons for this Canadian interest in animals, such as has been argued in Harold Innis' *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (1927), which ties the killing of animals in the fur trade to Canadian nationhood.

[7] John Sandlos, 'From within Fur and Feathers: Animals in Canadian Literature', *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*, 4 (2000) 73-91 (p. 74).

[8] Nicole Shukin, *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009) p. 3.

organism.' (3) Such use of an animal as a sign for a unified sense of national identity is, inevitably, underpinned by a settler-colonial sense of identity:

> In the 1970s, the institutionalization of the sign of the beaver mustered this nostalgic web of associations into the political service of a dominantly white, Euro-Canadian discourse of national culture, one pivoting on an assertion of its own indigeneity. Through the animal capital of the national symbol, a postcolonial project of national culture deeply structured by the logics of capital and "White normativity" has become the privileged content of a discursive struggle for "native space," displacing the ongoing machinations of internal colonialism and white supremacy, as well as infranational struggles for First Nations' self -determination

The implementation of the beaver as a symbol for Canada permits the privileging of a new sense of national identity: a settler one. It overlooks Indigenous struggles and the complexities underpinning settler-colonial relations in Canada, and the violence that marked the fur trade, putting forth the image of an animal that has been exploited and sacrificed in the establishing of Canada's economic prevalence on the historical stage. Animal signs and imagery then, have historically been incorporated into ideas of nation in Canada, and applied in a seemingly innocent means of representing a diverse country through an allegedly neutral signifier. However, using the beaver in this way simultaneously reveals a determination to ignore the realities that underpin national relations surrounding the beaver, both in terms of questions of species, and settler-Indigenous dynamics that have historically framed the beaver in Canada.

The point, here, is not to argue for the persistent connection between Canadian identity and animals in literature as a genre in itself – the 'Canadian animal story' as it were – but rather to demonstrate that writing about animals in Canada across the period of the early 1960s into the late 1990s evidences a move away from the idea that there is a single, homogenous Canadian identity or aspect of that identity, such as 'victimhood', that is or can be represented through animals. Indeed, the idea of nation and national identity becomes more fragmented and less of a focus in the novels as the thesis progresses, and the texts begin to focus their representations on particular and nuanced aspects of personal identity, such as Indigenous identity, sexuality and gender and the way in which these aspects of identity fragment a fixed conception of Canadian settler identity as representable through animals.

I will argue that we can see through an engagement with the novels in this thesis, and across the period in focus, writing about animals became less anthropocentric in focus and less invested in connecting animals symbolically to a homogenous idea of Canadian nation and identity, and rather it became invested in forging a new kind of critically engaged relationship with animal writing, and depicting a more metropolitan idea of Canadian identity as existing alongside a reciprocated relationship with animals. Consequently, I will demonstrate that the literature in this thesis develops in a new set of directions that compound each other. The arguments hold true to the claim that these are still stories about animals, but that the particular shift that Canadian writing takes, is executed away from a largely mythologized understanding of animality. It moves towards representational strategies that allow for human-animal relations to be characterised beyond a symbolic understanding and for animals to be taken seriously.

The term Indigenous used throughout this thesis refers exclusively to the First Nation People of Canada. I have chosen to capitalise Indigenous as a sign of respect and acknowledgement to the Indigenous First Nations of Canada, much in the same way as one would capitalise Canadian or English, and I have referred to the specific First Nation tribe in discussion where possible.[9] In addition, the terms settler and settler literature broadly refer to the non-Indigenous, English-speaking population of Canada, excluding, in this case, Quebecois literature. This thesis does not address Canadian literary history, but a specific brand of it: a particular settler one. It acknowledges that this is not the 'normative' nor the more important Canadian literary history, nor does it try to imply this through such a specific focus. The decision to focus exclusively on settler fiction was motivated by my process of researching primary materials in which I began to notice specific trends and characteristics of animal representation that were being used by English-speaking settler writers in their configurations of writing about animals, and how these were often intersected with identity issues, such as gender, sexuality and Indigenous-settler relations. Therefore, this thesis focuses specifically on the identification and development of particular representational strategies across what I will henceforth refer to throughout the thesis as settler stories about animals across this period in the late twentieth-century and it will show itself to be a development of an interest

[9] Source: https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-peoples-terminology-guidelines-for-usage#:~:text=Always%20capitalize%20Indigenous%2C%20Aboriginal%2C%20First,that%20has%20connotations%20of%20ownership.[Accessed 26 June 2020].

in Canadian literature that works across questions of species, nation (as understood in a settler context) and personal identity.[10]

The Critical Field of Animal Writing in Canada

Although it has been easy to identify an abundance of stories written by Canadian authors that are about or include animals, little attention has been paid to the study of writing about animals in Canada or why it is that so many Canadian authors have historically written, and continue to write, novels about animals.

Sandlos' argument, which in 2000 continues to read the presence of animals in Canadian literature from within a nationalist subgenre framework, argues that the biggest influence on what he terms as the 'prominence of the "Canadian" animal story at the beginning of the twentieth century' (79) is the work of Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G. D. Roberts. However, rather than simplifying their animal representation down to this notion of the 'victim', Sandlos develops the case that:

> The pervasive influence of Seton and Roberts ties the genre firmly to a natural history tradition, one that attempts to reconcile instinct with reason, biology with myth, human with animal, and physical fact with fictional narrative. (82)

He explains that their work 'was not intended to lament a "victimized nation" but rather to promote a sympathetic identification between the reader and the animal characters' (81) by writing 'accurate natural history-stories that reflect the habits and behaviours of real animals within a fictional frame.' (75) The influence and continuation of this kind of writing in Canada then, Sandlos argues, reflected 'a wider public concern that emerged in the early 1970s about the consequences of ecological destruction (species extinction, dying lakes, etc.)' (85) Consequently, he argues that the animal story fed into a new cultural concern:

[10] In addition, there were core methodological challenges in engaging with First Nation literature and Quebecois literature, in that it was extremely difficult to access primary materials here in the UK. This meant that certain lines of interpretative enquiry were excluded from focus. I have attached in my bibliography a list of novels from settler writers, both English-Canadian and French-Canadian, and from First Nation authors, that were published between 1960-2000 and use animal representation. This is so as to provide an extensive demonstration of the background research that went into the primary materials used in this thesis, and to demonstrate the trajectory that the thesis could have taken if it had been possible to access all of these resources or if I had focused on another specific cross-section of literature. There are also core issues surrounding language barriers that underpin the study of Quebecois literature and my ability to search for primary materials that have been translated.

> Literary animals who were shot, beaten, and unceremoniously killed may therefore have simply been creative "cannon fodder" in a larger effort to record destructive human behaviour toward the natural world. (85)

Sandlos' arguments are convincing considering the environmental context of the 1970s, in which there were a number of ecological disasters and hardships experienced globally, such as famine in Bangladesh and the Sahel; inflation due to poor harvests in Europe and Asia, and sustained cold and water shortages in North America.[11] In addition, there were three international conferences held in Banff, Canada, each titled 'Man and his Environment', which took place in 1968, 1974 and 1978, and the purpose of which was specifically to address what were seen as pressing environmental questions, such as pollution, the relationship between ecology and economy and human interaction with the environment.

M.F. Mohtadi explains that in the late 1960s terms like pollution had become 'a catch phrase' that 'generated much public discussion' (vii) and so the opportunity arose to organise these meetings and capitalise on this growing environmentalist movement.[12] It is this environmentalist context that Sandlos contends underpins the nationalist subgenre of Contemporary Canadian animal writing, rather than a cultural psyche, as contended by Atwood, or a historical attachment to animals, such as Shukin identifies through the beaver. Tina Loo also identifies the 1960s and 70s in Canada as a significant era of growing cultural concern for environmental issues. She states that new governmental changes occurred that reflected a wider cultural concern within Canada at the time, such as the passing of the federal Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act (ARDA) in 1962, which 'encouraged the consolidation of small farms into larger and more efficient economic units and the reversion of marginal lands to their "natural state."'[13] Loo adds that these changes were systematic, indicating real, invested efforts:

> Government biologists were certainty aware of the importance of habitats in limiting factors in population growth, but it was not until the 1960s that they began to take the first concrete steps towards assessing and protecting them systematically. (183)

---

[11] M. F. Mohtadi, *Man and His Environment: Proceedings of the Third International Banff Conference on Man and his Environment* (Exeter: Pergamon Press Ltd, 1980) p. 53.

[12] *Man and His Environment*, p. vii.

[13] Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006) p. 183.

For the first time then, attitudes in Canada shifted towards a focus on the idea of conservation. In light of this cultural environmental context, this thesis will hold together questions of species, nation and personal identity in an exploration of literature about animals that has been written against this cultural backdrop. It will explore changes that occurred within the literature of this period with regards to the representation of interspecies relationships and argue that this period saw a development of a new style of writing about animals that moves away from anthropocentrism and was at times influenced by this shift in cultural attitudes towards animals and the environment.

Despite the cultural significance of environmental issues and human-animal relations in this period in Canada, the only other literary study that engages with contemporary animal writing in Canada is Janice Fiamengo's edited collection, *Other Selves: Animals in the Canadian Literary Imagination* (2007), which posits itself as the first systematic study of animals in Canadian literature, attempting, for the first time, an overarching study. Inhabiting the position staked by Atwood herself, in her introduction to the collection, Fiamengo argues that '"Speaking for" animals in Canadian literature and literary criticism has always been double-edged: both an exploration of the radical otherness of the animal and an intensely human, and human-centred endeavour.'[14] As such, for Fiamengo writing in Canada about animals hinges upon an ambivalently but residually anthropocentric framework that both acknowledges species difference but simultaneously reinscribes it. Although the collection claims to provide a systematic study, the literature in focus broadly spans from the eighteenth century, such as Thomas McIlwraith's *Birds of Ontario*, through to contemporary authors such as Barbara Gowdy's *The White Bone* (1998) and Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* (2002), providing a wide, yet sparse analysis of a number of Canadian texts about animals. Each chapter adopts a different approach to the text, which ultimately means that there is no overarching argument or sense of tracing occurring throughout the collection. This suggests that Fiamengo, much like Polk, Atwood and Sandlos, began with the framework of considering writing about animals in Canada to be an established nationalistic project or subgenre. As such, *Other Selves* is a demonstration of the multitudinous ways in which Canadian authors have created stories about animals and the types of representational strategies they have adopted both historically and in some contemporary works, as

[14] Janice Fiamengo, *Other Selves: Animals in the Canadian Literary Imagination* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2007) p. 2.

opposed to being a critical project that is determined to prove something in particular about this mode of writing.

Intertextual Relationships with Historical Animal Writing in Canada: Ernest Seton Thompson and Charles G. D. Roberts

Throughout this thesis, there are repeated references to the work of Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G. D. Roberts, both in the novels themselves and in the secondary critical material mapping the historical context of writing about animals in Canada. Seton and Roberts were two Canadian 'nature writers' working in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Their animal stories attracted a lot of attention, both positive and critical in nature, and their influence on contemporary Canadian writing has been repeatedly emphasised. Polk and Sandlos, for instance, consider Seton and Roberts to be the founders of an animal story tradition in Canada.

Seton's famous wolf Lobo in particular, who appears in the first of his short stories in *Wild Animals I have Known*, titled 'Lobo the King of Currumpaw', garnered a legendary reputation in North America. His pelt is currently stored at the Ernest Thompson Seton Memorial Library and Museum in New Mexico, and Seton continued to lobby for the protection of wolves until his death in 1946. Disney later released a film titled *The Legend of Lobo* in 1962, just one year before *Never Cry Wolf*'s publication, reinforcing the continued receptive nature of the Canadian public to empathetic wolf narratives about wolf-human interactions and the legacy of Seton, both as a Canadian writer but also as an animal activist.

So what has been the species politics at play within their work and in Canadian animals stories historically? Susan McHugh says of Seton and Roberts:

> These writers purportedly espoused a benevolent view of animal life that was anchored by strictly anthropomorphic storytelling techniques, and for this they were loved as well as reviled. Part of the reason that the nature fakers were assailed in public discussion was that they almost immediately proved so successful. Animal narratives dominated the literary marketplace at the turn of the twentieth century.[15]

[15] Susan McHugh, *Animal Stories: Narrating Across Species Lines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011) p. 213.

McHugh makes reference to the 'nature fakers' debate, but she also points out that despite, and in spite of, this criticism, Seton and Roberts were extremely popular in Canada, and animal narratives continued to 'dominat[e] the literary marketplace.' The success of these stories, McHugh argues, 'reflects broader social desires for animal stories not to simply convey the truth of humans or of animals, but also to value nonutilitarian human-animal relationships.' (213) It is this idea of representing reciprocal relationships that Sandlos similarly argues is a defining element of Seton's and Roberts' work, and that marked the beginning of a Canadian animal story tradition:

> Seton's and Roberts' animals are at once transcendental "types" and fallen creatures of flesh and blood, creative tropes and "real" animals, creatures of elemental myth and of basic biology. 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. (78-79)

For Sandlos then, the 'nature fakers' criticism regarding truth within their work is misplaced because, as he argues, their stories focus on representing a more active depiction of nature and animals, rather than the passive 'sublime' representations that have historically frequented literature of this kind. There is then, a truth in their creations and a shift in focus towards a more receptive relationship between man and environment.

Aside from this debate surrounding the truthfulness of Seton's and Roberts' depictions, their literary influence pervades this thesis, although it is not the focus of it. Throughout the novels that I will explore, there are frequent self-conscious and purposeful references and nods to Seton and Roberts. For instance, the criticism that was received of *Never Cry Wolf* after its publication in 1963 echoed the 'nature fakers' debate surrounding Seton and Roberts, as Karen Jones states: 'the controversy over *Never Cry Wolf* further encapsulates a crucial divide within modem environmentalism between professional science and amateur naturalism.'[16] Such a criticism suggests that the terms through which contemporary animal stories in Canada were being received were still being met with nineteenth-century arguments. In addition, Atwood recalls that when she was at school:

[16] Karen Jones, 'Never Cry Wolf: Science, Sentiment, and the Literary Rehabilitation of Canis Lupus', *The Canadian Historical Review*, 84.1 (2003) 65-93 (p. 65).

> Someone had given us Charles G. D. Roberts' *Kings in Exile* for Christmas, and I snivelled my way quickly through these heart-wrenching stories of animals caged, trapped and tormented. That was followed by Ernest Thompson Seton's Wild Animals I have Known, if anything more upsetting because the animals were more actual – they lived in forests, not circuses – and their deaths more mundane: the deaths, not of tigers, but of rabbits.[17]

Settler-Canadians then, have been brought up reading Seton and Roberts, and in engaging with stories about animals, localised and full of tragedy. It is no surprise therefore, that critics such as Atwood, Polk and Sandlos have adopted the animal story as a marker of Canadian fiction. Similarly, in *Bear*, as will be discussed in chapter three of this thesis, the protagonist Lou states:

> 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 God Damn Roberts that her grandmother was so fond of.'[18]

Her frustration, 'Sir Charles God Damn Roberts' reinforces the extent to which his work, amongst others, have been pushed upon her, and her reference to them as stories that her 'grandmother was so fond of' reaffirms their cultural longevity in that they were still being drawn upon in her childhood.

There is an acknowledgement, therefore, in the contemporary stories about animals with which this thesis will engage, that writing about animals in Canada has a long history, with roots in the work of Seton and Thompson. In addition, my analysis will demonstrate that the contemporary novels in focus are still being critiqued by these same late nineteenth and early twentieth-century 'nature fakers' arguments, in particular in the literature of the 1960s and 70s. However, this thesis is not concerned with the politics of truth or in providing an answer to this 'nature fakers' debate, but rather it is interested in looking at the way in which literature can take to task particular politics concerning species, and both produce and destabilize particular mythical narratives that go towards the production of species politics and human-animal relations, thus moving away from such out-dated lines of enquiry as in the 'nature fakers' debate.

---

[17] Atwood, *Survival*, p. 23.

[18] Marian Engel, *Bear* (Jaffrey: Nonpareil, 2002) p. 46.

Much like Seton and Roberts caused controversy during their periods of writing, the authors in this thesis actively work deliberately to engage with the literary mode of animal writing, at times both consciously and unconsciously drawing upon Seton and Roberts, to continue but re-work stories about animals. They offer a new kind of animal story: one that critically engages with representational strategies in moving towards a more explicitly pro-animal depiction of human-animal relationships. In doing so they demonstrate a de-mythologized development of the animal story as emerging within the last third of the twentieth century in settler Canadian writing.

Why Write about Animals?

The presence of animals in literature has been a historical constant. But the critical study of their presence, the field of literary animal studies, and the politics of representation, has developed significantly in the last twenty five years and has produced a multitude of arguments. Marian Scholtmeijer takes Atwood's *Survival* thesis to task by detaching it from the nationalist framework, stating: 'this idea goes wrong in confining the 'deep-seated cultural fear' to Canadians alone.'[19] She then re-situates the presence of the animal in Canadian literature within a more broad tradition of animal writing that she determines centres on the concept of victimization. Amongst many writers, she argues, there is a perception that:

> Modern Westen culture in general is under threat – and under threat specifically and directly as Atwood's remark suggests – from the animal. When modern culture reaches out to victimize the animal, it wounds itself. Each animal victim is a revelation. Each animal victim opens a path to modern culture's insecurity. (85)

This argument determines that animal representation, and the depiction of animal victims, is a decidedly human endeavour developed to reflect a modern sense of cultural insecurity. It simultaneously exposes and reinforces the marginality of animals within this culture, and argues that the presence of animals in literature is more nuanced than being simply a product of a unique national subgenre.

Critically engaging with this idea of the inseparability of human and animal narratives, McHugh argues:

[19] Marian Scholtmeijer, *Animal Victims in Modern Fiction: From Sanctity to Sacrifice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) p .85.

> In certain historical and cultural moments, some literary and visual narrative forms become inseparable from shifts in the politics and sciences of species such that questions about animal narratives come to concern the formal and practical futures of all species life.'[20]

Literary animal representation here, is a useful lens through which to examine the changing nature of wider species relations, particularly when it is approached through a critical lens that takes animals seriously as agents, capable of real reciprocated relations.

The difficulty that lies within McHugh's argument is, however, as Mario Ortiz Robles argues, that the animal in literature is inherently tied to the politics of representation as a mode. In considering the animal in literature then, we might also consider the broader idea of a 'trope':

> The constant, if marginal, presence of animals in literature not only impels us to reconsider the significance of animal tropes, or, rather, of the animal-as-trope; it also pushes us to reassess the character, morphology, physiology, and force of tropes themselves, of the trope-as-animal.[21]

This entanglement of 'animal-as-trope' or 'trope-as-animal' suggests, he argues, that 'there is something literary about our relation to animals' (9) and as such:

> Only by disentangling the various strands of the literary animal (of the literarity of the animal) at the place of its greatest visibility as figure (that is, in literature) that we can begin to understand the significance of animals "out there" in the place of greatest resistance to the figurality of the animal. (25)

The examination of literary animal representation then, is a vital part of understanding our wider relationship with the environment and species around us, and through such engagement we might understand the politics that underlie the way in which these relationships are represented in literary narratives.

Timothy Baker argues that animal stories 'are in the service of the human,' identifying an anthropocentrism in the species politics at play in literature.[22] However, Baker emphasises that through the animal story, there is an

---

[20] Susan McHugh, *Animal Stories: Narrating Across Species Lines,* p. 4.
[21] Mario Ortiz Robles, *Literature and Animal Studies* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016) p. 19.
[22] Timothy C. Baker, *Writing Animals: Language, Suffering, and Animality in Twenty-First-Century Fiction* (Culemborg: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019) p. 186.

'understanding, and perhaps a dissolution, of the conventional binaries between human and nonhuman lives', which then 'raises crucial questions about the nature of literary representation.' (4) Animals in literary narratives then, have a propensity to destabilize and bring into question both social and literary conventional norms. However, Baker, much like McHugh, emphasises that the 'extent to which nonhuman animals can destabilize narrative at the very same time they are bound by it' is only revealed when the 'representation of nonhuman animals in necessarily anthropocentric texts [is taken] seriously' (204), and it is precisely this notion that this thesis investigates within this particular set of novels.

By placing these contemporary settler novels in conversation with one another this thesis examines the way in which the texts explore similar questions and themes within writing about animals in Canada through different means and using different representational strategies, but they all ultimately shed light upon the politics of both settler relations and species representation across a specific period of time in Canada. It investigates the way in which these particular novels endeavour, through different means, to engage in critical animal writing that attempts to de-mythologize and destabilize hegemonic norms and binaries by bringing into focus questions surrounding inter-species relations, and in doing so take animals seriously. It argues that the way in which this occurs is through a self-conscious engagement with the historical and contemporary politics of species representation, their literary predecessors, and the kinds of ideas put forth by critics such as these.

From Mowat to Anderson-Dargatz: The Chapters at Work

The structure and content of the chapters is as follows. Following a chronological structure, the thesis opens with a focus on Mowat, titled 'Mythical Reconfigurations and The Cultural Rehabilitation of the Wolf': Examining 1960s Canadian Wolf Narratives in Farley Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf* (1963).' The reason for beginning the thesis with this novel is because *Never Cry Wolf* is a culturally visible piece of writing that is still continually drawn upon in conversations about wolves and utilises myth as its crux of narrative reconfiguration. The text is a memoir written by Mowat to document his experiences observing wolves in Churchill, northern Manitoba, as part of a government funded investigation into the decline of caribou populations by wolves. It documents Mowat's surprise on discovering a small family of peaceful, careful hunters that kill only what they need and target the weakest of herd members, juxtaposing the image of bloodthirsty hordes of wolves that he had been led to believe were plaguing the area. I argue that its success was a product of the

timing of its publication, pre-empting the burgeoning environmentalism of the 1970s, and that the public were primed to receive a pro-wolf message like that in the text due to this increasing shift in cultural attitudes towards the environment and its animal inhabitants. Centring the text as the first in my analysis then, is a strategic reflection of its cultural visibility and influence of the text on the proceeding animal fiction in the thesis. It is a way of examining the use of reconfigured myth within animal writing in the 1960s that marks the beginning of this de-mythologizing representational development that I will demonstrate occurs across the thesis. This chapter will show that Mowat's attempt at a reconfiguration of dominant mythic narratives about wolves is still underpinned by an anthropocentric motivation, and simply re-situates the wolf within a new anthropomorphic, gentrified and mythic narrative.

The second chapter is titled 'Animals on Display: Promiscuous Animal Ciphers and the Creative Process of Human-Animal Interaction in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (1972) and *Life Before Man* (1979).' These novels bookend the 1970s and the growing concern for the environment that critics such as Loo and Karen Jones identify as occurring within Canada during this period. *Surfacing* follows the female narrator's journey back to the family home where she grew up as an English speaker in Quebec, which has become an increasingly French-speaking region and a growing commercialised outpost for hunting parties. The novel thus depicts the narrator's domestic struggles, navigating her past relationship trauma in her current relationship, as occurring alongside an emotional struggle with the changing dynamics of her home space at the hands of hunters. In *Life Before Man* there are three protagonists, Lesje, Elizabeth and Nate, whose perspectives are alternated with each chapter change. The novel follows the intricacies of both their new and failing relationships, as Nate ends his marriage with Elizabeth in order to pursue Lesje. This is set against the backdrop of The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, in which Lesje is a palaeontologist and Elizabeth is a curator. Unlike Mowat's wolves, Atwood's animals are confined to the realm of the symbolic, performing the role of emotional outposts and trapped by the mythicisim that is instilled around them by the protagonists. Any empathy for them is temporary and abandoned in an anthropocentric emotional process, which ultimately involves returning to ordinary heteronormative life.

The chapter will trace the scope of representation across the novels, arguing that it moves from the popular, local scale in *Surfacing*, which focuses on establishing the right to hunt and own Indigenous land, the killing and displaying of a heron by a

group of hunters and a small taxidermy moose family display, through to a national scale of animal representation in *Life Before Man,* where the use, display and engagement with animal bodies is elevated to an institutional level: the museum space. In this space animal bodies are employed alongside educational material, escalating and intellectualising the use of animal bodies as a means of contextualising human history. Despite these differences in representational scale, both novels demonstrate the multitudinous employment of animal bodies as symbolic representatives, or ciphers, of anthropocentric concerns, which I have thus termed 'promiscuous ciphers' after Stephen Asma's argument in *Stuffed Animals and Pickled Heads* that animal displays permit a promiscuity of meaning, depending entirely on the collection that they are situated amongst. As such, this chapter thus demonstrates that whilst Atwood moves away from the type of representational strategies used by Mowat, such as anthropomorphism, she still utilises animals symbolically and exploits particular mythic understandings of animals, such as the imagined narratives given to iconographies of extinct beings on museum displays and in her depiction of a spiritual proximity between animals and Indigeneity. These strategies are employed throughout the novel as a means of representing the difficulties her protagonists are facing in their domestic relationships, which contributes to an overarching notion of heteronormativity as oppressive. Empathy with animals is then, temporary in Atwood's humanist fiction.

The third chapter is titled 'Writing Bear(s): Thematizing the Canadian Animal Story' in Marian Engel's *Bear* (1976).' This novel is positioned next because I argue that her work is in conversation with Atwood's in that it reads like a reaction to Atwood's symbolic animals. It is a novel about a woman, Lou, who journeys to a remote private island in northern Ontario, formerly owned by a Colonel Cary, in order to document the contents of the vast library inside the old colonial-style house belonging to this now deceased owner. Upon arriving at the island, Lou discovers that there is a bear that belongs to Cary and has lived chained to a large doghouse in the garden of the house, like a pet. The novel thus details her growing curiosity towards the bear and her desire to strike up a relationship with him during her time on the island, ultimately followed by her disappointment in his indifference to her. Through such a dynamic Engel self-consciously and critically engages with symbolic animal representation to depict a bear that refuses to be interpreted in any singular way, refusing symbolic understanding, and remains steadfast in his materiality as a disinterested, smelly bear. This is the turning point in the thesis, marking a move away from a use of animal representation that is motivated anthropocentrically and

towards a focus on the representation of the material animal, and more specifically, the human-animal relationship in the text.

This chapter will focus on particular fictional strategies that are employed by Engel to enact and critique writing about animals, whilst simultaneously constructing a new type of story about animals itself. This includes a heavily stylized engagement with the use of mythology within animal writing, which I will define again using Roland Barthes' definition of 'myth', the use of heterotopia, the depiction of Indigeneity as granting proximity to animals, and finally the engagement with prior Canadian animal writers. It will argue that *Bear* marks a de-mythologizing turning point away from the symbolic animal employed by Atwood, and from the heavily anthropomorphic, mythologized wolves in *Never Cry Wolf*, to imagine personal identity as able to operate with and alongside animality, and not only to be symbolically represented by it. The novel therefore destabilizes the notion of a fixed concept of and connection between nation and animals. This emphasises that Engel's novel is a deliberately self-conscious fictional story about writing about animals in Canadian fiction, and the border between the symbolic and the material animal. Through a de-mythologized engagement with a smelly bear that refuses to be interpreted in any singular way, the novel imagines the ways in which it might be possible to construct more critically engaged stories about animals. It is then, a story about a story about a bear.

The fourth chapter of this thesis, titled 'Queering Kinship: Adopting Ethics of Care in Timothy Findley's *The Wars* (1977) and *Not Wanted on the Voyage* (1984)' demonstrates a further de-mythologized development from Engel's critical style of writing and attempting to take animals seriously by working from within a camp, queer framework to put forth an ethics of care and construct literature that contains a decidedly anti-hegemonic, pro-animal message. Findley follows Engel because his work moves beyond Engel's configuration of the material animal and strategically utilises methods of animal representation, such as anthropomorphism, to self-consciously play with methods of textual animal representation whilst simultaneously putting forward a pro-animal message by focusing on the construction of empathetic and caring human-animal relationships.

The Wars tells the story of Robert Ross, a young Canadian who enlists in the army during the Second World War through the lens of a historian who is attempting to piece together Robert's experiences during the war years after his death. It soon emerges that Robert committed an act seen by his fellow soldiers as born out of

defiance against his military duty, when he barricaded himself into a barn with a large number of horses and refused to come out. Tragically, the barn was set alight by an army superior and many of the horses perished and Robert was badly injured in the fire. The novel attempts to piece together the course of events that led up to this moment, and to challenge the perspective of Robert as a military coward by reconfiguring the conception of heroism to incorporate the sympathy that drove him to attempt to rescue the horses from certain death on the front line. Comparatively, *Not Wanted on the Voyage* is a re-written, subversive edition of the Flood Myth in Genesis, written from multiple perspectives, including Mrs Noyes (Noah's, or, as Findley calls him, Dr Noyes', wife), a blind cat named Mottyl, and Dr Noyes' sons. It documents the story of the building of the ark and the difficult realities of life aboard during the flood amongst all of the animals. It also emphasises the great tragedy that underpins the exclusionary edict that left so many behind to perish, comparing it to genocide. Findley wants to demonstrate that there are dynamics of power that underpin such decisions and are perpetuated through the circulation of these types of narratives.

Bringing together these novels, this chapter will demonstrate that Findley is interested in specifically camp moments of defiance in which violent hierarchies of oppression are directly challenged by individual acts of care. To do so, it will set out the terms care and empathy as being drawn from a feminist ethics of care, defined by Carol J Adams and Josephine Donovan. In addition, it will set out the terms kinship and relations using Donna Haraway's *When Species Meet* and *Making Kin not Population*. Much like the chapter on Atwood, this chapter will explore the differences between these two novels by Findley and look at the way in which, although they utilise different representational strategies, it is possible to unite them through the same logic of animality, which is at this intersection of queering and caring. In *The Wars* Findley employs a camp framework to a military hero narrative that is designed to meet the genre on its melodramatic, mythic level and complicate this notion of heroism and duty, particularly in relation to human-animal relationships and the cruelty his protagonist witnesses continually throughout. However, in *Not Wanted on the Voyage* Findley mobilizes mythic representations of animals and the use of anthropomorphism as a self-conscious representational strategy designed to elicit sympathy and demonstrate a kinship that moves beyond species binaries, visibly demonstrating a unity and caring intimacy between the human and animal characters that reject Dr Noyes' patriarchal authority. Through the use of camp then, Findley mobilizes and queers mythological representations of

animals and well known national narratives to produce a specific interest in human-animal relationships and the way in which we might imagine, through literature, the construction of relations built upon empathy and care, and abandon hierarchies of oppression that have produced particular ideas and narratives of nationhood.

Finally, the fifth and final chapter, titled 'A Settler Literary Engagement with the Story of Coyote: Taking Indigenous belief systems seriously as a source for establishing caring and empathetic relations in Gail Anderson-Dargatz's *The Cure for Death by Lightning* (1996)' reaffirms the shift that occurs in writing about animals during this period that this thesis traces towards a de-mythologized, critically engaged, self-conscious focus on the representation of human-animal relationships. The thesis thus ends with Anderson-Dargatz because her text is a demonstration of a consciously de-mythologized animal story at work. The novel is an example of the way in which a settler engagement with Indigenous stories, one that de-mythologises them and takes them seriously, can offer nuanced ways of thinking through human-animal relations.

The Cure for Death by Lightning follows a young protagonist, Beth Weeks, who lives on a dairy farm with her family. Following a bear attack, her father becomes increasingly violent and sexually abusive towards her. Her mother's friend, an Indigenous woman named Bertha who lives on the local reserve, believes that Beth's father has been inhabited by Coyote, the Indigenous trickster figure. In addition, Beth begins to feel that she is being followed by something when she is out walking in the wilderness around her house, which her father's Indigenous farmhand also believes is Coyote. In attempting to avoid her house and father, Beth strikes up a relationship with Bertha's daughter, Nora, which becomes semi-sexual at times. The novel thus documents her attempts to navigate her fear of her father, of Coyote, of growing up and of protecting the farm and its animal inhabitants, and her growing sexual curiosity towards both men and women.

Much like the novels that have come before it in this thesis, this novel also attempts to bring together Indigeneity and its configuration as in proximity to animals, but, unlike its literary predecessors, it does so through a de-mythologized process of bringing Indigeneity to the forefront of settler fiction and engaging with it in a way that takes Indigenous lifeways seriously, rather than using them as a mythological, fictional device. This makes it possible to imagine a different way of understanding settler-Indigenous relations as well as re-thinking species relations.

The chapter draws upon Indigenous scholars Kim TallBear's and Melissa K. Nelson's theories regarding Indigenous 'eco-sexuality' to explore the way in which Anderson-Dargatz's novel engages with such Indigenous concepts of relating, both to human and non-human beings. It argues that the novel represents the Indigenous characters' relationship to non-human animals as being less grounded in oppressive binaries that confine animals anthropocentrically to specific physical spaces as well as ideological inferior ones than that of the settler characters. Moreover, it argues that the novel's engagement with an Indigenous story, drawing upon it as a real means of comprehending human-animal relations, contends that Indigenous knowledge must be taken seriously as a valuable source for understanding how to construct more empathetic and nurturing relations, both human and non-human. The critical animal story then, in Anderson-Dargatz's fictional world, is one that fractures the fixed concept of nationhood put forth by Mowat and Atwood, and by Polk and Sandlos, and does not confine itself to settler understandings of animality, nor does it mythologize Indigeneity and Indigenous animal stories. Rather, *The Cure for Death by Lightning* advocates for a way of thinking that refuses the types of binaries that uphold both patriarchal heteronormativity and anthropocentrism and reconfigures human-animal relations within a more caring and empathetic, Indigenous framework.

Within the triangular critical methodology that I have taken in this thesis, between Canadian nationhood, questions of species, and questions of personal identity, namely Indigeneity, gender and sexuality, there are differences of emphasis demanded by each text and differences in critical approach. I have used particular secondary materials in particular chapters in order to best make sense of how that text responds to these set of questions regarding literature, animals and social identity. For instance, I have not used Donna Haraway or Kim TallBear in the chapter on Margaret Atwood's novels because I do not feel that Atwood's use of animals is interested in asking questions about inter-species ways of relating or the notion of human-animal kinship. Haraway's material would offer a type of analysis that I argue is too early for the de-mythologized development in writing about animals in Atwood's work in the early 1970s, which is why I put it to use when analysing Findley's work in the late 1970s and 1980s, as this has a decidedly more prevalent pro-animal message and focus on the intricacies of human-animal relationships.

Moreover, TallBear's theories regarding eco-sexuality encourage a reconfiguration of our relationship with the land and all of its inhabitants, which hinges upon an

abandonment of anthropocentrism and of a fixed concept of Canadian cultural identity. However, in both Atwood's novels the protagonists' relationships with animals are anthropocentric in that they are temporary signifiers of their domestic struggles and desire for escape from heteronormative human life, and moreover, they indulge in utilising Indigeneity as a temporary state for gaining proximity to animals because they are settler characters constructed from within a framework that considers the animal story to be a settler nationalist project and subgenre. Such an analysis then, would be misplaced, and is better used to focus more specifically on a novel that engages seriously with Indigeneity and Indigenous lifeways, human-animal relationships, and in fragmenting contemporary Canadian identity beyond a fixed settler conception, like that in *The Cure for Death by Lightning*. And so, each chapter pays attention to the critical framework required to unpick the social identity triangulation at question within the text and applies what I have determined to be the most effective secondary critical material to bring out the way in which that text responds to those questions.

Similarly to the way in which myth is handled differently in these works, not all of the novels in this thesis engage directly with Indigeneity, but it is a recurrent presence in the majority of them. By holding these works together I will demonstrate that there is a recurring tendency by settler writers working during this period to code Indigeneity as in proximity to animals, and moreover, to represent Indigeneity as a state that can be temporarily adopted to gain closer identification with animals. Indigenous characters are thus largely marginalised and underdeveloped in representation, utilised only when characters seek specific knowledge.

As the thesis develops, I will demonstrate that there is a move away from this way of thinking in the later contemporary works in this thesis. Findley does not attempt to engage or represent Indigeneity in *Not Wanted on the Voyage*, instead focusing on a settler creation story and the types of oppressions that have underpinned narratives such as these, ultimately as a means of considering alternative ways through which to construct empathy and kinship with animals and to play around with the types of narratives that have underpinned contemporary settler Canadian conceptions of national identity. Anderson-Dargatz does the opposite, and frames her entire novel with an engagement with the Indigenous story of Coyote, demonstrating that it is possible to re-consider both settler-Indigenous relations and human-animal relations through a serious engagement with Indigenous ways of being, rather than settler ones. Thus, by focusing on Indigeneity it allows for the asking of questions about relations between settler culture and Indigenous culture,

demonstrating that advocating for identity with animals in Canada in the 1960s and 70s is not something that you can innocently do. There is a larger dynamic of species and postcolonial politics at work that in a process of de-mythologizing presents a counter-narrative of nation. My work thus allows for this point to be made.

It is also important to outline that not all of the authors advocate for a pro-animal ethics. Rather, by holding these novels in comparison with one another and tracing the development of animal representation across them, this thesis will demonstrate that as the style of writing adopted for the animal story became more critically engaged, so too did a pro-animal ethics begin to emerge. Thus, advocating for a pro-animal ethics only emerges within the fourth chapter on Findley's novels and is sustained by Anderson-Dargatz. Mowat's representation, though seemingly pro-animal, is anthropocentric in its construction, politically motivated to displace an old mythic narrative and replace it with am anthropomorphic depiction of wolves that suits Mowat's narrative purpose. Atwood's depiction of empathy between her female protagonists and the animals they encounter is momentarily pro-animal, but it is not sustained as the women recognise their own victimisation through witnessing animal suffering, and turn the focus of the novels back to anthropocentric concerns. Finally, Marian Engel does not advocate for a pro-animal ethics as she focuses her attention of self-reflexively demonstrating the absence of the material animal within animal stories and rejecting symbolic representational strategies as a remedy for this. As such, I demonstrate that this pro-animal ethics is a developing factor within the writing during this period, emerging from the 1980s onwards at the same time as a more critical animal story began to emerge, imagined through an engagement with empathy, care and the construction of interspecies kinship and a fragmenting of a fixed concept of Canadian national identity.

Ultimately, this thesis argues that Canadian settler writers have manipulated and put to use the figurative aspect of animal writing to reflect upon specifically settler-Canadian anxieties and concerns, which then become increasingly diverse and unstable as period develops. It will demonstrate that writing about animals in Canada has been influenced not just by Seton and Roberts, but also by specific novels and authors such Farley Mowat and Margaret Atwood, whose narratives and arguments regarding writing about animals in Canada have garnered cultural fame.

As such, I argue that there is a developing self-reflexivity within the contemporary novels that this thesis examines in that they actively engage with and critique writing about animals in the construction of their narratives about human-animal relationships. It does so through a framework of triangulation with questions of species, nation and personal identity, the last of which is made up three aspects of social identity: Indigeneity, gender and sexuality. These intersections demonstrate that through thinking about animal stories it is possible to produce a way of thinking about human-animal relations that is radically anti-hegemonic, enacted through a critique of the kinds of binaries and hierarchies that have upheld systems of oppression that effect both humans and animals and have contributed to a fixed concept of both personal and national identity. Moreover, these stories simultaneously play with the species politics of representation and literature as a cultural medium, engaging directly with the narratives strategies that surround the representation of interspecies relationships and the animal in literature more broadly.

The novels that appear in this study are, then, stories about writing stories about animals. I argue that these novels play a self-conscious role in the changing nature of writing about animals in contemporary Canada during this period, and that this development occurs through a process of de-mythologizing. The result of this process is the construction of more critically engaged writing about animals that attempts to take animals seriously as agents in reciprocated interspecies relationships, rather than confining them to a literary symbolic realm. Moreover, these stories complicate notions of national identity and undermine the nature of a homogenous idea of settler identity as the Canadian hegemonic norm and as signified through animal representation. Finally, through my engagement with these texts, I argue that in the animal fiction in late twentieth-century Canada there was a development that saw the emergence of a pro-animal message that sought to imagine and focus specifically on human-animal relationships that are built upon reciprocity, empathy and care.

Ch1. Reconfiguring Wolf Myths in Farley Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf* (1963)

Much of the discussion surrounding Farley Mowat's 1963 memoir, *Never Cry Wolf*, has praised the text as a seminal piece of animal writing, arguing that it played a significant role in altering Canadian public opinion in favour of the wolf during the 1960s. This chapter will argue that in the process of reconfiguring specific wolf narratives through various literary strategies, Mowat's memoir simply implants one narrative of wolves onto another. The text dismantles the mythic perception of wolves as dangerous, blood-thirsty hunters who are decimating caribou populations, by instilling a sentimental depiction of wolves as genteel, anthropomorphic family units. As such, this new narrative still operates from within an anthropocentric framework. Thus, there is an irony surrounding this memoir in that the text is an aesthetic project aimed at debunking myths, but in actuality, is producing another and is doing it self-consciously.

The use of the word myth that I refer to throughout this chapter lends itself to the definition set out by Roland Barthes, as stated in the introduction of this thesis. He states that 'myth is a type of speech'[1] and that it is 'speech stolen and restored.' (50) Moreover, he states that 'myth deprives the object of which it speaks of all History. In it, history evaporates' (178) and consequently 'essentially aims at causing an immediate impression.' (155) This chapter then, argues that Mowat's memoir engages in this mythic type of speech, stealing from preconceived mythic understandings of wolves, such as narratives surrounding howling and the wolf gaze, and reconfigures them to produce another narrative surrounding wolves that still restores the mythic understanding and way of talking about wolves that he attempts to dismantle. The memoir aims to make an 'immediate impression' about wolves, but in doing so it still functions from within a mythic, anthropocentric framework.

Environmental historian Tina Loo argues that Mowat's novel brought about a cultural 'rehabilitation' of the wolf,[2] and Karen Jones emphasises the text's place within a larger discourse of animal rights, stating that '*Never Cry Wolf* participated

[1] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Vintage, 2009) p. 131.
[2] Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006) p. 173.

in the birth of a new environmental revolution.'[3] There is evidence that a focus on maintaining ecosystems and their animal inhabitants became more of a priority during this period, as a number of new environmental organisations were created, such as The National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada (1963), World Wildlife Fund Canada (1967), the Canadian arm of the Sierra Club (1970) and the Canadian Nature Federation (1971) (now Nature Canada). As a consequence, the era has been hailed historically as the second wave of Environmental activism in Canada after the first wave in the early 1900s. It marked a change in conservationist attitudes because concern began to be expressed by ordinary Canadians at a grassroots level, rather than a governmental one. In addition, the rise of the media brought more exposure to hunting techniques, in particular the clubbing of seals. This garnered more attention to environmental issues that often concerned animals, and an increase in public outcry against violent practices towards animals began to garner momentum.[4]

Never Cry Wolf's rationale was evidently to influence public opinion in favour of the wolf by exposing fallacies within particular representations that have been perpetuated by the organisations he names, such as the Canadian Government and within some scientific textbooks. Despite the text's rationale, there is no textual evidence that *Never Cry Wolf* consciously 'participated' in this environmentalist movement, as it makes no direct references to broader environmentalist issues, but rather it is a text whose sole purpose is to retain a focus solely on reconfiguring wolf narratives. However, the text's success in motivating opinion was likely a product of the cultural prevalence of environmental issues, in that there was a shift in cultural attitudes towards more welfare based ethics about wild animals in the 60s and 70s, which has been read as connected to *Never Cry Wolf*'s influence because it was a best seller. This cultural climate means that people were primed to receive messages like Mowat's because of this cultural change.

The notion that there was a cultural embracing of pro-animal narratives is reinforced through the contradiction that Jones' argument makes regarding *Never Cry Wolf*'s membership in the amateur naturalist tradition:

---

[3] Karen Jones, 'Never Cry Wolf: Science, Sentiment, and the Literary Rehabilitation of Canis Lupus', *The Canadian Historical Review*, 84.1. (2003) 65-93 (p. 86).

[4] The Canadian Encyclopaedia: http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/environmental-and-conservation-movements/ [Accessed 29 November 2017].
CBC: http://www.cbc.ca/archives/topic/pelts-pups-and-protest-the-atlantic-seal-hunt [Accessed 29 November 2017].

> He was operating within a different, storytelling, tradition, perceiving imagination and literary verve as key routes to converting his audience to an environmental cause. The emotive epiphany of *Never Cry Wolf* positioned it squarely within a North American amateur naturalist tradition. The book related a spiritual awakening and an intuitive environmental narrative that deplored the decimation of resident fauna at the hands of a bureaucratic elite. It was consciously designed as a piece of propaganda, employing natural history, humour, and tragedy to fashion an affecting tale. (16)

Such an analysis recognises that there is an intention motivating Mowat's storytelling, as she labels the text a 'piece of propaganda' in its pursuit of inciting an affective response to the wolf. However, she also suggests that Mowat's text doesn't attempt a new type of storytelling. Rather, she emphasises that the affective nature of Mowat's work lends itself to the same type of sentimentalist animal narratives seen in the work of Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G. D. Roberts. Therefore, following this line of argument, if Mowat's memoir is continuing the same type of work as Seton and Roberts, then only the period of publication can be the influencer, rather than the particular piece of work. Thus, Mowat's success evidences a cultural shift that was more receptive to this type of sentimental animal narrative, allowing his work to capitalise on this burgeoning environmentalist movement.

This chapter will explore Mowat's depiction of wolves, focusing in particular on his representation of specific behaviours such as howling, the family 'pack', hunting practices and the wolf gaze. I will argue that *Never Cry Wolf* seeks to replace the common historical narrative that wolves are dangerous predators by representing a clash between the narratives Mowat has heretofore been exposed to regarding wolves and the reality that he is faced with upon encounter with real, material wolves, which is the discovery of the animals living a life of peaceful domesticity. Such a conflict is a literary strategy, accompanied with a satirical retrospective commentary within the narrative, which is employed to motivate public empathy in favour of the wolves through their humanisation. Such a mythic reconfiguration of one anthropocentric narrative for another demonstrates that human empathy for animals hinges upon being able to relate to them through particular narratives that pinpoint familiarity, such as a focus on the dynamics of family life, and this reinforces the importance of anthropomorphism to Mowat's narrative.

I will then turn to the text's depiction of its Indigenous characters because throughout *Never Cry Wolf* Mowat uses the Indigenous men that he meets to

access particular knowledge about the land and its animal inhabitants, before he then silences them through the construction of his text as a settler memoir that centres his experience and his knowledge of wolves. Brian Johnson has commented on the settler-Indigenous relationship depicted in the novel. He argues that *Never Cry Wolf* belongs to the genre of northern adventure fiction, stating that this 'sub-genre of imperial discourse is synonymous with the articulation of a romanticized Canadian nationhood that marginalizes Native presence.[5] As such, he argues that 'Mowat's northern discourse sails further and further into the realm of nationalist fantasy to imagine increasingly remote and transcendent genealogies of white indigeneity for Canada.' (46) Such an argument posits the novel as an attempt to incite a nationalistic claim to the wolf through the representation of Mowat's navigation of and attachment to the land as an act of Indigenizing himself. Rather than focusing on this act of Indigenizing, this chapter will argue that Mowat fails to take seriously the concerns and fears that the Indigenous characters exhibit with regards to his presence in this space, and moreover, he utilises their reactions as humorous points of narrative entertainment. In doing so Mowat undermines the agency of these Indigenous people by failing to take seriously the colonial history of the region, which motivates their fear of him. Thus, he silences these Indigenous people to little more than background sources of knowledge that permit him to access the wolves and to create the story of his memoir. His oversight of the postcolonial politics at play reinforces the narrow vision of *Never Cry Wolf*, which is focused entirely on a wolf narrative that would counter existing narratives and represent the wolf in a positive image, situated within a nationalistic framework. This evidences the use of Indigeneity as a narrative strategy within these types of settler animal stories, which confine Indigenous culture to the realm of the symbolic through the notion that it can be accessed and used in this way.

Using these specific items of focus that I have outlined, this chapter will argue that *Never Cry Wolf* is part of a tradition of writing that uses particular literary strategies to rework myths about human-animal relations. It is a particularly culturally visible piece of writing, effectively blazing a trail between writing about animals in Canada and a more literary strategic type of writing, influencing the way in which writing about wolves was constructed. Its cultural visibility is evidenced by the fact that the

[5] Brian Johnson, 'Viking Graves Revisited: Pre-Colonial Primitivism in Farley Mowat's Northern Gothic' in *Unsettled Remains: Canadian Literature and the Postcolonial Gothic,* ed. by Cynthia Sugars and Gerry Turcotte (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2009) pp. 23-47 (p. 36).

text has been repeatedly drawn upon in discussions of wolf culling policy across North America since its publication. Garry Marvin states:

> As a result of its publication the Canadian Wildlife Service received mail from all over the world condemning its programmes of intense wolf culling and supporting the man who was seen as a champion of these wild creatures in the face of an unfeeling wildlife bureaucracy.[6]

In addition, in 1988, *The Associated Press* televised a section titled 'Wolves, Up Close and Personal on 'National Geographic Explorer'', in which it was stated that:

> Anyone who has read Farley Mowat's best-selling "Never Cry Wolf", or just seen the Disney film adaptation, already knows wolves are not the slathering, indiscriminate killers of lore, but highly intelligent creatures with a well-developed social structure.[7]

Moreover, a 2017 publication of the *New York Observer* titled 'Fear and Misinformation Fuel Government Killings of Wolves' similarly references Mowat's text by quoting directly from the memoir.[8] Mowat's memoir then, not only attempts to reconfigure the mythic nature of literary wolf representation, but in doing so it carves itself its own mythic status amongst literature and cultural conversation regarding human-wolf relations by tapping into the environmental context surrounding its publication.

A New Wolf Story: Literary Strategies for Reconfiguring Wolf Representation

In *Never Cry Wolf* Mowat employs a narrative that details the clashing of his former knowledge about wolves, which he had gained through scientific textbooks, mythological stories, contemporary literary depictions and his employers, The Canadian Dominion Wildlife Service, with that of the passive, family-centred wolf-pack that he encounters once in the arctic space. In constructing his narrative Mowat employs a retrospective commentary that accompanies his descriptions of the events as they unfold for the reader throughout the text. This often offers a humorous critique of his former ignorance, which encourages the reader to take the same quizzical perspective. The text thus works in this non-fictional, self-reflective mode that is designed to allow Mowat to be critical and shed doubt on public attitudes to wolves, and thus debunk these former narratives.

[6] Garry Marvin, *Wolf* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2012) p. 146
[7] Katherine Baker, *The Associated Press*, December 13 1988, Entertainment Byline PM cycle.
[8] Michael Sainnago and Chelsea Skojec, *The New York Observer*, Byline, January 5 2017.

Mowat's technique of reconfiguration involves an initial detailing of the kinds of narratives circulating regarding wolves, and the militarised approach to the animal that was born out of this imagery, which is then accompanied by this retrospective, self-reflective narrative voice that pinpoints the fallacy of these narratives, both in their hyperbolic nature and through his experiences of material encounter. Mowat explains that prior to landing in the wilderness his employers, the CDWS, used a militarised rhetoric to describe the wolf and encouraged a military-style approach to his mission in the arctic, placing Mowat and the wolves into a conflict underpinned by a anthropocentric framework: that of soldier and enemy. Mowat explains that this approach has stemmed from the 1940s' and 50s' rabies epidemic in Canada and the effect this had on public perceptions of wolves both during the period and still to the present day because of a specific myth regarding a dangerous and infected wolf. By drawing upon this specific narrative of a historical and mythic incident Mowat introduces an intertextual element to his memoir and demonstrates the way in which particular narratives have historically shaped national human-animal relations and have gone unquestioned due to the 'mythic' nature that they have developed over time. As Mowat uncovers, this incident didn't actually involve a wolf, and so the history of this story has been 'evaporated' in favour of retaining the more exciting narrative 'impression' of dangerous, rabies infected wolves. Specifically, this intertextuality reinforces that notion that the stories that have been told about wolves have accumulated a cultural wealth that is no longer interested in understanding and taking wolves seriously because the imaginative or 'mythic' conception of the wolf is far more engaging on a narrative level. Keeping the wolf within the mythic framework of culture then, has superseded the real and contextual facts surrounding their existence and interactions with humans.

As evidence of this cultural desire to continue to confine and discuss wolves within a mythic framework, Mowat works to expose and undermine the narrative of the rabies incident. Rabies is a disease that when contracted by an animal causes a slow death and is often characterised by significant behavioural changes, such as foaming at the mouth and an increase in aggressive instinct, and wolves were one of the many animals infected with the disease during this period.[9] However, despite such knowledge of rabies symptoms during the 1960s, Mowat states that the behaviour of infected wolves during this epidemic was not recognized to be an

[9] George Colpitts, 'Howl: The 1952-56 Rabies Crisis and the Creation of the Urban Wild at Banff', in *Animal Metropolis: Histories of Human-Animal Relations in Urban Canada*, ed. by Joanna Dean, Darcy Ingram and Christabelle Sethna (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2017) pp. 219-253 (p. 219).

effect of rabies contraction, but was attributed to typical aggressive behaviour associated with wolves. He says, 'the human reaction to them [was] usually one of unbridled terror – not of the disease, for it [was] seldom recognised as rabies, but of the wolves themselves.'[10] The use of 'unbridled' here evidences an excessive hysteria and also reflects an innate human preference for domesticated and tamed animals, specifically referencing a human-made tool for controlling domestic horses. Thus, Mowat demonstrates that the position the wolf occupied in the Canadian cultural imagination during this period, as a dangerous predator, is so solidified that even infected wolves were vilified as acting consciously and intently on harming humans, regardless of the knowledge concerning rabies and behavioural change.

This is further reinforced through Mowat's critique of the alleged incident in 1946 in the Churchill region (for which he is bound, incidentally), wherein an infected wolf was said to have wandered into the town and attacked an Army Corporal. As a consequence, militant measures were employed to deal with the animal:

> Squads of grim-faced men armed with rifles, carbines and spotlights were soon scouring the surrounding country intent on dealing with a menace which, in a matter of hours, had grown into several packs of starving wolves. (184)

The description of the wolf as a 'menace' is a continuation of the intent that has been historically and anthropomorphically ascribed to wolves and has positioned them as consciously villainous. Moreover, this story demonstrates that the behaviour of one such wolf has accumulated such narrative significance as to be taken as indicative of all wolves and thus as justification for violently culling them from the area. This demonstrates that which Marvin has argued is the wolf's place within a 'complex system of crime, vengeance and punishment', (89) and the role and power that narratives play within this system to consolidate its perpetuation, even when it is revealed to be inaccurate and a grandiose version of events. Mowat creates humour by revealing the escalation that occurred in this narrative. He notes that the 'pack of starving wolves' was revealed to be a single 'cocker spaniel belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company manager' (185) and yet 'to this day there are residents of Churchill… who will, at the drop of a hat, describe the invasion of Churchill by wolves in 1946.' (185)[11] Such a criticism of this narrative is a literary strategy

[10] Farley Mowat, *Never Cry Wolf* (New York City: Back Bay Books/Little, Brown and Company, 1963) p. 184.

[11] It has proven difficult to find any historical record of this event other than Mowat's reference.

employed by Mowat to demonstrate that the role of the wolf within particular narratives has surpassed consideration of a depiction that takes wolves seriously because these stories have become enjoyable stories in themselves and part of a species politics that codes wolves in particular mythic ways and provides exciting narratives about the national history of that space and the species interactions within it.

By engaging with these mythic false narratives of wolves, Mowat makes known the conditions upon which he too entered the arctic space prior to his encounters with the wolves. This works to explain the predetermined state of vulnerability that he adopts upon landing in Churchill and further reinforces the tension undercutting the dual level of narrative embodied by the memoir form, as his critical voice works retrospectively against his former self and attempts to narrate the story in an engaging way by capitalising on this cultural fear. The tension and fear that the memoir at first presents is perpetuated by the detail regarding the purpose of Mowat's journey into the arctic to encounter wolves. This, he is informed by his military Chief advisor, is to investigate the 'carnage being wreaked upon the deer population by hordes of wolves.' (15) This type of narrative that positions the wolves as wholly responsible for declining deer populations is further figured as, at this point, undisputed within the text when Mowat is informed of the fate of his Chief's predecessor:

> "My predecessor supplied the Minister with an explanation of this situation in which it was his contention that there were fewer deer because the hunters had increased to the point where they outnumbered the deer about five to one. The Minister, in all good faith, read this fallacious statement in the House of Commons, and he was promptly shouted down by Members howling 'liar!' and 'wolf-lover!'" (15)[12]

[12] I cannot find record of this discussion happening in Canadian Parliament despite searching through archives from 1950-1970. I have found one record of the discussion of wolves and predator control in the House of Commons in 1950, raised by a Mr Adamson, which appears to be in line with the anti-wolf Parliamentary mentality depicted by Mowat in the 1960s. Mr Adamson describes wolves as 'ferocious killer[s]' and states that 'more destruction is caused to wildlife by protecting the predators than has ever been caused by even the greatest extent of hunting by man'. He asks that wardens be allowed to shoot wolves or indeed any predators (such as Grizzly bears). The item concludes 'item agreed'. This is in 'House of Commons Debates', 21st Parliament, 2nd Session, Volume 3, p.1016 http://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates_HOC2102_03/1016?r=0&s=1 [Accessed 15 November 2017].

Ironically, the aggressive behaviour attributed to the wolves is here subverted and embodied by the Commons Members. All notions of human culpability are wholly rejected as 'fallacious' because they do not fit into the dominant understanding of wolves as insatiable hunters. This is also the first indication in the novel that the attempt to change public perceptions of wolves might be met with opposition, particularly by those in power, whom Mowat later exposes as having an economic interest in the hunting of wolves. As such, he begins to indicate the species politics that his novel will ultimately engage with, which is examining why particular narratives regarding wolves have been perpetuated and then attempting to replace them with his own story about wolves.

Mowat's engagement with these vast negative representations of wolves serves to validate his own belief in these wolf narratives. By detailing his own investment in these misconceptions, followed by his enlightenment through encounter, Mowat employs a particular literary strategy that does not target and criticise the reader and society more broadly, but positions his novel as educational in its revelation of an alternative image of wolf life. He describes reading from the scientific guide given to him by the Wildlife Service that '"the wolf is a savage, powerful killer. It is one of the most feared and hated animals known to man, and with excellent reason."' (60) He adds, that 'the reason was not given, but it would have been superfluous in any case.' (60) His blind acceptance of the 'superfluous' need for a reason suggests a retrospective critique of his willingness to unquestionably accept such officially sanctioned discourse. The evident fear that Mowat holds of the wolves is further reiterated when we are given a detailed description of his arms collection, which reflects his own engagement in the militarised discourse surrounding the wolf and his mission. Mowat notes that it contained:

> Two rifles, a revolver complete with holster and cartridge belt, two shotguns, and a case of teargas grenades with which I was expected to persuade reluctant wolves to leave their dens so that they could be shot. There were two large smoke generators prominently labelled DANGER, to be used for signalling to aircraft in case I got lost –perhaps – in case the wolves closed in. A case of "wolf getters" – fiendish devices which fire a charge of potassium cyanide into the mouth of any animal which investigates them – completed my arsenal. (18)

This is an example of Mowat's use of a retrospective, playful tone that is both ironic and critical in its use of 'persuade' and 'fiendish'. He deliberately employs this tone

to reinforce that the idea that one might seek the compliance of wolves by way of discussion is both ludicrous and humorous. Moreover, the description of an excessive collection of arms demonstrates the extent to which violence towards non-human animals has been normalised within specific cultural narratives. Thus, his description of the wolf as 'reluctant' marks a move away from his reliance on his former knowledge, which justifies and normalises such violence, towards a humerous critical consideration of the ludicrous nature of the techniques he has been told to practice. As such, this use of humour works to undermine the authenticity of the knowledge and advice he has received prior to landing in the space, thereby closing the distance between the mythic narratives that have circulated culture and normalised this approach, and thus calling into question both the practices adopted by the wildlife services, and the narratives that have perpetuated this militarised framework.

The Signal for Danger: Dismantling the Myth of Howling

Mowat's literary strategy of using this retrospective humorous critical voice to detail his reliance on former knowledge of wolves and the clash that occurs when this knowledge fails to hold up upon encounter continues when he lands in the space and is first exposed to the howling of wolves. This is the first of a number of ecological features of wolf behaviour that Mowat's text focuses on and attempts to reconfigure so as to present a decidedly pro-wolf narrative. The significance and concern that has historically been attributed to howling, Marvin argues, is that it has long been understood to 'signal attack'. (24) This is the perception that Mowat admits to holding, as he describes his sheer panic, abandoning his arsenal of weapons and hiding beneath an upturned canoe. He therefore purposefully draws upon a mythologized trope of wolf behaviour in order to build narrative tension, which demonstrates a continued engagement with the cultural imaginary surrounding the wolf in narrative that is then reconfigured. He states that he heard the 'unmistakeable… howling of a wolf pack in full cry' (41) heading in his direction, and the sheer volume of noise was then interpreted by him to be a pack numbering 'four hundred' (42) in size. He adds: 'I therefore decided I should retire underneath the upturned canoe, so that the presence of a human being would not be readily apparent, with its consequent tendency to induce atypical behaviour in the beasts.' (42) Mowat's reaction and his exaggeration in predicting a pack of 'four hundred' wolves evidences his use of comedy as a narrative strategy for retrospectively criticising his behaviour and beliefs at the time, which is then reinforced with more humour when the source of the sound is revealed to be an Inuit named Mike and his

sled dogs.[13] His reference to the impending animals as 'beasts' and to their 'atypical behaviour' not only indicates the type of narrative that Mowat's knowledge of wolves previously hinged on, but it also provides further humour when juxtaposed with the arrival of domesticated dogs.

By choosing to hide rather than find his ammunition supplies, Mowat demonstrates both a literal and figurative disarmament by the rapid presence of the animals and furthermore, it is significant that he hides underneath an artificially made object, retreating back into that which is familiar, but revealing its inadequacy in this environment, the frozen lake. Mowat thus strategically leverages the comic consequences of his own belief in the mythical narratives surrounding the wolf in order to undermine them, as simply hearing the sound of howling induced a level of panic so immediate that he could only think to hide. Mowat's position here then, without the desire to use ammunition, seemingly without accurate knowledge, and without an escape route, demonstrates his vulnerability within this space and the comedy that his narrator-self sees retrospectively in this condition. However, more than this, such a narrativization is a move by Mowat to demonstrate that rather than his vulnerability stemming from the dangerous presence of wolves, it is rather a product of his lack of knowledge regarding the arctic space and its inhabitants – wolf, human or other. This encounter makes clear that the dangerous, vast and empty subarctic supposedly inhabited by bloodthirsty wolves is also a place inhabited by Indigenous people and domesticated animals, undermining its haunting and negative mythologization. Despite his revelation regarding the lack of danger and violence he finds himself subject to in the arctic space, Mowat continues to draw upon particular narrative tropes surrounding wolf ecology, such as his description of howling, that perpetuate the wolf's confinement within a mythological framework.

Who is watching whom? The Wolf Gaze

The next of these tropes that this chapter will turn to is his representation of the wolf gaze, which he depicts as inciting a state of subjective questioning that propels him into a reconfiguration of his knowledge about wolves. Philip Armstrong emphasises the symbolic weight that has been culturally attached to the gaze of

[13] Mowat refers to Mike throughout *Never Cry Wolf* as an Eskimo. The name Eskimo was given by non-Inuit people and is considered derogatory in its conception. It is said to mean "eater of raw meat". The Alaska Native Language Centre notes that the people of Canada prefer the term Inuit, which means "people". I have therefore chosen to use the word Inuit when discussing Mike. Source: https://www.uaf.edu/anlc/resources/inuit-eskimo/ [Accessed 28 March 2017].

animals and posits that the wolf's gaze in particular has historically been one of the most discussed of any animal species. This reinforces the type of mythic speech and discourse that has surrounded the wolf and that Mowat seeks to work within:

> Conceived as a current, flame, fire, stream of particles, or corporeal ray, eyesight was not just an active force in itself but also a vehicle for other physical effects: poisons, contagions, influences of various kinds. Moreover this visual flux seemed especially menacing because it was observably strongest in the gaze of humanity's most feared animal predators: wolves and big cats.[14]

The significance of the wolf gaze then, hinges upon their status as 'feared predators', reinforcing the layered influence of the mythologized narrative through which the wolf is continually approached and how this has gone on to underpin further narratives regarding their ecology. Moreover, Armstrong's addition that 'the power of the animal gaze, whether natural or supernatural, is answered down the barrel of a gun' (185) is poignant way of conceptualizing the complexity in being met by the animal gaze and the narrative that conceptualises it – one is aware of being looked at by something with agency, yet the consequences or even purpose of this gaze are unknown and as a consequence narratives that are familiar regarding that animal shape that interaction. In essence, one is rendered entirely vulnerable by being met with this inexplicable gaze, or this absent-presence. Mowat thus purposefully draws upon a heavily mythologised and infamous trope associated with human-wolf encounter and reconfigures it as a literary strategy to represent a transformative moment in his understanding of wolves and abandonment of his former narrative regarding their predatory and dangerous nature. Moreover, Mowat depicts an agency within the wolf gaze that permits the animal to both literally, during his encounter, and figuratively, on a broader narrative level, respond to the cultural depictions that have vilified it through a depiction of his encounter with the wolf as being symbolic of the clash of these knowledges. As a consequence, rather than removing the mythologization surrounding the wolf, Mowat simply reconfigures it through the emphasis that he continues to attach to the wolf gaze. He is not interested in simply reporting the behaviour of the wolves he encounters in a non-descriptive way, but rather he challenges the former narrative through his own representation that indulges in equivalent strategies of

[14] Philip Armstrong, 'The Gaze Called Animal' in *Theorizing Animals: Re-thinking Humanimal Relations*, ed. by Nik Taylor and Tania Signal (Leiden: Brill, 2011) pp. 176-199 (p. 181).

mythologization to present an overly positive and empathetic depiction of wolf behaviour that still continues to operate within a framework for understanding animals, and wolves in particular, that is familiar through its anthropocentrism

The language that Mowat uses to describe the transformative nature of the wolf gaze lends itself to the 'type of speech' that Barthes denotes as underpinning 'myth', which evidences his indulgence in this framework. As he states: 'everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse. Myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters this message: there are formal limits to myth, there are no 'substantial' ones.' (131) It is Mowat's 'utterance' of his description of becoming paralyzed by the wolf gaze that reinforces his careful deployment of mythic language, as he states hyperbolically that he found himself 'peering straight into the amber gaze of a fully grown arctic wolf', and adding that 'for some seconds neither of us moved but continued to stare hypnotically into one another's eyes'. (54) This description positions such a moment as significant and transformative, attaching spiritual importance to the wolf and this aspect of its' ecology. Furthermore, the spatial suspension caused by the gaze of the animal that Mowat describes is another element belonging to mythical discourse surrounding wolves: that which has become known as 'fascination'. Armstrong discusses the history of this trope, denoting the seventeenth century author Edward Topsell's belief that 'the gaze of wolves causes muteness in humans.'[15] Mowat reinforces this significance of this trope through his contemplation regarding what it is about being seen by the wolf that creates such unease, and what the consequences of this unease are. This is demonstrated by Mowat's description of being observed by a family of wolves:

> I was becoming prey to a small but nagging doubt as to just who was watching whom. I felt that I, because of my specific superiority as a member of Homo Sapiens, together with my intensive technical training, was entitled to pride of place. The sneaking suspicion that this pride had been denied and that, in point of fact, I was the one who was under observation, had an unsettling effect upon my ego. (72)

Mowat's identification as 'superior' juxtaposes with his description of himself as 'becoming prey' to doubt. In this instance his 'intensive technical training' and species membership are rendered inconsequential as a means of securing his 'pride

[15] Philip Armstrong, 'The Gaze Called Animal', p. 181.

of place'. This means that Mowat's self-reflection occurs through a new perception of himself as vulnerable – an 'unsettling' concept.

The discussion regarding the production of vulnerability through the animal gaze is written thirty years earlier than Jacques Derrida's *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, which is continually referred to by animal studies scholars as the seminal text on this concept. Mowat's contribution to the field of animal studies then, has been overlooked, as *Never Cry Wolf* demonstrated an effective engagement with the idea of being looked at by animals substantially earlier than scholars like Derrida. Thus, the value of both *Never Cry Wolf*, and its place within the genre of writing about animals that the text belongs to more broadly, cannot be downplayed, as there is evidently a potential value within these literary representations for engagement and critique regarding human-animal relations. Mowat enters the space with a fixed conception of his relationship with wolves as being held within a militarised approach. However, on being observed by the wolves and meeting their gaze, Mowat represents his knowledge and sense of understanding is being disarmed, leaving him with a new feeling of vulnerability that does not require arms, but rather a deeper ideological engagement with the animals in question. He thus successfully represents this transformation through the employment of these specific literary strategies of focusing on particularized mythological wolf tropes and reconfigures them in a positive light, thereby creating a new wolf narrative.

Mowat's conception of his own vulnerability and the way in which he came to recognise it as being a product of his own ignorance regarding wolf behaviour, rather than being a an object of their prey, is an inversion of the typical trajectory of human-animal vulnerability narratives. Not only does this put forth the importance of encounter in forming knowledge about animals, but it is also a specific narrative strategy of utilising tension and retrospective critique to reconfigure and undermine his preconceptions about wolves by demonstrating the misplacement of this concept of vulnerability. He states that his 'pride of place' had 'been denied' by the effect of the wolf gaze. His use of Freudian vocabulary to discuss the consequences of such denial ('unsettling' his 'ego') implies a sense of vulnerability that has fractured his masculine core identity. His inversion from the observer to the vulnerable observed exposes the instability of his ideals regarding the influence and importance given to membership of 'Homo Sapiens'. Here, within this 'northern' space and in the eyes of these wolves, such constructs are rendered obsolete. Rather, the wolf emerges as an active being, gaining, through its gaze, recognition as a species that experiences the world in much the same way as human-animals do,

and is not the violent and dangerous creature understood by Mowat's previous engagement with discourse on the animal.

Such a depiction is an early inversion of the kind of human-animal encounter produced vulnerability seen in the work of Val Plumwood, who also discusses a moment of emotional transformation after an animal encounter, describing her experience of being attacked by a crocodile whilst canoeing in Kakadu national park, Australia, as involving the realisation of 'being prey'. Much like Mowat becoming aware of the fallacy of the dynamics of his preconceived relationship with the wolves, Plumwood describes her experience as a state of recognition, stating that 'for the first time, it came to me fully that I was prey.'[16] Thus, it was only upon becoming aware of her own vulnerability in the face of a large predator that she realised the 'view of ourselves as rational masters of a malleable nature' was simply a 'delusion' (34) and moreover, that 'crocodile predation… threatens the dualistic visions and divisions which justify rational human mastery of the planet.' (34) Thus, by 'being prey' Plumwood became aware of the false dichotomy between 'human' and 'animal' and of the fragility upon which 'human mastery' has been constructed. However, whereas Plumwood enters the space unaware that she is the prey of a crocodile and consequently discovers her own vulnerability through being attacked, Mowat enters the subarctic believing that he is prey to wolves and that they are inherently dangerous. Thus, his vulnerability is produced through a realisation that he is in fact wrong about the wolves.

The wolves do not attack, but rather they observe him. It is through being observed by the wolf, and caught in the animal gaze then, that Mowat 'sees' the wolf for the first time, and he recognises the ability of the wolf to 'see' him. This destroys the literal and figurative distance between himself and the wolf, revealing an individual species that challenges the narratives it has been confined within. What unifies Plumwood's and Mowat's experiences however, is an acknowledgment of animal agency that had previously been denied through a perception of oneself in Plumwood's case as a 'human' superior' and in Mowat's case, through the narratives surrounding wolves he had engaged with prior to his encounter. Thus, this moment is a deliberate engagement with a mythologically rooted wolf tale: the gaze as transformative. By playing on this trope and presenting a scene that challenges dominant discourse, Mowat subverts the wolf trope from within; still playing into

[16] Val Plumwood, 'Human Vulnerability and the Experience of Being Prey', *Quadrant*, 39.3. (1995) 29-34 (p. 30).

socially accepted knowledges of wolf characteristics – for example, that there is something unique about their gaze – but altering them to present a positive depiction of wolves that grants them a new narrative in favour of their character and reconfigures this concept of vulnerability as being a product of displaced knowledge rather than animal aggression. Moreover, it positions his memoir as a text that engages with the kinds of concepts that have been repeatedly discussed throughout animal studies, such as vulnerability and encounter, seen in the later work of Plumwood. This reinforces the text's carving of a new type of animal story that self-consciously plays with the construction of animal narratives and the types of concepts that can inform them to undermine particular myths about human-animal relations.

This new perception of wolves and the openness to re-constructing knowledge of them that Mowat narrativizes here is employed to demonstrate that the knowledge that he has acquired through scientific discourse and anecdotes like that spoken previously by his military supervisor have failed to hold up in this material encounter. Consequently, Mowat turns his narrative strategy towards the construction of a new story regarding wolf behaviour that is employed to depict an overtly positive and empathetic image of the animals. This narrative turn does not challenge the broad mythologization of wolves, but rather it challenges one specific type of narrative that has framed them as dangerous and reconfigures it through the construction of a new wolf narrative. *Never Cry Wolf* then, continues to represent wolves from within a mythologized anthropocentric framework, proving that in the construction of writing stories about animals mythic reconfigurations are inadequate as a strategy for de-mythologization if they continue to be motivated by anthropocentrism.

Wolfish Anthropomorphism: Representing the Wolf Pack

Mowat's memoir turns its attention away from its former interest in howling and the animal gaze to focus on its representation of particular aspects of the pack's behaviour that is intended to evoke empathetic feeling, such as the representation of a nuclear family of wolves, playing with and raising their children. Marvin has said of Mowat's depiction that: 'in terms of the descriptions of the lives of wolves this was more an intensely anthropomorphic soap opera than an account of the social ecology of a wolf pack.' (145) Evidently, Mowat employs a sentimental form of anthropomorphism because he is invested in challenging the former narratives surrounding the species and implements an alternative narrative that isn't

necessarily ethnologically accurate, but is a strategy for convincing the reader that the wolf is worthy of moral consideration and protection. Mowat's use of familial and domestic imagery is also framed by descriptions of a genteel and colonial nature. This places the wolves within a settler-colonial cultural understanding, and draws upon an idealisation of masculinity and Canadian colonial history, whilst simultaneously centring the family unit within this nationalistic imagery. The pack consists of a mother and father, whom Mowat names George and Angeline, an uncle, named Albert, and three young pups. Notably, these names are English and French by source, (George, Albert and Angeline), which is a reflection of Mowat's humanisation of these wolves within a specifically Canadian settler cultural conception. He describes George as: 'the kind of father whose idealized image appears in many wistful books of human family reminiscences' (91) and moreover, he adds that 'he reminded me irresistibly of a Royal Gentleman for whom I worked as a simple soldier during the war.' (91) This brings the wolves into the same militarised rhetoric that was used prior to Mowat's landing in the sub-arctic space, and also reinforces an idealised colonial imaginative component to this militarisation through Mowat's reference to the wolf as a 'Royal Gentleman' under which he had previously served, which could be a reference to George VI. However, this description is a subversion of the former militarised approach highlighted by Mowat previously because he uses the military lexicon to represent the wolves in a positive and almost heroic, admirable way. Thus, through this imagery, Mowat reconfigures the position of the wolves from the enemy into an ally and settler-colonial war hero that must be protected and not vilified.

In addition to this colonial and nationalistic mobilising rhetoric, by depicting George in this way Mowat deliberately invites the reader to familiarise themselves with George as a 'father figure', and in doing so, he conveys that the kinds of familial relationships and the construction of gender roles present in human communities extend to wolves. The focus that he places on the representation of the family unit emphasises the playful nature of the wolves, and he does so by again using the memoir form's double temporality to criticise retrospectively his ignorance regarding wolf behaviour. He states that prior to his encounters with the wolves he was 'still labouring under the delusion that complex communications among animals other than man did not exist.' (95) However, on one occasion when observing the unfamiliar behaviour of the adult wolves, he became concerned for Albert, wondering if he 'had somehow transgressed the wolfish code, and was he about to be made to pay for his transgressions with his blood? It looked that way.' (169) But

when continuing to observe he realised that the animals appeared to have been enjoying themselves. He states that 'the three wolves separated, shook themselves, sniffed noses, wagged their tails hard, and trotted back to the den with every indication that a good time had been had by all.' (171) His choice of 'labouring' and 'delusion' to describe his commitment to his former knowledge reinforces the change in his opinions and affirms the secondary level of self-critique inherent in his narrative that encourages a similar critical engagement from the reader. The particular use of these words implies a criticism of those still committed to the type of knowledge that Mowat is undermining, indicating that they too are 'labouring' to consolidate an image of the wolf that is 'delusional' in its conception. Rather, through Mowat's narrative turn, these wolves are coded as figures of Canadian settler nationalism, symbolically reflecting the military history of settler Canada, whilst simultaneously revealing themselves to be humanistic family units of playful and peaceful domesticity, and thus worthy of empathy.

Building on this image of wolves as militaristic beings, Mowat turns his narrative towards a representation of the hunting practices of the pack, which he reconfigures from the narrative that has blamed the wolves for the decimation of caribou populations into a depiction of their hunting as strategic and careful. By placing this reconfiguration after he has sought empathy for the wolves through a depiction of their humanistic family units, Mowat seeks to turn the fear and vilification that was targeted at the wolves towards those that had been peddling the rhetoric of the wolves as ravenous hunters, which he reveals to be the Canadian government. He describes that rather than stalking and attacking vast numbers of the deer the wolves do not attack at all, and this is because the technique of the wolves is in reality a system of making sudden bursts of movement to frighten the caribou, and then, when the caribou move away, observing them and looking for weaknesses in movement or pace that would make for an easier kill. Mowat thus exclaims that 'the scene was all wrong.' (191) He adds:

> These were novel concepts to one who had been taught to believe that wolves were not only capable of catching almost anything but, actuated by an insatiable blood lust, would slaughter everything that came within their range. (200)

There has been dispute amongst scientists, animal behaviourists and authors regarding this idea that wolves only target the weakest members of herds. Barry Lopez argues that 'wolves do not just kill the old, the weak, and the injured. They

also kill animals in the prime of health. And they don't always kill just what they need; they sometimes kill in excess.'[17] (4) However, Marvin, writing in 2012, argues that 'wolf biologists seem to agree that, wherever possible, wolves target and then test potentially weak and vulnerable individuals as part of their strategy.' (27) The accuracy of Mowat's narrative is not the purpose of this analysis however, rather, this contention of facts evidences his particular choice of words and construction of a narrative that suits his purpose. As such, his use of 'novel concepts', 'taught to believe' and 'insatiable blood lust' are another example of his retrospective critical voice, which is deliberately employed to convey an almost humorous ignorance surrounding his prior knowledge. Through this description of witnessing their hunting practices then, he not only undermines the notion that they kill vast numbers for pleasure, but he is also able to carve a new story in which he depicts wolves as necessary and valuable protectors of the ecosystem through a representation of their hunting practices as involving carefully targeted attacks on weak herd members.

In a careful act of narrative reconfiguration then, Mowat redirects the fear and vilification of wolves as responsible for declining caribou populations towards the Canadian government, who he reveals are making considerable economic income through deer and wolf bounties. Such a move also redirects enquiry away from the accuracy of his wolf depictions by distracting readers with a new target for their critique. Furthermore, by implying that the government have an investment in negative narratives of wolves, Mowat exposes a species politics at play both within the remote area of Churchill, but also as underpinning animal narratives. Lisa Johnson argues that when confronting knowledge about animals, 'the important inquiry is not, what is true? Rather, the question is what are the politics of truth that allows truth claims to be made and authenticated?'[18] Mowat's memoir argues then, that financial investment in the wolf has provided a purpose for perpetuating the stereotype of the wolf as dangerous and that this has been a strategy for demonising the wolf to provide a method of deflection from Governmental interests, stating:

> Wherever men have engaged in the mindless slaughter of animals (including other men), they have often attempted to justify their acts by attributing the most vicious or revolting qualities to those they would destroy. (235)

[17]Barry Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men* (New York: Simon & Schuster; Rev Ed edition, 1979) p. 4.
[18] Lisa Johnson, *Power, Knowledge, Animals* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) p. 21.

This is a poignant moment of social commentary from Mowat, emphasised through his use of 'mindless' and addition of 'including other men', which serve as a reminder that the alleged brutality of wolves is an attribute that has played a historical part of human culture also.

In addition to the argument he makes regarding governmental investment in wolf mythology, Mowat argues that the reason this investment has gone unnoticed is because the government has exploited the spatial disparity between humans and wolves in Canada. Since most humans have not observed wolves in the wild themselves, they have become reliant upon the knowledge that is disseminated by that which Johnson terms as an 'office of authority'. (97) In this case, the full extent of human hunting activities in Churchill has remained undisclosed. Mowat states that 'much is said and written about the number of deer reputedly slaughtered by wolves. Very little is said about the actual number of wolves slaughtered by men.' (233) It is by keeping the politics behind their dissemination of wolf knowledge a secret, and by capitalising on the rarity of human-wolf interaction, that the Government ensures the public remain ignorant to the plight of the wolf and this has been the politics that has allowed these 'truth claims' of which Johnson references to go unquestioned. Through this revelation, then, *Never Cry Wolf* positions itself as a strategic literary intervention in this 'truth' production that exposes the species politics at play surrounding human-wolf relations in Canada in the 1960s and attempts to undermine this through the dissemination of a counter-knowledge of wolves, which launches the animal into the public domain. The purpose of which is to make visible notions of wolf subjectivity and claim that they have been intentionally ignored due to human investment and, in doing so, work to undermine both the literal and figurative distance between the humans that has permitted the consolidation of negative wolf perceptions.

As a continuation of his narrative strategy to reconfigure wolf narratives by exposing the existence of government interest, Mowat again returns to the nationalistic framework that he used to depict the wolves as genteel figures of settler colonialism and attempts to appeal to nationalist sensibilities through the addition that the vast number of the hunters being permitted access to Churchill and engaging in the slaughter of wolves are from the United States. Mowat states that 'the tourist bureau of the Provincial Government concerned had decided that Barren Land caribou would make an irresistible bait with which to lure rich trophy hunters up from the United States.' (237) He adds that 'parties of sportsmen' were being flown into the sub-arctic space 'for a thousand dollars each', enticed by the promise of 'a first-rate

set of caribou antlers'. (237) Thus, by suggesting that there is a threat to wildlife populations coming from the United States, Mowat introduces another element to his narrative: that of the threat of US expansion. Protecting the wolf, then, becomes synonymous in Mowat's narrative with protecting Canada. Brian Johnson argues that:

> Mowat's representations of the North as a neglected resource throughout the 1960s and 1970s remain intensely nationalist, even flagrantly imperialist, calling for a greater northern settlement to protect Canada's resources from American predation.[19]

This indicates that the strategy employed in the memoir was that of replacing the dangerous wolf 'predator' with American 'predation', thus reconfiguring the role of the wolf from perpetrator to victim. By inciting such a settler-nationalistic claim, Mowat diminishes Indigenous voices and agency through the emphasis on the need for a stronger and further claim to wilderness spaces in Canada, and privileges his narrative intention to restore the wolf to public favour. Stephen Henighan has stated that 'the 1960s was also marked by a buoyant Canadian nationalism, which peaked with the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of Canadian nationhood at Expo 67 in Montreal.'[20] Such a context then, means that Mowat was able to indulge in his anthropomorphic depiction of wrongly accused wolves because of rising nationalist sensibilities and so incorporate the wolf into the Canadian imaginary as an important configuration of Canadian settler identity.

The narrative that Mowat constructs, focusing on ecological factors of wolf behaviour and representational tropes, such as the wolf gaze, pack behaviour and hunting practices, is self-consciously indulgent in sentimental anthropomorphism and underpinned by an appeal to nationalism. He admits himself that scientific objectivity, as an approach does not allow for the subjective experience of individual wolves and their dynamic idiosyncrasies, stating that 'no matter how hard I tried to regard them with scientific objectivity, I could not resist the impact of their individual personalities.' (91) This individualisation of the wolves, and indeed the entire familiarisation with the wolf pack throughout the text, serves, according to Tina Loo:

---

[19]Brian Johnson, 'Viking Graves Revisited', p. 28.

[20] Stephen Heninghan, *When Words Deny the World: The Reshaping of Canadian Writing* (Erin: The Porcupine's Quill, 2002) p. 34.

> Only to underscore the wickedness of the poisoning campaign carried out against them and the corruption of humans who were so alienated from the natural world that they could orchestrate such a thing.[21]

Loo's reference to the 'poisoning campaign' works as a double entendre – the reputation of the wolf is being poisoned through objectifying discourse such as that seen in Mowat's textbook, but also the wolf is literally being poisoned by the government's culling programme.[22] Thus, Mowat's narrative operates at a dual level, on the one hand constructing a new representation of wolves that anthropomorphically emphasises particular characteristics of wolves that would elicit empathy and challenge former dominant understandings of them as violent and dangerous animals, but it also re-directs this violence towards the government, exposing them as responsible for violence against both wolves and caribou and exposing their economic interest in the region. Mowat's narrative then, becomes less about constructing a true representation of wolf ecology, but rather it is testament to the power of narrative and the way in which particular strategies of representation produce specific dynamics of species relations, and how these dynamics might be informed by contextual factors, such as nationalistic settler anxieties regarding land claims. As I will show in the next section, the consequences of such narrative reconfiguration are, however, that Mowat continues to instrumentalize the wolves in an anthropocentric settler-nationalist narrative that reclaims them and repurposes them into a palatable imaginary, confining the wolf within the 'mythic' framework that has always haunted cultural understandings and representations of the animal.

Indigenous 'Background Narratives': Exploiting Indigenous Guides and Knowledge to Construct Settler Stories about Wolves

The focus that Mowat retains in *Never Cry Wolf* on the plight of the wolf and his consequent attempt to close the figurative gap between humans and wolves through his literary representation comes at the expense of the Indigenous characters that he encounters. In documenting and narrating his experiences of encounter, Mowat erases Indigenous lifeways and refuses to take them seriously

[21] Tina Loo, *States of Nature*, p. 174.

[22] Mass poisoning has historically been a popular form of culling in North America (and elsewhere) through the dispersion of chemicals such as Strychnine across vast areas, which are then ingested by the animals. This strategy is still in use. Sources: http://westernwildlife.org/gray-wolf-outreach-project/biology-behavior-4/ [Accessed 6 November 2017] https://www.raincoast.org/2015/01/alberta-wolf-slaughter/ [Accessed 30 November 2017].

through his exploitation and then disregard of the Inuit men. He repeatedly draws upon their knowledge, relying on them to navigate the unfamiliar space and take him to the wolf den, but then admits and finds humour in frightening them with his scientific experiments and their perception of his misuse of animal bodies. This evidences Mowat's disregard and ignorance regarding the postcolonial politics of the space, as he fails to acknowledge the fear that his presence might evoke for the Indigenous people. Thus, despite the fact that the Inuit people are depicted as having a substantial amount of knowledge in the novel, Mowat's narrative ultimately shows that settler perspectives and knowledge is often positioned as the dominant source from which we draw information regarding human-animal relations, at the expense of Native people. [23] Mowat does not record what the Inuit men that he meets, Mike and Ootek, tell him about the wolves, but rather he constructs his own narrative in which they are merely background figures. This confines the Inuit men to a minor narrative role within the text and denies them a developed characterisation that centres them as people from whom knowledge about wolves can be learnt. In adopting this approach, Mowat uses Indigeneity as a temporary vehicle to access the wolves at numerous points within the memoir and to navigate the space before abandoning it and centring his narrative as the new source of knowledge on wolves. This silencing of Indigenous characters demonstrates the use of Indigeneity within settler fiction that I will draw attention to throughout the thesis, working within Mowat as a narrative strategy that validates particular knowledge claims about the land through access to Indigenous knowledge but ultimately confines Native People to the symbolic realm and continues to centre settler narratives.

There is context to the settler-colonial and Indigenous relationship in the region in which Mowat's memoir is set. Governmental policies, such as the introduction of animal bounties or 'conservationist' restrictions on the hunting of particular species limited the rights of First Nation Peoples to hunt also, which thereby impacted them economically. In addition, Loo explains:

> Wildlife conservation marginalized, dispossessed, and displaced rural people by imposing and legitimating one kind of relationship with nature over

[23] Treaties and Aboriginal land claims do include traditional ecological knowledge, particularly with regards to the management of caribou populations in the North West territories, however they are not particularly influential and Western science is held at the forefront of decision-making. Source: University of Alberta, Indigenous Canada Course, lecture 8: Indigenous Relations to the Land [accessed 27 December 2017].

> others, it was an instrument of colonization. But conservation was not just a way of managing the marginal, disciplining them to use resources properly: it was also an attack on local knowledge. (49-50)

Loo is referring here to the fact that, historically, Indigenous populations have hunted animal species sustainably, such as beavers and caribou, before the arrival of the European settlers, in part because they had their own environmental knowledge systems in place. This meant that, for the Indigenous, the decision to place restrictions upon them under the guise of conservation was transparently violent. It was evident that the erasure of Aboriginals from economic and social participation in constructing environmental knowledge, legislation and land claims ensured settler interests remained privileged and protected, and Natives continued to suffer depredation and displacement.[24] Mowat does briefly refer to this disenfranchisement of the First Nation people after discovering the carcasses of 'twenty-three' caribou that had been slaughtered by gunfire from an overhead plane. He states that:

> The Cree who accompanied me had observed this sequence of events for himself the previous winter while acting as a guide. He did not like it; but he knew enough of the status of the Indian in the white man's world to realise he might as well keep his indignation to himself. (239)[25]

It is evident from this account by a member of the Nehiyawak nation that these events have been occurring for a significant period of time, unnoticed by those who do not inhabit or visit the land. By noting that his guide has been forced to keep his 'indignation to himself' Mowat acknowledges his decolonial cynicism and cultural silencing. It does appear initially that, through his documentation of this indignation, Mowat is being critical of the settler-Indigenous colonial power dynamic by repeating the Nehiyawak guide's awareness of the 'status of an Indian in the white man's world' and by highlighting this oppressive relationship, but this aspect of his critical tone within the novel remains underdeveloped. Rather than then giving a voice to his guide, he positions him and Indigenous identity more broadly as being

[24] I am using the terms Indigenous, Native, Aboriginals and First Nations interchangeably because they are all preferred terms with which to refer to the First Nations of Canada. Aboriginal in particular is used in relation to legal frameworks and constitutional rights, hence why I have used it here in relation to land claims and restrictions on hunting practices.

[25] Cree people refer to themselves as Nehiyawak and so I will use this name in my discussion instead of Mowat's choice of Cree.

tied to animals and thereby the means through which to access knowledge about wolves, furthering his own narrative.

The depiction of Indigenous people as 'closer' to nature is a frequent stereotype employed by settler cultures. Brian Johnson explains:

> Confronted by an indigeneity that is desired but out of reach, the settler-invader produces compensatory narratives of indigenization founded on the production of stereotypes that associate the indigene with nature and the land.[26]

This demonstrates that this trope is a strategy of erasure. It permits the blending of the Native into the background and into 'nature' in order to hold them in a binary opposition to 'culture', which is represented by the figure of the settler, and thus dismissing them as legitimate sources of knowledge by rendering them as wholly symbolic figures. This is a trope that is adopted in Mowat's memoir also, as the relationship between himself and the Indigenous characters in his memoir is one of exploitation rather than equality. This is made evident through the reference in the above quotation to the Nehiyawak 'guide'. Native peoples were often employed to operate as guides for settler explorers or tourists in the more remote wilderness areas of North America, and so were expected to share their knowledge of the region, but were not consulted when making political decisions regarding the areas. Alan Lawson explains that the settler subject 'exercises authority over the Indigene and the land while translating his (but rarely her) desire for the Indigene and the land into a desire for Native authenticity in a long series of narratives of psychic encounter and indigenization.[27] As such, Mowat's interactions with Native people and his depiction of these interactions reinforce his use of them as a narrative strategy of 'compensation', as termed by Jonson, to validate his claims about the wolves and the involvement of the government in the species politics of the area. This permits him to then grant his narrative the 'Native authenticity' that is so desired by settler subjects.

Mowat's failure to centre Native lifeways and show consideration for the Native characters beyond an acknowledgment of their indignation is most evidenced in his humorous disregard for their misunderstanding of his scientific mission. He fails to

---

[26] Brian Johnson, 'Viking Graves Revisited', p. 26.

[27] Alan Lawson, "Postcolonial Theory and the 'Settler' Subject" in *Unhomely States: Theorizing English-Canadian Postcolonialism*, ed. by Cynthia Sugars (Peterborough, Broadview Press Ltd, 2004) pp. 151-164 (p. 156).

acknowledge that there is a violence played out in his treatment of other animals and instead shows nonchalance towards the fearful reaction of the Inuit characters to such treatment. Rather, the same retrospective critical voice that has accompanied his narrative throughout demonstrates his amusement at the Native characters when they express concern for his actions towards the animal bodies he uses for experiments. In addition, he further amuses himself with the knowledge that the Indigenous characters are wary of his presence more generally, disregarding the reality that this fear might stem from a colonial history and former interaction with a settler community. For instance, Mike is the child of an Inuit woman and a settler trader, which, Mowat explains, makes him particularly wary of his sudden appearance on the lake:

> He leaned towards a supernatural explanation of my presence; for he had learned enough about Christianity from his white trader father to be on his guard against the devil. Consequently he took no chances. During the first few days he carried his 30-30 rifle in his hands and kept his distance. (46)

Mike's Christian education evidences his experience with colonisation and his inability to escape the effects of it, as he still invests in the figure of the 'devil' in his adulthood and now that his father has gone. His reference to this figure indicates his mistrust of Mowat and his fear that he is in fact an embodiment of this being. This reveals a colonial mistrust stemming from the 'white man' that was his father, but also of the 'white man', Mowat.[28] Moreover, it demonstrates the extent to which this space is removed from settler-society, leaving Mike unable to comprehend Mowat's alleged form of transport and purpose within the space. He informs Mowat that 'during his eighteen years of life he had never known an aircraft to land in his part of the Barren Lands.' (46) Mike has then, been exposed to colonialism in the past, through his ancestral lineage, and Mowat's presence has evidently triggered his memories of this experience and produced this uncomfortable encounter in which Mike expresses his distrust of Mowat. The memoir makes no attempt to rationalise this fear, but rather it is recorded with a tone of amusement, as Mowat finds humour in Mike's fear and desire to carry a gun around him. As a consequence the postcolonial politics that underpin their relationship and Mike's behaviour is disregarded in favour of Mowat's idea of an engaging narrative that focuses on his exploits in the arctic and this includes his encounters with bewildered Natives.

[28] I am referring to the quotation 'white man' used by the Nehiyawak guide in Mowat's earlier passage.

Despite Mowat's lack of self-conscious engagement with postcolonial politics, the frightened and disgusted reaction that Mike has to Mowat's research and use of other animal bodies does form a counter-counter-knowledge of sorts that brings into question the way in which Mowat's treatment of other animals relates to his wolf conservation effort. Mowat shows Mike four different types of mousetraps. He explains 'the method of boiling a mouse skeleton in order to prepare it as a museum specimen', (49) to which Mike 'departed the cabin without a word and refused to take his meals with [Mowat] from that time forward.' (49) Evidently, Mowat's research, deemed by him to be essential, is for Mike a display of unexplained violence. This clash of cultural attitudes towards the use of animal bodies, Howard L. Harrod explains, stems from the fact that in many Native cultures animals were largely hunted due to a need for products, such as food and clothing.[29] Loo also says that for many tribes in Canada there are 'certain cultural proscriptions about the use and treatment of animals.' (58) Mowat's ignorance regarding this cultural difference reinforces the notion that he is only interested in presenting his own counter-knowledge of wolves to the reader, refusing to even acknowledge Mike's behaviour and beliefs as anything other than humorous and an unfortunate casualty of carrying out his research. This is evidenced when Mike makes an excuse to leave the hut and Mowat's company, saying that he must go and stay with his sick mother, and Mowat says:

> I was sorry to see him go, for the knowledge that I was now entirely alone with the local wolves, while satisfying from a scientific point of view, seemed to intensify the *Hound of the Baskervilles* atmosphere of the desolate and stormswept lands around me. (50)

His sadness at Mike leaving stems mostly from the support and knowledge that he can no longer gain from his presence, rather than lamenting that Mike should be so frightened of him and his scientific practices that he would choose to leave. He therefore acknowledges his reliance on Mike, in particular through his intertextual reference to *Hound of the Baskervilles*. This reference draws upon another animal story involving the haunting presence of a dangerous canid, drawing parallels between Mowat and the fictional protagonist Sir Henry Baskerville, a British Gentleman who is under threat from attack by a large and vicious hound. By using this reference, Mowat tries to reiterate the frightening nature of his experience, and

[29] Howard L. Harrod, *The Animals Came Dancing: Native American Sacred Ecology and Animal Kinship* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000) p. 6.

his seeming lack of protection now that Mike has gone, whilst simultaneously self-consciously situating his memoir within a literary tradition of animal fiction.

This conflict that arises between Mowat and Mike regarding Mowat's violence towards animal bodies reinforces the strategic intent of *Never Cry Wolf*. It is not interested in influencing human-animal relations more broadly; its principal concern is the reconfiguration of wolf narratives and centring itself as an influential source of wolf knowledge. As such, Mowat purposefully does not engage with the behaviour of mice, for instance. This means that when he describes his experiments on them, such as boiling their skeletons, he does not feel he has to justify or explain such violence because it is not happening to an animal he has tried to incite the reader's affection for. Whereas Mowat voiced an objection to the government's failure to acknowledge their wolf policy as inherently violent, he fails to recognise his behaviour towards mice as such because he has not elevated them to the same level on which he has placed the wolf. This evidences that rather than fully reconfiguring his understanding of violence towards animals Mowat has just resituated the wolf within an anthropocentric framework through his reconfigured anthropomorphic representation. Thus, it is afforded a better level of protection than other animals and should be exempt from experiencing violence. The mice, however, remain unnamed, under-discussed and consequently not anthropomorphised. He prioritises his desire to carry out scientific research on them over implementing the very behavioural changes he asked of the governmental bodies. Thus, Mowat's disregard for Mike's emotional reaction to his use of animal bodies and his exploitation of Mike's knowledge reinforces Mowat's use of Indigenous culture both as a means of access to the location of the wolves and knowledge regarding aspects of their ecology and as a source of narrative entertainment. By continuing to silence Mike then, Mowat privileges himself as the authority on wolves and presupposes a hierarchy of knowledge in which 'western' scientific experimentation is necessary and dominant, and forces Mike into this background figuration in which his fear is coded as motivated by bizarre and humorous ignorance.

This exposes an irony in Mowat's own narrative. He is critical of the blind acceptance of the knowledge regarding wolves that had been disseminated throughout Canadian settler culture and has demonised wolves, and so he positions his memoir as a narrative that brings the consolidation of particular narratives into question. However, he simultaneously denies credence to Indigenous knowledge and ways of relating, and privileges his own education. This is evident in his

treatment of Ootek and the alternative epistemological understanding of wolves that he offers Mowat. Ootek tells Mowat that he has a particular interest in wolves because 'his personal totem, or helping spirit, was Amarok, the Wolf Being.' (119) Ootek perceives himself, then, to have a familial and thus intimate relationship with the animal, presenting a striking alternative epistemological understanding of human-animal relationships. To perceive a spiritual relationship between species, and one that ties them together through an ancestral lineage, appears to remove anthropocentric boundaries and move beyond a mythologised understanding of animals by taking this relationship seriously. Such boundaries and myths, I have demonstrated, have motivated prior representations of wolves in Western scientific discourse and the subsequent influence of these narratives on government culling policy. In addition, Ootek tells Mowat a story from Inuit folklore, detailing the intricate relationship between wolves and caribou, and the way in which the wolves keep the caribou strong through the process of natural selection. Mowat is sceptical of this tale, stating that:

> Although I had already been disabused of the truth of a good many scientifically established beliefs about wolves by my own recent experiences, I could hardly believe that the all-powerful and intelligent wolf would limit his predation on the caribou herd to culling the sick and the infirm. (126)

Mowat's response works on multiple levels. He accepts that his encounters have undermined previous knowledge that he once held regarding wolves, but he is reluctant to accept Ootek's tale because it does not fit into Western epistemologies of knowledge production through its spiritual framework. This is a discourse that is often held in opposition to science, and evidently Mowat upholds this opposition through his scepticism regarding its validity against what he knows about wolves. Mowat's reluctance exposes the third dynamic to his response. Ootek's perceived lack of authority to speak is reinforced through his position as the colonised native. This is made evident when Ootek informs Mowat that wolves have been known to adopt the orphaned pups of another deceased wolf. This Mowat says, is a 'touching story' but not one to which he could give 'due credence'. (147) It is only later when Mowat hears this same discourse from another source, that of a 'white naturalist of such repute' that he 'could hardly doubt his word.' (147) The perpetuation of the myth and scientific knowledge of wolves as aggressive and cunning hunters serves not only to justify a systemic power dynamic between humans and wolves, privileging the human, but it is also colonially motivated. This colonial species politics serves to perpetuate and consolidate the authority of the Canadian settler

government and the settler population, whilst ignoring, exploiting and harming indigenous and non-human animal populations for economic and political benefit.

Mowat's narrative demonstrates that settler stories regarding human-animal relations can utilise Indigeneity and Indigenous characters as fictional strategies for gaining proximity to animals and for gaining knowledge about particular animal species. However, this strategy is temporary and selective, as ultimately it is used to establish the framework of a settler-centred narrative. In *Never Cry Wolf* Mowat exploits Mike and Ootek, utilising aspects of their knowledge but disregarding their experiences when they do not align with 'western' epistemologies, and carving a narrative that confines them to the background as merely guides in the construction of a new wolf story. The cultural visibility of the novel, which I will discuss in the next section, proves that settler narratives, like *Never Cry Wolf*, which although drawn heavily upon Native knowledge and characterisation, dominate the discussion surrounding literary human-animal relations, and in this case human-wolf relations.

A Culturally Visible Text: The Impact of *Never Cry Wolf* on Canadian Cultural Perceptions of Wolves and Environmental Policy

Despite the memoir's disregard of Indigenous characterisation and knowledge sources, the conversation that dominates the reception of the text concerns its move away from scientific objectivity and use instead of anthropomorphic animals to make claims about wolf ecology. Moreover, Mowat's claims regarding government investment in wolf hunting and the threat of US expansion that this poses incited an incorporation of the wolf into a nationalist sensibility. Through such a revelation, stopping the mass hunting of the wolf became synonymous with protecting Canadian land from imperialist interest. The use of these representational strategies involved a targeted effort to mobilize ordinary civilian perceptions in favour of the wolf, and the work succeeded in this. It has since been drawn upon in numerous conversations post 1960s regarding wolf behaviour and policy, such as in the 1988 *The Associated Press* televised section titled 'Wolves, Up Close and Personal on 'National Geographic Explorer'', in which it was stated that:

> Anyone who has read Farley Mowat's best-selling "Never Cry Wolf", or just seen the Disney film adaptation, already knows wolves are not the slathering,

> indiscriminate killers of lore, but highly intelligent creatures with a well-developed social structure. [30]

Moreover, a 2017 publication of the *New York Observer* titled 'Fear and Misinformation Fuel Government Killings of Wolves' similarly references Mowat's text by directly from the memoir. Marvin, Loo and Jones also all make reference to Mowat's work as playing a culturally significant role in altering public opinion of wolves and as subsequently becoming an instrumental piece of literature in discussions about wolves during the 1960s and onwards.

Jones argues that the text is 'an important work of modern environmental protest' (87), indicating that the text was successful in unsettling particular consolidated opinions regarding wolves. By critiquing these claims and reconfiguring the mythic elements of the wolf into a more positive narrative, Mowat brought into contention questions concerning why and by whom were these narratives formulated. Furthermore, Loo describes Mowat's text as the catalyst for the 'rehabilitation' (173) of the wolf, and details the content of a number of letters sent to the Wildlife Service after *Never Cry Wolf*'s publication. The letters vary in content and in sender, from those complaining about the 'wasted' use of their tax money on unnecessary policies, to those expressing outrage and confessing their support for the wolf. She includes the full content of one particularly tragicomic letter from a small child named Shawn:

> My name is Shawn. I love wolfs. I want to like you but I cannot because I saw one of you kill a wolf. Are you listening I hope so. You can stop killing them I know you can for me! So stop. Love, Shawn. (176)

However, despite Loo's references to the number of letters received by the Service and the pro-wolf momentum the memoir evidently stirred up amongst the public, it is difficult to find evidence of any specific wolf policy changes in the Canadian parliamentary records immediately after the text's publication that make reference to or can be attributed directly to the text. Rather, there is a general consensus across contemporary Canadian environmental criticism, albeit a limited field, such as in the work of Loo and Jones, that the 1960s and 70s more generally marked a cultural move in attitudes away from support for culling towards species conservation and that *Never Cry Wolf* was a testament to and significant factor in aiding in this change. Loo states that:

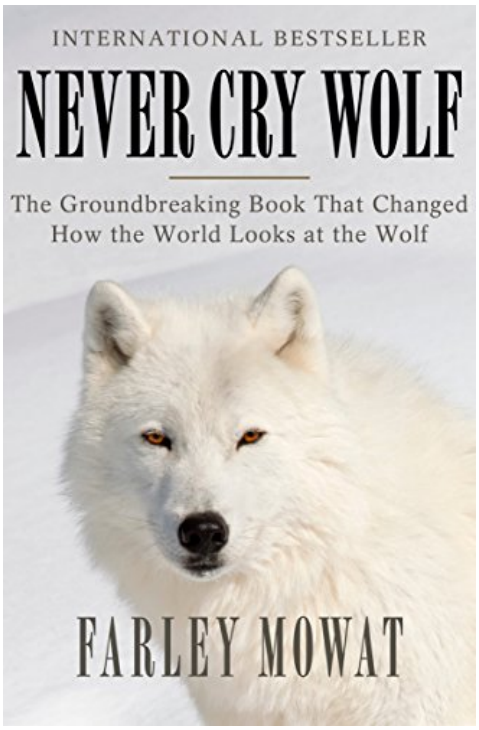
[30] Katherine Baker, *The Associated Press*, December 13 1988, Entertainment Byline PM cycle.

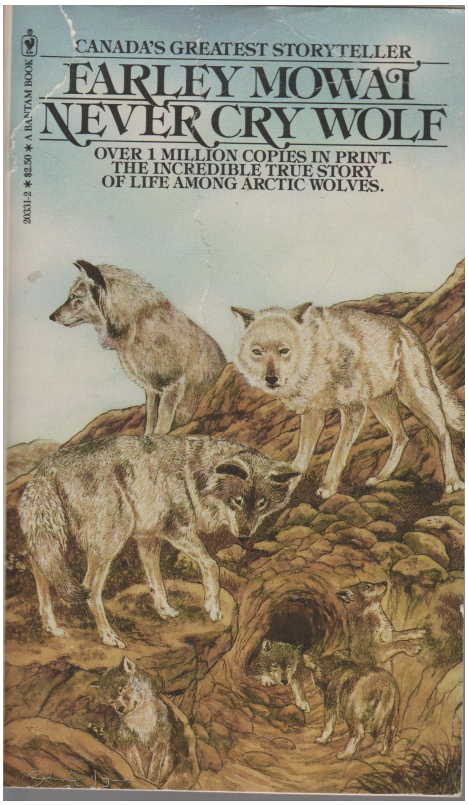
> Three years after *Never Cry Wolf* was published, British Columbia reorganized its Department of Recreation and Conservation. After nearly sixty years, the government got out of the "game" business, replacing its "Fish and Game" division with one responsible for the Province's "Fish and Wildlife". According to the man who headed it, this small semantic change altered more than the branch's letterhead, and the explanation for it was rooted in the same shift in attitude that had made Farley Mowat's book a best-seller. (210)

Therefore, whilst policy may have not immediately changed, it is significant that attitudes of both the public and a minority of those in power did. The move away from "game" to an emphasis on "wildlife" in British Columbia marks a shift away from animals as objects worth monetary value towards an acknowledgement of their subjectivity and towards conservation rather than domination. As such, this indicated towards a grassroots beginning of a new conservationist framework that would go on to develop further in the 1970s when the government eventually set up its own environmental agencies, rather than simply supporting private organisations.[31] Evidently, rather than *Never Cry Wolf* being the sole catalyst for inspiring support for conservation, Loo suggests that the text tapped into this 'shift in attitude' and utilised this potential for attitude change towards animals. It is through this meeting of memoir form, the context of shifting environmental attitudes and Mowat's anthropocentric strategy of representing his wolves then, that he produced a text that took on a mythic nature of its own, popularised and fetishized as a canonical source of knowledge about wolves.

Once such evidence of the book's fame and cultural visibility is the multitude of cover work and jacket blurbs belonging to the text:

[31] Source: Tina Loo p. 210





(Fig 1: Open Road Media, 2015) (Fig 2: Bantam Books, 1981)

These two examples evidence the reputation that Mowat and his memoir have garnered. The cover from 2015 refers to the text as 'groundbreaking' and as having 'changed how the world looks at the wolf', and the cover from 1981 titles Mowat 'Canada's greatest storyteller.' This label affirms a conscious engagement with Mowat's techniques of storytelling in the text, emphasising its positive reception in having sold over a million copies, and moreover, it introduces a nationalist element to the marketing of the text. *Never Cry Wolf* then, has been marketed as a canonical Canadian piece of writing about wolves ever since its initial publication and reception.

Despite the text's generally positive reception, Mowat's use of anthropomorphism and his instrumentalisation of the wolf into a narrative of nationalist sensibilities was, unsurprisingly, heavily criticised by those in the Wildlife Service and the wider scientific community as fictitious and inaccurate in its strategy of representation. It has also been criticised by animal studies scholars, such as Garry Marvin. This form of critique aligns Mowat's work with that of his Canadian animal story predecessors Seton and Roberts, who received similar criticism for their techniques of animal representation in 1903 by John Burroughs in in an article titled 'Real and Sham Natural History' in *The Atlantic Monthly*. In this article Burroughs criticised the style

of realistic animal writing adopted by writers such as Seton and Roberts, taking to task in particular the claim that their work makes to truth in representation. Burroughs said: 'Mr. Thompson Seton says in capital letters that his stories are true, and it is this emphatic assertion that makes the judicious grieve.'[32] As a consequence of the debate that this article inspired, Seton and Roberts, amongst other similar style authors, came to be labelled 'nature fakers.' [33] The criticism of Mowat's text then, demonstrates a continuity to this style of response, arguing that only biological analysis is proper to the discussion of animals, which was immediately set in motion as a response to animal representations in the late nineteenth century. As such, this critique and focus on Mowat's use of sentimental anthropomorphism reveals the ways in which the terms of discussion of animal representations were seemingly still set by nineteenth-century arguments during the 1960s, but that the binaries underpinning these discussions were starting to come into contention. Jones comments on this divide in cultural opinion between scientific objectivism and non-scientific sentimentalism, arguing that the text reflects this conflict:

> The controversy over *Never Cry Wolf* further encapsulates a crucial divide within modern environmentalism between professional science and amateur naturalism. Opinion on Farley Mowat was divided between those who based their fundamental conservationist visions on rational, scientific reason and those who favoured emotional spiritual, and intuitive engagements with nature. In locking horns over the value of Never Cry Wolf, biologists and citizens enlisted in a contest about the appropriate roles of science and sentiment in framing environmental sensibilities. (68)

In effect then, the text tapped into a discussion that was already on-going in Canada regarding the role of sentiment in animal stories that appear to represent the biological lives of animals. Marvin argues that the text's use of anthropomorphism in its contribution to this debate was that:

> Such images of human-like wolves do not only open up the possibility of thinking about wolf-like humans: they also show how scientific ideas can never fully be separated from cultural ones. (34)

---

[32] Taken from Sue Walsh, 'Nature Faking and the Problem of the "Real"', *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 22.1. (2015) 132-153 (p. 135).

[33] John Sandlos, 'From Within Fur and Feathers: Animals in Canadian Literature', *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*, 4. (2000) 73-91 (p. 81).

The timing of the text then, adopting this same sentimental narrative that had been criticised eighty years prior, is imperative to its success, as the growing concern for environmentalism that began to gain momentum in the 60s and 70s meant that the Canadian public were primed to receive narratives like Mowat's. In addition, his use of anthropomorphism and reconfigured mythic tropes to successfully motivate sentiment towards the wolves reinforces that stories about animals that seek to influence human-animal relations operate from within an anthropocentric framework to be successful in doing so.

A New Kind of Story about Animals

Never Cry Wolf is credited with having an instrumental role in shaping conceptions of wolves both during and in the post 1960s era in an almost culturally fetishistic kind of way, in that it repeatedly surfaces as a cultural source of conversation surrounding wolves in Canada. Undoubtedly the memoir has gained a reputation for itself, as is made evident through the book jackets that have accompanied the published texts in many different version since its initial publication, which refer to both the book's success and Mowat's fame and prowess as a storyteller. It is then, a culturally visible piece of Canadian writing about animals that demonstrates that particular strategies of narrativization can mobilize perspectives of animals and the consequent relations that humans construct with them. Mowat self-consciously manipulates particular aspects of wolf ecology that have been mythologized and incorporated historically into previous wolf narratives, and reconfigures them to construct a new mythologized narrative of wolves that represents them anthropocentrically in order to tap into empathy for them. This use of sentimental narrative means that *Never Cry Wolf* shares a consistency with its animal story predecessors, Seton and Roberts, but it marks a move away from their work through its retrospective, critical memoir form and also through its cultural reception, which saw this type of story somewhat break away from the critical confines of the 'nature fakers' argument.

Mowat's memoir is an example of the power that narratives have to influence human-animal relations, and moreover, it demonstrates that the 1960s and the burgeoning environmentalist movement in Canada brought about an era of change that primed the public to receive these kinds of narratives. Mowat uses his retrospective critical voice to inject humour and criticism into the narrative in a way that invites this same critical lens from the reader and in doing so encourage them round to his way of perceiving the wolves. In addition, he employs sentimental

anthropomorphism and a settler-colonial imaginary to depict a family of genteel wolves that, rather than being the enemy of folklore, are depicted as allies of a nationalistic claim to the wilderness. As such, rather than attempting to deconstruct the mythological handling of wolves within literary narratives more broadly, Mowat seeks to reconfigure these myths with his own new story that positions himself as the authority on both wolf behaviour and writing animal stories. *Never Cry Wolf* then, demonstrates a continuation of the confinement of the wolf within the same type of anthropocentric framework that has marked its prior mythological representations, but the text demonstrates that there was a particular shift in this framework in the 1960s in animal writing to a type of human-animal studies writing that self-consciously sought to engage with the issue of human-animal relations and the representation of these relations in literature.

Ch2. Animals on Display: Promiscuous Animal Ciphers and the Creative Process of Human-Animal Interaction in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (1972) and *Life Before Man* (1979)

This chapter will explore two novels by Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing* (1972) and *Life Before Man* (1979). It will argue that there is a representational logic that underpins both of the novels that uses animals as ciphers for human concerns. Although the way in which this plays out is represented differently in the texts, it is possible to pull Atwood's thinking together in a particular representational strategy that employs an anthropocentric motivation to a depiction of human-animal relations, and abandons any attempt to handle animals seriously. It will focus on moments within the text in which dead animal bodies are put on display, such as in cruel acts of violence by hunters in Quebec in *Surfacing*, and the exhibition spaces and workrooms of the Royal Ontario museum in *Life Before Man*. It will argue that the interactions that occur between the protagonists and these animal bodies do not demonstrate an empathy or pro-animal message that is sustained, but rather there is a recognition of the violence that underpins the dynamics of these displays that is then channelled by the human protagonist into a realisation of their own victimhood and unhappiness both within their struggling relationships and in their struggling sense of identity. The narrator of *Surfacing* feels displaced as an English-speaking native of Quebec when she returns to find her now largely French-speaking home town has been dramatically developed and has become overrun with hunters at a time when Quebec was attempting to become an Independent French-Speaking Nation. Similarly, in *Life Before Man* Lesje struggles to reconcile the conflict she feels being caught between her Jewish and Ukrainian grandmothers and also struggles with her growing sense of feeling outside of Canadian settler culture as an Immigrant. The animals within the novels, then, and the way in which the characters interact with them, are symbolic indicators both of the deathly nature of heteronormative monogamy and of the desire to come to terms with a conflicted sense of personal identity.

Adam Dodd, Karen A. Rader and Liv Emma Thorsen write that 'real animals have become inseparable from a variety of human modes and practices of display: museums, illustrated books, even the Internet.[1] Moreover, they add that 'these

[1] Adam Dodd, Karen A. Rader and Liv Emma Thorsen, *Animals on Display: The creaturely in Museums, Zoos, and Natural History* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013) p. 3.

animals become ironically visible only through occupying multiple and contradictory cultural and temporal spaces.' (5) The kinds of interactions that occur within these spaces then, are often the only interactions that some humans have with non-human animals, making them key spaces for animal visibility and human-animal interactions, despite the artificiality of their nature. As Dodd, Rader and Thorsen state, 'it becomes evident that what is ultimately presented are representations of animals as they really are for the producers of the representations themselves', (5) meaning that the way in which animals are represented, both textually and in temporal spaces like museums, is anthropocentric in motive, much like that which I have argued underpins Mowat's depiction of wolves in *Never Cry Wolf*. Thus, as Samuel J. M. M. Alberti argues: 'to understand the afterlives of animals, we therefore address here their consumption as well as their production.'[2] The analysis this chapter takes to animality is to examine the way in which these two novels by Atwood engage with the consumption of animals, through hunting, fishing and observing them in museum displays, and then how this process of consumption involves in itself a level of production that enables the animal to continue being consumed in its afterlife by the human protagonists. I will argue that the way in which the protagonists interact with these productions of animal bodies is motivated by a recognition of their own victimhood and unhappiness within their relationships. The animals thus provide an imaginative escape for the protagonists, acting as ciphers for indulging in mythic fantasies outside of human society.

The bodies of dead animals frequent both of Atwood's novels, but there is a development between the way in which these dead animals and the relationships formed with them by the human characters are figured in the novels. This development is one that moves the scope of representation from the popular, local scale in *Surfacing* to a national scale in *Life Before Man*, but the same logic of animal representation underpins them both. *Surfacing* depicts particular representational strategies that focus on establishing the right to hunt and own Indigenous land, such as the killing and displaying of a heron by a group of hunters, a family of taxidermy moose put on display outside a hunting post shop and a desire to immerse oneself in the wilderness in a process of 'Indigenizing'. In *Life Before Man* however, this use, display and engagement with animal bodies is elevated to an institutional level: the museum space. In this space animal bodies are

[2] Samuel J. M. M. Alberti, *The Afterlives of Animals* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011) p. 8.

employed alongside educational material, escalating and intellectualising the use of animal bodies as a means of contextualising human history.

In 1972, Atwood wrote in her influential text on Canadian fiction, *Survival*, that a distinctively recognisable feature of Canadian writing is the presence of 'animal victims' that symbolise a deep-rooted Canadian psyche of vulnerability, produced by a settler-colonial mentality that feared displacement by US expansion and also reflected a growing environmental concern. She states:

> Canadians themselves feel threatened and nearly-extinct as a nation, and suffer also from life-denying experience as individuals – the culture threatens the "animal" within them – and that their identification with animals is the expression of a deep-seated cultural fear. The animals, as Seton says, are us.[3]

This suggests that Atwood is invested in the same kind of representational use of animals employed by Seton, utilising them symbolically to reflect specifically Canadian human anxieties and tell a story that is underpinned by anthropocentrism. However, she does not prescribe to the technique of anthropomorphism that underpins Mowat's story-telling. Rather, the animals in *Surfacing* and *Life Before Man* are utilised as fictional tools to evoke human subjective contemplation before being abandoned and confined their lives in the woods and in museum displays.

Janice Fiamengo says of *Surfacing* that the novel engages with complicating the concept of nationalism, stating that 'the narrative some critics have made of *Surfacing* reveals a nostalgia for an idealized 1960s Canadian nationalism' but determining that 'what Atwood's novel reveals, on the contrary, is that such a position never existed.[4] The narrative that she identifies instead is one that Diana Brydon shares. This is that 'the fundamental repression in *Surfacing* may well not be the abortion but "genocide of First Nations peoples,"'[5] thus perceiving the novel as an exploration into the narrator's confrontation with and acceptance of her complicity in colonial violence through her settler status. Susan Fromberg Schaeffer similarly argues that the novel indicates towards the acknowledgement of victimhood and death, but she follows a generalising humanist framework to her analysis and states more broadly:

---

[3] Margaret Atwood, *Survival* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press Inc., 2012) p. 81.
[4] Janice Fiamengo 'Postcolonial guilt in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*' ,*The American Review of Canadian Studies*, 29.1. (1999) 141-163 (p. 159).
[5] Taken from Fiamengo 'Postcolonial guilt in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*' p. 145.

> In *Surfacing*, Atwood's narrator is worried about victimization of all mankind. Her book is a book about mortality, the unacceptable fact of one's own death, the even more unacceptable deaths of others.[6]

Whereas Schaeffer and Fiamengo maintain a focus on human death in the novel, Robert McKay focuses on the novel's engagement with animal suffering, arguing that the narrator carries out an 'identification with the animal on the level of the body' and attempts to reject human society.[7] McKay argues that such identification ultimately fails because the narrator must return to human society and therefore must abandon her 'bodily connection' to animals, determining that 'the exclusion of the animal, as a figure of the "inhuman", is constitutive of the human community.' (225) Whereas McKay recognises this identification with animals as situated in the body and in a search for the maternal, this chapter will argue that the narrator in *Surfacing's* attempt to reject the human society that she has recognised as her oppressor is also done through a process of Indigenization, as she perceives this to be a state that permits her closer proximity to animals.

My analysis thus bridges the gap between McKay and Fiamengo, bringing together the postcolonial undertones and the question of animal ethics in the novel. I argue that Atwood's narrator uses both animals and Indigeneity as symbolic signifiers of her desire to reconfigure her own narrative, rejecting victimhood and choosing to re-join human society only once she has reconnected to nature and her perception of her 'Native-ness' in this landscape where she grew up. This analysis will focus on the narrator's struggle to come to terms with Canadian complicity in hunting and violence against the non-human, seeing herself as a similar victim of patriarchal violence, and so she attempts a process of 'Indigenization' to re-familiarise herself with the landscape and situate herself closer to non-human animals and away from oppressive human society. Such a process presupposes an affiliation between Indigeneity and the natural, rendering Indigeneity as a state in which she can temporarily enter into and utilise to re-assert a narrative in which she is a Native of this area again and a rejecter of the settler-society that has brought increasing commercialisation to the space. This utilisation of Indigeneity and the perception of proximity to animals is ultimately abandoned when the narrator returns to her

---

[6] Susan Fromberg Schaeffer, '"It Is Time That Separates Us" Margaret Atwood's "Surfacing"', *The Centennial Review*, 18.4. (1974) 319-337 (p. 319).

[7] Robert McKay, '"Identifying with the animals": Language, Subjectivity, and the Animal Politics of Margaret Atwood's Surfacing' in *Figuring Animals*, ed. by Mary Sanders Pollock and Catherine Rainwater (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) pp. 207-227 (p. 222).

partner Joe and thus to human society, proving that the narrator's interest in such was only on a symbolic and temporary level whilst she came to terms with her victimhood. Any pro-animal ethics or concern for Indigenous displacement is thus discarded and she returns to the reality of her settler identity.

This core logic of animal representation, which uses animals as ciphers for reflecting on the domestic problems of the human characters, is also present in *Life Before Man*, but it works in a different way. This novel escalates the representational strategies in *Surfacing* of displaying dead animal bodies through local events like hunting into a national, broader scale by focusing on the institutional display of animal bodies in a museum space, and the biopolitics of telling a story set within this space. Thus, it still maintains a focus on the domestic problems of the characters enacted through a framework of human-animal relations, like that seen in *Surfacing*, but it is escalated and more prevalent through the museum setting and the large-scale purposeful display and interaction with animal bodies. The novel concerns itself with the lives of the museum workers, such as Lesje, a paeleontologist, and Elizabeth, a curator and also the ex-wife of Lesje's new partner, narrativizing an emotional struggle underpinning the representation of heteronormativity, and the escape that is offered through an indulgence in the museum display of animal bodies and iconographies of extinct beings.

There is a significant dearth of criticism written on *Life Before Man*. Marilyn French argued in the late 1990s that *Life Before Man*, given its publication during a culture of increasing environmental concern[8] and through its engagement with the Palaeolithic world, offers the perspective that 'humans are a mere dot on the graph of time: we may become extinct, our stories frozen like fossils; we may only be the

[8] In 1978 the Third International Banff Conference on 'Man and his Environment' was held in the Banff Springs Hotel. The aim of this conference was to discuss amongst a range of experts from various fields the relationship between man and his environment: his 'rights and responsibilities.' Feelings of human vulnerability were high during this period, as more natural disasters were occurring worldwide, such as famine in Bangladesh and the Sahel; inflation due to poor harvests in Europe and Asia, and sustained cold and water shortages in North America. As such, the conference sought to discuss the threat of the growing population on depleting resources, how this might be resolved, and the ways in which humanity might better relate to the environment and its non-human inhabitants. The preface to the conference notes states that the Canadian venue was chosen because it is an 'unusually picturesque and unpolluted town in the Canadian Rockies', (vii) which reinforces an acknowledgement of the beauty of the Canadian landscape and reflects the conference's purpose being to protect environments exactly like Banff's. Source: M. F, Mohtadi, *Man and His Environment: Proceedings of the Third International Banff Conference on Man and his Environment* (Exeter: Pergamon Press Ltd, 1980) p. vii.

beginning.'[9] This configuration of science and narrative is similarly picked up on by Fiona Tolan, who, writing from a more contemporary perspective in 2007, argues that through the character of Lesje, a young Canadian-Ukrainian Palaeontologist, the novel begins to confront the conflict between feminism and science that was plaguing gender conversations during this period:

> *Life Before Man* touches upon issues that feminism was beginning to encounter, but would only take up much later. Its recognition of the masculine rationalism implicit in science connects this novel to many of the issues raised in Atwood's earlier works, and suggests that they are not as far removed as might be first thought.[10]

Tolan explores the application of various scientific theories within the novel, such as Darwinism, and is generous in her belief that Atwood's novel pre-empted a period of later discussion in feminist conversation regarding the conflict that inevitably arises between particular feminist theories regarding gender roles and biological determinist theories. Carol L. Beran however, has approached the novel through a more localised, domestic lens, and emphasises instead that the vast intertexts present in the novel 'define the cultural context each of the three main characters absorbed in childhood that influences their vision of reality.'[11] These criticisms, however, have failed to consider the animal presence in the novel beyond the scientific reasoning or haunting presence of extinction that the dinosaur bones might signify, and as such have neglected to engage with the museum setting of the novel more closely.

In the turn this chapter will make to *Life Before Man* it will examine the way in which this same logic of animal representation as seen in *Surfacing*, the strategy of using animals as symbolic for domestic difficulties, is also present in this later novel, but I argue that it is at work differently. Lesje's imaginative indulgence in the display rooms, bringing the dinosaurs to life in mythic fantasies, permits her an escape avenue that is absent of human relationships and allows her to imagine her own narrative in which she can escape the difficulties represented by her new relationship with Nate, and also come to terms with her conflicted dual nationality by figuratively submerging herself in with the museum displays. Such a depiction

---

[9] Marilyn French, 'Spouses and Lovers, *Life Before Man* by Margaret Atwood', *The New York Times*, February 3, 1980, p. BR1.

[10] Fiona Tolan, *Margaret Atwood: Feminism and Fiction* (Leiden: Brill, 2007) p. 94.

[11] Carol L. Beran, 'Intertexts of Margaret Atwood's Life before Man', *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 22.2. (2009) 199-214 (p. 200).

reveals that museums are sites in which particular narratives are constructed by displaying both human and non-human animal bodies in particularized ways, and we are given insight into the androcentric and violent practices that occur in the museum workrooms where the specimens for display are created. As such, through interaction with the physical process of constructing narratives using animal bodies, Atwood's novel demonstrates the same concept of using animal bodies as ciphers as that seen in *Surfacing* with the taxidermy moose family and the dead heron. In *Life Before Man*, however, this interaction occurs in a more large-scale purposefully constructive way, such as in museum curation and the preparation of animal bodies, and through interaction with finished displays, all of which reflect the characters' interpersonal lives. Through using this logic of animality as a framework, much like in *Surfacing*, *Life Before Man* uses human-animal relations as a framework for considering what narratives that briefly challenge patriarchal heteronormativity might look like and how animal bodies can play a strategic role in the construction of these fictional narratives, before decidedly confining these animals to the realm of the symbolic – the animals remain in the wilderness, in the museum, and the women return to their relationships.

By holding these two novels together then, this chapter will demonstrate that there is a particular representational strategy at play with Atwood's work, which is underpinned by the same logic of animality that employs animals as ciphers for numerous humanist concerns. There is an indication towards a pro-animal ethics in the novels, in that they do expose the normalisation of violence towards non-human animals, but this ethics is never developed into a consideration for animals beyond symbolic representation. Rather, the novels both demonstrate a narrative use for animals through a configuration of encounters with the dead animal body as a subjectively transformative experience by demonstrating that indulging in this symbolic realm of non-human victimhood and imaginative escape allows for a temporary and symbolic refuge from victimisation felt in interpersonal relationships. Thus, the novels demonstrate the way in which narratives of human-animal relations provide a framework for considering more broadly the biopolitics of human-human relationships and for disrupting stories that conform to heteronormative, monogamous narratives. Both texts play around with the notion of surfacing out of a state of oppressive ignorance to briefly contemplate a life before, with and without men, using animal bodies as a representational strategy for narrating this.

Resisting Patriarchal Violence through Symbolic Empathetic Identification with Non-human Animals in *Surfacing* (1972)

In *Surfacing*, Atwood demonstrates a consistency with the opinions she expressed in *Survival* with regards to the symbolic utilisation of animals in fiction being inherently tied to Canadian national identity, and she employs them as a narrative sacrifice; that is, the dead bodies of non-human animals are used as a strategy for evoking self-reflection in the narrator and her conceiving of herself as a victim by witnessing the victimhood status of animals. Animal deaths within the novel, then, are used to drive the plot forward by rupturing the narrator's nostalgic emotional connection to the land through the presence of violence, but they are never established as figures for contemplation within their own right.

As a means of comprehending and attempting to overcome this newly conceived victimhood status, the narrator forges herself a position of Indigeneity, perceiving it to be a temporary state that she can adopt in order to feel closer to the environment and its non-human animal inhabitants, whilst simultaneously reasserting the narrative of herself as a Native to the space, a notion that she feels has been eroded through the increasing commercialisation of the space through the presence of hunting parties. In doing so she assumes a connection between Indigeneity and nature that has rendered Indigenous people a part of a binary that places them in opposition to culture, and thereby she enacts a displacement of her own through her assertion of herself as a 'Native' figure. Indigeneity, much like the non-human animals that she encounters then, and similar to the way it was used in Mowat's memoir, is employed as another narrative strategy through which Atwood's narrator is able to carry out a process of subjective emotional transformation and come to terms with her own identity and experiences of violence. As such, the novel's failure to push a convincing pro-animal ethics is tied to its failure to depict enlightened postcolonial moments because the narrator is unable to recognise or engage with a subjectivity outside of her own. Atwood's novel therefore implicates itself as a text that is interested in the way that particular literary tropes, namely that of the presence of non-human animals and Indigenous cultures, have shaped settler narratives. But moreover, it is also pushing at the boundaries of these tropes, evidencing that certain nationalist ideologies that have perpetuated their use might have fallen through, thereby fragmenting the concept of a hegemonic national identity. What remains consistent throughout the text is Atwood's contention that ethical relation to animals and an acknowledgement of postcolonial violence is not

marriageable with contemporary human society, and thus animals and Indigenous people remain confined to the realm of the symbolic.

The narrator's ethical identification with the non-human hinges on her disconnection from human society through feeling displaced within the childhood space that she nostalgically idealises. This first materialises when she is on the journey back into the countryside in which she grew up and she finds that it is no longer the untouched, idyllic and peaceful location she remembers, but that it is now overrun with commercial businesses and is a popular spot for tourists and hunting enthusiasts. Her nostalgia for the space is evident through her conception of accessing the space as being a process of emotional purification through the dangerous, yet exciting effort of exploration involved in driving on unmarked dirt roads. Furthermore, the comfort of partaking in this journey to return hinges upon her being able to re-live these experiences precisely as they were when she was a child. Consequently she refuses to bring a map with her on the journey; she remains positive that she will remember the way once she is there. Graham Huggan discusses the significance of the map motif in *Surfacing*, determining that the map is more broadly considered to be a patriarchal possession, established through its relationship and links with exploration, colonialism and consequent exercising of masculinity. Thus, the protagonist's rejection of the map is the first instance we see of the narrator's (conscious or unconscious) rejection of patriarchal technologies in favour of navigating the space using her own memories. Moreover, the complexity of the region in terms of its colonial history and the on-going fight for French-speaking independence in Quebec during this period is becomes the backdrop for the creeping feeling of displacement that the narrator is trying to deter. She feels she is 'native' to this space; she was born here, she will remember, and therefore does not need a tool for exploration. This scene of journeying appears to become then, a manipulation of the traditional male pioneer story, and Huggan writes:

> In Canada, women writers have also undertaken to write male 'pioneer' myths from their own point of view and to transform the map topos into terms that favour the territoriality of female imaginative space.[12]

The absence of the map therefore signifies the beginning of a conscious attempt to move away from androcentric ways of navigating the space that Atwood's narrator will later try to indulge in. This becomes then, a narrative strategy employed by

[12] Graham Huggan, *Territorial Disputes: Maps and Mapping Strategies in Contemporary Canadian and Australian Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994) p. 97

Atwood to circumvent traditional pioneer narratives, like that seen in *Never Cry Wolf*, and position *Surfacing* as a novel that centres the female experience in navigating wilderness spaces.

The narrator's emotive struggle with feelings of displacement is heightened by the significant capitalist development of the area, which has rendered it unrecognisable to the narrator. As such, they are forced to stop and ask for directions at a newly built shop. This inability to navigate the space, needing to stop and ask for directions, signifies the narrator's entrapment within an androcentric system – the development of the local area to meet the demands of the visiting hunters in the area reinforces the idea that her 'identity' as a local has been denied and circumvented by masculine practices and despite her attempts to resist this system of oppression, she is continually met with its consistent threat. This relationship between the exercising of masculinity and hunting is one of historical establishment, reaching back to the colonial era and the notion of mastering nature. It appears then, that the space that she once idealised as a child is now emerging as a contested site fraught with gendered, colonial and species politics, unable to evade patriarchal commercial developments.

This dynamic is made most evident by the presence of three anthropomorphised moose statues outside of the shop at which they stop. They are described as 'a father moose with a trench-coat and pipe in his mouth, a mother moose in a print dress and flowered hat and a little boy moose in short pants, a striped jersey and a baseball cap, waving an American flag'.[13] The presence of the American flag signifies the shop's purpose as a stopping post for American tourists visiting the area for hunting holidays. Moreover, the anthropomorphic nature of the statues offers a comedic effect, utilised to put the hunters at ease by introducing the idea of the whimsical moose that will be a vulnerable, easy target. This inevitably has sinister undertones, as the moose statues are employed to greet the humans that will go on to kill real members of the species they represent, and thus plays on a conventional mode of representing animals as willing to be slaughtered. They therefore operate as dead-yet-living representations of living-but-soon-to-be-dead real animals, functioning in a similar fashion to taxidermy: the collection of dead animal bodies presented in the guise of life to offer entertainment and signify successful ecological domination through hunting. Pauline Wakeman argues that

[13]Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing* (London: Virago Press, 1979) p. 7.

there is an inherent tension produced by displaying dead animals in the guise of life:

> What the exhibits register instead is the fact that whether the specimen on display is a truncated head or an entire stuffed corpse, the fantasy of taxidermic liveness is always already marked by the macabre traces of death.[14]

These statues then, despite intending to operate as a comic welcoming to American tourists by anthropomorphically bringing the moose to life, simultaneously depict violence, death and the 'macabre' fate of many moose in the area. The narrator's engagement with this reality means that the idealised conception she holds of the space as a peaceful refuge from the violence of the city and as the place she associates with an innocent childhood is punctured by her confrontation with the violence of the large-scale commercial hunting that now operates in the area and the subsequent deaths of its non-human inhabitants.

Recognising Personal Victimhood through Violence against Animals

The emotional difficulty *Surfacing*'s narrator faces in being confronted with the masculinization and violence that has overtaken her childhood town continues in her interactions with the male characters in the novel, suggesting that she is undergoing an emotional struggle in her personal relationships with male figures more generally. In particular this is evident in her relationship with her friend David and her partner Joe, and the film that they try to make whilst staying at her family's house on the lake. The taking of the footage for the film in the novel is notably propelled by an exploitative male gaze, which objectifies Anna and the narrator, and then later invasively films the innards of a dying animal. The novel thus begins to shift towards a symbolic alignment between women and animals through a sense of victimhood and vulnerability, consistent with Atwood's 1972 *Survival* theory. This is noted in a moment when the narrator describes the way her body was treated in former trauma as being akin to an animal, and later culminates in the narrator's discovery of a dead heron that has been strung up by a group of hunters. Such an encounter becomes an emotionally transformative moment in the novel, as it is the turning point at which she recognises her own suffering at the hands of men. These encounters with animals, and the animal imagery employed to describe the

[14] Pauline Wakeman, *Taxidermic Signs: Reconstructing Aboriginality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008) p. 75.

exploited female bodies at the eyes of the male gaze, are not intended solely to evoke more empathetic relations with the animals in question, but rather are employed as narrative strategies to shed light on the patriarchal violence that the female narrator is attempting to resist, and offer her an avenue through which to escape, in a binary-like mentality, towards an identification with nature. Such a strategy then continues to represent animals from within an anthropocentric framework, despite breaking away from androcentric narratives by centring the female perspective in a pioneer story that narrativizes resistance to violence and overcoming anxieties of displacement.

Joe and David direct Anna to remove her bikini and ignore her protests, telling her to '"look sexy now, move it; give us a little dance"' (130) to which the narrator notices that 'Anna stood for a moment, brown-red with yellow fur and white markings like underwear, glaring at them.' (130) Anna appears then, exposed, dehumanised and like a frightened animal, noted by the narrator's description of her skin and body hair as her 'fur' – the animal imagery highlighting and enhancing the sense of vulnerability the film is both capturing and producing. This focus the film has on exposed bodies is further demonstrated in their filming of a dead fish. The narrator states that they 'solemnly film the fish innards, collapsed bladders and tubes and soft ropes, rearranging them between takes for better angles.' (63) This invasive image, denoting 'innards' and 'ropes' being re-arranged to suit the men's liking demonstrates their nonchalance towards the bodies of their subjects. Much like Anna, the fish is subjected to visual (and in this case physical) exploitation for the purpose of male entertainment. Such behaviour evokes a specific memory for the narrator in which, during a medical termination, she felt similarly dehumanised and treated like the fish in David's and Joe's film:

> You might as well be a dead pig, your legs are up in a metal frame, they bend over you, technicians, mechanics, butchers, students clumsy or sniggering practising on your body, they take the baby out with a fork like a pickle out of a pickle jar. (74)

The narrator's description reads akin to a vivisection scene, describing herself as a 'dead pig' and noting that the doctors were 'practising on [her] body'. Moreover, a sinister tone is set through the uncomfortably blasé description of the 'baby' being removed 'with a fork like a pickle out of a pickle jar', again dehumanising the narrator and mirroring the bodily arrangement demonstrated earlier by David and Joe. By referring to herself as a jar she implies that she has been left empty after

having her contents removed, reinforcing further the emotional trauma of this experience. The powerlessness that she felt is evidenced when she states that they 'tie your hands down' and that 'they don't want you to understand', which introduces an abusive power dynamic to the memory that is heightened further through her continual reference to the medical professionals as 'they', homogenizing and refuting any familiarity with them. Finally, her rule of three list 'technicians, mechanics, butchers' reinforces again her feelings of dehumanisation under their care, each word escalating the level of separation and brutality, suggesting that she felt like an object for repair or a non-human body about to be sliced up for consumption, much like the fish. Such an identification with the fish, and through the animal language that she uses to describe her experiences, the narrator of *Surfacing* taps into a particular strategy of evoking empathy. Her human status should spare her of such treatment, but this is denied because of her gender, and so she begins to conceptualise her suffering through the suffering of animals, but rather than producing a pro-animal ethical engagement with the animals she encounters, she uses the emotive experience of witnessing their suffering to further propel her subjective transformation away from human society and patriarchy towards an affiliation with nature, by virtue of her binary way of thinking.

The climactic encounter with a dead animal body that induces this emotional departure from engagement with human society and subsequent 'Indigenization' and embrace of nature happens when the narrator discovers a dead heron that has been killed and hung up by a group of male hunters. The display of the heron, strung up in a display of conquest enables it to be read as a continuation of the colonial practice of hunting and displaying of animals for entertainment and masculine pursuit. Moreover, the heron has not only been physically sacrificed by the hunters but it is also sacrificed narratively, permitting the narrator an encounter that produces in her a new level of enlightenment with regards to her own suffering at the hands of men. The heron is therefore a literary device, employed as a fictional turning point in the novel that propels the narrator into a state of self-reflection. She begins to distance herself from the practices she once so easily engaged in, such as fishing, and she begins to descend into a detachment from both the humans and human society around her, culminating with her disappearance into the woods. McKay has pinpointed the discovery of the dead heron as the most significant moment in the development of the text's animal ethics. His analysis focuses on the bodily response of the narrator to such an encounter, reinforcing the narrator's attempted connection to the non-human through a rejection of language and

search for the maternal. However, McKay is generous in his analysis, and this pro-animal turn is neither consistent nor developed, as it collapses before the possibility of ethical politics can be produced seriously. Ultimately, what emerges from this encounter is a temporary sympathy for the heron, followed swiftly by the narrator's reflection regarding her own victimhood status and attempt at 'Indigenization' as a tool for managing this state of recognition. She states:

> It was behind me, I smelled it before I saw it; then I heard the flies. The smell was like decaying fish. I turned around and it was hanging upside down by a thin blue nylon rope tied round its feet and looped over a tree branch, its wings fallen open. It looked at me with its mashed eye. (109)

The sensory descriptions force an uncomfortably intimate and invasive engagement with the scene's gruesome nature. Furthermore, the heron has been manipulated into a position that deliberately marks the intention of the hunters to dominate and deny the animal the freedom of movement that marks its own species' idiosyncrasy. Its large wings are no longer spread by the liberated movement of flight but by hang loose and spread open by its side, and it has had its legs bound by rope. The distortion of the heron's agency is reinforced by the narrator's statement 'it looked at me'. This is reminiscent of Farley Mowat's transformative encounter with the wolf gaze, but it is subverted and rendered tragic because this transformation occurs upon encounter with a dead animal; still able to communicate with the narrator in its' gaze. McKay argues:

> The transfixing quality of the heron's look signals a compelling agency of the animal, even beyond death, in its ability to interpellate the narrator into some form of relationship with it. (213)

This implies that this moment induces an emotional attachment to the non-human beyond an anthropocentric framework. Similarly, Tania Aguila-Way argues that in this scene the narrator is 'dislodged' from her 'position as a self-contained subject'.[15] Both McKay and Aguila-Way then, read this moment in the novel as evidence of an emerging pro-animal ethics within the narrator's subjective development.

[15] Tania Aguila-Way, 'Beyond the Logic of Solidarity of Sameness: The Critique of Animal Instrumentalization in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* and Marian Engel's *Bear*', *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 23.1. (2016) 5-29 (p. 19).

The narrator's attachment to animals, however, is entirely double-edged, in that it acts as a carrier for her self-centred anxiety. She does momentarily engage with the horror of her encounter and the mentality behind the heron's murder before turning this moment and any further acknowledgments of violence against animals into an anthropocentric reflection upon her own systemic victimhood. She asks:

> Why had they strung it up like a lynch victim, why didn't they just throw it away like the trash? To prove they could do it, they had the power to kill. Otherwise it was valueless: beautiful from a distance but it couldn't be tamed or cooked or trained to talk, the only relation they could have to a thing like that was to destroy it. Food, slave or corpse, limited choices; horned and fanged heads sawed off and mounted on the billiard room wall, stuffed fish, trophies. (110-111)

By stating that 'relation' to the heron could only be met through 'destroying' it the narrator demonstrates a recognition of the power exertion that underpins the primary type of human-animal relations in this area, which is hunting. Her sarcastic addition of 'limited choices' followed by her reference to the collection of hunting trophies categorise the heron as performing the role of a trophy, killed and displayed to provide aesthetic entertainment. McKay also says of this scene that 'the killing and display of the heron has a primarily sacrificial function; it provides the hunters with an object onto which they can project the unwanted parts of themselves' (216), reaffirming their status as dominant humans by harming the non-human. Building on this argument, to return to Wakeman, she argues that the intimate relationship between taxidermy and animal trophy heads and the performance of male superiority is an established historical one. She pays close attention to taxidermy, but I will utilise her comments as a useful means of reading this display of a hunted animal body, since the heron, I would argue, is operating in the same way as taxidermy: the display of conquest. She states:

> Its connotative specters revive fantasies of white male supremacy in "the sporting crucible", of colonial mastery over nature, and of the conquest of time and mortality through the preservation of the semblance of life in death. (5-6)

This moment in the text then, encapsulates the continuation of these colonial imaginaries – the hunters have killed the heron as a demonstration of their ability to conquer nature, and they have hung it as an outward display of this aggression.

It is by being confronted with the literal displayed violence of masculinity that the narrator recognises the existence of a system that she is herself a victim of and complicit in. Temporarily, the narrator's disengagement does continue to appear pro-animal. For instance, David catches a fish and she declines to kill it for him, asking him to do it himself. As she is watching him she again engages with the brutality of the act, depicting a detailed and gruesome image that brings us back to the first sighting of the heron. Furthermore, she voices an ethical dilemma, considering and critiquing their 'right' to harm animals:

> Thud of metal on fishbone, skull, neckless headbody, the fish is whole, I couldn't anymore, I had no right to. We didn't need it, our proper food was tin cans. We were committing this act, violation, for sport or amusement or pleasure, recreation they call it, these were no longer the right reasons. (114)

The aural description of 'thud' forces an uncomfortable confrontation with the impact of David's knife. In addition, the narrator re-assembles the dissected fish, describing 'fishbone, skull, neckless headbody'. This demonstrates her repulsion at the scene, but also her newfound engagement with the non-human body. She commits to the notion that this killing of the fish is no longer justified, rejecting all of the normalised excuses for killing animals. Her ethical transition from ignorance to awareness and rejection is reinforced by her referral to David's killing of the fish as 'murder' (114) and thus unjustifiable. Evidently, for the narrator, the confrontation of violence against non-human animals has woken in her a recognition of the existence of power structures that privilege certain groups and species over one another and the artificiality of these said structures, which does momentarily appear to be a pro-animal analysis. However, this is the extent of her ethics. She uses these encounters with violence and recognition of victimhood to categorise her own experience of oppression and thus begin her process of resisting Joe and human society more broadly to begin a process of 'Indigenization' that not only appropriates and misunderstands Indigenous culture, but is anthropocentric in its purpose, erasing the experience of animals and centring her own trauma.

Confronting Canadian Complicity in Violence against Animals

The reason the narrator pushes to resist human society more broadly is because she initially believes that the violence she has witnessed against non-human animals was caused by American hunters. This preserves an idea of Canadian innocence and thus denies complicity within this system of violence. However, unlike Farley Mowat's novel, which attempted to incite nationalism in favour of empathy for

wolves, Atwood plays with and then subverts this strategy to implicate Canadians in this same violence and remove the narrator's reliance on her 'Native' status as a means of separating herself from both the men and hunters around her. The animals then, once provided the narrator with a symbolic point through which to assert her Canadian (and therefore innocent) status, but on confrontation with the hunters and in finding out they are in fact Canadian, the animals then become part of a broader binary that the narrator must submerge herself in in order to separate herself from broader human society. Consequently pro-animal thought collapses in favour of her detachment and re-engagement with society and her Canadian identity. This misidentification of the hunters as Americans thus plays with Atwood's own theory in *Survival* regarding Canadian anxieties surrounding the US. Throughout the novel the narrator shows disdain for these hunters, believing them to be American tourists come north to drain Canadian resources because of their continued disregard for the environment and its inhabitants. They flick cigarettes overboard into the lake, they complain about the lack of fish, and they are responsible for the death of the heron. As a consequence of this behaviour the narrator becomes territorial and assertive in her Canadian-ness, perceiving this to be a contrasting and innocent national identity and blaming their violence on their American nationality. She tells Joe and David not to tell the them that they have successfully caught any fish, warning them that if they do it is likely that the area will be 'swarming' with Americans the next day. (65) Her use of verb here denotes the presence of the Americans as a dangerous pest or plague, and her dislike for them is made further apparent when one of the 'American' hunters asks her which part of the US she is from. She takes offence at this presumption, and tells him she is Canadian, to which she says that 'his face lit up, he'd seen a real native.' (122) Her ironic use of the word 'native' as an interpretation of his attitude to her response is short-lived however, as to her surprise the hunter reveals that he is from Toronto, meaning that his face had lit up in recognition, and not in awe. She therefore states: 'I was furious with them, they'd disguised themselves.' (122) By stating that they had 'disguised themselves' the narrator attempts to deflect blame from her own ignorance regarding Canadian complicity. Her idealised image of Canadian-ness and belief in America as the enemy has been shattered by this revelation. Atwood therefore ruptures this common Canadian anxiety regarding US expansion, which Mowat utilised in his narrative, by resituating and aligning it with Canadian identity. In doing so she denies the narrator the concept of America as a scapegoat and forces her to acknowledge both her own and her country's complicity in normalised violence

against the non-human, bringing a more fragmented sense Canadian identity into this relationship with questions of species relations.

By subverting the use of nationalism to offer a basis for a pro-animal ethics, *Surfacing* plays around with the idea of coming to terms with contemporary Canadian identity when nationalism and patriotism are problematized by a continuing history of violence. Atwood stated in *Survival* that Canadian literature's focus on '"where is here?" has been replaced by "who are we?"' and throughout the text this question remains contested and difficult to answer. [16] This line of postcolonial enquiry is also supported by Dennis Lee, an academic to whom Atwood dedicated *Survival*. He argues that settler Canadian identity hinges on the problem of being 'not-yet-Canadian', and a language 'drenched with our non-belonging'.[17] He emphatically states: 'try to speak the words of your home and you will discover – if you are a colonial – that you do not know them.' (163) Both Atwood and Lee then, argue and express the continued difficulty of comprehending a nationalistic identity in a settler society and, moreover, in the late 1960s and early 70s, which was an era of particular postcolonial unrest.

Preceding the publication of Survival and *Surfacing* in 1969, Cree writer and activist Harold Cardinal published *The Unjust Society*. This was written as a direct response to Pierre Trudeau's 'Just Society' speech at the 1968 Liberal Party leadership contest and the party's introduction of the 'White Paper' in 1969, which brought about a move to abolish the Indian Act by removing the legal status of 'Indian'. Cardinal questioned the sincerity of Canadian public empathy for racial tensions in the US and the horrors of the Vietnam War when a blind eye was being turned to First Nations' problems within their own country. He wrote:

> We do question how sincere or how deep such concern may be when Canadians ignore the plight of the Indian or Métis or Eskimo in their own country. There is little knowledge of native circumstances in Canada and even less interest. To the native one fact is apparent – the average Canadian does not give a damn. [18]

[16] Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press Inc. 2012) p. xxii.
[17] Dennis Lee, 'Cadence, Country, Silence: Writing in Colonial Space', *Boundary 2*, 3.1. (1974) 151-168 (p. 162 & 163 respectively).
[18] Cardinal, Howard, *The Unjust Society* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1969) p. 3.

This perceived ignorance and indifference meant that tensions between Indigenous populations and the settler Government were riding high during this time. This was further demonstrated by the National Indian Brotherhood's launch of their first major campaign in 1969 against the 'White Paper' and their belief in its deployment for the assimilation and inevitable cultural genocide of Indigenous Peoples. Tension and fear emanating from the US, therefore, became less centralised when it was evident that there were internal disputes happening within Canada itself, fragmenting the idealised nationalistic image spewed by PM Trudeau and his liberal supporters. Atwood's novel then, taps into these cultural emotions and issues circulating during the 1970s and toys with the concept of Canadian 'ignorance' and false constructions of victimhood. The narrator's assumption that the hunters are American, followed by the revelation that they are Canadian demonstrates the national tendency to look to place blame and criticism elsewhere, when in reality self-criticism and reflection are crucial if the settler population of Canada are to understand and construct their own sense of self and of national identity. Fiamengo has argued that the novel taps into a 'cultural amnesia' regarding the history of Canada. She states that:

> The novel suggests that recognizing Canada's heritage of violence is painful but necessary if English Canadians are to escape from their recurrent paralyzing fantasy that "through no fault of my own I'm doomed."[19]

The statement here is that the colonial violence upon which Canada was founded has been intentionally erased and forgotten by the average Canadian, but that in order to move beyond the 'victim complex' initially raised by Atwood and to attempt to construct a contemporary Canadian identity, this violence must be confronted.

Adopting Indigeneity as a Temporal State of Proximity to Animals.

Despite this confrontation with violence being positioned as a necessary component for coming to terms with settler identity in the 1970s, Atwood's narrator chooses instead to reassert her attachment to the land in a further act of displacement that, rather than confronting violence, allows her to render herself a victim of it. This process she adopts is one of 'Indigenizing'. The connection that the narrator makes between Indigeneity and proximity to nature/animals is one that Fenn Stewart states

[19] Janice Fiamengo 'Postcolonial guilt in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing'*, *The American Review of Canadian Studies*, 29.1 (1999) 141-163 (p. 143).

has flourished historically in Canada. He says 'the "Indian" is said to exist in a "state of nature", not fully human, incapable of law, unburdened by property ownership or other rights', and so settlers have attempted to adopt an 'Imaginary Indian' status to replicate this 'state' and claim the land as their own. [20] This is a concept that Atwood has theorised in her own work elsewhere, naming it 'Grey Owl Syndrome', entailing the 'white' Canadian desire to achieve 'Indian' status and thereby claim a spiritual and ancestral relationship with the land.[21] 'Grey Owl syndrome', was coined after the famously fraudulent 'Indian' who, born Archibald Belaney, adopted a false indigenous identity and named himself Grey Owl to embark upon a career in conservation, believing that it would authenticate his work and message. He worked closely with the Canadian National Park organisations, and publically adopted and raised a family of beavers, which given the history of the beaver in Canada as a popular pelt, offered a striking depiction of an alternative relationship with the animal and thereby the 'Indian'. Tina Loo explains the outcome of Grey Owl's depiction of his life with the beavers, explaining that 'just as the beaver had to become human to be saved, Grey Owl argued that humans had to become Aboriginal in order to be conservationists.'[22] By demonstrating the capability of beavers to be affectionate pets, Grey Owl 'humanised' them, and through emphasising his Indigeneity and relationship with the beaver, he forged and projected a connection between Indigeneity and the ability to form meaningful human-animal relationships. Stewart draws Grey Owl's behaviour into a wider context of settler anxieties regarding displacement, and this analysis is one way of conceptualising Atwood's narrator's purpose behind her desire to indigenize herself. He states:

> As an "imaginary Indian," then, Grey Owl's historical (and contemporary) prominence reflects not only the work his presence did (and does) in attaching the cultural cachet of the "Indian" to the park, and to Canada. Grey Owl's significance also reflects what Indigenous cultures and literary theorists have identified as the ambivalent settler desire to achieve "cultural fusion

[20]Fenn Stewart, 'Grey Owl in the White Settler Wilderness: "Imaginary Indians", Canadian Culture and Law' in *Law, Culture and the Humanities*, 1.1 (2014) 1-21 (p. 3).
[21] Margaret Atwood, *Strange Things : The Malevolent North in Canadian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)
[22] Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Ottawa: UBC Press, 2006) p. 116.

> [through] violent appropriation" – to embody and to "destroy [the landscape's] original inhabitants." (7)

As such the narrator pushes away from the concepts of settler/human/culture/men towards Indigenous/non-human/nature/women because she believes these concepts to be inherently non-violent because of her perception of them as existing in a binary with the oppressive patriarchal culture she is currently living in. But in doing so, her actions are a further enactment of settler violence, as she adopts Indigeneity as a temporary state through which to seek refuge in nature, thus displacing actual Natives before simply discarding it and returning to the human community she so vehemently opposed. As a consequence, this abandonment occurs simultaneously with an abandonment of an ethical relationship with non-human animals.

The narrator's fetishization of Indigenous culture is evidenced in her continued vague discussion of its connection to Gods, religion and spirituality and her desire to adopt this same belief system. Moreover, through her tendency to think in binaries she problematically distances Indigenous culture from the realm of the' rational human' when she states: 'the gods, the likenesses: to see them in their true shape is fatal. While you are human; but after the transformation they could be reached. First I had to immerse myself in the other language.' (152) This suggests that in order to become closer to Indigenous belief systems, she must become something 'non-human' and adopt a whole new language that she terms only as 'other', aligning Indigeneity with the non-human. She thus views her descent into an Indigenous epistemological system as a 'transformation' through which she will reach a higher level of vague enlightenment regarding her own subjectivity and her relationship to the wider wilderness space because of its association with the non-human realm. This will permit her to reassert her 'Native' identity and overcome her perception of her own displacement. Furthermore, confronted with the violence of the settler-Canadians and the consequent fracture of her conception of Canadian identity through the increasing commercialisation of the area, she uses Indigeneity as a new identity that does not hinge on violence or the suppression of violent histories, stating that 'the Indians did not own salvation but they had once known where it lived and their signs marked the sacred places, the places where you could learn the truth.' (139) She therefore associates the 'Indian' or Indigenous culture and 'sacred' sites with sources of authentic connection to nature, or 'truthful' emotional relations to the land, not invading ones, conceptualised by the presence of the tourists, and although not acknowledged, herself. Terry Goldie explains that the

desire to 'indigenize' is a means of remedying a strained relationship to the land, stating:

> The central white characters of the texts, and the texts themselves, seek to atone for these neglects and omissions, not neglect of the infernal but of the internal, whether the internal soul of the self or the eternal essence of the land, directly manifested through the mystical commodity of the Indigene.[23]

Goldie's reference to the figure of the Indigene as a 'commodity' is accurate given the way in which the narrator of *Surfacing* evidently temporarily adopts the Native image as a vehicle for resisting 'culture', rather than acknowledging the agency and history of Native populations and her misplacement in such a culture.

Adding another layer to her feelings of territorial displacement is the reference she makes to the space as a site of English and Francophone territorial dispute. This settler conflict, on top of the increasing commercialisation of the space as a hunting destination, further propels the narrator into a perception of herself as a displaced 'Native', as she feels a sense of her country and her identity as being under threat:

> My country, sold or drowned, a reservoir; the people were sold along with the land and the animals, a bargain sale, solde. Les soldes they called them, sellouts, the flood would depend on who got elected, not here but somewhere else.'(126)

This quotation demonstrates the depth of the dispute over this land. The narrator switches between French and English, whilst simultaneously identifying as a displaced Native through her lamentation of 'my country.' This encapsulates the complex disputes that were occurring amongst these settler populations during the both the 1960s, after the Quiet Revolution in Quebec, and also in the 1970s, after election of the Parti Québécois and their advocating for Quebec's Independence.[24] Thus, the identity of the narrator is tied to the identity of the area: just as the space

---

[23] Terry Goldie, *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989) p. 146.

[24] Occurring in the 1960s, the Quiet Revolution was a period of change in Quebec in which a fight for greater control over the region's economic resources and the way in which these were distributed occurred. In addition, there was a decided move to redefine francophone society and consider its place in Canada. In 1980 the Parti Québécois (a social democrat party, elected in 1976) held a referendum for Quebec's independence. The proposal to seek independence from the Canadian Government was defeated. Sources: John A. Dickinson and Brian J. Young, *A Short History of Quebec* (McGill-Queen University Press, 2002) and https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/quiet-revolution [Accessed 23 February 2020].

is fraught with English and Francophone disputes, and is also unrecognisable because of its commercialisation, the narrator's identity is troubled, uncertain and feels at threat from displacement. Her reference to 'the flood' draws upon biblical imagery to imply that the future of the region depends on the next election and thus who will take on the role of God, the bringer of the flood to destroy current civilisation and start again with a new people. Such an intertextual reference hyperbolises the narrator's feelings of displacement and evidences her perspective of the changing nature of her home space to be akin to a tale of destruction and genocide. In attempting to come to terms with her status as a displaced person, she relates the notion of the space being sold and developed to the feelings of a Native person, who have historically experienced the same displacement. In doing so she carries out a displacement of her own that neither encourages real ethical empathetic relations with animals to be taken seriously, nor acknowledges real Indigenous people and culture beyond a symbolic utilisation and exploitation of her perception of 'being Native'. The genocide that she recognises is one that centres her own victimhood, failing to recognise the genocide of the First Nations that came before her. Fiamengo's statement that 'the fundamental repression in *Surfacing* may well not be the abortion but "genocide of First Nations peoples' is proven to be a discarded historical context, as the narrator does not recognise nor acknowledge this repression. Rather, her dispossession of First Nations by Indigenizing reinforces her utilisation of Indigenous culture as a vehicle for overcoming her own trauma.

The narrator's use of Indigeneity as a temporary state for accessing nature and the non-human, and also as a means of rejecting the settler patriarchal culture she associates with violence and oppression, cannot be sustained because the narrator is not Indigenous. And moreover, nor does she want to be, as she consciously decides to abandon her Indigenization and refuge in the woods to return to Joe and human settler society more generally. In doing so she abandons any ethical engagement with animals and Indigenous issues, proving that any hints at a sustained pro-animal transformation were temporary and the product of her attempt to understand her own oppression. The narrator's return to society is enacted by a problematic fantasy of herself as a Native experiencing their first cultural encounter with a settler. She thus enacts her own imaginative conception of re-entering the world afresh, drawing upon The Flood myth she previously referenced. She sees Joe looking for her and states: 'what's important is that he's here, a mediator, an ambassador, offering me something: captivity in any of its forms, a new freedom?'

(186) The oxymoronic link she creates between 'captivity' and a 'new freedom' demonstrates the fragmented and irrational nature of the narrator's conscience, but reaffirms the comfort she finds in structure, society and routine. For her, the notion of being looked after by this 'ambassador' in a 'captive' space brings with it the possibility of a new start. This romanticised and insensitive idealisation of an Indigenous-Settler encounter overlooks the reality of the genocide brought by the arrival of the Europeans for the First Nations People of America by suggesting it brought a favourable new beginning for them, but it permits the narrator a means through which to re-enter her former 'human' life. This serves to reaffirm the failure of the narrator to understand the history of the space that she is in, the foundations of her identity as a settler and her failure to put into practice the sympathy and rejection of violence she previously recognised through her encounters with non-human animal victims. As a consequence, such a return to the human community requires an abandonment of the ethical identification with animals and the non-human because Atwood makes such a union between the two impossible. This is reinforced by the final line of the novel, 'the lake is quiet, the trees surround me, asking and giving nothing.' (186) Whereas previous identification with the non-human through a rejection of the human brought a sense of communication, such as being seen in the eyes of the heron, now that she has made her choice to return to Joe and the human, settler society that he represents, the trees and lake remain silent, refusing to engage.

Surfacing then, encapsulates the depth and complexity of the conflict of identities occurring in Canada during the 1970s. In addition, the novel conceptualises female trauma through the narrator's recognition of her own oppression and experience of violence at the hands of men. This subjective transformation, first into a recognition of such violence and then an attempt to overcome this violence, is brought about through a recognition of suffering in animals at the hands of men and then is rejected through a process of Indigenization and embracing of the 'natural' and nonhuman, perceived as a binary to oppressive settler culture. Atwood's novel therefore demonstrates a use of both animals and Indigeneity as symbolic fictional devices that are utilised to construct, define and detail settler anxieties and feelings of displacement, whilst also being used as a means through which the female experience of trauma can be imagined and represented. The animals then, remain static devices of the Atwood's understanding of Canadian cultural imagination, objects of temporary ethical engagement, but ultimately overlooked and confined to this anthropocentric representation as ciphers of human victimisation.

Deathly Monogamy: Imaginative Escape and Engagement with Iconographies of Extinct Beings and Non-Human Animal Displays in *Life Before Man* (1979)

The representational strategy that I have identified at play in *Surfacing*, which uses dead animal bodies as ciphers for the protagonist's domestic concerns, is also at play in *Life Before Man*, but it works in a different way. There is a development between the two novels, which is evident in the handling of animality from the discovery of a dead heron, intended to be a type of anti-trophy, to the taxidermy object and the mass display of prepared animal bodies in an institutional space in *Life Before Man*. By examining this novel in comparison with *Surfacing* then, I am able to open up conversations about settler institutions and questions of species, rather than just objects and practices, like hunting. As a consequence, the scope of analysis moves from the popular and local scale to a national scale, as I engage with a physical bricks and mortar institutional arrangement of dead animal bodies intended to convey a national history but also working as a backdrop for narratives about domestic difficulties. As such, by exploring these two novels and identifying this same logic of animality in both that is enacted in different ways, it is possible to see the texts as exemplars of a fundamental strategy of representation in Atwood's work in the 1970s that brings together questions of nation, gender and species, and utilises animals symbolically in the representation of this dynamic.

Set in the Royal Ontario museum, a space in which specific narratives are constructed using iconographies of both extinct and existing species, *Life Before Man* represents imaginative engagements with curated animal bodies as a possible means of escape from oppressive narratives of heteronormativity. For Lesje and Elizabeth, this is realised through museum based research and curation, and the manipulation of animal bodies into particular displays. Moreover, Lesje produces educational material for the museum, intellectualising her relationship with the animals on display and encouraging a wider public engagement in the same way. As a consequence of her role within the museum, working as a paeleontologist and interacting with the dinosaur bones, she is able to comfort her anxieties regarding her 'non-Canadian' identity and sense of alienation by surrendering herself imaginatively to the fictional world and narrative she has created through museum display. And finally, for Nate his escape is through his desire to give up his law career and make toy animals full time, finding solace in the process of constructing animal bodies for children's entertainment. The bones and deconstructed non-human animal bodies surrounding all three of the protagonists, then, work to reflect a longing for an emotional attachment or relationship that stems deeper than the

institution of marriage and allows them a temporary existence outside of the heteronormative framework of their ordinary lives.

Private vs. Public spaces of Interaction with Animal Bodies

Alberti writes that 'for those beasts destined to become museum specimens, biological death is only one moment, one narrative hinge of many.'[25] For non-human animals that are on show in museums then, their biological lives may have ended when they died, but their museum and display lives begin and continue to be re-cycled and re-narrativized in contemporary displays. To enable such precise construction, the private spaces and workrooms of museums are stocked full of deconstructed non-human animal bodies, skin and bones. *Life Before Man* contains numerous engagements with such behind the scenes bodily construction spaces and I would like to focus in particular on the coding of these spaces and Lesje's consequent engagements with them. Throughout the novel, the museum's private construction rooms are coded as androcentric spaces that nurture masculinity and female bodily objectification, and in contrast, the public exhibition spaces are coded as liberating subjective spaces in which protagonists can imaginatively escape the narratives of their every day lives and submerge themselves within a fictional narrative brought to life by the bodies on display. Consequently, much like the narrator of *Surfacing*, Lesje's preference for interacting with the non-human animals is a result of her inter-personal relationships, which have become plagued with a monotonous and oppressive heteronormativity, and in addition, her feelings of unease regarding her own 'foreign identity' and feelings of displacement in contemporary Canadian society. Similarly, it is her recognition of male violence against the non-human animal body within these construction spaces that pushes Lesje towards a desire to identify with the extinct dinosaur bones on display.

Within these private construction spaces narratives regarding the misogyny and androcentrism underpinning human relationships emerge as the context from which the narratives concerning the physical manipulation of animal bodies for display are produced, linking male violence to the destruction and display of animal bodies that is similar to the relationship identified in *Surfacing*. Whilst working in one of the laboratories Lesje describes the process for preparing museum specimens:

> They have a freezer full of dead carcasses, camels, moose, bats, and when they're ready to assemble the skeleton they strip most of the meat off and

[25] Alberti, *The Afterlives of Animals*, p. 6.

> put the bones into the Bug Room, where carnivorous insects eat the shreds of flesh remaining. The Bug Room smells of rotting meat. Outside the door, several pictures of naked women are Scotch-taped to filing cabinets. The technicians in that department work to rock and country music from the radio.[26]

Her description of the atmosphere within the laboratory depicts the space as like a butcher's shop, detailing the violent processes through which the non-human bodies are dismembered and stored. There is a distinct focus on descriptors related to death and decay, evidenced in terms such as 'carcasses', 'skeleton', 'flesh', 'shred' and 'rotting meat', the latter additionally inciting an uncomfortable visceral engagement with the space. This creates a sense of irony given that it is in this space that specimens are constructed for display to represent a living mammal, but the process of such is so fraught with violence and death. Moreover, the 'pictures of naked women', 'rock and country music' depict an androcentric image of this part of the museum and the staff that work here. The insidious nature of this scene is not the blatant critique of the objectification of women's bodies by Atwood, but her depiction of this objectification as being simply part of the environment in which these men are working. Second Wave Feminist Andrea Dworkin wrote in 1980:

> The power of sex is ultimately defined as the power of conquest' and that 'the power of sex, in male terms, is also funeral. Death permeates it. The male erotic trinity – sex, violence, and death – reigns supreme.[27]

Life Before Man appears contemporaneous with this argument, particularly given the feminist ideological context, and it is certainly possible to read this scene through this lens: the stripping and re-constructing of non-human bodies stems from the same masculine desire for 'conquest' that enjoys and produces the manipulation of human female bodies in pornography. Both non-human and female human bodies are consumed as objects for visual objectification through a process of conquest and male domination that denies them autonomy and self-hood.

However, through this depiction of the violent and gruesome work that goes into the construction of animal bodies for museum display as happening within a misogynistic framework, Atwood embeds misogyny and the objectification subtly into the very frameworks of the everyday working environment. This contrasts with

---

[26] Margaret Atwood, *Life Before Man* (London: Bloomsbury, 1993) p. 201.

[27] Andrea Dworkin, 'Beaver and Male Power in Pornography', *New Political Science*, 1.4. (1980) 37-41 (p. 41).

the blatant feelings of unease that appear in *Surfacing* when Anna is forced to remove her clothes for David's video, and the descriptions alluding to her as a frightened animal, as Lesje appears almost de-sensitized, reflecting the normalisation of androcentric atmospheres and also demonstrating a development in Atwood's feminist engagement, subtly exposing and embedding misogyny rather than drawing explicit and simple connections between women and non-human animals. Furthermore, this laboratory is usually a non-hierarchised space, and is not necessarily 'private' as I have termed it, however, through the presence of these naked posters and the violent practices of dismembering non-human bodies by the male employees, Atwood's novel depicts a space that is made hierarchized and nurtures a specific cross-section of society: namely heterosexual human males. The laboratory is therefore presented as a form of private space, excluding those that do not enjoy and conform to these set of ideals, and so it is unusually political for a seemingly non-political space. Moreover, this is the space in which the specimens for display are cleaned and produced, symbolically reflecting the grassroots patriarchal constructions that are hidden from the wider public and uphold both the museum space and wider society.

As a consequence of the oppressive patriarchal nature of these private construction spaces, it is unsurprising that Lesje finds comfort and refuge in the public display galleries, amongst the finished specimens and away from such performative masculinity. Her imaginative interactions with the display pieces temporarily give the non-human bodies a narrative of her choosing that restores that which was literally and figuratively stripped from them in the private work rooms. By imagining that the non-human animals come to life around her Lesje is able to mentally escape from interactions with humans that bring her trauma and stress, such as having the responsibility of being a step-mother thrust upon her and, more poignantly, being raped by William. She is able to fantasize about existing within another world, absent of humans and men, and filled entirely by 'immense' non-human dinosaur bodies. This means that these display rooms operate (through her interactions) as spaces that distinctly contrast with the private spaces in the novel, meaning that a dichotomy is created and spacialised as private/public, dependent entirely on the nature of the interaction with and the relationship between the non-human body and the human observer:

> Looking up at the immense skulls towering above her in the dim light, the gigantic spines and claws, she almost expects these creatures of hers to reach down their fingers in friendly greeting. Though if they were really alive

> they'd run away or tear her apart. Bears, however, dance to music; so do snakes. What if she were to press the buttons on the filmstrips and, instead of the usual speeches or the cries of walruses and seals used to simulate the underwater voices of the marine reptiles, some unknown song were to emerge? Indian music, droning, hypnotic. Try to imagine, says the brochure she wrote, a guide for parents and teachers, what it would be like if suddenly the dinosaurs came to life. (284)

It is worth noting that Lesje refers to the display specimens as 'hers', as this implies that in addition to designing the displays herself, she also feels she has a sense of ownership over the specimens she is arranging. Dodd writes of museum taxidermy that 'what is ultimately presented are representations of animals as they really are for the producers of the representations themselves.'[28] This reiterates the imaginative capacity offered to Lesje by these iconographies of extinct beings, as she is able to construct a narrative of her choosing through bringing them back to life in an imagined interaction. In this quotation the specimens are physically 'immense' in size, but they are also figures of her imagination, 'reach[ing] down their fingers in friendly greeting', rendered more bizarre by the use of 'fingers'. Atwood may here be recognising that there is a necessary gap between fantasy and ideals, and that whilst fantasies are valuable, so too are displacement activities that condition the relationship of the human self to their world. The practice of building these dinosaur displays then, has multiple purposes: to literally build and portray Palaeolithic life, but also to symbolically open up a comfort and sanctuary in imagining oneself in a 'life before man'.

Lesje does recognise the limitations and farcical nature of her imaginative interactions with the dinosaurs, however, when she thinks, 'though if they were really alive they'd run away or tear her apart.' (284) This shows that she acknowledges the behavioural norms of the non-human animals she wishes to interact with, but this acknowledgement is temporary and is rapidly disregarded by her following reference to 'bears and snakes that dance.' The knowledge of these 'dancing animals' comforts her desire to imagine a reciprocated relationship with the display specimens by recalling two non-human species that have been 'tamed' to provide entertainment, and in the process problematically bypasses the violent means with which this is made possible. Therefore, to conceive of non-human animals to suit one's imaginative enjoyment means that the way in which the

[28] Dodd, Rader, Thorsen, *Animals on Display*, p. 5.

animals operate as display pieces is entirely subjective to the viewer and can have little to do with the knowledge we have of that individual or the species more largely. Stephen Asma states:

> The odd thing about a specimen is that it's a kind of cipher when considered in isolation. Specimens are a lot like words: they don't mean anything unless they're in the context of a sentence or a system, and their meanings are extremely promiscuous.[29]

To refer to the meaning of a specimen as 'promiscuous' reinforces the notion that the animals on display lose something of their own animality and individual identity in the process of becoming museum specimens. Alone they are cryptic 'ciphers' but collectively they are exactly as the viewer interprets them to be: essentially 'real' but 'not real' representations of the spectator's perception of non-human animals, promiscuously changing with each new spectator. In the novel then, the dinosaurs on display provide a source through which Lesje can escape the domestic pressures she is experiencing by imaginatively transporting herself into a fictional world and interaction with that specimen and its fantasy world correlatives. The imaginative capacity of the dinosaurs stems from the fact that they are iconographies of extinct beings. They are a reminder of an 'other world' that is different to the one that we and other non-human animals currently occupy. Thus, their display in the museum demonstrates what scientific knowledge about historic animals can allow us to see, but also to imagine on a narrative level. The enjoyment that is gained through interacting with extinct beings is drawn from the notion that we are permitted to imagine and create a level of fictional narrative surrounding them by the very nature of their current existence as creatures from an unknown past. This reflects the use of animal bodies in both *Life Before Man* and *Surfacing* more broadly, as they provide symbolic sites through which to construct particular narratives that are still framed by andro- and anthropocentrism, rather than a pro-animal ideology that encourages us to take animals seriously. This therefore evidences this same strategy of animal representation occurring in both novels, promiscuously employing animal ciphers as a way of conceptualising particular human subjective struggles.

Forging Personal Identity through Interaction with Museum Display

Operating alongside this desire to reject patriarchy and human society in favour of imaginative refuge in non-human animals, and much like the narrator of *Surfacing*

[29] Asma, *Stuffed Animals and Pickled Heads*, p. xiii

who struggles with feelings of displacement, Lesje's attachment to and idealisation of the museum means that it operates for her as a liminal space in which she can shed her 'foreign' status and escape through immersing herself in cultural and historical displays. The exhibition of extinct species occurs within the novel alongside the display of Indigenous artefacts and temporalities. We hear that one of the display pieces is a totem pole, an item which is still used and displayed by Indigenous tribes and therefore not an artefact of the past. However, displaying the totem pole in the museum forges a connection between Indigeneity and history, 'freezing' Indigenous cultures in the past and therefore denying them present-day autonomy. Wakeman has commented on the politics of displaying Indigenous artefacts alongside taxidermy, arguing that it contributes to a narrative of a 'lost past', and so when we see an animal or an Indigenous figure on display, they come to stand in for a population that has supposedly vanished:

> The stuffed animal and the plastic Indian are rendered interimbricated figures of extinction, the lost corpses of an atavistic past. The intimate contiguity constructed between the taxidermic animal and the native mannequin consequently effects a collapse of species hierarchies that racializes the aboriginal figure and spectacularizes it as a synecdochic spectre of a vanished population. In so doing, the tableaux amplify the colonial logic embedded in the structure of dioramic display, dramatizing a white supremacist narrative of evolution that fetishizes the supposed lost objects of a primitive wildness. (5)

Present-day Indigenous narratives are consequently erased by being confined as figments of the past and, as Wakeman has stated, they are labelled as contributions to the fetishized notion of a 'primitive wildness' upon which settler-Canada was founded. Museum displays such as this then, contribute to difficult and skewed perceptions of Indigenous-Settler relations and deny de-colonial progress by retaining an attachment to an imagined history and constructing a narrative through display that perpetuates this notion.

Moreover, placing animals alongside Indigenous figures not only 'racializes' them, but it also aligns them with the non-human and contributes to a wider narrative of both colonial and ecological domination. Much like in the mind of the narrator in *Surfacing*, the Indigene is more closely aligned with the non-human animal in a display that not only 'fetishizes the lost objects of a primitive wildness' but also re-invents the narrative that this 'wildness' is the reason for their 'extinction'. Moreover,

the capacity for animal taxidermy to act as a promiscuous cipher, means that animal taxidermic specimens can be employed in displays to render and signify Indigenous bodies on display as 'less-than-human', and as a less 'civilised or developed' population. Such a narrative, played out through the curation of museum displays and the specific positioning of bodies, is a factor in Lesje's idealisation of the museum. She recognises the propensity for her inner conflict regarding her foreign identity to be shed through submerging herself within an environment that begs subjective narrative construction and consequently is a producer of a multiplicity of stories:

> Sometimes she thinks of the Museum as a repository of knowledge, the resort of scholars, a palace built in the pursuit of truth, with inadequate air conditioning but still a palace. At other times it's a bandits' cave: the past has been vandalized and this is where the loot is stored. Whole chunks of time lie here, golden and frozen; she is one of the guardians, the only guardian, without her the whole office would melt like a jellyfish on the beach, there would be no past. She knows it's really the other way around, that without the past she would not exist. Still, she must hold on somehow to her own importance. She's threatened, she's greedy. If she has to she'll lock herself into one of these cases, hairy mask on her face, she'll stow away, they'll never get her out.' (309)

Lesje's description of the museum points to its problematic colonial foundations. She optimistically describes it as a 'repository of knowledge', 'built in the pursuit of truth', but then contrastingly calls it a 'bandits' cave'. Through her choice of 'bandits', 'loot' and 'vandalized' she is seemingly aware of the conditions upon which much of the items are required and the politics of their display. This means, then, that her statement 'built in the pursuit of truth' brings forth the notion that truths are subjectively manipulated, much like concepts of nation as put forth by these types of institutions.

The museum, through its display and curation of historical objects, produces, perpetuates, and reinforces a colonial vision of history and 'truth' that contrasts with that of the cultures it has looted. This is reinforced when Lesje says 'chunks of time lie here, golden and frozen'. Museum displays such as the totem pole, and by exhibiting Indigenous bodies alongside taxidermy and extinct non-human species, contribute to difficult and skewed perceptions of Indigenous-Settler relations and deny de-colonial progress by retaining an attachment to an imagined history of a

'non-human' people on an institutional scale. Whereas the narrator of *Surfacing* attempts to 'Indigenize' herself and escape to the wilderness to handle her feelings of displacement, which is a private, localised practice, in *Life Before Man* Lesje is able to indulge in the institutional objectification of identity through the large-scale display of cultures, bodies and animals in an attempt to comfort her perception of her own alienation from settler-Canadian culture. The museum space is thus designed to permit this kind of engagement and utilisation of both Indigenous and animal bodies, which can be interpreted promiscuously to encourage the viewer to construct a sense of subjective relationship to the alleged narrative history the displays portray.

Lesje's perception of the exhibitions is complex and uncomfortable because of the anxiety she holds regarding her non-Canadian or 'foreign' identity. She, much like the narrator of *Surfacing*, attempts to uproot Indigenous people and position herself within their culture and as an artefact of Canadian history through the statement 'she's threatened, she's greedy. If she has to she'll lock herself into one of these cases, hairy mask on her face, she'll stow away, they'll never get her out'. (309) This demonstrates her desire to attach herself to these 'historical' displays and her fetishization of such cultures due to her desire to forge a connection to the Canadian past and a fixed and stable identity that she feels she is lacking. She feels conflicted about her mixed Ukrainian and Jewish heritage, describing in detail throughout the novel the struggle she experienced being caught between her grandmothers, who were both fighting to bring her into their respective cultures. She remarks that to settle this dispute, 'instead of synagogue Lesje attended the museum' (84), and so it became a place and refuge from the disconnection she felt regarding her own identity, and problematically, a replacement place of worship. Her previous quotation, stating that 'she's threatened' and that 'she'll lock herself into one of these cases', further demonstrates the feelings of vulnerability that stem from both her gender and identity and her desire to use the museum displays to overcome this. The addition of 'she must hold on somehow to her own importance' further reinforces this notion. For Lesje, and evidently, more widely speaking, to settler cultures in the institutional production of museum displays and the employment on non-human bodies within them, to have historical roots, knowledge and links to the past is to have a form of proof of connection to that space. Therefore, these historical displays are a means through which this claim and attachment to history and to the land are established through particularized narratives that utilise non-human animal and Indigenous bodies by framing them as

in proximity and as a part of history. They are therefore coded as symbolic figments of the past, denied autonomous and serious representation within present or future narratives.

Deathly Monogamy: The triangle of Lesje, Elizabeth and Nate

The novel's focus on the museum as a space in which narratives are constructed about human relationships to the world and its animal inhabitants is reflective of the smaller narratives of heteronormativity and monogamy that are complicated in the novel through the difficult relationship between Lesje, Elizabeth and Nate. As such, the lack of control that Elizabeth feels she has over the break down of her marriage is reflected in her curation work, as she wishes to transport herself imaginatively to a different narrative, much like Lesje. This is apparent in two of her displays, one of which is titled 'Artefact and Environment' and the other is a display on China. The control she asserts over the narrative in these displays is evident through the fetishization of Canada's history to suit and validate a colonial imaginary in the construction of 'Artefact and Environment':

> She wanted to juxtapose some of the small items from Canadiana with natural objects from the same geographical regions. Artefact and Environment, she was calling it. She could use some stuffed animals to go with the pioneer axes and traps, and a few fossil bones for atmosphere. "This is an old country," she said. "We want people to see that." (12)

The replacement of Indigenous tools and traps with those belonging to 'pioneers' is a deliberate attempt to establish a narrative of settler history, and the addition of 'stuffed animals' and 'bones' to create an 'atmosphere' further contributes to this idealised image of a wild non-human landscape that confronted the settlers upon arrival. Moreover, the employment of animal bodies for 'atmosphere' commodifies them to little more than display pieces, with no historical placement of their own, but it also reinforces the symbolic promiscuity of non-human bodies when used in displays. They can be employed with seemingly little historical relevance to add and enhance the atmospheric effect of museum displays and the non-human bodies they are positioned against. Evidently, this display is interested in human histories, and more distinctly, settler ones. Elizabeth's statement, "this is an old country" as an explanation for her choices is ironic considering that Canada's history spans far back beyond European arrival, reinforcing her commitment to a constructed and artificial depiction of history. Elizabeth is obviously conscious of this connection between the creation of artwork, and its curation in the museum, and the depiction

of a constructed, often idealised, image of the culture on display. Her emotional reaction to an exhibition she designed on China aligns her with Lesje, as she similarly wishes to use the pieces on display to imaginatively transport herself away from her newly conceived single status after the death of her lover, Chris, and her divorce from Nate.

The artificiality and manipulated temporality of the displays and the employment of non-human animal bodies 'for atmosphere' is what allows for this imaginative creativity and freedom because of the potential of the non-human body to be read subjectively. She wonders amongst the exhibition after the museum closes, enjoying the lack of crowds and remembering the elaborate exhibitions that have come before this one, but when observing the paintings on display, rather than being able to enjoy and imagine herself in these idealised depictions of China, she is unable to look past their artificiality, which forces her into reflection regarding the collapse of her marriage. She observes a painting titled, 'The New Look of Our Piggery' and notes that:

> She's not much interested in pigs. These pigs are like toys, like the plastic pigs from the farm set the children still play with occasionally. They're discreet and neat and evidently they don't root or shit. (289)

The artificial nature of the painting is signified to Elizabeth by the clean depiction of the 'toy-like' pigs, and the lack of evidence for common pig behaviour. This painting, in addition to another that depicts a group of people helping to build each other's houses, ruptures Elizabeth's enjoyment of the paintings and their ability to transport her into an idealised China, and as such the pigs work in this moment as ciphers, both triggering and reflecting her own unhappiness. She states, 'China is not paradise; paradise does not exist. Even the Chinese know it, they must know it, they live there. Like cavemen, they paint not what they see but what they want'. (290) China here however, is lucid and interchangeable: most exhibitions are constructed to depict exactly what the artist or curator wants to show and Elizabeth is seeing through this fallacy and confronting her inability to escape her lived reality through the artwork. Consequently, the novel states that, 'suddenly Elizabeth feels, not lonely, but single, alone.' (290) She is unable to imagine herself into these artwork scenes and instead is forced to acknowledge her current condition as separated from Nate and without Chris. However, she adds that 'China does not exist. Nevertheless she longs to be there.' (290) Despite acknowledging the

artificiality of the display, she still imaginatively aligns China with paradise as a point of reference for wishing to be away from Canada, the museum and her single status.

The narrative that surrounds the relationships in the novel deliberately conveys the complexity of the emotions involved and resists following a simple story in which a happy version of heteronormative monogamy always prevails. This is evidenced in the conflicted depiction of Elizabeth's feelings. On the one hand she expresses sadness for the breakdown of her marriage when viewing the museum's display on China, but she simultaneously recalls the lack of emotion that underpinned their relationship, stating that she 'married him easily, like trying on a shoe' (15). Their marriage then, is depicted as a relationship of convenience and comfort, rather than one of real, genuine emotion. Marge Piercy argues that these types of relationships occur frequently in Atwood's work, stating that, 'love, in Atwood, is often an imitation of the real: an aquarium instead of the sea.'[30] This imagery of comparison between the human relationships and a space in which animal bodies are displayed for human visual consumption is particularly fitting in relation to *Life Before Man* in which the animal bodies in the museum are used by Atwood to symbolise the desire to imaginatively escape the confines of relationships, granting temporary and artificial moments of refuge, rather than representing real and sustained human-animal relationships.

More than this, Elizabeth attempts to come to terms with her ex-husband's new relationship with Lesje by weaponising her role as a mother and inserting herself into their relationship in a way that interrupts the simplicity of the traditional domestic narrative that they, as a new couple, are trying to construct. She does this by insisting that they share time and their new accommodation with the children, complicating the narrative of their relationship. Elizabeth knows that Lesje is not entirely comfortable with children outside of the realms of educating them on dinosaurs in the museum, and so motherhood becomes a complex concept in the novel that problematizes the development of romance and romantic imaginative escape. Lesje is denied the easy romantic stage of her relationship through Elizabeth's behaviour, evident in the novel through the statement that 'Lesje isn't sure any longer whose house it is. She wouldn't be surprised to get a gracious phone call from Elizabeth saying that she and the children will be moving in the next day.' (219) In addition, the fascination with extinction and vulnerability played out

[30] Marge Piercy, 'Margaret Atwood: Beyond Victimhood' in *The American Poetry Review*, 2.6. (1973) 41-44 (p. 42).

through the presence of iconographies of extinct beings and populations in the museum is further enhanced through the children in the novel. For instance, on Halloween three children visit Elizabeth's flat dressed as a 'Chinaman', 'Frankenstein' and one child in a 'rat suit'. (44) These three costumes depict a similarly jarring level of intersection of ethnicity, culture, science and the non-human seen in the museum. Moreover, rats are considered 'vermin' and creatures for scientific experiment, rendering them culturally frightening non-human figures. Elizabeth's reaction to these children indicates a similar level of imaginative engagement seen with the non-human display pieces:

> They are souls, some back, crying at the door, hungry, mourning their lost lives. You give them food, money, anything to substitute your love and blood, hoping it will be enough, waiting for them to go away.' (44-45)

She dramatizes the act of dressing up as ghostly figures on Halloween by children through imagining them as haunting figures 'mourning their lost lives'. In the same way that the museum displays are reminders of the vulnerability of man, and given the 1970s Canadian environmental climate, fixating on the dangers to human society, the children's costumes serve as another reminder of her mortality and the depletion of her resources as a mother and a partner. The racialized and non-human costumes of the children thus operate in similar ways to the non-human displays, as metaphors for extinction and vulnerability and as promiscuous, subjective ciphers.

This leveraging of children to produce particular narratives with respect to relationships is also a tactic employed by Nate, who uses his children to win the affections of Lesje by bringing them to the museum. Despite the focus this chapter has retained on the female experience, I would like to turn a focus to Nate's perspective here briefly because he is the central male character that both Lesje's and Elizabeth's narratives and subjectivity are constructed around and attached to. In contrast to Elizabeth and Lesje who enjoy and find refuge in imagining the extinct beings on display coming to life, the dinosaurs make Nate feel uncomfortable and vulnerable. He imagines them as haunting figures that are a reminder of the threat of becoming frozen within one narrative. His decision to pursue Lesje then, is a narrative level resistance to this broader idea of being confined by a particular story, as he refuses to remain within an 'aquarium' style relationship. This is conceptualised through his experience in the museum with his three children and Lesje, and his imagining of himself becoming frozen in place like the dinosaur

specimens around him, reinforcing the use of animal bodies for anthropocentric concerns:

> The three of them, ahead of him, indistinct in the cavernous dark. Monsters loom over them, reptilian, skeletal, wired into poses of menace as in some gargantuan tunnel of horrors. Nate feels his bones eroding, stone filling the cavities. Trapped. Run Nancy, run Janet, or time will overtake you, you too will be caught and frozen. But Nancy, secure in the belief that he can't see her, is calmly picking her nose. Lesje's silhouette bends towards the children. Elongated: Our Lady of the Bones. (71)

Nate's description of Lesje as 'Our Lady of the Bones' is a reference to a Catholic title given to the Virgin Mary in relation to the Rosary: 'Our Lady of the Rosary'. He is therefore alluding to Lesje as a religious head of the museum, and bones being the object of her worship. His sexualised description of her bending silhouette is reinforced by his biblical reference and idealisation of her as a 'virgin' figure, innocent in her love for the museum. In addition, Lesje appears maternal, bending 'towards the children', but this is complicated through the notion that she has been forced into this maternal role by Nate bringing her into his familial set up, orchestrating this educative day out for his children. This scene also reinforces Lesje's perception of herself as vulnerable, as Nate appears here like a predatory figure, hunting Lesje and selecting her as the object of his next affair, drawing their relationship into a narrative of predator-prey like that of the Palaeolithic creatures around them. His perception of the non-human specimens on display as 'gargantuan monsters' in 'poses of menace' reflects his surprise by the literal size of the specimens, but also his fears regarding the threat of remaining a static and trapped figure within one narrative. Asma's comments regarding the construction of predatory specimens in the museum opens up this idea further. He states that in manipulating non-human animals into specific shapes, such as with open mouths and bearing teeth, or by positioning them above the viewer, as is the case in Nate's description, we enter into a form of prehistoric interactive 'game':

> We enjoy this momentary reacquaintance with our prehistory, in which life was nasty, brutish, and short. We get an unthreatening encounter with the threatening. These mock-frightening displays highlight an interesting feature

> of the edutainment process, the psychological game of the diorama experience.[31]

The 'psychological game' that Nate enters into is one in which he imagines his own preservation amongst the predatory specimens, feeling his 'bones eroding, stones filling the cavities' and that he too will become 'caught and frozen', a specimen amongst the other extinct predators. Therefore, whilst Lesje wishes to hide amongst the displays and transport herself into an imagined pre-historic world through her interactions with the non-human display pieces, Nate appears to be frightened of them, resisting the predatory nature that they reflect and lamenting being 'taken over by time' like the specimens. The escape that Nate identifies from this entrapment is his pursuing of Lesje, as she represents to him the beginning of a new, exciting story that will shatter his entrapment within the monogamy and monotony of his marriage with Elizabeth.

Finding Refuge in Creative Representations of Animal Bodies

Although Nate is resistant to the imaginative potential of interacting with the predatory museum animals and their frozen temporality, he finds refuge in the creation and assembling of animal bodies through his love of making children's toys. This work demonstrates a connection between non-human animals and creativity and freedom, as Nate is able to construct his own narratives using the animal bodies through the process of construction, rather than feeling threatened by becoming trapped in someone else's narrative (namely Elizabeth's). Moreover, his relationship to the rocking horses and animal toys that he creates is one of nostalgia for the imaginative freedom of childhood, absent of the adult concepts and responsibilities that currently plague him. The novel states that 'without his toys, surely there would be nothing to fight for' (34), emphasising the importance he places on toys as a creative output both for himself in their construction, and for children he imagines will play with them. However, this narrative and his ability to continue in this profession is stunted in the novel by mounting financial pressure, and the reality of his relationship struggles begin to impact on his creative capability:

> Tonight he's been finishing rocking horses; five of them, he finds it easier to do them in lots of five. He sanded them yesterday. Today he's been painting eyes. Round eyes, expressionless, the eyes of creatures made to be ridden

[31] Asma, *Stuffed Animals and Pickled Heads*, p. 37-38

> for the pleasure of others. The black eyeliner of the girls in the Strip. This isn't how he intended the horses to look: he intended joy. But more and more, recently, the toys he makes have this blank look, as if they can't see him. (34)

The oppressive financial reality of monogamous life, going through a divorce, and renting a new house with a pregnant Lesje, is reflected in the 'blank' faces of the rocking horses. The horses are anthropomorphically rendered as tragic and exploited through his emotional engagement with them and description of them as 'creatures made to be ridden for the pleasure of others'. They are no longer objects that bring enjoyment and fun, but are now creatures that labour at the expense of humans. Moreover, whereas creating the toys once brought Nate joy, now they no longer interact with him; as his adult monogamous life takes over, the rocking horses deny him their imaginative capacity.

Nate is reluctantly forced to return to activist and legal work due to financial pressures and give up his creative hobby. The oppressive nature he attributes to this work is evident when he imagines himself leaving his new job after a day at work and states that 'he will lose himself among the apathetic, the fatalistic, the uncommitted, the cynical; among whom he would like to feel at home.' (280) Nate evidently perceives his creative work of building children's toys as that which marks him as unique and free from traditional domestic work life, but that now he is forced to become 'lost' within it and live a life full of these negative connotations. His addition of wanting to 'feel at home' reflects his desire to want this new work life and so consequently his conscious resistance to it. This infers the deathly nature of patriarchal monogamy. Lesje and Elizabeth seek solace in the non-human animal displays because they offer an alternative reality and world to the suppressive one that they occupy, and Nate is torn between the creative freedom of the non-human toy business and the reality of settling down with Lesje and occupying a more conventional, imaginatively restrictive but more domestically responsible profession. He is no longer drawn in by the excitement of hunting down a victim for an affair, but is confined by the pressure of monogamy intrinsic to maintaining his new relationship with pregnant Lesje, and this is a narrative absent of imaginative escape and non-human animals.

Life Before Man is concerned throughout with the domestic lives of the human workers and visitors to the museum, operating within a framework of human-animal relations. Through the characters' interactions with the extinct non-human beings on display, the novel demonstrates this same particular representative strategy of using

animality as a cipher for reflecting on human concerns and narratives of relationship difficulties like that which was evident in *Surfacing*, but on a larger, institutional scale. In *Life Before Man* the use and display of dead animal bodies is re-purposed to depict a specific narrative of their life that suits and is constructed anthropocentrically. As such, Lesje and Elizabeth take refuge and comfort in the imaginative capabilities offered by the museum and its non-human inhabitants because through immersing themselves in the worlds of the displays they are transported away from the oppressive reality of patriarchal monogamy. Nate also attempts to use non-human animals to creatively escape from the pressure of his new relationship and unsettled divorce, but is forced to abandon this ideal due to the financial responsibilities that come with domesticity and raising a family.

In a further strategy of similarity to *Surfacing* and the narrator's return to society, both Elizabeth and Lesje are similarly abandon their imaginative engagement with the animals and the displays in moments of acceptance of their new complex, heteronormative narratives. In particular, Lesje abandons her temporary allegiance with the non-human to return to patriarchal society after she discovers she is pregnant:

> Here are her old acquaintances, familiar to her as pet rabbits: Allosauras, the carnivore, parrot-beaked Chasmosaurus, Parasurolophus with its deer-antler crest. They're merely bones, bones and wire in a scenery of dusty plastic, and she's an adult; why does she continue to think of them as alive? (283)

She appears to chastise herself by infantilising her imaginative interactions with the dinosaurs. Now that she is an adult, and she is pregnant, she must return to the adult world and the reality of a serious relationship with Nate: abandoning and confining the non-human animals to their lives of static display. The non-human animals in *Life Before Man* then, frame the narrative of the human characters in an atmospheric way, acting as promiscuous symbols of anthropocentric concerns that are engaged with as a means of resisting the seemingly oppressive nature of heteronormative monogamy. As such, the move away from an engagement with these iconographies of extinct beings marks a shift in the narrative that abandons a relationship with 'life before man' and moves towards both 'life with man' for Lesje and 'life after man' for Elizabeth.

Conclusion: Atwood's Representational Strategy

In bringing together an analysis on *Surfacing* and *Life Before Man* this chapter has demonstrated that it is possible to pull Atwood's thinking together in a particular representational strategy. The logic of animality at play within the novels is such that animals are employed as promiscuous ciphers for a multiplicity of human domestic concerns, albeit it enacted in each text differently. In *Surfacing* the human-animal interactions are localised through practices such as hunting and the display of a taxidermy moose family at a hunting post. The narrator's identification with animal suffering and consequent attempted rejection of human society through a process of Indigenization are reflective of her own subjective sufferings and sense of victimisation in her relationships. Consequently, no serious engagement with a pro-animal ethics is developed.

In a similar logic but working differently, in *Life Before Man*, the animal interaction is coded as a physical and emotional creative process through an engagement beyond the localised setting of *Surfacing* and into the larger, institutional level of the museum space. Animal bodies and the mythologies attached to them then, are manipulated purposefully to reflect particular narratives of mastery and historical identity, and also act as ciphers for the domestic problems of the characters working in and visiting the displays.

Thus, the two novels are underpinned by this same logic of using animals symbolically to reflect human concerns. Whilst they do demonstrate a move away from the type of anthropomorphism used in Mowat's memoir to depict specifically orchestrated understandings of animals, they still demonstrate an anthropocentric engagement with animal representation that fails to centre animals and take them seriously. Moreover, Atwood's engagement with animality is confined within the symbolic realm and it still draws upon particular mythologizations, such as links to a essentialized idea of Indigeneity and the imagination of lives belonging to extinct beings: they are not fictitiously embellished or reconfigured. Rather, Atwood focuses specifically on dead animal bodies and engaging self-consciously with the ways in which these bodies can be narratively employed within different types of spaces in Canada to reflect upon questions of identity, both national and personal within literature.

The literature that this thesis engages with after Atwood demonstrates a further development on Atwood's representational strategy, away from the symbolic use of animals for anthropocentric purpose, to become more critically self-reflective about

representational strategies which go hand in hand with a genuine concern for animal life. Both *Surfacing* and *Life Before Man*, and the representational strategy that is at work within them, then, marked the beginning of a shift within writing about animals in Canada in the 1970s towards a more critical way of writing stories about animals.

Ch3. Writing Bear(s): Thematizing the Canadian Animal Story in Marian Engel's *Bear* (1976)

In Margaret Atwood's *Survival* she argues that the defining feature of the Canadian animal story is the inclusion of hunted or dying animals, narrated from 'within the fur and feathers.'[1] This, she argues, is because 'the animals… are us', positing that Canadians have a victim complex that is played out through animal representation. (75) As such, animals within Canadian literature have been confined to symbolic status, perpetually standing in for the victimised Canadian psyche. The influence of this argument, John Sandlos argues, is that 'subsequent criticism of the animal story in Canadian literature is, in many cases, a direct response to Atwood's… survival/victimhood thesis.'[2] It is therefore unsurprising that Marian Engel's *Bear* (1976), which has been the subject of much criticism, has been read within the context of Atwood's thesis, and that numerous critics have resigned the bear to the symbolic status that *Survival* set out for animal representation within Canadian literature. This chapter will argue that *Bear* responds to this thesis concerning the symbolic use of animals in Canadian literature, by self-consciously thematizing animal writing to construct a story about a bear that refuses to conform to one such representation through an assertion of his material animality. Engel's novel then, is a text conscious of its literary predecessors and consciously situating itself within and developing a tradition writing about animals in Canada in the late 1970s.

Helen Tiffin is one such critic and has argued that the bear has 'effectively disappeared from his own narrative, leaving only the limited interpretive possibilities of an avatar of the Canadian wilderness or, still more anthropocentrically, a mere catalyst for the sexual awakening of the human protagonist.'[3] Similarly, Margery Fee argues that Lou uses the bear 'as the kind of mirror that women have conventionally provided men: a surface onto which to project fantasy',[4] which as Paul Barrett has determined, 'is certainly convincing but again analyses Bear's presence only in

[1] Margaret Atwood, *Survival* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, Inc. 2012) p. 75.
[2] John Sandlos, 'From Within Fur and Feathers: Animals in Canadian Literature', *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*, 4. (2000) 73-91 (p. 74).
[3] Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* (London: Routledge, 2010) p.197-198
[4] Margery Fee, 'Articulating the Female Subject: The Example of Marian Engel's Bear', *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* (1986) in Paul Barrett, '"Animal Tracks in the Margin": Tracing the Absent Referent in *Marian Engel's Bear and J. M. Coetzee's The Lives of Animals*', *Ariel: a review of international English literature*, 45.3. (2014) 123-149 (p. 24).

respect to his meaning for Lou.'[5] Distancing himself from these anthropocentric strands of analysis, Sandlos argues that in actuality 'the dying animal motif that was so prevalent in Canadian literature reflected a wider public concern that emerged in the early 1970s about the consequences of ecological destruction (species extinction, dying lakes, etc.)' (85) and not because of Atwood's Canadian nationalist psyche thesis, but yet continuing to forge this link between nationalism and questions of species. To reinforce his argument, Sandlos contends that contemporary Canadian literature has been heavily influenced by the work of animal writers Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G. D. Roberts, both of whom Sandlos argues were more 'concerned about writing accurate natural history-stories that reflect the habits and behaviours of real animals within a fictional frame' (75) than Atwood's contention that their work always consisted of 'failure stories' that were 'tragic or pathetic' in their depiction of animals dying. Gwendolyn Guth argues in support of Sandlos' statement, saying that 'Atwood intentionally misrepresents the scope of Roberts's (and Seton's) realistic animal stories by limiting the range of animal reaction and emotion.'[6] By misrepresenting Seton's and Roberts' work in this way, Sandlos argues that Atwood overlooks the importance of animal ethology within their work and contends that:

> More recent Canadian animal literature has encompassed a wide variety of thematic concerns, but the pervasive influence of Seton and Roberts ties the genre firmly to a natural history tradition, one that attempts to reconcile instinct with reason, biology with myth, human with animal, and physical fact with fictional narrative. (82)

This influence, and the bridging of biology, myth and fictional representation, Sandlos argues, is evidenced in *Bear* by Marian Engel, whom he states is an example of the 'creative potential and mythic vitality co-existing with the biological "reality" of an animal character.' (86) He argues that although Engel's protagonist is marginally less 'biological' and more 'enigmatic' (both 88) than Seton's or Roberts', her fiction nonetheless sits 'firmly on the boundary between physical reality and myth' (88) that her predecessors' work did also.

---

[5] Paul Barrett, '"Animal Tracks in the Margin": Tracing the Absent Referent in *Marian Engel's Bear and J. M. Coetzee's The Lives of Animals', Ariel: a review of international English literature*, 45.3. (2014) 123-149 (p. 125).

[6] Gwendolyn Guth, '(B)othering the Theory: Approaching the Unapproachable in *Bear* and Other Realistic Animal Narratives' in *Other Selves: Animals in the Canadian Literary Imagination*, ed. by Janice Fiamengo (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2007) pp. 29-50 (p. 35).

Gwendolyn Guth expands on her analysis of Engel's departure from animal symbolism through close examination of the form of Engel's novel: specifically honing in on her layering of mythic texts against realist narrative. She states: 'Engel scrutinizes the dilemma of animal representation by couching the almost fabular story of a woman's sexual tryst with a bear within the framework of a novel that critic after critic praises for its believability, its realism.' (31) Such a form then, Guth contends, aids in capturing and attempting to handle the complexity involved in fictional animal representation. This is a factor identified by Tania Aguila-Way also, who builds on the significance of these moments of woman-bear sexual relation that are identified by Guth, and argues that:

> The complex relational exchanges that occur during these climactic moments defy the Anglo-Canadian impulse to collapse the animal into a symbol of national self-discovery and individuation and, in so doing, begin to tear at the limits of the semiotic field constructed by nationalist discourses of the 1970s and reinforced by Atwood's own theorization of the animal in *Survival*.[7]

As a consequence of the novel's 'tear' in the 'semiotic field', Aguila-Way argues that Engel's novel 'seems to anticipate Wolfe and Haraway's shared insistence that relating ethically to animal others demands, first and foremost, that we conceive of human-animal interactions as material-semiotic encounters'. (21) Such an analysis positions *Bear* as a significant novel in a shift towards pro-animal writing because she argues that it emphasizes the value in human-animal encounter, thus praising the novel for pre-empting animal fiction that might offer more constructive ways of thinking about human-animal relations outside of the fictional realm. This analysis is too generous, since it praises Engel in a conceptual development beyond her own novel simply due to *Bear's* rupturing of symbolic animal representation depicted through Lou's encounters with him. However, it is a significant and relevant analysis for emphasizing the argument that I will make regarding the importance and influence of the novel as a departure from Engel's animal story predecessors through the self-conscious engagement that the novel makes with representational strategies, and its rejection of a symbolic animal characterization.

Across these analyses, what has been overlooked by such criticism is the self-conscious nature of the novel, in both narrative and form. I will argue that Marian

[7] Tania Aguila-Way, 'Beyond the Logic of Solidarity as Sameness: The Critique of Animal Instrumentalization in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* and Marian Engel's *Bear*', ISLE: *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 23.1. (2016) 5–29 (p.16).

Engel's novel thematizes the complexity of animal writing by acknowledging the components that have marked writing about animals in Canada heretofore, such as Atwood's symbolic animal rhetoric. The novel holds these strategies within sight, centring them as the structure of the narrative as a way of acknowledging these literary-historic representational pitfalls in their ability to comprehend the material animal. This fictional strategy positions *Bear* as a text that is both made of and situated within a literary tradition. The bear in Engel's novel is not one that conforms to Lou's fantasy narratives, but rather he remains steadfast in his indifference, he is smelly and he looks nothing like the teddy bears Lou has encountered throughout popular culture. Despite this purposeful denial of symbolic characterisation and understanding of the bear, Mary K. Kirtz argues that Engel's novel is an example of an 'intradmodernist' text and states that: '*Bear* is such a story but without any self-reflexive acknowledgement of the artificiality of its constructs or a total dissolution of its form.'[8] However, she adds:

> [The novel] dramatizes, within an unreflectively realistic framework, how we take uncontextualized events and infuse them with meaning. Thus it serves as a meditation on how we read, interpret, and shape both texts and objects to satisfy our own perceptions of the world. (354)

I assert that these statements contradict one another and I will argue that *Bear* is a novel full of 'self-reflexive acknowledgment' precisely because it is a 'meditation on how we read', and specifically how we read the animal story when the animal is denied a symbolic characterisation.

In order to examine and prove the novel's engagement with representational techniques, I will focus on the novel's self-conscious and intertextual construction as a fictional strategy employed and designed to enact and critique writing about animals that has tended to favour representing the animal symbolically to reflect human concerns. These include the novel's heavily stylized use of mythology, which I will first explain in terms of using Roland Barthes' definition of myth. I will then demonstrate that Engel's novel emphasises a fallacy in approaching the animal through a mythologised lens, as Lou's preconceptions of the bear based upon these mythic literary and cultural sources fail to offer her any understanding of how to relate to him. The second of these strategies is the use of heterotopia in the setting, which I will argue is employed as a means of mythologically thematizing the

[8] Mary K. Kirtz, 'Facts Become Art Through Love': Narrative Structure in Marian Engel's *Bear*', *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 22.3. (2009) 351-362 (p. 354).

wilderness locations of human–animal encounter that have frequented Canadian animal writing heretofore and as contributing to this falsified mythic and therefore significant affective experience for Lou. Thirdly, I will expose the novel's depiction of a proximity between Indigenous characters and animality and nature. I will argue that this is a further engagement with the common trope that I have identified in the settler literature in this thesis, which essentializes Indigeneity as a temporary state that can be adopted or used as a threshold that can be crossed as a means of accessing inter-species relations. This codes Native people as the gatekeepers of interspecies relations.

Through such engagement with the novel's representation of Indigeneity, I will argue that Engel self-consciously engages with the use of Indigeneity as a misplaced Canadian settler literary trope for finding proximity to animals. Lou mythologises Indigenous culture, viewing Lucy as a mysterious, other-worldly presence who understands the bear in a way that she does not. However, Lou erases any real grasp of Native culture and only uses the knowledge given to her by an Indigenous character temporarily before giving up and reaching no greater enlightenment in her understanding of the bear. Thus, Engel reinforces the need for a de-mythologized, serious engagement with both animals and Indigeneity.

Finally, I will contend that Engel offers no viable resolution to the question of human-animal relations, but rather that she wishes to comment specifically on the construction of animal writing and interrogate the boundary that exists between the symbolic and the material animal. Such an emphasis on the biological reality of the bear reinforces her engagement with the work of her predecessors Seton and Roberts, a connection that reinforces Engel's text as consciously made of literature. However, through her protagonist's contemplation of the knowledge regarding animals that these former narratives of Seton and Roberts offer, and the strategies they employ in their representations, this chapter will argue that Engel's novel marks a departure from this idea of a homogenizing way of writing about animals in Canadian fiction. And moreover, that *Bear* marks a move away from the work of Mowat and Atwood, whose work contains anthropomorphic and symbolic animal representations.

Bear attempts to establish a foundation for interrogating writing about animals in Canada, taking to task the political motivation to use animal representation for anthropocentric means. The significance of *Bear* to the development of writing about animals in Canada during the late 1970s therefore, cannot be understated, as

it marks a turning point away from the symbolic fictional animal and imagines Canadian identity as able to operate with and alongside animality, and not only from within it, thus restoring and emphasising Engel's novel as a deliberately self-conscious fictional story about the border between the symbolic and the material animal.

'Robbing Myth': Deconstructing and Reconstructing Mythic Narrative

A consistent literary strategy that appears throughout the novel is Engel's layering of a mythologised narrative against the indifference of the bear, which is employed as a form of de-mythologizing critique. I refer to Roland Barthes' *Mythologyies* to clarify my use of mythologizing here. Barthes defines myth as a 'type of speech'[9] and explains that as such, 'everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse. Myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters this message: there are formal limits to myth, there are no 'substantial' ones. (131) He explains further his reference to these 'formal limits', asserting that myth belongs to the realm of semiology, and states:

> Mythical speech is made of a material which has already been worked on so as to make it suitable for communication: it is because all of the materials of myth (whether pictorial or written) presuppose a signifying consciousness, that one can reason about them while discounting their substance. (133)

Myth therefore, does not occur naturally, it is built upon historic material and moulded, (or 'appropriated' as Barthes describes the process), into a form that can then communicate this material in a way that naturalizes particular narratives. Significantly, Barthes proposes that the 'best weapon against myth' is precisely that which I argue Engel does with her novel, which is to 'mythify it in its turn, and to produce an artificial myth: and this reconstituted myth will in fact be a mythology.' (161) I assert that Engel utilises the historic mythology of a relationship between a woman and a bear as the narrative back drop for her novel, which according to Robert E. Bieder is 'one of the most universal tales… the legend of the woman who marries a bear. With such extensive geographical range, this tale may be thousands of years old'.[10] Engel then appropriates the myth through the continual rupturing of the mythic framework it supposes to instil induced by the reality of the bear's indifference to Lou and his failure to live up to the narrative put forth by the myth.

[9] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Vintage, 2009) p. 131.
[10] Robert E. Bieder, *Bear* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2005) p. 56

Barthes adds, 'since myth robs language of something, why not rob myth? '(161) and I would argue that Engel's purpose in 'robbing' myth is to prove that fictional narratives indulge in and perpetuate mythic and semiotic representations of animals. She thus both deconstructs mythic understandings of bears and reconstructs her own de-mythologized tale of a woman-bear encounter in the construction of her novel. In producing a novel that centres on this revelation there is a strategic intent to show this practice in action – that is, to show the process of making animals into symbolic characterisations, and reveal it to be politically motivated for anthropocentrism. Engel does not, though, offer a resolution to either the question of human-animal relations, nor its representation in literature. Rather, her novel is interested in this boundary and the representational difficulties that plague it.

The Island 'Heterotopia'

The mythic 'speech' and 'formal limits' that Engel draws on and develops in her novel form the framework of the fictional strategies that she uses to undermine the type of animal story adopted by Mowat and Atwood. One such element of *Bear* that is incontrovertible evidence of the novel's artificiality and self-conscious nature is the 'heterotopic' island setting. Volkmar Billig argues that the island has been a significant and common motif across literature from Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* onwards. He states that 'the Robinson-myth of an almighty individual could be regarded as the modern heir of the earlier tales about remote paradises and their divine inhabitants.'[11] The power of the island motif in literature, he adds, is that it can act as 'a kind of symbolic landscape and an accessible place of inspiration which puts one in contact with an imaginary other'. (25) Similarly, Heather H. Yeung refers to Michel Foucault's work on the island, and argues that 'the island represents the idea of *liminality par excellence*,'[12] explaining that it is often 'travel to and from the islands that ha[s] the greatest effect upon their visitors'. (85) Engel's novel then, demonstrates its self-conscious, metafictional nature and its intertextuality through a deliberate and self-conscious engagement with this established literary trope and the kinds of meanings it invokes as put forth by Billig and Yeung, and in doing so positions her novel as a text in which a central protagonist finds themself on a

[11] Volkmar Billig '"I - lands": The Construction and Shipwreck of an Insular Subject in Modern Discourse' in *Shipwreck and Island Motifs in Literature and the Arts*, ed. by Brigitte le Juez and Olga Springer (Leiden: Rodopi, 2015) pp. 17-33 (p. 25-26).

[12] Heather H. 'Yeung Adventures in Form: The Hebrides and the Romantic Imaginary' in *Shipwreck and island motifs in literature and the arts*, ed. By Brigitte le Juez and Olga Springer, (Leiden: Rodopi, 2015) pp .85-97 (p. 86).

remote island and undergoes a significant personal transformation as the narrative develops. Furthermore, the nature of an island, a remote space, and in Engel's novel devoid of any presence other than Lou and the bear, actively contributes to and formulates a significant aspect of the novel's process of de-mythologizing former mythologized narrative tropes. It is the first and most significant framework within which to give Engel the purchase to unwork specific fictional moves. In constructing a heterotopia Engel taps into a particular way of writing about the physical form of encounter. It draws upon this mythic 'form of speech' and places relation next to encounter and other kinds of physical projection.

The distinction I am drawing between straightforwardly an island setting and establishing it as a heterotopia is to emphasise that Engel's island construction embodies the careful combination of 'mythic' and 'real' set out by Foucault. He defines heterotopias as 'counter sites.' He explains that they are 'a simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live' because they are imagined spaces that are intended to reflect wider, real spaces .[13] As such, they provide a lens through which to expose and critique particular dynamics occurring in the outside space through the affective experience that they produce. In addition, they 'presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable', as 'to get in one must have a certain permission and make certain gestures,' (7) and they are 'linked to slices in time' and are 'absolutely temporal.' (6, 7) By setting her novel within this heterotopic island space then, Engel is able to construct a location that is rendered different to the city space from which Lou has journeyed through its isolated and temporal nature, which contribute to its mythic nature. Thus by drawing on this particular fictional motif, which has been so prevalent as a trope for staging imaginative encounter, Engel is laying bare her text's presence within literature, reinforcing its self-conscious intertextuality.

The island itself, Homer informs Lou, is, more or less, a secret. He states that '"nobody would know about this place who wasn't running around in a boat; and none of us are telling."'[14] This reinforces its secretive yet accessible nature. In addition, the novel evidences Yeung's statement regarding the affective significance that journeying to an island holds, and depicts Lou's journey as emotionally transformative. As Lou approaches the island: 'there was a Rubicon near the height of land. When she crossed it, she began to feel free. She sped north to the

[13] Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias' , *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité* (1984) 1-9 (p. 3).
[14] Marian Engel, *Bear* (Jaffrey: Nonpareil, 2002) p. 22.

highlands, lightheaded.' (7) The symbolism inherent in her 'crossing of the Rubicon' draws upon a historic narrative in which Julius Caesar irrevocably committed to a course of action and decided to march on Rome. Such an allusion, held in tandem with Lou's feeling of liberation, indicates that the excitement being produced by this journey feels for Lou to be marking the beginning of a similarly historically significant commitment to a course of action and thus to a construction of a narrative that will continue to be referenced in the same way. The excitement that she finds in journeying to the house is then consolidated and effectively proven by the cryptic nature of a question that is posed by Homer, her contact at the house, which ends the short opening chapter: '"Did anyone tell you," he asked, "about the bear?"' (15) This mysteriously toned question creates a sense of foreboding, particularly due to its placement at the end of the chapter, and so it contributes to a narrative that the bear will come to be of significance to Lou's stay at the house. As such, this immediately contributes to a mythologized narrative surrounding this bear, as he is both positioned as a figure of significance through the artificiality of his presence on this remote island (having been chained there) and the cryptic tone surrounding the climactic reference to him at the close of the chapter, which is a type of mythologized speech. The island itself operates, then, as a heterotopia both in location and in addition through the presence of this bear, who is the signifier that this space will be inherently different to the outside space from which Lou is entering.

Commenting on the relationship between material animal presence and the construction of 'heterotopic' space, John Miller has developed Foucault's concept to determine that spaces are 'zooheterotopic.' He explains the paradox of such sites:

> On the one hand, these habitats articulate the desire for spaces ungraspable by capital, for animal life beyond the reach of imperial modernity; on the other, it is the very 'outside' of capital that drives the urge to representation and appropriates this 'beyond' into the ideological regime it appears to contest.[15]

As Miller states, these spaces reflect a desire for interaction with animal life beyond the realms of 'ordinary experience', and yet these interactions occur within this space precisely because they are isolated, unordinary spaces. On this island Lou is

[15] John Miller, 'Zooheterotopias' in *The Globalization of Space: Foucault and Heterotopia*, ed. by John Miller and Mariangela Palladino (London: Routledge, 2014) pp. 149-165 (p. 151-152).

able to interact with a bear, an animal that she has otherwise never encountered before, however, it is precisely due to the island that these conditions of interaction are possible. Unpicking this idea of 'ordinary' spaces for humans and animals, Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert have said about the relationship between humans and animals and the spaces they occupy that:

> Many different forms of human discourse—economic, political, social and cultural—include a strong envisaging of both where animals are placed in the abstract 'scheme of things' and where they should be found in the non-discursive spaces and places of the world.[16]

There is then, that which Philo and Wilbert term an 'imaginative geography of animals' (10) at play within human-animal spatial relations, which carves out specific ideas regarding what kinds of animals should be found in specific spaces. In Engel's novel, she deliberately codes her space as unique and thereby significant in terms of human-animal encounter because the remote island is home to a bear that has been brought to the island and chained up, but who, when let off this chain, wanders about the house freely. The literary significance of this characterisation ties into the significance that Philo and Wilbert place upon these types of 'transgressions', wherein animals that aren't commonly found in that space appear in them and this occurs within Engel's novel in that the bear being brought to the island underpins the artificiality of his presence. They state:

> It is animals themselves who inject what might be termed their own agency into the scene, thereby transgressing, perhaps even resisting, the human placements of them. It might be said that in so doing the animals begin to forge their own 'other spaces', countering the proper places stipulated for them by humans, thus creating their own 'beastly places' reflective of their own 'beastly' ways, ends, doings, joys and sufferings. (13)

Through the bear's presence both on the island and in his roaming of the house then, Engel has created an environment in which the bear asserts his agency through his material presence – that is, being a wild animal that is not found in domestic spaces frequently entering the Cary house and wandering up the stairs, 'transgressing' into the human space – and also fictionally, through the artificiality and self-reflexivity of this very literary construction. Through this fictional technique

[16] Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert, *Animal spaces, beastly places: new geographies of human-animal relations* (London: Routledge, 2000) p. 10.

of creating an island zooheterotopia, inhabited by a lone bear who frequently transgresses the borders that Lou imagines through her surprise at the bear's movements between the domestic/human and wilderness/animal space, Engel's bear therefore carves out a new narrative of agency for himself through his coding of the house as a 'beastly place' that removes such binary ways of thinking.

Engel's construction of space within the novel, then, demonstrates her self-conscious, intertextual engagement with a number of mythologized literary strategies. This includes the construction of a mythic narrative through the use of an established literary trope, the island motif, which is then rendered more mysterious through the presence of the bear, who signifies the island as a zooheterotopia with a 'mythic' and 'real' nature. By this I mean that the island on the one hand contributes to the mythologization of the narrative through the nature of its isolation, the affective experience of journeying to the space and through the unusual addition of a domesticated but wild animal. However, it is simultaneously a real site in which Lou will encounter a real bear and test her knowledge of animal encounter. Consequently, the 'beastly place' that is the island zooheterotopia is the first literary strategy employed by Engel that lays a mythologized narrative foundation for human-animal encounter that can then be ruptured and undermined. It codes the island as a significant site of critique, both materially in terms of Lou and the bear's relationship, and also fictionally, through an engagement with the animal story through such a self-conscious spatial construction. It therefore lays the groundwork for considering the other literary strategies that Engel will employ throughout the novel that continue her myth critique.

Contending with the Material Animal: Framing Narrative 'failure' as a Narrative

Engel's novel is actively thematizing and undermining the symbolic erasure of the material animal that frequently occurs through particular representational techniques. As such, throughout the novel, Lou attempts to approach and understand the bear using a number of different knowledge discourses, most of which are underpinned by literary mythology. These sources permit her to indulge in an imagined understanding of and a relationship with the bear that is then consistently ruptured by his indifference to her and his failure to behave in correspondence to these discourses.

The 'mythologized narrative' of *Bear* has been identified and critiqued by numerous literary critics. Sandlos determines that the novel traces a development within Lou from an investment within such a framework for understanding the bear to her

ultimate abandonment of it upon leaving the island. Tiffin, however, argues that Lou makes 'little progress in understanding bears; and though the eponymous Bear is in some sense a human captive, it has not proven possible to capture his essence in all the different representational genres, including the novel itself.'[17] Tiffin rightly differentiates between Bear's physical captivity and his representational one, acknowledging his imprisonment on the island and its contrast against his consistent evading of representational captivity. However, in doing so she presumes that bear has an 'essence' that might be possible to capture. In contrast to Tiffin, I would argue that it is precisely the idea that an animal can be 'captured', or that literature can successfully conceptualise an animal 'essence' that *Bear* seeks purposefully to undermine. This literary strategy permits Engel to create a novel that, rather than representing the bear through one particular literary technique, instead thematizes and positions the complexity of animal representation as its very narrative focus: presenting us with a process of de-mythologizing that results in un-representable material bear.

Lou learns that literature and mythology once informed the bear's former owners' relationship with the animal both in his reasoning for wanting to own a bear and through the various notes that she finds littered around the house that contain a mixture of scientific information, mythology and folklore on bears that span a vast geographical range. One note states that 'in the lore of Ireland… there was a god who was a bear' (73) and another that, 'the Norwegians say, "the bear has the strength of ten men, and the sense of twelve" … they refer to it as… the old man with a fur cloak.' (101) Amongst the notes also is one stating that: *'bears were once common on the British Isles. Caledonian bears were imported by the Romans and used as instruments of torture. In Wales, it was a beast of chase.' (89)* Such an interest in the mythological, historical literary representation of bears and cultural interactions with/uses of them indicates a concerted effort to understand historical relationships between humans and bears.

These notes consistently insert themselves into the narrative at random moments as and when Lou discovers them lying about the house, reflecting the continued temptation and tendency to revert back to mythologized discourse when attempting to construct relations with animals. Furthermore, the inclusion of Cary's mythologized notes is further evidence of Engel's self-conscious fictional strategies pertaining to myth critique. Not only are the notes themselves pieces of mythology,

[17] Helen Tiffin and Graham Huggan, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* (London: Routledge, 2010) p. 214.

but they also contribute to another layer of mythology within the novel's narrative that further perpetuates a mythologized image of the bear by framing Lou's interaction with him with various pieces of mythology regarding his species and historical human-bear relations. Such an authorial move demonstrates that human-animal relationships are steeped in and often defined by discourse (in this case mythological) and that animals have been made into symbolic characterisations through the continued construction of these types of mythologized narratives in animal stories. Engel thus imagines a new kind of narrative that unpicks this heavy reliance on mythology and symbolic characterisation and rather considers what real, material human-animal encounters might look like, and in doing so undermines the idea that they are not as narratively captivating as those put forth by Cary's notes. Engel still manages to construct an engaging and developed novel despite its critique and desire to abandon human-animal semiotic representation. The presence of these notes and the mythic narratives they represent means that the novel's narrative begins to take on this consistent form of indulgence in mythology, cultural discourse and fiction, followed by the repeated rupturing of that indulgence by the bear's indifference and failure to conform to the behaviour set out by the discourse he is approached with. Engel's animal protagonist refuses participation in an animal narrative that sets out a particularized idea of him and attempts to erase his material self with language.

The bear's resistance to narrativization by Lou is evident in her attempt to construct a romanticised relationship with him. Bieder says that there is a 'long cross-cultural obsession with women and bears' that 'continues to this day.' [18] In the self-conscious construction of her novel and its engagement with a common cross-cultural myth Engel draws upon a long literary history, playing with animal discourse and representation, reconstituting the myth so as to thematise it as a narrative concept. Lou indulges in the mythic tale of women-bear relationships:

> She lay naked, panting, wanting to be near her lover, wanting to offer him her two breasts and her womb, almost believing that he could impregnate her with the twin heroes that would save her tribe.' (103-4)

The narrative within this description has broken down to the extent that Lou appears to be operating within an almost entirely mythologised conception of her relationship to bear. She has begun to blur fantasy and reality through her denotation of 'her tribe', which is also arguably a problematic reference to

[18] Robert E. Bieder, *Bear*, p .64.

Indigenous tribal identity, reflecting a desire to establish herself as a Native and thereby construct a relationship with a bear and conceiving his offspring by perceiving animals and Indigenous people to be in proximity to one another. This has colonial undertones, since 'her tribe' that she may be wishing to code as Indigenous would be the settler population, thereby demonstrating a popular Canadian cultural trope that includes a desire to appropriate Indigenous culture as a means of validating one's claim to the land. Eva Mackey explains:

> Native people and the land, and the link between them, play a central role in negotiating the rocky terrain of developing, within official settler nationalism, a narrative of progress that links colonisers to the specific topographical space, at the same time producing national innocence regarding the colonial encounter. [19]

In this depiction of Lou's imaginative indulgence then, Engel is able to represent a settler-colonial mentality underpinning the desire to form relations with animals by demonstrating the attempted use of animal bodies as occurring alongside Indigeneity as a means of claiming attachment to the land. Lou's half-bear-half-human 'tribe', appears to her as a means of establishing a new relationship to both the land and the bear, but the indifference of the bear to this narrative exposes the bizarre nature of the fantasy and the structural violence that perhaps 'innocently' underpins it. Moreover, her description of their children as 'twin heroes' is also another reference to Roman history and the founding twins of Rome, Romulus and Remus, who, according to mythology, were raised by a she-wolf. She thus draws on another interspecies mythological relationship as a means of validating her fantasy. The conflict that the narrative consistently details between fantasy and reality is evidenced in her addition of 'almost believing.' This indicates an awareness of the fine line between imagination and reality that she is treading with this desire, but it also indicates the hope in her statement. As such, the threat of reality is rapidly and temporarily dismissed as the narrative shifts towards a surrealist, fetishistic tone, as Lou begins to fully submerge herself within an imagined romanticised relationship with the bear.

The break down of Lou's subjectivity, and her consequent indulgence in a mythologised concept of a woman-bear relationship, is reflected in the

[19] Eva Mackey, 'Becoming Indigenous: Land, Belonging, and the Appropriation of Aboriginality in Canadian Nationalist Narratives', *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Anthropology*, 42.2. (1998) 150-178 (p. 164).

deterioration of the narrative into surrealism. This is evidenced in a sustained chorus-like drawn-out sexualised poetic address to bear:

> 'Bear, take me to the bottom of the ocean with you, bear, swim with me, bear, put your arms around me, enclose me, swim, down, down, down with me.
>
> Bear, make me comfortable in the world at last. Give me your skin.
>
> Bear, I want nothing but this from you. Oh, thank you, bear. I will keep you safe from strangers and peering eyes, forever.
>
> Bear, give up your humility. You are not a humble beast. You think your own thoughts. Tell them to me.
>
> Bear, I cannot command you to love me, but I think you love me. What I want is for you to continue to be, and to be something to me. No more, Bear.' (96)

Lou's poem depicts her engagement with a sustained and elaborate fantasy surrounding her relationship with the animal. The stylistic effect of repeatedly referring to him as 'Bear' reflects a desire to claim his presence, which she has otherwise failed to capture elsewhere. It is also a denotation of his species, which complicates the subjectivity of the address. He becomes then, within her fantasy, an imagined lover forced to bear the confines of his own species. Her request, 'give me your skin' in order to feel 'comfortable in the world' indicates Lou's feelings of alienation from human society and the consequent desire she has to be closer to the bear, perceiving his animality as a refuge to the society she left behind when she entered the island. Furthermore, if she can have his skin then she can escape into the mythologised literary narrative that she is imagining through this fantasy regarding their relationship. However, her next statement: 'I will keep you safe', reasserts her species difference and the potential threat posed by humans to animals.

Such a contradiction of being protected and also offering protection reflects the non-linear level of symbolic and surrealist engagement that Lou is attempting with the bear, as she rapidly passes in and out of her imagination and reality. In addition, her reference to 'strangers and peering eyes' not only encapsulates a desire to protect him from literal strangers but the meta nature of the narrative extends this protection to a desire to shield him from literary eyes and being captured within a representation, including within the novel. Lou's attempts to draw the bear into a

dialogue are ultimately ruptured by the realisation that 'Bear did not reply.' (36) Whereas Lou perceives his 'bear-ness' as permitting a mythical relocation of their relationship and a cross-species understanding, Engel's construction of a bear that remains steadfast in his indifference reinforces the myth critique that Engel is enacting. Through this clash of realism and surrealism within the novel, Engel reinforces the undercutting of Lou's *imaginative* conceptions by Bear's *real* indifference. Such a mythologised fantasy will not permit Lou a relationship with this bear, as he literally ignores her narrative.

The failure of this mythologised context in providing Lou with access to a relationship with the bear is just one of the representational strategies Engel employs in demonstrating the bear's narrative elusivity. Guth says of the 'bear's shifting and sliding identities':

> These renderings signal the clash between Lou's heuristic use of metaphor/anthropomorphism and the kind of courteous (not quite contemplative) seeing that allows the bear to be rigorously (even realistically) his inscrutable self.[20]

Guth thus identifies an agency within this clash between Lou's language for the bear and his material presence, which I would identify as a deliberate fictional strategy designed to remove power from the human subject and place it with the animal subject: subverting traditional literary representational power dynamics in which the human protagonist and author usually determine and dictate the animal. Engel's bear, then, asserts himself realistically through his very refusal to assert himself mythologically.

Popular Culture as a Representational Reference

Throughout the novel Lou tries a number of different personas on the bear, conceptualised through her knowledge of popular culture surrounding bears, various fictional narratives that she has heard about bear behaviour, and the bear's physical appearance, but all of them are refuted and fail to offer her a closer understanding of him. Lou's confusion regarding how to approach the bear is evidenced from their first encounter. She has to remind herself that he is a real bear, and is surprised when his appearance falls short of her expectations both in his

[20] Gwendolyn Guth, '(B)othering the Theory: Approaching the Unapproachable in *Bear* and Other Realistic Animal Narratives', p .41.

physicality and behaviour, stating that 'this is a bear. Not a toy bear, not a Pooh bear, not an airlines Koala bear. A real bear' (22) and noting that 'its nose was more pointed than she had expected – years of corruption by teddy bears, she supposed – and its eyes were genuinely piggish and ugly.' (24) Lou's acknowledgement here that her expectation of bear's appearance has been 'corrupted' by 'teddy bears' narratively frames and identifies the pitfalls in approaching the animal through popular culture and discourse, as these are fictional narratives that are providing no real knowledge that is useful here in this encounter. Moreover, the reference she makes to an 'airlines Koala bear' alludes to an advertising campaign for the Australian airline Qantas, created in 1969 by advertising agency Cunningham and Walsh:

Fig 3.[21]

This campaign utilised the cute, cuddly appearance of the koala in its imagery to draw tourists to the airline, centring the animal in various poses and costumes as a representational icon for Australia. Such a reference, then, serves as a reminder of the symbolic power that can be found within animal representation, as the Koala was effectively leveraged to stand in as a symbol of Australia. Thus, In referencing the 'airlines koala bear' Engel further incorporates intertextual cultural references in her novel that specifically highlight the multitude of representational narratives that surround animals and the way in which these narratives are employed both for anthropocentric use and to incorporate animals into the national consciousness.

[21] An example from Qantas's advertising campaign, 1982. Taken from: http://www.vintageadbrowser.com/airlines-and-aircraft-ads-1980s/8 [accessed 10 March 2020].

Lou further reinforces the disjunction between the material bear she is encountering and the narratives she has heard surrounding bears prior to her journey on the island, which advances the novel's self-conscious aesthetic because it implies that Lou, the novel's protagonist is somewhat aware of her own inability to approach the bear with the discourses she currently holds. She states: 'you have these ideas about bears: they are toys, or something fierce and ogreish in the woods, following you at a distance, snuffling you out to snuff you out. But this bear is a lump.' (23) This quotation is an example of an animal story within itself, retelling a narrative of bears as monstrous hunters lurking within the woods. The indifference of the bear to Lou refutes this narrative, which she acknowledges through her labelling of him as a 'lump'. As such, Lou's acknowledgement of the failure of her 'ideas about bears' is a specific and purposeful reminder of the way in which particular narratives have shaped and can shape our conceptions of animals. By creating a smaller narrative within a narrative that is then undermined, Engel's plot mirrors her wider narrative purpose: to construct an intertextually self-conscious novel whose purpose is to critique and de-mythologize the way in which we develop these types of narratives about animals.

Despite Lou's acknowledgement of her narrative failures, her reference to Bear as a 'lump' not only refers to his unruly and unknown physicality, but it indicates her symbolic commitment to moulding him like a 'lump' of clay into a characterisation of her preference. This is evidenced through her continually changing descriptions of him, as he appears to present himself to her each time in a different guise: 'Yesterday he stood there staring at me like a fur coat, she thought, and today he looked like some kind of racoon.' (35) Her reference to him firstly as a 'fur coat' and then as a 'racoon' encapsulates the bear's elusive representational nature; his appearance ranging from an item of clothing made from animal skin to an animal of an entirely different species. This representation is not only indicative of Lou's confusion regarding the material nature of the bear and her desire to inflict an image onto him that she can comprehend him with, but it is also indicative of this elusive agency that belongs to the bear through Engel's fictional strategy of refuting one description for her animal protagonist. Barrett has determined Lou's changing descriptions of bear as a 'language failure', stating: 'Lou's approximations and descriptions of Bear as a strange object-subject indicate his enigmatic quality and

the failure of Lou's language to fully account for his animal presence.'[22] This argument rightly acknowledges that Engel's protagonist fails to grasp the bear's materiality, or his 'animal presence' and continually approaches him through comparison to another object. However, rather than a 'language failure', I would argue that Engel is deliberately trying to avoid a replacement of the animal through language. Thus, this is not a failure, but a rejection. It is a deliberate contemplation on the type of language that surrounds animal representation within literature, and a consequent rejection of the language of symbolic characterisation. This rejection occurs because Engel positions it to be a process that is inherently motivated by anthropocentrism. Consequently, no one type of language or mode of comprehending the bear will suffice, as Engel's novel is specifically interested in exposing and representing the multitude of ways in which animals are approached in representation, and it is not intended to solve this alleged 'failure' but rather utilise it as a fictional strategy in the pursuit of this interest.

The incomprehension that occurs within Lou's language surrounding the bear, and her temporary acknowledgement of it, does not encourage her to abandon her search for a characterisation for him that suits her understanding. Rather, she looks elsewhere and finds fictional colonial narratives, such as *Robinson Crusoe*, *Oroonoko* and *Atala*, in an attempt to find someone else's language that she can submerge herself in as a means of relating to bear: this time being an attempt to incorporate her relationship with the bear into a settler-colonial, settler-subject dynamic. This is a further indication of the novel's self-reflexivity, as Lou's arrival on the island is a product of Engel's imagined literary world, which is then layered by Lou's own perception of the island as a literary world in which she can inhabit the role of a fictional character and thereby engage in a narrative with her fellow bear character. Furthermore, the application of existing fictional narratives for Lou as a means of approach to relationship with bear is another example of the representational strategies that Engel is playing with in her novel, adding to Lou's tried and tested mythologised approach, teddy bear label, and her comparison of him to various other objects and animals, such as a racoon and fur coat. Engel's novel thus explicitly layers these representational approaches throughout her novel, inviting reflection and critique of these modes, angling this as the crux of her plot as well as the narrative structure. As evidence of this, Lou's indulgence in existing

[22] Paul Barrett , '"Animal Tracks in the Margin": Tracing the Absent Referent in Marian Engel's *Bear* and J. M. Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals*', *Ariel: a Review of International English Literature*, 45.3. (2014) 123-149 (p. 140).

fictional narratives begins with her imagining herself into the role of an explorer and discovering the island for the first time, stating that 'everyone wants to be a Robinson Crusoe' (42) and that upon gazing out of the window onto the island, 'for a moment she was Cary advancing boldly on the new world, *Atala* under one arm, *Oroonoko* and the handbooks of Capability Brown under the other.' (52). *Atala* was written by a French author after his travels in North America, and centres upon the 'savagery' of the Natives in contrast to the 'saintly' European settlers; *Oroonoko* follows an African prince who is tricked and sold into the British slave trade; and finally, Capability Brown was an English landscape architect. Tiffin has commented on these textual choices, stating that '*Robinson Crusoe* was written at the time of European territorial and capitalist expansion, and it has been almost commonplace to read it as paradigmatic of colonial encounter.'[23] Lou is then, placing herself in the role of the coloniser, encountering the island space and its bear inhabitant for the first time. Applicable to Lou's purpose behind adopting this role is Aguila-Way's discussion of Cary's notes. She says that they 'can be read as an ironic commentary on the ethical pitfalls of the settler– invader impulse to incorporate the animal other.' (15) Thus, through indulging in this literary fantasy and positioning herself as this settler-invader, Lou attempts to enter into a recognisable relationship dynamic which is upheld by the fictional worlds she is inspired by and alongside the animal or colonised 'other' represented by the bear.

Building on the application of this 'settler-invader incorporation of the animal other' and the type of familiar dynamic that it offers to Lou is an additional textual layer of North American colonial historiography. She imagines herself as a colonial figure and 'inheritor' of the island and its animal inhabitant. Moreover, she revels in her proximity to the bear, perceiving it to be an interaction that achieves more than colonial victory through the gentle nature of the interaction. This sensual encounter, which details her 'rubbing' her feet into the bear's fur, is an interaction that she codes as inherently drawing upon her feminine identity and as a striking indicator of an established relationship with the bear:

> She looked up at Cary and down at the bear and was suddenly exquisitely happy. Worlds changed. Two men in scarlet uniforms, two men who had lived well; neither rich or highly well born, both she was sure in the end, ruined. She felt victorious over them: she felt she was their inheritor: a woman

[23] Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, p. 169.

> rubbing her foot into the thick black pelt of a bear was more than they could have imagined. More, too, than a military victory: splendour. (57)

Bear's position in Lou's imagination as the colonized subject is physically reflected and realised by his position under her foot. He is then turned into a non-human colonial commodity through her reference to his 'pelt', invoking the hugely influential transactional role that animals played in the North American fur trade and harking back to her previous desire to 'wear his skin'. Moreover, her description of the men in 'scarlet uniforms' is a reference to the red coats worn historically and to this day by British soldiers, the nationality belonging to one of the powers that colonised North America, and so in constructing this fantasy she has drawn directly from the region's colonial history and the former owner, Cary's, role in this history and situated herself within it. Significantly, she imagines herself as superior to the former male owners and their 'military victories' because of her physical interaction with the bear, which she determines as a product of her gender and her feminizing of the masculine sense of colonialism depicted by the men, stating emphatically that 'a woman' was 'more than they could have imagined'. She is able to rub her foot into the bear's pelt, demonstrating a physical, yet non-violent, and tender interaction with the bear, and so it is unsurprising that following her desire to form a relationship with the animal she attaches such significance to this particular encounter. The unexplained domesticated nature of the bear, entering the house and allowing her to place her foot onto him, whilst in reality offering no further indication of a developing relationship other than that the bear is indifferent to her physical contact, prompts Lou to construct this entire gendered-colonial narrative that escalates, in her mind only, the significance of their relationship.

Asserting Bear's Materiality through Violence

The final proof that it is Lou's imagination that has inaccurately narrativized the dynamic of their relationship is in the climax of the novel in which the bear's indifference, which has heretofore governed his characterisation and continually ruptured Lou's other conceptions of him, is escalated further, and he violently attacks her. There is, in this moment, a significance placed on the point of physical contact, as it is the means through which the bear's materiality is asserted. It is however, still a story, and not any less mythic or more real simply because it draws attention to specific physical aspects of the animal rather than just semiotic descriptions. Rather, this moment ruptures Lou's fantasy of imagining an intimate relationship with the bear, which has been conceived of through her symbolic

characterisation of him. It then becomes a story detailing what an interaction that destabilises this boundary between the mythological/symbolic and the real might look like.

Lou has previously desired affectionate contact from the bear, wishing to have his children, and also enjoying rubbing her feet on his fur, and in this final act of agency, the bear gives Lou the physical contact she desires, but it is clothed in violence and not in affection, both physically and literally rupturing her island fantasy. She attempts to entice him into a sexual relationship: 'she took her sweater off and went down on all fours in front of him, in the animal posture.' (113) To her surprise this provokes a violent reaction from the bear: 'he reached out with one great paw and ripped the skin on her back.' (113) This moment of physical contact serves as a reminder to Lou that although she may have the imaginative upper hand with regards to her armoury of representational strategies, the bear's materiality is what matters in this moment of interaction, and is the more assertive in the dynamic of their relationship (or lack thereof). It is in this moment of rejection that the bear is the most active we have seen him so far, marking a definitive change from his former passivity. Ironically, however, this clawing of Lou's back is Engel's way of asserting the bear's right to be passive. Her animal protagonist makes a definitive, explicit refusal to play a part in the narrative that Lou desires for them, which inevitably results in total confusion by Lou: 'she could see nothing, nothing in his face to tell her what to do.' (113) The double emphasis on 'nothing' reinforces her totally inability to interpret his behaviour. This emphasises that despite Lou's attempts to indulge in her mythological fantasy, her relationship with the bear is in reality entirely empty of symbolic meaning. The conflict evident in moments like this is a feature of the novel's self-conscious narrative, wherein the inability to comprehend the bear narratively, layered against repeated assertions of his materiality, are turned into the structure and crux of the narrative itself.

Engel's novel continues to layer the conflict between an assertion of the bear's materiality and his denial of semiotic status against Lou's determination to read significance into his behaviour, even after his clawing of her back. Engel's protagonist, rather than acknowledging the bear's indifference to her, enacted through his clawing of her and refusal to engage in sexual activity with her, instead chooses to read this violent interaction as a moment of emotional enlightenment and/or transformation, indicating that there was a symbolic significance in being clawed by the bear:

> What had passed to her from him she did not know. Certainly it was not the seed of heroes, or magic, or any astounding virtue, for she continued to be herself: But for one strange, sharp moment she could feel in her pores and the taste of her own mouth that she knew what the world was for. She felt not that she was at last human, but that she was at last clean. Clean and simple and proud. (117)

The cryptic use of the word 'clean' might suggest a relationship to animal otherness that is not somehow a representation, however, Lou's inability to pinpoint the specifics of her transformation is a fictional strategy employed by Engel to demonstrate the concerted effort still being taken to locate meaning within this interaction with the bear. Thus, Lou is depicted as remaining steadfast in her determination to engage with the animal from within a mythologized narrative, evidenced here by her alleged induction into the enlightened knowledge regarding 'what the world was for.' Her remark that it was 'not the seed of heroes, or magic' does emphasise a degree of recognition of the limitations of her mythologized fantasy, but her reluctance to part with this style of thinking is reinforced through her use of the word 'clean'. Lou uses this word to relate the clawing of her back by the bear to a form of ritualised practice, the sacrificial logic of which relates penance to purity, rather than indicating towards a relationship with the bear that is removed from a representational strategy.

Furthermore, the emotional transformation that Lou attaches to this encounter is evidenced through her decision to leave the island after this encounter. She again attaches a power of purification to the bear, stating:

> She remembered guilt, and a dream she had had where her mother made her write letters of apology to the Indians for having had to do with a bear, and she remembered the claw that had healed guilt. She felt strong and pure. (140)

This dream and apology relates to her interactions with the present bear, as it refers to her repeated attempts to entice the bear into a sexual relationship and the climactic clawing of Lou's back, that which she terms as 'having to do with a bear'. Moreover, the quotation locates a maternal influence on atonement and in doing so indicates a level of coercion within the apology that infantilises Lou. However, for Lou, her continued connection between her interactions with the bear and his ability to grant purity through the penance of his claw removes the need to apologise. Consequently, she remembers 'the claw that healed guilt' and is left feeling 'strong

and pure', rather than regretful. In addition to the quotation's reference to Lou and the bear's relationship, it also implicates 'the Indians' as a stakeholder in their relations. This notion that Lou ought to 'apologise' to 'the Indians' for her relationship with the bear codes the bear as an object of Native property through a perception of proximity between animals and Native people. Eva Mackey explains that: 'Native people are perceived to be actually linked to the land, and, as we have seen, the land is a primary symbol of the nation.'[24] Thus, Lou's coding of 'the Indians' as the gatekeepers of the land and its animal inhabitants draws upon an established Canadian settler cultural attitude that Mackey argues is an integral component of the Canadian perspective of 'nationhood'. This engagement with such a perspective is another element of the novel's self-reflexivity, as the novel contends with the way in which this idea has informed writing about animals in contemporary Canada, asserting the novel's literary-artificiality.

Lou's arrival on the island, her interactions with the bear, followed by her emotional enlightenment and apology to 'the Indians', then, engages with this narrative of accessing Indigeneity and the proximity to animals that is perceived as part of Indigenous culture, as a means of feeling closer to the land. Mackey comments:

> The linear narrative — beginning with Native peoples in harmony with the land and ending with Canadians of all cultures in harmony with the land — functions by appropriating Native people, and by incorporating cultural pluralism and environmentalism into a Western linear narrative of national progress. This is facilitated through the construction of Native peoples as guardians of the land and as helpmates in the project of progressive nation building. (162)

Engel's novel then, rather than attempting to create a novel that furthers this 'narrative of national progress', instead constructs a novel in which the authorial tendency to create such narratives within the genre of the animal story is acknowledged and explicit so as to become a site of narrative critique. Aguila-Way supports this conscious engagement with this settler narrative, and writes that 'Lou's insistence that Bear's claw "healed [her] guilt" (140) stands both as an ironic commentary on the settler–invader impulse to instrumentalize animals and a reminder of the need to develop more competent—and reciprocal— ways of

[24] Eva Mackey, 'Becoming Indigenous: Land, Belonging, and the Appropriation of Aboriginality in Canadian Nationalist Narratives', p. 161.

engaging with animal others.' (22) Rather than focusing generously on the novel's wider arguments regarding human-animal relations and ways of engaging, as Aguila-Way does, I would argue that this is another example of Engel's deliberate fictional strategies for constructing a story about animals that deviates from its predecessors.

Engel's novel, rather than being a novel that perpetuates the symbolic use of animals in narratives that attempt to consolidate settler claims to the land through engagements with animals and the consequent proximity to Indigeneity this offers, is instead a novel that holds these very concepts in site as the narrative structure itself. It does not therefore seek to offer new ideas regarding how best to relate to animals, but rather it self-consciously represents the complex boundary between the symbolic and the material animal in representation, revealing there to be an anthropocentric motivation behind techniques of characterising animals in literature that need to be avoided if we are to take animals and our relationships with them seriously.

The self-conscious conflict that the novel demonstrates between the bear's consistent indifference and Lou's desire to read meaning into their interaction is consolidated when the bear leaves the island at the end of the novel. This depiction of the bear leaving the island further contributes to the temporality of the mythic, heterotopic space that permitted her relationship with the bear. Now that the perception of a level of emotional transformation has been reached, access to the space begins to close and the island begins to lose its 'beastly space' identity once its bear inhabitant is removed:

> 'She was left standing, watching the bear recede down the channel, a fat dignified old woman with his nose to the wind in the bow of the boat. He did not look back. She did not expect him to.' (119)

This quotation encapsulates the crux of Engel's argument. Lou is still not able to capture the bear through representation and instead describes him like an 'old woman.' However, she does now accept and predict his indifference to her, affirming that she did not expect him to look back. Despite this acknowledgement, rather than seeming to indicate a new level of knowledge regarding the bear's behaviour, this moment seems to contribute towards a new mythic narrative surrounding the bear, wherein he is this elusive figure that she can predict will remain steadfast in his indifference, elusive and impenetrable. This is because Lou still desires to read significance into the events that have transpired on the island

and so expresses meaning within their relationship through her ability to predict his indifference.

In depicting this parting of her protagonists in this way, Engel is able to visualise this conflict between the desire to 're-mythify' and re-situate a mythic narrative concerning human-animal relationships, like that done by Mowat, and the reality of this bear's both passive and prior momentary assertive refusal of that re-narrativisation. Engel's novel thus resists creating a narrative surrounding the bear that shapes our attitude towards him in a specific direction, and she has refrained from using his character symbolically to reflect a human social problem. In adopting this narrative technique she emphasises the individuality of the bear, marking him as a lone animal through which a set of relations are possible, but are not set out or governed by human constructed concepts surrounding his species. The novel thus explores the idea that writing about animals is inherently complex because there is an inherent conflict between discourse surrounding animals that has influenced our understanding of them and the reality of encountering them. The material animal then, will inevitably fall short of our literary expectations. Consequently, Engel resists embellishing the bear and insists that the 'essence and magic' (or lack thereof) of the animal and Lou's relations with him is in his mundane 'bear-ness.'

"Shit with the bear": Indigeneity as a Temporal State of Proximity to Non-Human Animals

The third fictional strategy that *Bear* employs that this chapter has touched upon but endeavours to expand is an engagement with First Nation characterisation that demonstrates the tendency within settler fiction to create narratives that depict Indigeneity as an experience or state of being that can be accessed temporarily as a means of accessing closer relations to non-human animals. Margaret Atwood, who identifies Indigenous characterisation as another feature of Canadian writing in *Survival*, writes that:

> The position of the writer in relation to the Indians or Eskimos has been much the same as his position in relation to the animals in animal stories: an imported white man looks at a form of natural or native life alien to himself and appropriates it for symbolic purposes. (95)

This confinement within symbolic status means that consequently Native characters are moulded within settler novels to suit the imaginary of the settler writer and so 'the Indians and the Eskimos have rarely been considered in and for themselves;

they are usually made into projections of something in the white Canadian psyche, a fear or a wish.' (95) This notion of projecting a 'wish' is also identified by Mackey, who as mentioned previously, relates this representation to Canadian nationhood and the desire of establishing a connection to the land through an acceptance of the settler character by the Native, who is seen as representative of nature and the land. This type of narrative is evident in Engel's novel through the characterisation of Lucy, an older Native woman, and the way in which she is viewed through a similar mythologized lens to that of the bear. She is characterised by both Lou and Homer as the authority on how to care for the bear, aligning Indigeneity and animals in proximity to one another through their denotation as part of the nature of the 'mythical' island space. This is, I would argue, another fictional strategy employed by Engel in her self-conscious novel that is intended to critique the use of a settler-Indigenous characterisation identified by Atwood and Mackey as an accompaniment to animal representation through their mythologized proximity.

Through such an engagement with this fictional trope denoting a connection between animals and Indigenous people through their position in the 'natural' realm, Engel is able to demonstrate another representational strategy that frequents the settler animal story and confines both animals and Natives to a marginal, semiotic framework. Throughout the novel, Engel constructs a dynamic between Lucy and Lou wherein Lucy is represented as a mythic source of knowledge on bears that Lou must attempt to listen to and embody, but that she never takes seriously. Lou's consequent abandonment of Lucy's advice, followed by the bear's exit from the island in the company of Lucy reaffirms Lou's access to Indigeneity as a temporary affective experience. In addition to this, Lucy is repeatedly absorbed by and represented as operating within the same mythologised narrative to the bear, which subsequently confines Indigeneity within a mythical framework and as a culture belonging to the past through the historiography that underpins the construction of myth in Barthes' terms. This erases the lived experience of Indigenous People today by refusing them material representation within fictional narratives other than for settler purposes to reinforce the historical mythology of the space or to access their knowledge as a means for understanding animals.

The mythologization of Lucy begins in her description by Lou, who states that 'she did not look one hundred years old, only eternal.' (36) By using the word 'eternal' in this way it contributes to an image of Lucy as an elusive, more-than-human figure that is evading temporal normality, and thereby characterises her as another mythological figure within this narrative. Lucy's characterisation as such also further

contributes to the mythologization of the space, and the coding of it as 'heterotopic', as she is seemingly able to access the island without a boat or being heard by Lou. Their first encounter appears inexplicable, as Lou spots her talking to the bear and states: "I didn't hear your boat." (35) This creates an atmospheric 'magic' to Lucy's presence, implying that she can appear and disappear silently, navigating the land under the settler characters' noses. This not only positions Indigeneity as permitting access to a greater knowledge of the landscape, but it also codes it as another element that contributes towards the mythic and real nature of the space, alongside the animal presence, problematically mythologizing Indigenous culture as an intersection between the past and present, and myth and reality, and confining Lucy within this representation.

Homer similarly gives an elusive description regarding his respect for Lucy: '"all I can say is, Lucy says he's a good bear and you know some people don't like Indians and they can't hold their liquor, but around here we respect Lucy."' (17) Homer's use and then dismissal of racist stereotypes followed by his assertion of respect for Lucy reinforces the uniqueness of her character and the way she is perceived by the settler characters as a mythologised figure that holds knowledge about bears that therefore entitles her to respect. Her place within the narrative then, codes her as a bridge between the settler characters and an understanding of the island and its bear inhabitant. Mackey confirms that a connection between Indigeneity and the landscape is a well established trope, stating that: 'Aboriginal people have been invited into official Canadian identity to do the job of negotiating that rocky terrain of legitimating settler ownership and occupation of the land.' (168) The purpose of such a representation, she adds, is that:

> [It] allows the profound differences and deeply asymmetrical relations between Native people and settler cultures to be transformed into a mythic narrative of natural, peaceful and tolerant progress. (162)

Engel's novel then, self-consciously represents the construction of these narratives of 'progress' through her protagonist's entrance into a 'mythologised' space and interaction with a bear and an Indigenous figure and her consequent perception of these interactions as meaningful and significant in terms of establishing better relations with the bear. In doing so, the novel exposes their lack of depth in terms of actually offering a deeper understanding of both Indigenous culture and the island's bear inhabitant.

The representational tool of depicting Native characters as sources of knowledge about animals through a cultural stereotype that locates Indigeneity in proximity to animals is reflected in Lou's disregard for conversing with Lucy beyond a discussion about the bear. Lucy tells Lou: '"I am one hundred years old. I can read. I went to the mission school"' to which Lou replies, "And the bear?" (36) This deliberate evasion of discussing Lucy's life and the missionary school that she attended is a self-conscious narrative move by Engel to satirise the erasure of Native characterisation and history within settler literature and demonstrate the confinement of Indigeneity to a characterisation associated with animals. Engel thus demonstrates through this interaction, that as far as Lou is concerned, Lucy's role within the novel is simply to offer a source of knowledge and comfort for Lou regarding the way in which she should look after the bear and thus to contribute to the mysterious, mythologised narrative she has constructed surrounding both the bear and the island space.

The knowledge that Lucy passes to Lou is very physical and sensory. She instructs her to '"Shit with the bear,"' explaining that '"he like you, then. Morning, you shit, he shit. Bear lives by smell. He like you."' (36) Lou attempts to follow this advice on one occasion, urinating near the bear, but she quickly reverts back to the knowledge sources with which she is familiar, disregarding Lucy's advice in favour of an engagement with more 'Western' sources of discourse, such as Colonel Cary's notes. Her decision to favour Western literary sources of knowledge regarding bears above Lucy's indicates a privileging of such settler knowledge over Indigenous sources, and an inherent trust in them. Thus, the mythologisation of Lucy and her relationship with bear combined with Lou's disregard for her advice positions Lucy's advice as mythologised fiction itself that should not be taken seriously. Such a depiction demonstrates the literary tendency to depict Indigenous characters as mythical figures that offer alternative, fictional knowledge for relating to animals that is not taken seriously by the settler character because of this mythologisation. Pauline Wakeman explains this stereotype and the connection between the semiotic framing of an Indigenous-animal connection, stating that 'the symbolic bodies of animals and aboriginals are fetishized as remnants of "prehistory" that are incorporated back into the national imaginary as part of the nation's own mythologized origins.'[25] Engel is thus able to satirise this depiction through Lou and

[25] Pauline Wakeman, *Taxidermic Signs: Reconstructing Aboriginality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008) p. 22.

Lucy's dynamic, and reinforces specific representational tropes that often accompany the writing about animals in Canadian literature, such as this mythologised, fetishized approach to Indigeneity by proximity to animals and a similar confinement to the realm of the symbolic.

This mythologisation of Indigeneity contributes to the trope that has occurred across this thesis: that it is possible to access and use Indigeneity as a temporal means of experiencing relations with animals. As previously mentioned, this is evidenced most closely in the quotation wherein Lou describes a dream in which she had to apologise to 'the Indians':

> She remembered guilt, and a dream she had had where her mother made her write letters of apology to the Indians for having had to do with a bear, and she remembered the claw that had healed guilt. She felt strong and pure. (140)

This quotation positions access to Indigeneity and animals as temporal because Lou is reflecting upon and describing her relations with the bear retrospectively. Moreover, her conception of needing to 'apologise' to 'the Indians' affirms her belief in the connection between the bear and the First Nations people, and thus her belief that she somehow accessed Indigenous culture in her associations with the bear and caused offence through her failed attempt to engage with him sexually. This positions her encounter with both animals and thereby Indigeneity as experiences that she can now leave behind with her mythologised experience before returning to her real life in the city, having served her penance at the paws of the bear.

This rendering of Indigeneity as a temporal means of experiencing relations with animals is consolidated through Bear's leaving the island with Lucy – effectively 'returning him to the Natives'. Although by removing him from the island he is successfully removed from both his physical imprisonment and from Lou's representational clutches, such a narrative further perpetuates the notion that not only is Indigeneity a state of fantasy that can be tapped into in order to relate to animals, and then abandoned when necessary and returning to reality, but it is also the correct and 'natural' ally for this animal protagonist to return to. Such mythologization contributes to the Indigenous erasure by undermining Indigenous knowledge and practices as fictional indulgences in historical fantasy and not as current-day lived sources of engagement and relation with non-human animals. Such a deliberate and unsubstantiated engagement with this trope by Engel's

protagonist reinforces the purposeful utilisation of this mythic trope as a self-conscious and intertextual means of critiquing the use of Indigeneity as an avenue for accessing knowledge about animals from within a symbolic framework. It continues to reinforce the conflict that occurs throughout the novel between a desire to indulge in representational techniques and fantasies with regards to the animal with that of the material reality, and that for instance, proximity to Indigeneity does not grant one access to that culture and thereby closer relations with animals.

'Animal Tracks in the Margin': Meta-Narrative Engagement with Animal Representation

The continued conflict that I have proven as occurring throughout the novel between Lou's indulgence in her mythologised fantasy and her acknowledgement of the reality of the bear's indifference to this is developed further in the final element of Engel's fictional strategies employed in her self-conscious novel. This is that of the intertextual and meta narrative engagement with former Canadian authors of animal stories by her protagonist. Using this strategy, the novel moves beyond simply thematizing animal writing through the bear's evasion of representation and into a self-reflective depiction of the protagonist's own engagement with writing about animals in Canada, consequently situating *Bear* within a literary-historical relationship with its predecessors. This contemplation is the limit of the novel's engagement with this discussion however, as neither Lou nor Engel seek to offer a resolution to the lack of animal knowledge offered through the animal stories in discussion. Rather, *Bear* is interested in its own relationship with literature, reinforcing its intertextual construction and demonstrating and interest in the concept of representation.

In-between the aforementioned strategies detailing Lou's indulgence in mythologised textual and cultural approaches to the bear, is her engagement with renowned Canadian authors of animal stories and their understanding of real animals. Through her interactions with the bear and the repeated clashing of her textual knowledge about him with his indifferent behaviour, she questions the validity these former narratives, and the validity of their understanding of animals. The novel then opens up a self-conscious, intertextual discussion regarding the construction of a narrative surrounding the bear, in which Lou considers the absence of the material animal she has encountered within textual language. The decided

move away from these former animal story authors is therefore explicit and offered for purposeful discussion through this bridging of narrative and plot.

The contemplation of the role of the author is evidenced in the novel's explicit interaction with the 'intellectual' in Lou's statement that: 'she loved the bear. There was a depth in him she could not reach, could not probe with her intellectual fingers and destroy.' (102) Such a quotation self-consciously critiques the role of the author in constructing the literary animal by implying that animal writing 'probes' and 'destroys' the material animal because it inherently attempts to intellectualise that which cannot be comprehended through such anthropocentric desires to analyse and find meaning. Such a statement evidences the novel's conscious demonstration that just as Lou is not able to penetrate the bear's character and understand his inner thoughts and behaviours, Engel is not able to 'intellectually probe and destroy' him through ascribing to him a singular representation, and nor does she want to. Engel is thus explaining, through her protagonist's contemplations, why she has determined to leave her animal character as his indifferent, material self, as she is attempting to move away from these past 'intellectual' moves.

This developing engagement that Lou evidences with the notion of constructing a narrative surrounding this bear that does justice to the individual she is encountering is evidenced in particular through her attempt to imagine the bear into the role of Edward John Trelawny. Just as Colonel Cary had imagined himself a Lord Byron figure in his ownership of a bear, so too does Lou try on this role through this figuration, but in doing so she recognises the failures of such a representation:

> Once and only once, she experimented with calling him "Trelawny" but the name did not inspire him and she realized she was wrong: this was no parasitical collection of memoirs, this was no pirate: this was an enormous, living creature larger and older and wiser than time, a creature that was for the moment her creature, but that another could return to his own world, his own wisdom. (103)

The issue at stake here for Lou is primarily one of possession rather than destruction, which is evident in her labelling of the bear as 'her creature'. She acknowledges that the type of fragmented narrative that surrounds the elusive historical figure of Trelawny is not appropriate for the bear, stating emphatically that 'she was wrong.' Furthermore, her recognition that the bear has 'his own world' and 'own wisdom' indicates a move towards an acceptance of the bear as an individual

in his own right, restoring to him his presence, rather than attempting to understand him through a 'collection of memoirs' that she now labels 'parasitic'. This lexical choice implies that Lou is now aware of the way in which narratives can feed off the animal and create a cycle of misinformation that offers no real indication of the individual it seeks to tell a story about. Lou therefore acknowledges that her desire to approach the bear through such fictional and mythologized narratives evidenced throughout this chapter do limit her ability to relate to the animal because such narratives are usually conceptualised within an anthropocentric, collective framework and are thus incapable of grappling with the individual animal in question beyond a symbolic characterisation.

The role of Lou within this analysis of the novel's intertextual mediation on animal stories has been touched upon by Kirtz, who, although has determined the novel not to be 'self-reflexive', does state that: 'Lou functions on these two distinct levels: she serves the text both as realism's fictive character and as postmodernism's model reader, constructing worlds out of the words she finds.' (354) Consequently, Kirtz argues, *Bear* 'serves as a meditation on how we read, interpret, and shape both texts and objects to satisfy our own perceptions of the world.' (354) There is an evident contradiction in this statement regarding the novel's ability to serve as a mediation on reading and interpretation through the construction of a postmodernist 'model reader' but a continued denial of the self-consciousness that underpins these moves. Rather, I argue Engel creates a unification of narrative and characterisation through Lou's role both as a protagonist and 'model reader'.

This occurs when she identifies a number of animal authors, which includes a mixture of British and Canadian authors, and questions their representational techniques and authority for understanding animals. These textual references reinforce the novel's self-reflexivity by situating it in relation to writing about animals in Canadian literature that has come before, whilst simultaneously emphasising its' desire to critique and move away from the kind of representational techniques employed by these former texts. Lou notes:

> 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 God Damn Roberts that her grandmother was so fond of. Wild ways and furtive feet had preoccupied that generation, and animals clothed in anthropomorphic uniforms of tyrants,

> heroes, sufferers, good little children, gossipy housewives. At one time it had seemed impossible that the world of parents and librarians had been inhabited by creatures other than animals and elves.' (46)

Lou's reference to Beatrix Potter emphasises the animal story as a tradition of her childhood that carries over into adulthood as she progresses to the Canadian authors. The temporality of this indication, in addition to her reference to 'pass[ing] on to Jack London', suggests a kind of cultural colonial relation, since the Canadian writers were often writing earlier than the Anglo-American ones. Furthermore, Lou's emphasis on her grandmother's 'fondness' for Charles G. D. Roberts, whose middle name she mockingly states as 'God Damn' exposes exasperation at having heard his name so often. This, combined with her comment that these stories 'preoccupied that generation', further ties stories about animal representation into questions of national identity, but it emphasises that this relationship, built upon these types of animal stories, is out-dated and specifically popular with the older generation. Lou's exasperation therefore indicates a desire for a departure from these out-dated and over-referenced animal stories, reflecting the opening up of a new kind of animal narrative that *Bear* attempts to represent in its self-reflexivity.

In addition, this quotation reinforces Atwood's arguments in *Survival* regarding the symbolic use of animals in Canadian literature. Lou states that the animals of this era's literature were 'clothed in anthropomorphic uniforms', implicating them in parable-like stories that are absent of the material animal that she has found herself confronted with. Consequently, Lou questions the legitimacy of these kinds of texts as a source of information about animals:

> 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. (46)

The self-reflexivity inherent in this quotation implicates Engel herself within this category. Such a positioning does not equate her novel as the antithesis to its predecessors by presenting an alternative to such 'anthropomorphic uniforms', but rather it critiques particular methods of representation such as anthropomorphism that have characterised the animal story up until this point and puts forth a new kind of animal story that tries to avoid such symbolic characterisation, is conscious of its representational techniques, and holds these concepts in explicit site. Lou emphasises again the fallacy of approaching the animal through an anthropocentric lens by separating humans and animals through her labelling of animals as

'creatures' and as 'not human'. This is direct resistance to the anthropomorphism that underpins the texts she named previously, as this hinges on characterising animals symbolically through its anthropocentrism.

In these self-consciously intertextual moments in which Lou engages with animal writing there is evidence of the beginning of a pro-animal thought that considers the kinds of questions that both authors and society more broadly might ask about animals. Although the assertion that Aguila-Way makes regarding the novel's pre-empting of the kind of concepts discussed by Donna Haraway regarding human-animal relations is hard to evidence, since there are no specific moments of explicit pro-animal arguments put forth, Lou's interest in the bear's thought processes and the questions that she asks do reflect the type of questions that might inform the construction of broader animal narratives, and so they are positioned in the novel as part of the fictional strategy employed by Engel to contemplate literature that attempts to represent human-animal relations and reveal itself to be a text that lays bare its madeness of literature. Lou evidently begins to scale back the types of questions she asks about the bear, and in doing so exposes the anthropocentrism that informs her initial questions: 'How come he knows his way upstairs? No, back to the beginning: how and what does he think?' (47) Furthermore, when observing the bear, she notices no specific aspects in his behaviour that indicate a particular thought process or personality trait:

> He, she saw, lay in the weak sun with his head on his paws. This did not lead her to presume that he suffered or did not suffer. That he would like striped or spotted pyjamas. Or that he would ever write a book about humans clothed in ursomorphic thoughts. A bear is more an island than a man, she thought. To a human. (47)

The reference that Lou makes to the writing of a book 'about humans clothed in ursomorphic thoughts' is a deliberate engagement with the novel's status as a human written book about a bear clothed in humanist thoughts, and the bizarre nature of this type of narrative construction. The notion that a bear might try to write about a human using 'ursomorphic thoughts' is intended to demonstrate the seeming idiocy of applying characteristics specific to a particular species to another and the inevitable absence this language would enact. Engel is therefore reflecting upon the limitations of human language to construct fictional narratives about other animal species because of the desire to ascribe meaning to these stories from within an anthropomorphic framework. The quotation thus begins to indicate towards the

type of pro-animal thought identified as a feature of the novel by Aguila-Way, albeit subtly, through Lou's reference to the bear's ability to suffer.

Moreover, this also reads as a reference to Jeremy Bentham's seminal statement in the literature of animal rights. The novel's engagement with such literature adds yet another layer of narrative self-reflexivity, homing in on the kinds of questions and theories that have historically shaped human-animal relations and ethics. Finally, Lou's statement that 'a bear is more an island than a man' followed by the addition 'to a human' has been read by Guth as 'closer to indicating the bear's affinity with the non-human physicality of the natural world then to suggesting a symbolic neo-human isolation.' (38) Guth thus resists centring the human experience within this reference, and so reinforces the novel's determination to undermine the symbolic use of animals. Such a statement by Lou therefore, is an explicit affirmation that attempting to approach the animal through symbolic and representational techniques is flawed because the anthropocentrism that underpins these textual moves does not consider the animal within its own species framework. Engel's novel, then, works to expose and undermine the type of animal narratives that favour symbolic or anthropomorphic representation by creating a story that attempts to narrativize the complex process of representing animals by exposing representation to be politically motivated for anthropocentric purposes and that using this technique in fictional representations of animals risks losing sight of taking the animal seriously as an individual and species.

Concluding *Bear*: a Story about Writing a Story about a Bear.

In this chapter I have attempted to establish an analytical position between Sandlos' arguments regarding the novel's influence by Roberts and Seton; Kirtz's argument that the novel is a mediation on the act of reading but is absent of self-reflexivity; and finally Aguila-Way's argument that the novel pre-empts the work of Haraway through its engagement with material-semiotics. I have argued that *Bear* is a self-conscious, intertextual and highly thematised engagement with writing about animals in Canada and the representational tropes that have tended to underpin the work that has gone before her novel.

The novel's intention is to critique these tropes through a number of fictional strategies that are employed to thematize and thereby expose the failure of these representational tropes to offer knowledge regarding the bear than can further the development of a relationship between Lou and the bear, or offer her a greater understanding of his behaviour beyond a symbolic characterisation. These de-

mythologizing strategies include an engagement with a kind of myth critique, evidenced through the use of heterotopic island space, Colonel Cary's notes, and Lou's investment in a common mythical narrative detailing woman-bear relationships, some of which only offer temporal access to the bear or culminate in the bear's clawing of Lou's back.

The second strategy concerns interrogating literary discourse as an inadequate way of accessing knowledge about animals that can be used in encounter, as the bear continually evades representation and Lou's attempts to construct an image of him that is able to comprehend his material animality.

The third strategy exposes the use of Indigeneity and its perceived proximity to animals as a trope that occurs within settler Canadian animal stories, and the way that it is used as a temporary state from which to feel closer to animals. Lou fails to follow Lucy's advice, opting instead to utilise Western knowledge sources, and the bear's departure from the island at the end of the novel in the company of Lucy reaffirms the associated mythologisation of Indigenous people and animals through the notion that access to them is temporary.

The fourth and final literary strategy employed by Engel in her self-conscious critique is her explicit intertextual narrative engagement with stories about animals through her protagonist's contemplation of animal writing, including the work of Canadian authors Seton and Roberts. This deliberately situates her novel within a relationship to other fiction about animals in Canada and makes explicit the novel's intentional consideration of the kinds of representational strategies utilised in these stories, such as anthropomorphism and symbolism in Mowat and Atwood, and thus her novel's influence by and subsequent departure from these. These fictional strategies are layered against one another, occurring simultaneously, and depicting a narrative that purposefully indulges in and is framed by imagined and mythologised fantasy, but is at the same time repeatedly ruptured by moments of clarity in which Engel's protagonist engages with the complexity of animal representation and acknowledges the need for a de-mythologized approach.

Bear therefore seeks to use these fictional strategies to mark a self-conscious move away from the use of symbolic and/or anthropomorphic animals to consider what a story that denies the symbolic animal might look like. Although the novel appears to be making somewhat of a pro-animal move, as asserted by Aguila-Way, I would argue that this is premature, as the novel is not intended to comment more broadly on human-animal relations, as it makes no explicit assertions regarding ethics. It is

intended to comment specifically on the literary depiction of human-animal dynamics and put forth the notion that the process of making animals into symbolic characterisations is politically motivated for anthropocentrism. As such, *Bear* imagines and marks a development away from the style of symbolic characterisation seen in its literary predecessors, such as Mowat and Atwood, to present itself as an intertextual and self-conscious story about animals that plays around thematically with the concept of representation and lays bare its presence in literature.

Ch4. Queering Kinship: Adopting an Ethics of Care in Timothy Findley's *The Wars* (1977) and *Not Wanted on the Voyage* (1984)

Much of the critical material written on Timothy Findley approaches his work through a singular academic angle, such as through a postcolonial analysis, a focus on gender, the queer nature of the texts and Findley's homosexuality, or the presence of animals in his texts. This singular approach overlooks the intersection of these issues within Findley's work and his wider engagement and criticism of social hierarchy as contributing to the violent oppression of multiple minority groups in society. In this chapter, I will focus on two of Findley's novels, *Not Wanted on the Voyage* (1984) and *The Wars* (1977) and with attention to the human-animal relationships formed throughout the texts I will establish the importance of reading across this intersection of species and queer theory. Such a reading, triangulating questions of species, nation and queer identity, I will argue, demonstrates that Findley's novels push for an ethics of care to be adopted to overcome oppressive and violent patriarchal regimes that Findley codes as heteronormative. I have chosen these two novels because they both use well-known narratives within Canada, the biblical story and fiction about the Second World War, and are self-consciously underpinned with patriarchal violence. By bringing together these novels, this chapter will demonstrate that in the work of Findley there is a development on the type of representation seen in Marian Engel's novel, *Bear*, building on the self-conscious and critically engaged type of writing about animals that reconfigures mythic narratives to introduce a pro-animal message that comments on the ways in which we might establish more empathetic and caring human-animal relationships imagined through reconfigured versions of narratives of nation.

Susan McHugh comments on the possibilities that working across an intersection of queer theory and animal studies opens up in literary critique, writing in 'Marrying My Bitch', which focuses on British queer writer J. R. Ackerly's novel *My Dog Tulip*, that 'Ackerley's treatment of sodomy highlights how hetero- sexuality's juridical, economic, and aesthetic structures extend into the definition of nonhuman animal bodies and their behaviour.'[1] To explain, she adds:

[1] Susan McHugh, 'Marrying My Bitch: J. R. Ackerley's Pack Sexualities', *Critical Inquiry*, 27.1. (2000) 21-41 (p. 23).

> By focusing on relationships between sexually active gay men and dogs, he comes to launch a notion of sodomite culture that I formulate along the lines of what Warner and Lauren Berlant term a "queer counterpublic," that is, queer culture formulated as a subordinate (and explicitly not separate) sphere founded on "nonstandard intimacies." (23)

By drawing this comparison McHugh demonstrates that the applicable nature of queer studies and queer narratives to animal writing is a product of this shared sense of camaraderie in navigating the heteronormative world and the regulation of particular sexual practices that evades even dog owning. She calls this relationship 'pack sexualities', explaining that it is a 'triangulation of gay men, bitches, and their usually "mongrel" (whether human bisexual or canine mixed-breed) sex partners.' (23) Unlike Ackerly, however, Findley uses relationships with animals less as an avenue through which to express sexual frustration, but rather to represent the difficulties that arise for queer characters in navigating the hegemonic heteronormativity of particular spheres, and as a means through which to demonstrate that empathy is one such product that might come out of their shared experience of oppression.

The queer nature of *The Wars* has been discussed in previous criticism by Shane Rhodes, who states that the novel 'explores the queer erotics, both loving and violent, inherent in male-male bonds especially heightened in the greatest of "homosocial" events, war. '[2] He thus argues that the war context of the novel provides the perfect setting for conceptualising this fine line between love and violence underpinning that which he terms 'queer erotics'. Peter Webb, however, has focused on what he identifies as an environmental message within Findley's novel, stating that 'for Findley, "the wars" are more than a crisis of man-against-man or man-against-himself'; they are symptomatic of what he termed humanity's "war with nature."'[3] This aspect of the novel is also picked up on by Diana Brydon, who argues that:

---

[2] Shane Rhodes, 'Buggering With History: Sexual Warfare and Historical Reconstruction in Timothy Findley's *The Wars'*, *Canadian Literature, A Quarterly of Criticism and Review: Gay and Lesbian Writing in Canadian Literature*, 159 (1998) 38-53 (p. 39).

[3] Peter Webb, '"At War With Nature": Animals in Timothy Findley's *The Wars'* in *Other Selves: Animals in the Canadian Literary Imagination*, ed. By Janice Fiamengo (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2007) pp. 227-244 (p. 228).

> Like everything else in this novel, nature is double-edged. Robert shares in what is best in nature – its physicality, its intuition, its commitment to life – and he shares in what is worst – its violence.[4]

Brydon also argues that *The Wars'* most prominent feature is its manipulation of the war novel genre, stating that 'the problem is not to find a language to articulate the experience of war but rather how to circumvent the established rhetoric of the genre.'[5] These criticisms, then, have not engaged with the intersections in the novel between the queer narrative detailing Robert's struggle with his sexuality within the masculinized sphere of war and the environmental, pro-animal narrative that frames Robert's war story, they have only dealt with these issues in isolation, which is why this intersection is the focus of this chapter.

The same kind of gap in criticism regarding the intersection between queer theory and animal studies in *The Wars* is equally lacking in analysis of *Not Wanted on the Voyage*. Much of the existing criticism surrounding the novel has focused exclusively on the novel's depiction of an oppressive patriarchal structure and hierarchy as violently governing both the ark and its inhabitants (both human and non-human), and as foregrounding the religious edict upon which this historic myth and its narrative have been constructed. Marian Scholtmeijer argues that Findley's novel offers a critique of entrenched belief systems and the effects these systems have upon the social world, imagined through the 'savagery and the madness of a world controlled and interpreted by Dr Noyes'.[6] She pays particular attention the violent upholding of Noah's patriarchal authority demonstrated in the rape of Emma and the murder of the unicorn, arguing the wider social victim status of both women and animals is reflected by the novel:

> Findley inverts the fantasy: men do not stride bravely through the world penetrating living beings with phalluses and spears, but instead meanly usurp the animal's vitality and pervert it for use as a weapon against women, killing both animals and love in the process. (248)

---

[4] Diana Brydon, 'A Devotion to Fragility: Timothy Findley's *The Wars'*, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 26.1. (2008) 75-84 (p. 80).

[5] Diana Brydon, "It could not be told": Making Meaning in Timothy Findley's *The Wars'*, *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 21.1. (1986) 62-79 (p. 62).

[6] Marian Scholtmeijer, *Animal Victims in Modern Fiction: From Sanctity to Sacrifice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) p. 247.

Her criticism appears to praise Findley's exposure of these oppressive power structures through the subversion of myth, highlighting the significance of the violence in the novel as a means of identifying the belief systems that have consolidated the 'victim status' of both women and animals, and the authoritative status of men. Exposing the existence of these structures thus provides a basis for her critique. Similarly, Helen Tiffin argues that the novel is a postcolonial text that uses myth to demonstrate the way in which oppression and power structures are constructed and achieved through exclusion and violence to 'otherness', stating that the novel is 'a saga of destruction in the name of minority righteousness and the extension of petty power.'[7] Tiffin has taken this analysis further to contextualise Findley's work amongst other postcolonial writers, arguing that *Not Wanted on the Voyage* aims to dismantle the 'master narrative' of history as a 're-definable present' and to erode 'conquering and containing perspectives' through the 'counter-culture of imagination'.[8] She states that Findley writes from this perspective because he is a non-Indigenous Canadian, a settler writer, and thus 'there are no formulated systems which may be recuperated to challenge the imposed European one' in which he is living. (173) Subversive action is possible therefore, but only through imagination. And thus, literature is a powerful tool of postcolonial contemplation. Taking such into consideration, I argue that rather than working to comment more broadly on the notion of 're-defining history', Findley's novels focus more specifically on problematizing the types of narratives that underpin singular hegemonic settler narratives of Canadian nation by queering them and fracturing this sense of singular identity.

Finally, Philip Armstrong argues that *Not Wanted on the Voyage* 'returns to the tradition of nineteenth-century radical sentimental narrative,'[9] which indicates that the novel seeks to evoke empathy in its drive towards emotion over action and returns to a particular historical way of writing. Whilst there is sentimentalism in Findley's novel, and there is push towards empathy, this chapter will argue that it is not a straightforward use of sentimentalism, but rather that empathy is produced through a camp sentimentalism. By combining these two elements Findley is able to dramatize particular oppressive hierarchies and relationships to evoke empathy in

[7] Bill Ashcroft; Gareth Griffiths; Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989) p. 97.
[8] Helen Tiffin, 'Post-Colonialism, Post-Modernism and the Rehabilitation of Post-Colonial History',*The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 23.1. (1988) pp. 169-181 (p. 173).
[9] Philip Armstrong, *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2008) p. 223.

his excessive representations, thereby undermining the dominant hegemonies he exposes.

Findley's engagement with the concept of camp in the construction of his novels aligns itself with the definitions set out by Esther Newton and Richard Dyer, and at times with the camp aesthetic described Susan Sontag, who is often hailed as the authority on camp. Sontag argues that camp is a 'sensibility' and a 'taste', an aesthetic that enjoys 'artifice and exaggeration'.[10] She then sets out to deliver a structured definition of the concept by listing a number of its characterizations and examples of camp texts. However, Sontag emphasises that the relationship between camp taste and homosexuality is 'peculiar', arguing that 'it's not true that Camp taste is homosexual taste', despite there being a 'peculiar affinity and overlap.' (64) She also adds that 'one feels that if homosexuals hadn't more or less invented Camp, someone else would.' (64) Newton on the other hand, argues that in the act of defining the boundaries of what constitutes camp we lose sight of the importance of the tradition, which is precisely its expression of homosexual identity. She states:

> Camp is not a thing. Most broadly it signifies a relationship between things, people, and activities or qualities, and homosexuality. In this sense, 'camp taste', for instance, is synonymous with homosexual taste.[11]

Dyer concurs with Newton, stating that 'Camp is one thing that expresses and confirms being a gay man.'[12] Moreover, Newton's notion that it is a 'relationship between things' is shared also by Dyer, who states: 'identity and togetherness, fun and wit, self-protection and thorns in the flesh of straight society – those are the pluses of camp.' (111) Camp is then, an aesthetic and way of relating that seeks to work outside of dominant hegemonies, and it was born out of homosexual resistance to 'conforming to the drabness and rigidity of the hetero male role.' (110-111) Consequently, using this understanding of the concept, the camp sensibility at work in Findley's novels is a useful framework for approaching the reconfiguration of well known national narratives, such as the stories of Genesis in *Not Wanted on the*

[10] Susan Sontag, Notes on 'Camp' in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*, ed. by Fabio Cleto (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999) pp. 54-66 (p. 54).
[11] Esther Newton, 'Role Models', in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*, ed. by Fabio Cleto (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999) pp. 976-109 (p. 102).
[12] Richard Dyer, 'Its Being So Camp As Keeps Us Going' in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*, ed. by Fabio Cleto (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999) pp. 110-116 (p. 110).

Voyage, and Canadian war-time heroic stories, such as in *The Wars*, and for approaching the representation of human-animal relations within these narratives, precisely because it seeks to frustrate the types of social structures and roles that have entrenched particular hierarchies and ways of relating, such as oppressive masculinity and heteronormativity. Dyer states, 'Camp sensibility is very much a product of our oppression' (114) and so I will argue that by paying attention to the triangulation of species, nation and queer identity in the novels, it is possible to see the use of a camp sensibility and framework in Findley's novels as a part of a de-mythologizing process of reconfiguring narratives about animals to emphasise a need for care and empathy, rather than a system of control and violence.

As such, this chapter will argue that there is a logic at play within Findley's work that is interested in dramatic, camp moments of defiance, wherein the violent hierarchy and status quo of animal oppression are directly challenged by individual acts of care. Moreover, within these moments emerge relationships that are built on a more-than-human kinship, which, as Sontag argues about camp more broadly, encourages us to find the 'success in certain passionate failures' (65) and imagine the construction of relations built on empathy, reinforcing the useful intersection of queer theory and feminist care ethics in pro-animal fiction.

Defining Kinship and a Feminist Ethics of Care

In my focus on the notion of care and duty within the novels, I will draw upon Donna Haraway's idea of kinship and also Carol J Adams' and Josephine Donovan's concept of the feminist care tradition. Drawing these feminist theories of species relations together will permit me to use the attention that Haraway gives to the individual animal and to material encounters together with the emphasis on 'sympathetic response' and 'care for well-being'[13] put forth by Adams and Donovan. I will use this to explore the way in which Findley depicts a kind of kinship between humans and animals that puts forth an ethics of care as a basis for forming non-exploitative and non-hierarchical relations. In doing so I will situate his ethical turn within a wider criticism of political and systemic frameworks.

In *When Species Meet*, Haraway emphasises what she believes is the importance of re-thinking interspecies relationships and our approach to them, particularly in a time of growing capitalism, wherein our relationships to particular non-human

[13] Josephine Donovan, 'Attention to Suffering: Sympathy as a Basis for Ethical Treatment of Animals' in *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics*, ed. by Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007) pp. 174-198 (p. 190).

animal species, such as dogs, are frequently changing. To emphasise her argument she discusses and critiques Jacques Derrida's *The Animal That Therefore I Am* by arguing that as a consequence of failing to look beyond his own species exceptionalism Derrida misses an opportunity to interact with the cat that he observed to be returning his gaze. She states that he 'missed a possible invitation, a possible introduction to other-worlding'[14] and just so with humans, as it is with animals: 'ignoring social cues is far from neutral social behaviour.' (24) She thus argues that when interacting with non-human animals we have a moral and ethical obligation to engage on a material level, to respond and reciprocate, rather than just to acknowledge, stating:

> To hold in regard, to respond, to look back reciprocally, to notice, to pay attention, to have courteous regard for, to esteem: all of that is tied to polite greeting, to constituting the polis, where and when species meet. (19)

This call for reciprocity, she argues, is our 'responsibility':

> Response, of course, grows with the capacity to respond, that is, responsibility. Such a capacity can be shaped only in and for multidirectional relationships, in which always more than one responsive entity is in the process of becoming… If this structure of material– semiotic relating breaks down or is not permitted to be born, then nothing but objectification and oppression remains. (71)

She is therefore interested in our material practices with animals and the value that can be found in them, versus the outcomes of failing to relate. To deny such responsibility and to fail to reciprocate the animal's invitation to engage, she argues, like Derrida did, results in 'objectification' and 'oppression'. The nuanced form of relationship that she therefore advocates for is what she describes as a kinship, arguing that kin be used to describe intimate and reciprocated relationships that are not exclusively held through ancestry or isolated to a singular species. She expands upon this in both *Making Kin not Population* and *Staying With the Trouble*, wherein she makes a 'plea for other-than-biogenetic kindred.'[15] She explains that 'people become kin largely by sharing experiences and generating a sense of belonging' (3) and that 'the recomposition of kin acknowledges that all earthlings

[14] Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008) p. 19.
[15] Donna Haraway, 'Making Kin in the Chthulucene: Reproducing Multispecies Justice' in *Making Kin Not Population*, ed. By Adele. E. Clarke and Donna Haraway (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2018) pp. 67-101 (p. 69).

are relatives with affines, and it is past time to practice better care of kinds-of-assemblages (not species one at a time)'. (93-4) The significance of constructing non-biological kinship, she argues, is that 'such belonging – such kinship – can not only be across species but blur such boundaries.' (3) It is this relating across species boundaries through material encounter that I aim to build on through an engagement with theories of care.

Josephine Donovan and Carol J. Adams state in T*he Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics* that Donna Haraway's feminist postmodernist writings, 'have made important contributions', but that they are 'flawed from an ethic-of-care perspective.'[16] Adams and Donovan highlight the importance of Haraway's emphasis on the individual animal, but their departure from her work is evident through the grounding of their approach in a wider critical political framework, stating that:

> Attention is a key word in feminist ethic-of-care theorizing about animals. Attention to the individual suffering animal but also – and this is a critical difference between an ethic-of-care and an "animal welfare" approach – attention to the political and economic systems that are causing the suffering. A feminist ethic-of-care approach to animal ethics offers a political analysis. (3)

A feminist ethics of care, then, is not a critique of animal welfare, but rather it attempts to uncover the systemic cause of animal oppression and suffering, so that we might then consider animals in their individuality and adopt an approach of care in forming our relationships with them. Donovan adds that 'caring is an important ethical point of departure, but to be effective it must be informed by an accurate political view.'[17] This situating of ethics within a wider criticism of political and systemic workings is what I argue is at play within both of Findley's novels. The call for ethics is tied up in a queer, camp sensibility that attempts to work against the domineering patriarchal hegemony governing the experience of the characters within the texts by suggesting that we need to be more caring. The significance of an intersection between species and sexuality is explained by Donovan, who argues that:

---

[16] Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan, *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007) p. 12.

[17] Josephine Donovan, 'Attention to Suffering: Sympathy as a Basis for Ethical Treatment of Animals', p. 187.

> The best way to convey this analysis of the overlapping, interdependent relationship of sexual inequality and species inequality is by referring to our current racist patriarchy as instituting a sex-species system. (203)

It is this concept of a 'sex-species system', acknowledging the intersections between oppression through sexuality and exploitation of non-human animals, that I argue is an important lens through which to approach the fiction of Findley. Thus, although the references that this chapter will make to the concepts of caring and empathy are underpinned by this framework set out by Haraway, Adams and Donovan, my interest in the elements of Findley's work, and in the queer/species intersection, moves beyond their focus on a feminist gender logic. In both *The Wars* and *Not Wanted on the Voyage*, Findley manipulates famous narratives through a postmodern form to subvert and queer these narratives, aligning patriarchy, hierarchy and masculinity with oppression and violence, and femininity, non-heteronormative queer identity and non-human animals with sympathy, care and affection. Queering and caring thus go hand in hand in Findley's novels.

Queering History: Reconfiguring Heroic Duty through an Ethics of Care in *The Wars* (1977)

In my analysis of *The Wars* (1977) I will examine the novel's historiographic form, the queer nature of the protagonist, Robert Ross, and the configuration of an ethics of care for animals as a marker of resistance to domineering heteronormativity and masculinity. I will argue that the novel critiques the way in which we build relations to those around us, human-to-human and human-to-animal, both physically in the present day, and historically and textually. Lastly, I will analyse the way in which the text adopts a camp aesthetic in parts in order to meet the cultural logic of the military hero on the same pitch and with the same melodrama, but to subvert and repurpose it. Such a repurposing of a military mode of narrative through stylization, depicting an act of defiance, abandoning military duty in favour of an act of care towards animals, resituates the concept of duty within an ethical tradition and challenges historical and national narratives of heroism by imagining a heroic act as one in which the importance of protecting the marginalised and abandoning the principles that oppress them is realised.

I will focus on the way in which masculinity is at first idealised by Robert and perceived to be embodied by the figure of the soldierly hero, but then is problematically ruptured through homosexual interactions that are accompanied by or associated with cruelty to animals, rendering them violent. I will use Haraway's

concept of kinship, whilst also drawing on the feminist ethics of care I have set out, to turn my attention to the male relationships in the novel that are not violent because they are framed by a shared love for animals, implying that this ethics of care, and a shared desire for kinship, is the determining factor for Findley's moral judgement. Moreover, I will argue that the kinship and care tradition that he depicts within the novel figures care and affection for non-human animals as a way of characterising resistance to a form of domineering masculinity that he presents as heteronormative.

I first turn to the novel's historiographic metafictional form, as this is the basis through which Findley troubles the distinction between literature and history, forging space for his queer, pro-animal war novel. Written in 1977, the novel includes multiple narrative perspectives, descriptions of photographs, and metafictional moments, a move that Webb argues, 'disrupt[s] the realism that typifies most First World War novels.'[18] Such a form is categorized as 'historiographic metafiction'. Linda Hutcheon describes historiographic metafiction as fiction that 'attempts to demarginalize the literary through confrontation with the historical, and it does so both thematically and formally.'[19] In addition, the form 'plays upon the truth and lies of the historical record' (114) and within these types of novel, she states:

> We see both the collecting and the attempts to make narrative order. Historiographic metafiction acknowledges the paradox of the reality of the past but its textualized accessibility to us today. (114)

Adopting such a form then, allows for an opening up of past narratives to the present, forcing us to question the way in which historical knowledge is formulated and transmitted.

Pre-empting the criticism that such a concept undermines the boundary between historical and fictional narratives, Hutcheon reinforces the textual nature of history:

> History is not made obsolete: it is, however, being rethought— as a human construct. And in arguing that history does not exist except as text, it does not stupidly and "gleefully" deny that the past existed, but only that its accessibility to us now is entirely conditioned by textuality. We cannot know

[18] Peter Webb, '"At War with Nature": Animals in Timothy Findley's *The Wars*', p. 227.
[19] Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1988) p. 109.

> the past except through its texts: its documents, its evidence, even its eye-witness accounts are texts. Even the institutions of the past, its social structures and practices, could be seen, in one sense, as social texts. (16)

The self-conscious engagement that the historiographic metafictional form permits in regards to the act of collectivizing documents and perspectives, and with constructing narratives, simultaneously reinstates and blurs the boundary between fiction and historical narrative and in doing so challenges the concept of 'master narratives'. Hutcheon argues that the fallacy of the concept of a 'master narrative' is precisely what postmodern fiction aims to expose, stating that:

> No narrative can be a natural "master" narrative: there are no natural hierarchies; there are only those we construct. It is this kind of self-implicating questioning that should allow postmodernist theorizing to challenge narratives that do presume to "master" status, without necessarily assuming that status for itself. (13)

Therefore, Findley's historiographic metafictional war novel, *The Wars*, engages in the discourse of World War I, but, through its form, subverts the way in which such national narratives surrounding the war have been constructed and transmitted, and challenges the way in which heroic protagonists and their experiences of war have typically been depicted. This permits, then, the characterisation of Robert Ross as a soldier who struggles to contend with his duty and, in addition, with his sexuality, which due to the masculinized arena of warfare appears tied to his masculinity and heroism. Moreover, Robert is particularly protective of non-human animals, stemming from his affection for his disabled sister, Rowena, whose pet rabbits were culled after her death. Care and affection for animals then, runs tangentially within the novel to his sexual struggles, bringing together the caring and queer elements of the novel. This meeting of queering and caring puts forth the argument that by an ethic of care we might abandon heroic nostalgia and the heteronormative masculinized constructs that oppress Robert and the animals he desires to protect, and we might re-think the type of heroic narratives that have dominated literature.

Robert first develops a skewed attitude towards his own sexuality at the beginning of the novel after the death of Rowena, and the subsequent culling of her pet rabbits. At the moment that Rowena fell from her wheelchair, Robert was 'locked in his bedroom. Making love to his pillows,'[20] a description that depicts Robert's youth

[20] Timothy Findley, *The Wars* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2001) p. 15.

and inscribes a humorous immaturity to his behaviour, whilst marking the beginning of his problematic association between the expression of sexuality and violence. Robert punishes himself emotionally for what he feels was a privileging of his own sexual exploration over protecting Rowena; a foregrounding of his own sexual pleasure and desires over the necessity to protect his sister, whom he perceives as vulnerable due to her disabled condition. Brydon comments on this formative scene, stating that:

> Robert assumes the guilt for the intrusion of suffering into his world, linking Rowena's literal fall with his metaphorical fall into solitary sexual knowledge, and opposing sex – a losing of oneself to oblivion – against watching, paying attention, assuming responsibility, for others. The rest of Robert's life can be seen as an attempt to compensate for that momentary lapse of attention that he connects with Rowena's death.[21]

This relationship that Brydon establishes between the death of Rowena and the subsequent redemptive mission that Robert embarks upon for the rest of his life is compelling. The emphasis she places on the need to 'assume responsibility' for others incorporates the non-human animals that appear throughout the text, firstly in relation to Rowena's pet rabbits. After her death, Robert's mother states that Rowena's rabbits must be killed. When Roberts asks why, she responds '"because they were hers."' (17) This reasoning determines not only that the rabbits hold no intrinsic value or right to life on their own, but also that their value is tied to Rowena and thus ends with her death because of the way in which they memorialise her. Moreover, the lack of photographs of Rowena in comparison to the other family members combined with the desire to kill her rabbits suggests that Robert's mother's intention is to dispose of all evidence of Rowena's existence. Such a characterisation presents a troubling representation of disabled bodies, simplistically inflicting victimhood onto Rowena through her vulnerability. Robert's grandiose desire to protect her and her rabbits effects its' own kind of conceptual violence by infantilising disabled bodies and locating Rowena as a person enacting a non-normative way of being human, thus needing protection. Sunaura Taylor explains this tendency, stating that 'disability oppression is not natural, and the idea that disability is a personal tragedy as opposed to an issue of social justice needs rectifying.'[22] However, Robert's personal affinity with disability, and his conception

[21] Diana Brydon, "It could not be told": Making Meaning in Timothy Findley's *The Wars*', p. 73.
[22] Sunaura Taylor, 'Beasts of Burden: Disability Studies and Animal Rights', *Qui Parle*, 19.2. (2011) 191-222 (p. 204).

of vulnerability drives his desire to protect both Rowena, her rabbits and the consequent suffering non-human animals he encounters later within the novel. As a consequence of their belonging to Rowena, Robert conceives of her pet rabbits as equally vulnerable and, moreover, they are his last connection to Rowena. Robert's dedication to care as a counter to his mother's desire to cull locates his mentality within the feminist tradition of care I have outlined. Such a critical ethics privileges care and empathy as the basis for a relationship with animals, desiring to move away from a focus on who does and doesn't deserve to be killed, which those working on these ethics argue is a masculinized framework. This further reinforces Robert's distance and difference from the mentality that traditionally governs the logic of the war and military hero, which he will go on to repeatedly struggle with.

This struggle is first evident when Robert refuses to kill Rowena's rabbits and his mother employs Teddy Budge, a local boy and soldier, to do the killing instead. Overcome with grief, it takes Robert a few moments to realise why Teddy is at the family house, but once it becomes clear, his emotional need to protect the rabbits leads him to leap 'up out of the chair and ran downstairs unthinking. Only knowing' (19), implying that his emotional response has overwhelmed his logical thinking. He then attacks Teddy whilst shouting '"You bastard! Bastard! What are soldiers for?"' (20) Robert's rhetorical logic is that the duty of soldiers is to protect, not to kill. The irony of this statement is that Robert's conception of what constitutes a good soldier overlooks the fundamental notion that what foregrounds soldierly duty is following orders. Whereas Brydon places the emphasis on Robert's feelings of 'responsibility', situating this moment as marking the beginning of a redemptive narrative for Robert, I argue that Robert's conflict lies in his perception of duty. Evidenced in this moment, Robert believes that it is the duty of soldiers to protect the vulnerable, which to him is the rabbits and the memory of Rowena, which overlooks Teddy's military duty to follow Mrs Ross' orders, even if it is at the expense of lives. This early conflict of duty foreshadows the later climax of the novel in which Robert reconfigures his military duty in order to privilege that which I term an ethical duty towards non-human animals. The novel thus contends with this concept, bringing into question the foundations upon which such concepts are built and what the stakes are in blindly following them.

Military Coded Violence Towards Horses

After Robert enlists in the military himself the novel represents horses as the major victims of the military code of violence within the text, but also as the main

recipients of Robert Ross' care and affection. This means that Robert's interactions with horses are often coded as emotionally conflicting events, as he is caught between the way he is ordered to interact with the animals in his military duty, which often involves elements of violence, and his empathetic desire to care for them. He discovers a love for caring for horses whilst on board the ship that is transporting Canadian military platoons and horses to the battlefront in Europe. His enjoyment is such that he 'soon became completely disengaged from the other life on the upper decks. He even went below off duty.' (63) This decision to disengage from soldierly life and immerse himself in caring for the horses speaks to the concept of 'kinship' put forth by Haraway, as Robert demonstrates an affinity for relationships that stretch beyond his own species and built upon material interaction and care. Haraway argues that 'meetings make us who and what we are in the avid contact zones that are the world. Once we have met, we can never be "the same" again.' (287) Such an argument puts forth the notion that coming into contact with, responding to and interacting with animals is the foundation for establishing a new kind of relationship to the world and the beings within it, our kin. Certainly Robert, because of his time on board this ship caring for the horses, and through his violent 'meeting' with one horse in particular, has his perception and way of relating to those around him altered irreparably.

A bad storm hits the ship and the horses are 'left to fend for themselves' (66), which causes one of the horses to break its leg. Robert, being an officer and therefore in possession of a gun, is tasked with shooting the horse. The panic he later identifies in the eyes of Taffler and 'the Swede' at the brothel is recognisable in the eyes of the horse, whose 'gaze was turned in their direction – white with alarm in the lantern light.' (66) In addition, the prospect of having to kill the horse elicits emotional distress in him. However, Robert is aware of his duty as an officer, noting that he 'could barely move in his panic but he knew that he had to show his nerve and his ability as an officer.' (66) This conflict evidences the ethical war raging in Robert's head; on the one hand he must fulfil his military duty and prove that he is capable of fulfilling the heroic, masculine role of officer, but on the other, he struggles emotionally with the prospect of taking life and feels an ethical duty of care towards those he perceives as vulnerable – in this moment, the horse.

Furthermore, Robert's orders to kill the horse are complicated by the fact that he does not know how best to shoot the animal. He recalls that 'he'd seen a picture of a cowboy shooting his horse behind the ear. The image rose in his mind – black and white and clumsily drawn – a child's world picture of exactly what to do.' (67) This

troubling intrusion of violence into a childhood memory reflects the shattering of Robert's innocence through his military duty and reiterates Robert's inadequacy for the job. Such ignorance implies that there is no method of 'teaching' killing within the military, it is less a learnt behaviour rather than an adoption of a code of ethics in which killing is permitted and normalized. Donovan and Adams recognise this connection between a masculine arena and the justification certain codes within this arena grant towards killing animals (and humans). They determine that the masculine approach to animal rights is disconnected from individual beings and is concerned with policing who can and can't be killed, whereas a feminist ethics of care concerns itself more particularly with specific animals and sympathetic concern for the well-being of all species. They state that:

> Whereas the masculine concern with rights, rules, and an abstract ideal of justice tends often to seem like "a math problem with humans" (28), the feminine approach offers a more flexible, situational, and particularized ethic.[23]

Robert's failure to conform to the traditional image of a masculinized war hero through his fear surrounding carrying out his duty and shooting the horse, and later in his failed experience in the brothel, means that he is positioned by Findley to adopt the principles in line with a feminine approach. Just as he enjoyed caring for his sister, and the numerous horses on board the ship, he cares for this individual horse, which is further evidenced in his emotional distress.

When Robert shoots the horse, he is reminded of the death of another vulnerable being, his sister Rowena and her rabbits:

> He fired.
>
> A chair fell over in his mind.' (68)

In this moment then, we see Robert's ethical framework incorporating horses. Shooting the horse and the exercising of his military duty in his mind recalls the emotionally distressing time in which he neglected his ethical duty towards his sister and she fell from her wheelchair. Robert's trauma is escalated when the scene is made more gruesome by his numerous unsuccessful attempts to shoot the horse. Afterwards he notes that 'he didn't want to meet the other man's eyes just yet –

[23] Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan, *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007) p. 2.

though he didn't know why.' (69) His confusion is a product of the conflict of duty that has plagued him throughout, as his shame stems from both his inability to effectively shoot the horse, publically struggling to carry out his duty, but he also feels ashamed of having killed a vulnerable being, and at having been witnessed doing so. Webb, whose criticism focuses closely on the novel's engagement with animal representation, argues that 'this scene marks the point at which Robert leaves behind the last vestiges of domestic innocence and enters a world of horrific experience.'[24] As such, the journey on board the ship becomes both a literal and figurative move away from his innocent, domestic home-life represented by Rowena and her rabbits, towards the front line, a site of a coded violence in which he'll go on to witness normalised mass death of both humans and animals. Moreover, Webb argues that this particular scene is an important representation of the novel's message regarding the treatment of non-human animals and goes further to locate the novel's acknowledgement of the historical role of horses in the war. He states:

> The scene acknowledges the horses as sentient beings and the forgotten victims of human conflict. Captured and broken in the Canadian wilderness, herded onto the ship, then marginalized by the military system, the horses provide a stark example of how speciesism operates in theatres of war. (231)

Webb points out the novel's attempted engagement with the historical through a depiction of such suffering, bringing the horse to the forefront of the military narrative. To build on Webb's argument, I argue that rather than 'sentience' being the emphasis in this moment, Robert's experience of shooting the horse is a grotesque subversion of the kind of peaceful material encounter suggested by Haraway. It is one that, through its intimacy and materiality, forces Robert to physically encounter and be complicit in violence towards animals. As such, it forms a basis through which he begins to resist such violence. Consequently, the novel figures the establishing of kinship with non-human animals, and caring for them through empathetic encounter as a basis for countering domineering hetero-masculinity. Robert's failure to conform to the masculinized image of a military war hero and kill without guilt or empathy differentiates him from the mentality that is needed to survive in the war space and is held by men such as Eugene Taffler, a famous Canadian war hero. His ethics, more aligned with a feminist care tradition, represent a conflict of duty within the novel, bringing into question the limits of

[24] Peter Webb, '"At War With Nature": Animals in Timothy Findley's *The Wars*', p. 231.

following orders when they occur at the detriment of non-human lives. Such a narrative, working within and subverting traditional war narratives that depict overtly hetero-masculine protagonists demonstrates Findley's queer troubling of this mythologized literary genre of nation and the narratives surrounding its heroes. Through this narratavization, shattering the solidified concept of heteronormativity in relation to the war hero and incorporating an ethics of care that aligns itself with feminist criticism, the novel offers a queer resistance to the idea that heteronormative society reproduces itself by way of duty, and moreover, demonstrates the corruption of psychology that these forms of heteronormativity produce, normalizing mass killing on the battlefield.

Duty or Care, or a Duty of Care? Findley's Military Hero

As a consequence of such confusion regarding Robert's feelings towards carrying out his military duty but not betraying his ethical concern with taking life, he expresses his desire for a role model, one that can help him overcome this conflict of interest. When he was younger, Robert's 'hero' was a Native named Longboat, whom he admired for his marathon running and because 'he smiled and was silent', like Robert. (47) His attachment to Longboat was such that he'd 'take off his clothes in front of an old, dark mirror and wish that he was red. Or black. Or yellow. Any colour but pink. Smiling and silence didn't seem to go with pink.' (47) Robert's problematic desire to be a member of an oppressed race stems from what he perceives as his own failure to live up to the stereotypical vocal masculinized image of a white man, signified by his description of himself as 'pink', a subtle reference to both an abiding sense of shame and also his homosexuality.[25] He therefore wishes that he had, essentially, a reason to be silent, which is inherently problematic because of the oppression it overlooks, but it indicates the immaturity and ignorance of Robert. The difference now, however, is that he no longer idealises athleticism and silence, but rather that he wishes to find himself a new role model whom holds the emotional propensity for committing violence without remorse, a characteristic he lacks:

> What he wanted was a model. Someone who could teach him, by example, how to kill. Robert had never aimed a gun at anything. It was a foreign state of mind. So what he wanted was someone else who had acquired that state of mind: who killed as an exercise of the will. (24)

[25] In that pink is a colour that has historically been linked to the LGBT* movement, and is the predominant colour in many of the LGBT movement's flags and symbols.

This desire is a reflection of the cultural mindset during the war, in which wanting to kill was encouraged because it was seen as a necessary means through which masculine, heroic soldiers could protect their country and those back at home. There are few other contexts, bar the mass slaughter of animals for intensive farming, in which large-scale de-personalised killing has been so normalised. As such, in emphasising this shift in Robert's desires, Findley emphasises the violence underpinning the types of heroic narratives that have been culturally celebrated as markers of nationhood and reconfigures them through Robert's inability to fulfil these markers of heroism. In addition, this quotation can also be read as an example of homosexual repression, desiring a male role model or instructor to teach him to 'aim his gun'. As such, Robert's idea of what constitutes a 'hero' shifts across this period, as the tools he desires for survival alter upon his arrival in the military – a new largely white, hyper-masculinized state.

The gap that opens up between Robert's young 'silent' self and his older self that now desires a military mindset is reinforced when Robert passes through the town of Regina on a military transport train and sees a 'band of Indians – twelve or fourteen of them – standing by the railroad track.' (44) The narrative describes how 'even though the snow was lifted from the ground and blown around their feet, the Indians did not make any motion to depart. They stood and stared at all the faces – ghosts through the frosted glass.' (45) There is ambiguity here with regards to whether Findley is referring to the Natives or the soldiers as the 'ghosts', but either way it signifies a divide between the two groups, both physically and politically. The silence and potentially 'ghostly' demeanour of the Indigenous group symbolises their disenfranchisement from World War I political conversations and also foreshadows the soldiers' deaths. Despite an estimated one third of Aboriginal men aged between 18-45 enlisting during the war, Indigenous people still did not have citizenship status in Canada during that time, and so were not required to adhere to conscription.[26] Many non-aboriginal citizens supported this legal loophole, believing it was dangerous to arm Natives and therefore best to leave them out of this war. This scene is an example of the historiographic metafictional form at play, as it exposes an era of politically complicated cultural and racial relations in Canada through a fictional moment. It begs a questioning of whose history we remember and which stories are retold, as the train's rapid passing by of these Indigenous

[26] Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1414152378639/1414152548341 [accessed: 2 June 2019}.

people quickly shifts our focus back to Robert's story, a settler-history. Furthermore, the unanswered question exposes the many conflicts at play within this moment, 'Robert wanted everyone to raise an arm in greeting. Why should the Indians not be greeted standing by the railroad track?' (45) signifies the political and social silencing of Natives during this period. It also symbolises Robert's abandonment of his old hero Longboat, and his new shift towards a military life, in which he will be expected not to stay silent and to take life: marking his descent into the chaos and violence of the war. However, the desire he feels to have everyone wave at the Indigenous group brings to the surface once again Robert's conflicted sense of duty. On the one hand, he feels pressured to conform to the similar behaviour of his comrades, however, he also feels a duty to wave to the group watching the departing of his train. This reiterates his concern for the marginalized, foreshadowing the clash that these concepts will bring about at the climax of the novel. Furthermore, this scene creates a binary between peace and violence, and Native and settler, in which Native culture and ways of being are essentialized and utilised as a literary device to mark Robert's move away from nature and peace, symbolised by the Natives, towards technology and violence, symbolised by the train and the soldiers.

After the rapid abandonment of his childhood hero, Robert finds this new role model in Eugene Taffler, a famous Canadian war hero. Taffler's fame is enough to entice Robert to idealise him, combined with Taffler's role with managing the care of the horses, or 'horse flesh' (31) as Findley has stated, deconstructing the bodies of the horses to signify their impending disposal on the battlefield. Taffler tells Robert that he is 'killing bottles' (31), to which the scene then ends with Robert concluding that 'perhaps he'd found the model he could emulate – a man to whom killing wasn't killing at all but only throwing.' (32) Robert thus idealises Taffler's nonchalant attitude that levels throwing stones at bottles with killing men.

The performance of masculinity that Taffler puts on display, 'killing bottles', and Robert's subsequent idealisation of him is rapidly ruptured during a visit to a local brothel wherein he witnesses Taffler engaging in sexual relations with another man that convey a violent subversion of a horse and rider dynamic. This narrative dislocates the figure of the masculinised military hero from heteronormativity, indicating to an overarching queer framework at work in the novel that exposes the social and ideological conflicts operating around Robert and plagues his conception of what constitutes a military hero. Rhodes explains the destabilizing power in queering a narrative, seen in this configuration of Taffler, stating:

> The homosexual scene effects a queer breakdown of meaning and the reading process is set on its back with this plurality of signification emanating from a climax of clashing symbolic structures.[27]

All that which Robert thought he knew about Taffler and military heroes more broadly appears ruptured through this clashing of pre-conceived heteronormativity with an unexpected homosexuality. Moreover, this sexual encounter appears to Robert to be violent, furthering the connection that Robert made after the death of Rowena between the expression of sexuality and violence. The strongholds in Robert's life, then, his desire to be like Taffler and to become comfortable in exerting violence, become unstable and collapse in in a queer reconfiguration of an overtly masculinized venture to the local brothel, muddying the spheres in which violence is accepted and normalized and troubling the notion that heroism is upheld by heteronormativity.

Robert's sexual immaturity is evidenced in his silence throughout his time at the brothel, refusing to engage the sex worker in conversation and also seemingly showing disinterest in any sexual activity. It quickly becomes clear that Robert's indifference is in fact sexual innocence, as he ejaculates simply walking up the stairs to Ella, the sex worker's, room, before any sexual activity has taken place. As a consequence, Ella encourages Robert to look through a peephole in the brothel wall, in which he can see Taffler engaging in sexual activity with a male prostitute known as 'the Swede'. She holds Robert's head in place, forcing him to witness their private encounter in an extension of the dominant-submissive dynamic he is witnessing. Robert is distressed by the scene, noting that his 'heart was beating so fast he thought it would explode' and moreover, 'he went on hearing and seeing everything he'd heard and seen in his mind and his mind began to stammer the way it always did whenever it was challenged by something it could not accept.' (44) The image of the overtly masculine war hero that Robert had heretofore constructed of Taffler is confronted by a homosexual scene of submissive-dominant played out through the role of horse and rider, in which Taffler is the submissive:

> One was lying on his back with his back arched off the mattress while the other sat astride his groin exactly like a rider. The one who played the horse was bucking… just like the mustangs Robert and the others had broken in the summer. The rider was using a long silk scarf as reins and the horse was biting into the other end with his teeth… The rider held the reins in one hand

[27] Shane Rhodes, 'Buggering with History', p. 43.

> and, using a soldier's stiff-peaked cap, beat the horse on the thighs – one side and then the other. And the two – both horse and rider – were staring into one another's eyes with an intensity unlike any other Robert had ever seen in a human face. Panic. (43)

Rather than perceiving this scene as role-play between seemingly consenting adults, indulging in fantasies of dominance and submission, Robert sees only violence. He dehumanises the two men, recognising what he sees as 'panic' in their eyes beyond that which he has ever witnessed in humans before, only in the eyes of the horse on the boat. Robert's confusion and distress stems from his shock that 'the man being ridden was Taffler. The rider was the Swede' (44) and this is because the notion that Robert's dominant, hyper-masculine hero would enjoy being dominated sexually by another man complicates and fractures his conceptions of the military hero as inherently tied to heterosexuality and dominance.

Terry Goldie argues that Robert's distress in this moment stems from his own suppressed homosexual identity and the subsequent feelings of desire that witnessing this scene surfaces. Consequently, when Robert smashes the mirror in the bedroom with his boot, Goldie argues that this plays into Robert's subjective struggle between his homosexuality and his military, masculine identity, a common trope for gay characters written within these masculinized narrative boundaries: 'in an identity game common in descriptions of gay characters, Robert uses this metonymy of his military masculinity to break the image which shows behind him, watching and desiring.'[28] Whilst I do agree with Goldie, he neglects to consider the animal imagery at play within this scene, and given Robert's past experiences with animals, which have heretofore ended in violence – Rowena's rabbits, and the horse that he was forced to shoot on the boat during the platoon's deployment to Europe from Canada – this is inevitably a large influence on Robert's distress. Thus, taking into consideration the violent context underpinning the majority of the human-horse relationships in the novel, the importance of this depiction, of a seemingly violent sexual enactment of a horse and rider dynamic, is a de-familiarising of horse riding that asks us to see horse riding as potentially violent. Through such dominant-submissive role play the scene implicitly asks us to question whether riding a horse involves this same dominant-submissive dynamic.

[28] Terry Goldie, *Pink Snow: Homotextual Possibilities in Canadian Fiction* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2003) p. 159.

The use of the silk scarf as reins is a queer interplay in the material culture of horse riding and femininity. In addition, the Swede's use of the 'soldier's stiff-peaked cap' as a whip to beat the horse (Taffler) acts as both as a whip in the ordinary sense of horse riding and also as a phallic signifier of soldier-ness that the Swede ironically flagellates Taffler with, dominating him with a signifier of his own dominance in the military sphere. Such a conflation of violence, between military dominance and this dominant-submissive display of horse riding signifies that human-animal relations like this are violent also. Robert identifies this relationship too, as the description of his recoil when handling his boot evidences a disgust for the violence that surrounds the idea of the 'human', stating that: 'he picked up a boot and held it in his hand. Its weight alarmed him and the texture of its leather skin appalled him with its human feel.' (44) In addition to the militarised code of violence represented by the boot, the leather of the boot is a memento of another kind of violence done to the animal and Robert wishes to reject his complicity in both these systems of violence. His human subjectivity is subsequently ruptured, in addition to his sexual subjectivity, and this is evidenced in his repulsion by the 'human feel' of the boot, smashing his conception of military heroes, his humanness and his homosexual desires in the mirror. Through such a moment, then, of having an intimate homosexual scene played out through a dominant-submissive horse and rider dynamic, the novel demonstrates its concern with queering humanity as a form of utterly entitled control over animal life.

Encroaching Homoeroticism: Male Intimacy in the Trenches

Robert's queer resistance to the type of military characterisation that Findley outlines as violent and upheld by an image of masculinised heteronormativity is recognisable through the few friendships that he establishes with other soldiers, which are of a particularly intimate nature. Robert only finds it possible to enjoy the company of other people and form emotional attachments to them if they share his kinship and care for animals. Webb argues that 'human characters in *The Wars* can be morally categorized according to their attitude toward animals' (239) and it does seem as though Findley draws a line of morality between those who care for animals and those who don't. However, Webb's criticism does not consider Robert's potential homosexual feelings towards these men and the homoerotic moments of comfort they find in one another and how this relates to his moral judgement of them and their relationship to animals. Robert's connection to the men then, is figured as a queer resistance to heteronormative violence enacted through kindness and care towards animals and a love for each other.

The two men that hold significant emotional places in Robert's affections are Harris and Rodwell. Harris is a soldier that he meets when caring for the horses, but he is soon injured in combat. Robert's affection for Harris is evident in his decision to visit him every day whilst he is in hospital in London. Despite Harris's debilitating injuries and the lack of conversation at his bedside, it is stated that 'the hours were made worthwhile whenever Harris woke and smiled and sometimes Robert had to look away because he was confused by what he felt.' (104) Robert's confusion for how he feels stems from his innocence and confusion surrounding his sexuality. This is a different confusion from that which he felt when witnessing Taffler in the brothel, because Harris is not associated with violence. This is reinforced by the comment that 'the thing was – no one since Rowena had made Robert feel he wanted to be with them all the time.' (104) Harris is therefore aligned with Rowena, vulnerable in his injured condition, and worthy of Robert's affection due to this vulnerability and the affinity they both share for animals.

In Harris's delirium, he begins recounting to Robert memories of his encounters with animals. His descriptions are surreal and dream-like, but depict intimate, material relationships. For instance, he states : 'I'd slide. Like a seal. Out of the air and into the water. Out of my world into theirs.' (104) In addition, 'once I got lost. In a school of mackerel. Silver. Blinding. Every time they turned, I was blinded by their scales. We swam into seaweed. Kelp. Long, slippery arms, like horses tails.' (104-5) His poetic descriptions depict a sensual and beautiful underwater world that contrasts heavily with the violent, muddy warfront. This is further evidenced by Harris's addition that 'they accept you there. As if you might belong, if you wanted to. It's not like here. It's not like here at all.' (104) He therefore demonstrates a kind of relationship with these animals and their world that bears similarity to the kinship put forth by Haraway, and one that is not governed by heteronormative expectations, meaning that he can be himself and not the heteronormative violent military 'hero' he is supposed to be when he is with his animal kin. Haraway states that 'people become kin largely by sharing experiences and generating a sense of belonging.' (3) Harris feels he 'belongs' with the animals in a way that he does not feel in his military world, preferring kinship with animals to that with humans. Robert recognises this, and it is this that endears Harris to Robert. After his death, Robert scatters his ashes into a river: 'Go, he said, in peace. And sing with the whales.' (119) His idea of peace for Harris is imagining him with his animal kin. Juliet D'Orsey, a young woman that became acquainted with Robert after her family home was converted to a military hospital during the war writes in her accounts of

the period, which are drawn upon by the archivist framing the novel: 'I think that Robert was in love with Harris.' (113) In addition, she shatters the connection between masculinity and heterosexuality, and masculinity and sensitivity, stating that 'it may be pedestrian to say so – but the truth is often pedestrian and I think the fact is that extremely physical men like Robert and Jamie and Taffler are often extremely sensitive men as well.' (113) Their sensitivity however, becomes their downfall within this hetero-masculine military arena, in which emotions and caring for others, both human and non-human, interferes with military duty and plagues them with feelings of inadequacy.

Robert meets his other close friend, Rodwell, when he is assigned to his dugout in a trench on the front line. Unlike the consistent violence towards animals that Robert has heretofore witnessed, Rodwell presents a striking contrast because, since Rowena, he is the first person Robert encounters that keeps a number of 'pet' animals, caring for them in an explicit sense in the trench. He therefore, like Robert, demonstrates an ethics of care in line with the feminist care tradition set out in this chapter as a new way of relating to animals that resists the masculinized violent ethics of justice that have underpin the war. Donovan suggests that 'ethics be rooted in caring practice and an epistemology of attentive love.'[29] This dichotomy of ethics, the masculinized military conception vs. feminist empathy, is recognised by Webb, who states: 'the antithesis of this domestic "war with nature" is the compassionate, cocoon-like environment created by Robert and his fellow soldiers in the trench abode known as the Stained Glass Dugout.' (236) His reference to the dugout as 'cocoon-like' encapsulates a womb-like, formative and nurturing space that sheltered the men from the violence of the outside world by drawing upon imagery of a butterfly. This suggests that when they leave this safe cocoon space they must undergo a transformation, leaving behind their empathy and emerging as soldiers of duty, forced out into the violence.

The conflict between military duty and ethical duty that I have argued as operating throughout the novel in Robert's consciousness is also that which drives Rodwell to take his own life. Like Robert, he too cannot tolerate violence against animals, which is what he witnesses when he is deployed to another location with a different platoon of soldiers:

> When Rodwell arrived, he found them slaughtering rats and mice – burning them alive in their cooking fires. Rodwell, being Rodwell, had tried to stop

[29] Josephine Donovan, 'Attention to Suffering', p. 190.

> them. They would not be stopped – and, seeing that he took an interest, they'd forced him to watch the killing of a cat. Half an hour later, Rodwell wandered into No Man's Land and put a bullet through his ears. (150)

These men, who kill animals in front of him because they know he finds it harrowing, mocking him and finding enjoyment in mentally torturing him through physically hurting animals, violate Rodwell's ethical boundaries. Rodwell recognises that amongst these men, unlike the ones he shared with in the dugout, he is different, and that he will not be able to protect animals and care for them, as he has always done. These men enact the military, masculinized mindset that justifies killing without consequence, whereas Rodwell embodies an ethic of care. Consequently, Rodwell takes his own life. Rodwell's suicide seems to be the novel's implicit admission of the hopelessness of such a resistance to a domineering masculinity that normalizes violence against animals and is figured as heteronormative, signalling the fate that awaits Robert.

The affection that Robert has for Rodwell, substantiated by his shared concern for animals, is reciprocated by Rodwell, who recognises in Robert the same morality. This is evidenced by his immortalisation of Robert within his sketchbook, situated amongst their animal kin: 'in all of them – on every page, the drawings were of animals. Of maybe a hundred sketches, Robert's was the only human form. Modified and mutated – he was one with the others.' (155) Rodwell recognises in Robert that which Robert saw in Harris, that they both feel a better sense of belonging in forming kinship with animals. Webb reads this moment as indicative of Robert's 'impending death' (237), which following the deaths of Taffler, Harris and Rodwell, is a reasonable conclusion. I would build upon this argument by stating that Robert's place amongst the other animals is indicative of the resistance that he will go on to demonstrate against his human comrades and his military duty in favour of protecting animals and upholding an ethical duty. Rodwell foresees that Robert, like himself, will choose to be amongst his animal kin in an explicit sense and in drawing Robert amongst the animals he immortalises his care for them. It is then, a deeply tragic moment in the novel in which art conveys the impossibility of a better more-than-human-world.

This connection that Findley draws between queering and caring, enacted through Robert's affection for Harris and Rodwell, is figured through their relationship to animals. Through their affinity with animals and the desire they have to protect them and be kin with them they are able to recognise in each other the propensity for

care and a desire to escape the hierarchy of violence enforced in the military, and imagine a type of relationship with one another that is radically anti-hegemonic in its rupture of heteronormativity and anthropocentrism.

Reaching the Ethical Limit: The Rape of Robert

The turning point for Robert does not come through a witnessing of violence towards animals, as was the case for Rodwell, but rather it is realised when he is raped by a group of men at a public baths in Desolé. It is through this experience that Robert recognises the limitless violence that is nurtured within the military world and the need to exert and prove one's masculinity in order to survive it, which is often at the expense of violating someone else. Robert's rape is a violent reconfiguration of the masochistic encounter between Taffler and the Swede, marked by a similarity in horse and rider dynamic. However, whereas Taffler's activity was consensual and confusing to Robert as a witness, Robert has now been placed as the subject within this non-consensual encounter, forced into the role of a horse to be broken, and a young man to be dominated and violated by predatory men abusing his non-masculine vulnerability.

The novel describes in graphic detail Robert's struggle against the assault: 'Robert threw his head back and tried to scream but a hand went over his face and fingers were inserted in his mouth. They pulled at his lips until he thought his jaw was going to snap.' (192) The insertion of fingers in Robert's mouth, pulling at his lips, is not only a gross demonstration of the sadomasochistic enjoyment of his perpetrators, forcing apart his mouth for their pleasure, but it is also reminiscent of the 'bit', a piece of equestrian equipment used to break-in and control horses by being placed within their mouths and across their tongue by pulling on their lips and inserting a finger into the side of the horse's mouth. This feature of the assault also symbolizes their attempted silencing of Robert, rendering it impossible for him to speak or shout for help. He, like the animals he has encountered up until this moment, becomes a silenced victim of violence in a wider system of oppression.

Rhodes argues that in moments like this, the novel 'literalizes the violence inherent in the tense interlining of homosocial and homosexual and the queer disruption of binaries in which homosexuality seems to exult.'[30] Robert's queerness then, is seen as disruptive to the other male soldiers, who in an effort to consolidate their masculinity partake in an over-exertion of it by turning Robert's sexuality back on

[30] Shane Rhodes, 'Buggering with History', p. 45.

him as a way of violating him and the disruption he represents. This distorted expression of their hyperbolised masculinity and its convolution in violence, consistent with the military arena, presents a reconfigured and gross demonstration of the intimacy of the male relationships in this space, reinforcing Rhodes's labelling of the dynamic between the homosocial and the homosexual as 'tense'. Brydon brings this moment further into the militarised sphere when she states that 'Robert never sees his assailants' faces. Modern warfare, like the rape, is impersonal, anonymous.'[31] The rape of Robert, therefore, is not only coded within a language of species dominance, but also reflects a corrupt logic within the psychology of warfare. In his failure to fit into the image of a masculine, heteronormative military hero, or to conceal his sexuality, like Taffler, Robert becomes like Harris and Rodwell and the animals they sought to protect: a victim. Furthermore, by including such a scene in his war narrative, Findley both ruptures and denies the traditional sense of heroism that underpins these types of national narratives.

Camp Climactic Heroism: Choosing Animal Kinship over Military Duty

Robert's horrific experience at the hands of his comrades is the turning point at which he decides he will no longer follow his military orders. Findley demonstrates through this turn in psychology that he is resistant to a logic of morality as duty to law and the notion that laws are inherently ethical by demonstrating that in this case they are a product of violent patriarchy and masculinity. Robert, who has consistently been in conflict between his military duty to kill and his ethical duty to care for, finally decides to privilege his ethical duty and abandon his allegiance to his human comrades in an camp, grandiose tragic scene in which he attempts to rescue a large number of horses from the front line. He turns to his fellow soldier on duty Devlin and says '"I'm going to break ranks and save the animals."' (201) This militarised language constructs two opposed ranks, humans and animals, between which Robert is switching sides and 'breaking' away from the army. The question as to whether there is a duty to protect the animals rather than kill them has finally been answered for Robert, whose experience of sexual assault, zoomorphic in its dynamic, pushes him to decide that the only counter to such violence is distance from humans and kinship with animals. He therefore decides to lock himself and the horses inside a barn, and refuses to come out.

This climactic scene is camp in its depiction of a highly wrought scene of violence. The aesthetic of this scene is consistent with Sontag's description of camp as 'a

[31] Diana Brydon, 'A Devotion to Fragility: Timothy Findley's *The Wars*', p. 79.

particular kind of style [with a] love of the exaggerated.'[32] Moreover, she adds that camp 'incarnates a victory of "style" over "content," "aesthetics" over "morality," of irony over tragedy.' (62) The camp stylization I am referring to in the novel, then, is the overtly dramatic, exaggerated scenes of violence, like this scene when Robert attempts and fails to rescue the horses, however, Robert's emotional turmoil and the escalation of the problem from a small act of defiance into a scene of tragic failure as Robert is burnt and the horses perish reinforces the notion that the novel adopts but reworks Sontag's definition of camp by encapsulating the tragedy within this dramatic scene. It is a scene of exaggerated style, encapsulating and escalating the melodrama of the military narrative into a scene of chaos in which it is hard to pinpoint whether the tragedy lies in Robert's failure or in the conditions that led him to attempt to defy orders.

Ironically, it is the very thing that Robert perceives as the remedy to violence, kinship, which ultimately dooms him and the other horses to a violent end. The narrative notes that 'Robert called out very distinctly (and there are twenty witnesses to this): "we shall not be taken."' (212) Such a statement represents a utopian sense of togetherness that Robert has been striving for throughout the novel and, moreover, his defiance in this unity reflects his determination to protect the vulnerable beings he has repeatedly failed to protect in the past. However, 'it was the 'we' that doomed him. To Mickle, it signified that Robert had an accomplice.' (212) The notion that Robert's 'we' could be inclusive of horses is not a point of consideration for Mickle, his military superior, who is a product of the humanist, patriarchal military that Robert is opposing. As such, Mickle perceives Robert as a threat and does not understand the reasoning underpinning his decision to lock himself in the barn. He thus sets fire to the barn in an attempt to force Robert and his 'accomplice' out.

The fire soon engulfs the entirety of the barn, and this is where the camp stylization of the scene begins. It is grandiose in its depiction, a moment of heavily exaggerated violence, stating that 'Men, machines and houses went up like torches. It became a holocaust.' (207) This description of the seeming mass slaughter occurring during the scene implicates the innocence of the victims, sacrificed due to a logic of difference:

[32] Susan Sontag, Notes on 'Camp', p. 56.

> Just as the walls began to fall in on top of the fifty horses – all of them standing in their places while they burned – Robert turned the mare and she leapt through the flames – already falling – with Robert on her back on fire. (213)

Robert's final attempt to save the horses results in one-hundred-and-thirty dying. The description of them 'standing in their places while they burned' is a reconfiguring of military stoicism, exaggerating to certain death. Moreover, Robert's tragic subversion of horse and rider, 'leaping through the flames' whilst also on fire, reiterates the 'consciously "stagey", specifically theatrical' concept of camp put forth by Newton and brings us back again to the association between violence and horse riding that has pervaded the novel.[33] Not even in an attempted assertion of empathy and care can Robert ride this horse away from violence because by the very nature of its dynamic it is violent.

By depicting a camp stylized tragedy, deadly serious and deeply moral, but meeting the melodramatic cultural logic of the military hero on a similar level, Findley radically inhabits the military mourning mode. This moment is both tragic in its failure and in the death of so many horses, but it is exaggerated and "too much" in its actualisation of events. This plays into Findley's engagement with the construction of narrative and the self-conscious state of his novel. We are hearing this account from testimonies of witnesses, through Juliet D'Orsey's account and also through photographs, and so the camp, exaggerated nature of the scene encapsulates the way in which narratives take on a life of their own when they are reiterated – they are often built upon, exaggerated, and in particular with war narratives, they hinge upon theatricality, tragedy, empathy and a grandiose mode of mourning.

Robert's defiance of military orders would seem enough to deny him empathy, but through Findley's characterisation of a hero as someone who undermines military duty in favour of ethical duty, he re-imagines a military hero as someone who seeks a utopian kinship and commits to a conscience of caring. He thereby commits an awful but necessary act in a dreadful failed attempt to save lives, and attempts to undermine the fixed construction of hierarchy that has been so oppressive. Brydon

[33] Esther Newton, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972) p. 107.

does not comment on the camp nature of the scene, but she does comment upon the ambiguity that I previously identified, stating:

> He [Robert] represents the ambiguity of the beautiful gesture. Is Robert's action beautiful because it is humane, because it is (at least immediately) useless, or because it is doomed to failure and leads inevitably to violence?[34]

However, I argue that it is precisely through the exaggerated camp nature of the scene that renders such moral categorisation impossible. Although it is tragic, as Brydon states here, it is difficult to point out precisely that which makes it tragic. However, there is an underlying sense of heroism and beauty in Robert's militarised logic of 'breaking ranks' in favour of kinship with animals, which does render the scene a 'beautiful gesture'. In comparison, Webb says of the scene:

> These graphic descriptions reinforce the novel's strategy to shock the readers out of a complacent acceptance of suffering. Findley's outrage at humans "dragging its animals into destruction" finds expression through an articulation of animal suffering in the midst of a conflict they have no stake in and no power to escape, except by death. (234)

Such criticism implies that Robert failed to recognise his and the horses' same entrapment within this oppressive structure of conflict. Webb thus argues that it is through a depiction of 'animal suffering' that Findley attempts to expose the gruesome reality of the arena of war. However, an emphasis on suffering overlooks Robert's controversial and incredible defiance of his military duty in favour of solidarity with animals. And so, I argue that the novel puts forth the notion that by an ethic of care we abandon the type of heroic nostalgia that has dominated war fiction; we re-imagine what constitutes the 'hero' and the stakes that are at play in following one's duty, and forgo violence in favour of kinship. Findley realises it is difficult to implement such a utopian, sentimental framework, evidenced in the death of the horses and in Robert's injuries. However, the construction of the narrative, in particular by drawing upon the account of Juliet D'Orsey, who admires and cares for Robert, continues to depict Robert in a sympathetic and heroic light, underlining the novel's ethics with a kind of sentimental hope that cannot be distinguished. Although the queer hero of this narrative fails to rescue the horses and later dies of his injuries, the anti-heroic heroism of his act, defying military duty in favour of ethical duty, remains the central logic of the novel and its camp climax

[34] Diana Brydon, 'A Devotion to Fragility: Timothy Findley's *The Wars*' p. 78.

of heroism. Findley locates within his vision of the heroic an ethics and duty of care that refutes hierarchy and imagines kinship in which feminized and queer ways of relating take precedence as a counter to a figured domineering heteronormativity. The queer elements of the novel, then, such as the camp aesthetic utilised in this particular scene, and Robert's queer identity, are coded as entangled within an ethics of care to present a narrative that is radically anti-hegemonic in its way of thinking.

Camping Genesis and Caring for those *Not Wanted on the Voyage* (1984)

The techniques of queer animal representation that I have outlined in my analysis of *The Wars*, working from within a camp framework towards a feminist care ethics, are similarly at work in *Not Wanted on the Voyage*. However, there are representational differences and developments between the two novels. In *Not Wanted on the Voyage* Findley mobilizes anthropomorphism to provide a camp version of the Genesis Flood myth. This myth is a central story in nations where Christianity is the dominant religion, and in particular in settler nations wherein these types of myths played a role in the construction of colonized nations and a new sense of 'Canadian' identity. By reconfiguring this myth then, much like his inhabitation of the war fiction genre in *The Wars*, Findley deliberately engages with the types of narratives that have underpinned settler national identity and works to undermine them by demonstrating that violence accompanies them. Moreover, by framing the narrative with a camp aesthetic, Findley radically inhabits the mythic literary form to demonstrate a self-conscious engagement with mythical narratives about animals, developing on Engel's de-mythologizing strategy. However, whereas Engel creates a story that is self-consciously centred around the writing of stories about animals, Findley opts instead for a process of reconfiguration of established narratives.

In Findley's Genesis story there are talking animals, hierarchies of oppression, and Satan disguised as a woman named Lucy and married to Noah's son Ham. Taking this all into consideration, I want to reflect on Haraway's statement that: 'I am convinced that actual encounters are what makes beings' (67) to suggest that Findley's novel, alongside demonstrating the violence and oppression of hierarchical structures, simultaneously imagines a kind of kinship as occurring between its oppressed inhabitants of the ark. The intimate kinship that is achieved namely by Mrs Noyes, Ham and Lucy with non-human animals is that which Robert in *The Wars* aspired to achieve when rescuing the horses. It demonstrates the possibility of a new kind of interspecies interaction that acknowledges these

differences and yet moves beyond them through the establishment of non-violent, non-oppressive relationships, and that these moments are powerful, deeply emotional, and yet positive aspects of the novel that provide profound social commentary on the kinds of relationships we form with humans and non-human animals alike. I will then attempt to draw these moments into a queer framework of subversion, demonstrating that the camp elements of the novel, such as the characterisation of Lucy, figures care for animals as a form of resistance to a kind of patriarchal violence that, much like in *The Wars,* Findley contends as heteronormative, demonstrating that this same logic visible in *The Wars* is also underpinning *Not Wanted on the Voyage*. Consequently, Findley's novel is a postmodern, self-conscious and camp version of the myth of the Flood that subverts a traditional narrative to introduce an ethical resistance to violent patriarchy through the concept of care and kinship stemming across species, genders and sexualities in the framework of nation.

Mrs Noyes and Her Feminist Care Tradition

In *The Wars* it is Robert, Rowena and Rodwell who adopt an ethics of care, but the novel predominantly centres on Robert in a reconfigured heroic narrative. However, in *Not Wanted on the Voyage*, there is a more explicit sense of hierarchy between the characters, made evident through a physical divide in the spatial confinement of Mrs Noyes, Emma, Ham and Lucy below deck with all of the animals. Within this confinement, we see the ethics of care emerge between these characters and the animals around them, particularly through the character of Mrs Noyes, who is figured as radically caring in contrast to her violent husband, Dr Noyes. The dynamic of their marriage depicted in the novel is an exaggerated and heavily stylized version of the typical arguing married couple. This camp, humorous and stylized subversion of the serious biblical myth is indicative of Findley's creative license, working within but departing from a well-known narrative framework in order to ridicule the ideology underpinning Dr Noyes' violence and rendering it impossible to take seriously. Findley's depiction of the arguing biblical couple inevitably produces humour, particularly through Mrs Noyes' disobedience, which is continually shut down by Dr Noyes' overruling dominance.

Despite this constant power struggle, and in contrast to the narrator of *Surfacing*, who empathises mimetically with non-human animals, Mrs Noyes leverages her position in the power structure as below Dr Noyes but above the non-human. Much like Robert in *The Wars*, she attempts small acts of defiance in order to protect

other beings she recognises as suffering and in doing so she demonstrates a sense of duty to care for these beings as a means of providing comfort for their current oppressive conditions. Moreover, much like Robert and his friends Harris and Rodwell, Mrs Noyes prefers the company of non-human animals to her human husband and two of her sons because she so frequently chooses them over those members of her family, for instance in opting to remain in the lower decks of the ark rather than be with her husband. Her approach, though perhaps not consciously, is pro-animal and anti-patriarchal. She sees the non-human animals around her not as her comrades in oppression, but as her kin, which is reinforced by her distress at the end of the novel when Yahweh's binaries are codified and her sheep can no longer communicate in her language and sing with her as they always have. This confirms and consolidates another divide between species, literally and figuratively silencing the voices of animals in Yahweh's new world and rupturing the kinship she had built with the sheep.

One of Mrs Noyes' most significant acts of defiance in the novel is her rescuing of Lotte, Emma's younger sister, who is an ape-child, and her attempt to bring her on board the ark to safety. Lotte is one of three 'ape children' that appear in the novel, the other is Mr and Mrs Noyes' son, Adam, who is born and dies before the beginning of the novel, and the third is born to Hannah and Shem. Despite the proximity of humans to apes, these children are characterised in the novel as a genetic abnormality because of their ape-ness, perceived almost as an evolutionary failure: an underdeveloped human. However, they aren't genuinely hybrids, they are biologically conceived, and so this characterisation of them as 'ape-children' reinforces Dr Noyes' ableist way of talking about bodies that do not conform to his anthropocentric edict. This is further reinforced by the fact that they are kept secret by the families they are born into, as they are depicted in the novel as a marker of shame, of indicating that there is some kind of genetic impurity running within that family. Dr Noyes' repulsion at their existence signifies the binary he has drawn between human and non-human, concluding that any being that is not wholly human is thereby non-human and a threat to the purity and superiority of the human species.

As a consequence of this characterisation, the continued emergence and killing of the 'Lotte children' throughout the novel has been read by critics of the text as representing a fascist politics of species, offering, through his detestation of them, a clear demonstration of Dr Noyes' speciesist humanism and his anxious defence of the human. Wendy Pearson links Dr Noyes' obsession with genetics to the queer

nature of the novel, arguing that it can only be read 'in light of the Human Genome Project, the search for the gay gene, and the genocidal potential of genetic engineering and biotechnology.'[35] She explains:

> Those most at risk from these developing technologies are the ones at the bottom of the social hierarchy, invisible as selves but all too visible – and vulnerable – as objects of study, experimentation, destruction. (128)

Such an analysis centres Lotte and the other ape-children as a queering element in the narrative – resulting in a re-writing of a Genesis myth in which Noah's children are (by Pearson's argument) homosexual, thereby complicating the repopulation of the earth that is to follow in this creation story. However, this analysis, equating the ape-children with a 'gay gene' detested by Noah overlooks both the neurodiversity element and the species element that is at play within the novel by reducing it to symbolic significance. I would instead argue for the intersection of these social strands. Lotte queers the narrative through her disruption to what Dr Noyes perceives as genetic normativity and the potential this holds to shed a light on the troubling arguments surrounding homosexuality and genetics during this period, especially considering Findley's own sexual identity, but she also stands as a figure that complicates the species distinction. Her characterisation, coded as vulnerable to the violence of Dr Noyes' exclusionary humanism, encourages us to sympathise with her. Findley does not privilege one social oppression over another, but rather, through the ambiguous characterisation of these 'ape-children', and through the intersection between using them to queer the narrative and also to trouble the question of species, he problematizes the violence underlying genetics and hierarchy.

Criticism that attempts to understand the characterisation of Lotte and the 'ape-children' of the novel has consistently overlooked the more positive and caring way in which Mrs Noyes speaks of and interacts with these children. I contend that when she discovers Lotte abandoned due to the rising flood waters, her desire to rescue her and care for her demonstrates a sense of kinship. Haraway states that 'people become kin largely by sharing experiences and generating a sense of belonging' (3) and it is this 'belonging' that challenges Noah's speciesist and exclusionary paranoia and the rules governing who is permitted on board the ark. Mrs Noyes' sympathy for Lotte partly stems from the love she had for her own 'ape-child' son, with whom

[35] Wendy Pearson, 'Vanishing Acts II: Queer Reading(s) of Timothy Findley's Headhunter and Not Wanted on the Voyage', *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 33.4. (1998) 114-131 (p. 128).

she had also challenged Noah's speciesist logic by keeping him alive for a short while:

> Mrs Noyes had briefly disobeyed the rules and had allowed her forbidden child to exist, as Lotte was allowed to live, and the results had been tragic. She had come to love the child in its short, short life – and that was her downfall. Mrs Noyes had never forgotten her unwelcome baby – her pariah – nor how she had lost it.[36]

Mrs Noyes does not mean that she was wrong to love such a child, but that it was foolish of her to allow him to live and to bond with him when his existence in a world governed by Noah's ideology was doomed. It is relevant to point out here that there are significant risks at work in Findley's novels in the apparent alignment he draws between human disability and animality that I raised previously in my analysis of Rowena in *The Wars* that are also evidenced here in the figure of Lotte. The disparaging rhetorical use of disabled humans as "marginal cases" in early animal rights conversations has consistently sparked debate and has since been resisted. Lotte is represented as an outcast due to her animality, which is signified in her bodily 'ape-like' appearance. Taylor states that human culture has 'invested in certain bodies', and so consequently animality and animal bodies have consistently been weaponised against disabled people as a way of labelling their bodies as inadequately human.[37] She states: 'I understood that saying I was like an animal separated me from other people'. (192) As such, Findley's configuration of Lotte as an outcast due to her non-human body problematically draws upon conversations surrounding animal studies and disability that seeks to move away from these kinds of comparisons. She therefore shares a similar characterisation to Rowena in *The Wars*, enacting a 'non-normative humanness' that renders them vulnerable, a concept that Taylor argues has been detrimental to the advancement of disabled people and to animals. Lotte's victimhood differs slightly from Rowena's, however, because it is grounded in her bodily proximity to animality. She is born to human parents, much like Mrs Noyes' own 'ape-child', Adam, which suggests that the concept of 'human' is fluid, and pertains to a certain visual bodily aesthetic. Such a 'paradigm of able-bodied superiority' that Taylor critiques is 'not something we should accept as natural', nor should we accept 'human domination over animals',

[36] Timothy Findley, *Not Wanted on the Voyage* (New York: Arrow Books Limited, 1986) p. 149 [All subsequent quotations taken from this edition].
[37] Sunaura Taylor, 'Beasts of Burden: Disability Studies and Animal Rights' in *Qui Parle*, 19.2. (2011) 191-222 (p. 197).

another socially constructed site of oppression. (202) Taylor's statement that I drew upon in my analysis on Rowena is equally applicable to the characterisation of Lotte. She states that 'the idea that disability is a personal tragedy as opposed to an issue of social justice needs rectifying.' (204) Findley, although depicting a localised, intimate relationship between Mrs Noyes and Lotte, characterises these ape-children in a way that casts a broader critique surrounding our normalised conception of 'bodies.' Thus, there is an underlying problematic alignment with disability occurring at moments within Findley's fiction, evident through the vulnerability and victimhood status of both Rowena and Lotte, which needs to be unpicked in an alternative project to interrogate this troubling intersection that renders disability and non-able bodies as inherent victims.

Despite this potentially challenging alignment, considering Lotte's narrative from a singular species-centred focus does permit us to expose moments of Haraway's concept of kinship and to reiterate Mrs Noyes as a character that cares for all beings, despite the duty she holds as Dr Noyes' wife and to the Edict. This exposure works to find the positivity within Findley's novel, and pay attention to the more intimate moments that are frequently overlooked in favour of a critique of patriarchy and the oppressive politics at play within the novel. Mrs Noyes knows that Yahweh's Edict does not permit Lotte entry to the ark, and she knows, given her own history of birthing Adam, that Dr Noyes has a particular disdain towards children like Lotte. However, she still chooses to save her. Moreover, she climbs into a flooding and fast flowing river in order to retrieve her, as Lotte is trapped on the other side: 'Mrs Noyes hoisted Lotte onto her back and started down the bank. "Don't be afraid…"' (157) This moment, although tragic because Lotte has been abandoned, is also sentimental and radical because, as Armstrong states, sentimental narratives 're-engage literary fiction with the most vital and intimate of contemporary structures of feeling.' (225) This moment then, in its depiction of an interspecies relationship operating outside of patriarchy, imagines what it would be like to put yourself at risk out of concern for a member of another species, and literally and figuratively walk through the river together. Such a kinship and radical moment of rescuing is like that which Robert was striving for at the end of *The Wars*, but ultimately failed to achieve.

Mrs Noyes holds Lotte physically close to her, carrying her on her back, and also emotionally comforts and communicates with her, repeatedly telling her '"don't be afraid"', (157) reassuring Lotte and adopting a maternal role. Furthermore, Mrs Noyes' thoughts whilst she is crossing the river reinforce not only her desire to

detach herself from Yahweh and Noah's religious patriarchy that has permitted Lotte to be abandoned to her death, but her dislike and distrust of Yahweh for that cruelty: 'Pray she almost thought, that Lotte will not be afraid when she sees me coming. But I will not pray: not to You, gone mad up there with Your vengeance.'(153) Here, then, the concept of care and maternal protection is not limited to intraspecies relationships and, controversially for the wife of Noah, it is foregrounded over religious duty. In rescuing Lotte Mrs Noyes gets a second chance at the motherhood role she did not fulfil with Adam, and actively goes against the word of God and of her husband. Thus, this is an extremely emotive moment in the novel, whereby a relationship that has been forbidden by human speciesist social constructs is authentically grounded on empathy and responsibility, exposing the ethics of care underlying the novel that Findley sees a hope within. Moreover, it is a radical reconfiguration of the submissive and obedient wife figure in Genesis, demonstrating Findley's intention to re-situate the narrative of this myth within a more caring, pro-animal and less hierarchical direction.

The challenge to Dr Noyes' authority that rescuing and forming an attachment to Lotte offers in the novel is symbolised by Mrs Noyes' decision to rest and eat apples before returning to the ark, despite the impending flood. Prior to rescuing Lotte, Mrs Noyes had ventured into a forbidden orchard to pick some apples, but before she had gotten the opportunity to eat them she spotted Lotte and abandoned them in her panic. In such a depiction, Findley subverts and camps the myth of 'the fall of man' to reinforce Mrs Noyes' defiant and rebellious character: there was no serpent tempting Mrs Noyes, she actively chose to defy Dr Noyes by venturing away from the ark and entering the orchard. The camp artifice and exaggeration lies in Mrs Noyes' desire not just to try the fruit, but also to find and eat lots of apples. This provides a humorous characterisation of her as the anti-thesis to the image of Eve in that she is both actively disobedient and greedy, and that she finds active enjoyment in breaking her husband's rules. Moreover, furthering her departure from Eve, her 'fall' is choosing to form a kinship with a being that not only falls outside of the Edict, but is also a being that for Noah, represents the faltering superiority of humans, that which he is determined to protect and keep genetically pure. Depicting Dr Noyes in this way does move his characterisation beyond that of an oppressive patriarch and into a fascist politics of concern for genetics and separation of species. This purposeful contrast of the original biblical figure of Noah as the protector of animal species in his building and management of the ark with Findley's Dr Noyes, a figure that draws parallels to Dr Mengele through the addition

of 'Dr' for his title, is a further demonstration of the exaggerated camp framework at work within the novel, which both exposes the drawing of clear moral boundaries between characters and their treatment of their potentially queer, potentially non-human kin, and also undermines it through its representing it with such hyperbolic artifice.

In this exaggerated and self-conscious construction of "goodies" and "baddies" at work in the novel's camp framework then, Dr Noyes is the perpetrator of violence and Mrs Noyes is the protector. Donovan states that a Feminist ethics of care 'appreciates that what we share – life – is more important than our differences. Such a relationship sometimes involves affection, sometimes awe, but always respect.'[38] This disregard for difference and desire to establish a relationship built on respect and awe is demonstrated by Mrs Noyes' physical closeness and protection of Lotte: 'Mrs Noyes and Lotte – hand in hand – went up the Hill', and she reassures her again, saying '"Don't be afraid."' (159) The genuine affection she holds for Lotte is made further evident in her optimism regarding keeping her safe, and Mrs Noyes' puts her faith into the ark's role as a haven of safety and a vessel for the future of the earth's human and non-human populations, believing that it will protect them both: 'as she crossed the threshold and stood – at last where she had thought she would never stand – aboard the ark, with its deck beneath her feet – she kissed the top of Lotte's head and whispered to her; "safe, at last. You're safe, at last – as I promised."' (167) It is her desire to protect her that motivates her to bring her on board the ark, countering the Edict but remaining hopeful that she can appeal to her husband's empathy. She uses the 'scandal' of Lotte and Adam's existence and connection to Noah's bloodline to manipulate him into agreeing to allow Lotte to remain safely aboard the ark. Unfortunately, Mrs Noyes' underestimates the depths of Dr Noyes' cruelty, and that he is steadfast in his role of the gatekeeper of both the Edict and the ark, and so he ultimately decides whom the ark 'saves'. This brings to light the violence that would underpin an event like the Flood, revealing that in the detailed reality of this myth there were many lives that were discarded and eradicated and bringing a nuanced perspective to this biblical narrative, reiterating the image of God and Noah as vengeful, violent and lacking in empathy.

Despite Lotte's murder being desperately sad, the moments that she and Mrs Noyes share prior to her death, and Mrs Noyes' determination to save her, do offer

[38] Josephine Donovan, 'Animal Rights and Feminist Theory' in *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics*, ed. by Josephine Donovan and Carol J. Adams (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007) pp. 58-87 (p. 74).

some of the most tender and – if only temporarily - optimistic scenes within the text. Mrs Noyes is depicted, therefore, as a character of resistance and rebellion, which is evidenced frequently through her relationships with the non-human characters of the text. Moreover, much like the conflict of duty experienced by Robert in *The Wars*, Mrs Noyes evidences a similar conflict of conscience. She acts in direct opposition to her supposed duty as a wife and also her religious duty as a servant of Yahweh, who is determined to demarcate and police clear species boundaries, evidenced in the killing of Lotte and through the imprisonment of the animals in the lower decks of the ark. Mrs Noyes follows her ethical duty by establishing close and caring relations with the animals and attempting to save Lotte despite knowing Dr Noyes' perception of children like Lotte. She therefore demonstrates again the ethics of care that the novel puts forth as the antidote to the oppressive politics that governs the hierarchy both on and off the ark.

As part of her kinship with the animals on board the ark, Mrs Noyes demonstrates a sense of duty towards them in her continued caring, feeding and maintaining of their limited enclosures. It is tempting to read this relationship akin to a zoo and zookeeper, however, it is vastly different due to the unique nature of the ark, in which they are all prisoners of the lower decks. In this sense then, it appears like a concentrated animal farm; each animal pair are confined to a small, inadequate enclosure, and are being kept alive to ultimately re-populate their species once the flood is over. This microscopic critique of farming conditions and the cruelty of keeping animals imprisoned in this way is offered some relief by Mrs Noyes' care for the animals and the duty she feels towards them. Mrs Noyes notes that 'she and all these creatures with her shared their captivity in a way that they could never have shared the wood.' (251) Through being confined together, then, the dynamics of their relationships have been altered. This is further reiterated in her description of the ark as akin to a baby's cradle:

> Though the ark was absolute hell in so many ways and though all their lives were so appalling – caged and underfed, left without air and daylight, separated from all their kind but one – there was nonetheless some comfort here in the lamplight, all of them warm together, nesting and being rocked together in this great, fat cradle on the waters. (250)

It is in this 'togetherness' that there is some comfort and peace in an otherwise oppressive and hellish situation. This quotation reminds us of Haraway's contention that 'actual encounters are what make beings' (67) and it is through Mrs Noyes'

proximity and material interactions with these animals that a kinship is established that moves beyond species boundaries. The rules that governed their prior relationships and interactions no longer stand because of the small, closely lined enclosures and their positions on board a vessel that is the only means to guarantee their future survival. There is no sense of predator and prey, no active hunting, nor any room for the animals to carry out their usual behavioural idiosyncrasies, which validates Mrs Noyes's use of 'captivity' to describe their situation. They swiftly become, then, kin that are sharing both a space and an experience, living more closely aligned lives than ever before. This returns us to Donovan's statement that in an ethics of care, what matters is an acknowledgement and privileging of shared existence over difference.[39] Mrs Noyes's caring for the animals is a recognition of them as her kin, and an acknowledgement of the ways in which she can leverage her humanness and its privileges to the animals' benefit, exercising an ethics of care in accessing and managing food to maintain them all through the long duration of the flood. Most significantly, she recognises the emotional needs of the animals, abandoning the caution that kept her at a distance from species that she hadn't before interacted with. In doing so, she demonstrates again a feminist care approach to interspecies relationships, one that recognises and sympathises with suffering in the other through a shared sense of imprisonment and oppression, and adopts a 'nurturing and caring' approach to them.[40] Moreover, she finds emotional joy in the closeness that this brings.

This interspecies closeness and the emotional value that can be found in these relationships is imaginatively conceived by Findley in the moment that Mrs Noyes comforts a weeping bear. She ventures into the bear cage to give comfort to a bear who has become distressed due to a storm, despite admitting that bears both 'terrified and infuriated her.' (233) This encounter is loaded with meaning given that it was written after Canadian author Marian Engel's *Bear* (1975). In *Bear*, I have noted that the animal protagonist, a large male grizzly bear refutes all symbolic readings and refuses to conform to the idea of bears that the human protagonist, Lou, constructs of him. And so, whereas Lou fails to initiate an intimate relationship with the bear, Mrs Noyes does not. Findley's bears do not resist meaning, but they are not symbolic either. Rather, Findley mobilizes anthropomorphism to deliver an emotional politics that feeds into a wider logic regarding the unity of the oppressed

[39] Josephine Donovan, 'Animal Rights and Feminist Theory', p. 74.
[40] Carol J. Adams 'Caring About Suffering: A Feminist Exploration' in *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics* ed. by Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007) pp. 198-227 (p. 201).

and drive for an ethics of care as a means of coping with their confinement. Findley wants to depict a successful, caring and intimate interspecies relationship with an animal that has famously evaded such depiction in the work of his literary predecessor because he privileges kinship and shared life experience over an emphasis of materiality and difference of species. The interaction that occurs within the cage serves as comfort to both Mrs Noyes and the bear through a reciprocated embrace. She offers physical contact to the bear by 'put[ting] her arms to the weeping bear' (233) to which it then 'stepped into the proffered embrace and hung its head on Mrs Noyes's shoulder.' (233-234) The perceived acceptance of the physical contact by the bear at first leaves Mrs Noyes contemplating her next behaviour, but this doubt is quickly overcome:

> Well – she thought – what do I do now?
>
> The answer was relatively simple.
>
> She sat on the floor of the bear cage and held the terrified bear until it fell asleep with its head in her lap…
>
> In the morning, that was how Ham found them – his mother in her nightdress – snoring in the straw, with a bear on either side, asleep. (234)

The reference Findley makes to Mrs Noyes' 'nightdress' is a clear allusion to her sexuality that engages with Engel's novel. Mrs Noyes puts aside her fear of the bear and prioritises the need to care for it by engaging in reciprocated physical contact with the bear. The success of this encounter was dependent on Mrs Noyes's offering the embrace to the bear and recognising that the animal is capable of reciprocating, which Haraway reinforces as a principle element in the act of relating. By remaining in the enclosure for the entire night and sleeping amongst the bears it is apparent that Mrs Noyes enjoys being able to offer and have this closeness with the animals; choosing to sleep with them rather than returning to her own bed. In addition, the statement 'on the ark, she not only walked amongst bears – she sat amongst them and was unafraid' (251) reinforces the new proximity she has gained to the bears on board the ark, as sitting 'amongst' them implies there is a reciprocated, functioning relationship. She has therefore, arguably, achieved a peaceful, albeit tragic due to the circumstances, version of the 'we' that Robert visualised when he barricaded himself in with the horses in *The Wars*. There is tenderness in this notion and in the encounter, and a physical gentleness that contrasts strikingly with the violence of Noah and Japeth. This scene, therefore,

indicates that there is potential stemming from these sentimental moments of resistance to oppression to imaginatively conceive of forming non-exploitative relationships with animals: an interspecies kinship.

Camping Ceremonial Animal Sacrifice: The Sacrifice of Ham

The hierarchical divide that I have outlined and the way in which this develops into a physical divide enacted through the confinement of particular characters to the lower deck, includes Ham, who is the only cis-gendered male in the lower decks. Throughout the novel his relationship with his father is figured as tumultuous in comparison to his warrior brothers and he instead is more closely aligned with the care ethics shown by his mother. It is this alignment that Dr Noyes resents, as he sees Ham's rejection of the masculinity represented by his brothers as a sign of his effeminacy and thus as a threat to the heteronormativity underpinning his governance. He therefore tests Ham prior to the boarding of the ark by asking him to sacrifice a lamb, and it is during this test that Ham demonstrates a show of loyalty to animals and thus to his mother's caring way of relating. Scholtmeijer discusses the historical and social significance of sacrifice in *Animal Victims*. She says that historically 'the normalization of killing animals apparently goes hand-in-hand with the rationalization of moral stricture', situating animal sacrifice as an influential means through which communities constructed and reaffirmed aspects of their culture .[41] She explains this by stating that sacrifice has been 'a kind of culmination in the process of 'hominization.'' (79) As such, sacrifice permits a way affirming control and domination over nature and animals by bringing them into the realm of human culture through sacrificial killing. Ham's task to sacrifice the lamb is an instruction from his father to mark the occasion of Yahweh's visit, playing into a governing social framework as discussed by Scholtmeijer. However, Scholtmeijer adds that 'primitive animal sacrifice, rather than calculated collectivization and slaughter, articulates the gravity of aggression against animals' (83) and moreover, that 'with the domestication of animals, emotional intensity surrounding the shedding of animal blood shrinks from a collective to a personal level.' (78) Therefore, the locality and personal nature of sacrifice does not permit an emotional distancing from the animal. This might explain Ham's subversion of the sacrifice of the lamb, since he has never committed a sacrifice himself before due to his disdain for harming animals.

[41] Marian Scholtmeijer, *Animal Victims*, p. 78.

In his method of carrying out the sacrifice he radically demonstrates that, like his mother, his kinship lies with animals, and not with Yahweh or his father, and moreover, that he refutes 'hominizing' ceremonial displays such as sacrifice that work to consolidate Yahweh's dominion. Ham cuts the throat of the lamb and at the same time cuts himself on the arm, mixing their blood in a camp exaggerated display: 'blood poured onto his head and through his hair and down his face and over his breast.' (27) In this moment Findley is re-working another culturally entrenched biblical myth that underpins the Western canon, the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis, in which Abraham is ready to sacrifice his son, Isaac, on an altar to God before he is stopped by a messenger who states, "now I know you fear God."[42] By revisiting this myth, Findley evidences the intertextual and self-conscious nature of his novel and its engagement with particular myths that have underpinned specific belief systems, saturating his biblical novel with smaller reconfigured biblical myths. In addition, Ham is confronted with a similar conflict of duty to that experienced earlier by Mrs Noyes, and also by Robert in *The Wars*. Ham battles between his religious duty that requires him to serve both Yahweh and his father and sacrifice the lamb, as Abraham did, and his ethical duty, which requires him to care for animals and not harm them, which Abraham did not have. By opting to alter the myth so that it is not a father willing to sacrifice a son, but a son willing to sacrifice himself in empathetic display alongside an animal, Findley radically re-situates Abraham's love for his son and fear of God into Ham's love and fear of killing the lamb through a camp depiction of a heavily stylized moment of defiance.

The God of *The Bible* shows mercy to Abraham, perceiving his readiness to sacrifice his son as proof alone, and so a ram is offered in Isaac's replacement. Ham, however, does not view the lamb as a fairer sacrifice and so willingly places himself into the role of Isaac, committing to a dramatic mutual sacrifice and joining of blood on the altar that demonstrates his refusal to perceive animal life as inherently less valuable than his own. Armstrong has said of this scene:

> Ham turns the sacrifice back on the perpetrator. And by mingling his own blood with that of the lamb, Noah's middle son (whose name of course is a homonym for a type of meat) signifies a fundamental consubstantiality between human and animal which inverts the conventional meaning of the sacrifice. (184)

[42] Genesis 22:12, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+22&version=CEB [Accessed 30 April 2020].

I want to push Armstrong's notion of 'consubstantiality' further by arguing that Ham is demonstrating a kinship with the lamb. 'Consubstantiality' implies an abandonment of difference through a shared essence, however, I would argue that Ham is utilising his position as a human and the facilitator of this animal sacrifice, privileging his ethical duty over his religious duty, acknowledging their structural differences, but valuing his relationship with the lamb nonetheless. He positions himself not only to empathise with the lamb and its ability to fear and respond to the threat to its life, but he places himself into the sacrificial role also, demonstrating the development of a non-species centred empathy: a kinship. Haraway says of killing animals that:

> Human beings must learn to kill responsibly. And to be killed responsibly, yearning for the capacity to respond and to recognize response, always with reasons but knowing there will never be sufficient reason. We can never do without technique, without calculation, without reasons, but these practices will never take us into that kind of open where multispecies responsibility is at stake. For that open, we will not cease to require a forgiveness we cannot exact. I do not think we can nurture living until we get better at facing killing. But also get better at dying instead of killing. (81)

In 'inverting' the sacrifice, and re-positioning himself as a joint victim, Ham finds his own way to 'get better at facing killing'. He joins the lamb, shedding his own blood alongside it in a manipulated cross-species empathetic sacrifice, which incorporates the exaggerated elements of camp through its ability to 'dethrone the serious'.[43] Newton says that camp is 'a system of humour. Camp humour is a system of laughing at one's incongruous position instead of crying.'[44] Thus, by reconfiguring this biblical narrative through a camp framework, and describing Ham dramatically drenching himself in blood, Findley represents an engagement with animal sacrifice that allows us to see the ridiculous nature of its ceremonial aspect. Ham's commitment to a gross, overtly embellished animal sacrifice simultaneously signals his kinship to the lamb by joining it in a partial self-sacrifice, whilst also undermining the seriousness of the act itself: exposing the artifice involved in this type of triangular relationship between animal, human and religious ceremony.

Ham's empathy is credited to a period of sickness he experienced as a child, from which he recovered but 'emerg[ed] with a love of life so great that he could not

[43] Susan Sontag, 'Notes on Camp', p. 62.
[44] Esther Newton, 'Role Models', p. 106.

bear to kill. It was for this love that he was paying now, since his father's terms of reverence were God first and all else after.' (25) This desire to protect life echoes Haraway's statement, which draws on Derridean debate regarding animal sacrifice, and states that it should be done 'always with reasons but knowing there will never be sufficient reason.' (81) Leonard Lawlor has similarly addressed this issue within Derrida in 'This is Not Sufficient'.[45] He summarises Derrida's arguments on animal sacrifice and contends that for Derrida, similarly to Haraway, an absence of violence does not equate the ethical, because of the inevitable reductive nature of relating to the other. And so, the aim becomes to limit and reduce violence against animals. Scholtmeijer shares this opinion, but rather than focusing on the amount of violence used as the ethical standpoint, she situates emotions as integral to killing animals:

> If we are to go on killing animals, it would seem better that there at least be some guilt accruing from the act than that the slaughter pass as an unremarkable event congruent with the steady process of civilization. Guilt at least honours the difference of the animal from ourselves, even if it does not prevent killing. (83)

This failure to avoid inflicting violence, but recognition of the need and necessity to reduce this violence is evident in the behaviour of Ham. He knows that he has to carry out the sacrifice of this lamb, as ordered by his father, who places God before all other life, but he makes peace with his actions through recognizing his role within the killing and his relationship with the lamb through his evident guilt at having to do so. He demonstrates the depth to which he values multispecies life in the act of causing himself physical harm to emotionally comfort himself as he kills the lamb, emotionally reducing the violence inflicted upon the lamb by inflicting it on himself as well. He purges his guilt through his own pain, sharing the experience with the lamb, and thus centring its experience as a being that is in this moment suffering.

In becoming kin with animals, Haraway argues for a reconstitution of the grounds upon which we think about our relationships with them. She states:

> Human beings' learning to share other animals' pain nonmimetically is, in my view, an ethical obligation, a practical problem, and an ontological opening. Sharing pain promises disclosure, promises becoming. The capacity to respond may yet be recognized and nourished on this earth. (84)

[45] Leonard Lawlor, *This is not Sufficient: an Essay on Animality and Human Nature in Derrida* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

Through this moment, then, Findley's novel demonstrates this notion of 'becoming' through sharing the pain of an animal in the re-writing and re-imagining of a biblical myth belonging to the book of creation; how we ourselves as earth dwellers 'became'. This moment with Ham imagines the possibility of an 'ontological opening', a new way of situating ourselves in relation to animals and our killing and sacrificing of them. The care that Ham has for the lamb means that he finds a new way of connecting to it and its suffering and sacrifice, resisting Noah's oppressive framework but also technically still operating within it – he kills the lamb as directed in preparation for Yahweh's visit, the man who will soon 'cleanse' the earth, but he intentionally mixes his blood with the animal's in a direct display of opposition to the ideology driving Yahweh's exclusionary humanist edict.

Furthermore, Ham's vulnerability, harming himself alongside the lamb, is ontologically transformative through his decision to straddle the role of sacrificer and sacrificial subject, predator and prey. In coming to terms with the notion of oneself as possible prey, Val Plumwood argues that the framework of one's subjectivity shifts. She states, 'the lack of fit between this subject-centred version, in which one's own death is unimaginable, and an "outside" version of the world comes into play in extreme moments', adding that through her experience of being attacked by a crocodile she 'glimpsed the world for the first time "from the outside", as no longer my world, as raw necessity, an unreasonably bleak order which would go on without me.'[46] In a similar way Ham demonstrates a shift in his own subjectivity, but it does not occur through the experience of becoming prey, which would be 'mimetic' as termed by Haraway, but it happens through an act of choosing to position himself as prey alongside the lamb. This shift in subjectivity then, produced through a sense of himself as prey, pre-dates that outlined by Plumwood, demonstrating the potentially crucial role of fiction in critical animal studies in furthering these types of discussions.

Ham extends his framework of subjectivity to incorporate, care for and relate to the non-human, recognising his role as the predator, or sacrificer, but also valuing his kinship with the lamb and wanting to share it's tragic role as sacrificial victim, amalgamating the two roles as a means of finely balancing resistance and conforming and religious vs. ethical duty. In depicting this gruesome and unexpected mythic re-work as a camp act of defiance, Findley encourages us to

[46] Val Plumwood, 'Human Vulnerability and the Experience of Being Prey', *Quadrant,* 39.3. (1995) 29-34 (p. 30).

imagine what it might look like to care for animals outside of these ridiculous social ceremonial duties that have normalised violence against animals. Such a depiction forces contemplation on the way in which these practices have become socially entrenched and the consequent victimhood of those suffering because of them. Through caring for the animal, Ham distances himself from Yahweh and forms a kinship instead with the lamb, putting forth an ethics in the novel that depicts care and empathy imagined through a camp framework as the means to challenge such oppressive hierarchies, and how this can be enacted through small sites or opportunities of exaggerated resistance. This demonstrates the continuity of logic underpinning the representation of human-animal relations within Findley's fiction, centring dramatic acts of defiance as integral to a pro-animal ethics.

Queering Genesis: Satan in Drag

Amongst these sentimental and tragic moments of resistance within the novel is perhaps the most controversial character in *Not Wanted on the Voyage*: Lucy, Ham's wife, who is Satan in disguise. Such a characterisation is the most explicit form of camp textuality at work within the novel, producing a deliberate queering not only meta-textually, of the Biblical Satan, and also of John Milton's antihero from *Paradise Lost*, but also inter-textually, through her challenge to *Not Wanted*'s Yahweh's and Dr Noyes' heteronormative politics. Much like Milton's Satan, and controversially in juxtaposition to the evil depiction of Lucifer in *The Bible*, Lucy is likeable and determined to lead her fallen comrades against Yahweh's and Noah's oppressive Edict. However, Findley's deviation from *Paradise Lost* is significant; Lucy is a male angel cross-dressing as a woman and is in a same-sex marriage with a human. She is described as, "Seven-foot-five: and every inch a Queen" (249), bringing her characterisation into the realms of drag through its adoption of Queer vernacular. Much critical attention has been given to the queer characterisation of Lucy. Peter Dickinson argues that:

> Her ambiguous sexuality, her hybrid human-animal status, and her camp vernacular, who most obviously disrupts the familiar binary oppositions of this world (male versus female, human versus animal, upper orders versus lower orders, old world versus new world) and who launches the most formidable challenge against Noah's "apparently axiomatic significatory system which

> has invested itself with absolute authority over those it has constructed as 'Other.'"[47]

Through her use of drag, then, she represents a queer resistance to both Yahweh's and Noah's power structures, refusing to conform to the heteronormative gender and sexuality categorisations that they uphold.

Historically, drag has been utilised within the LGBTQA* community as a means of political expression, and indeed Verta Taylor, Leila Rupp and Joshua Gamson go beyond to argue that it is a form of protest:

> [Drag] Function[s] as important tactical repertoires of the gay and lesbian movement, illuminating challenging aspects of gay life for mainstream audiences and providing a space for the construction of collective identities that confront and rework gender and sexual boundaries.[48]

There is then, through the character of Lucy, a kind of queer aesthetics of drag performance that exercises a political protest pertaining to the boundaries of sexuality and gender. Moreover, there is a camp stylization to her drag. She asks the angel Michael Archangelis:

> '"The slanted eyes, et cetera? The black, black hair – the white, white face? You don't like it? I love." Lucy took a few steps across the grass, showing off the dress – which was loose, though bound very tight around the waist with a wide, dark sash.' (107)

Findley has rightly been taken to task by critics such as Dickinson for the fetishistic orientalism of Lucy's drag. But I want to point out the performance of Lucy within this interaction with Michael Archangelis. She strides out in front of him, parading her costume of femininity, and she stumbles, comically stating that '"I haven't quite got the hang of this one yet."' (107) By combining a camp textuality in his depiction of Lucy's drag aesthetics, Findley opens up the opportunity for humour. Such a deployment of style, Esther Newton argues, works to underscore any hostility or stigmatising of the performer:

---

[47] Peter Dickinson, '"Running Wilde": National Ambivalence and Sexual Dissidence in *Not Wanted on the Voyage*' in *Essays On Canadian Writing,* 64 (1998) 125-146 (p. 139).

[48] Verta Taylor, Leila Rupp, and Joshua Gamson, 'Performing Protest: Drag Shows as Tactical Repertoire of the Gay and Lesbian Movement', *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, 25 (2004) 105-137 (p. 108).

> By accepting his homosexuality and flaunting it, the undercuts all homosexuals who won't accept the stigmatized identity. Only by fully embracing the stigma itself can one neutralize the sting and make it laughable.[49]

The employment of a camp aesthetic then, playing into an almost predominantly homosexual form of performance – drag – neutralizes confusion and dislike for Lucy's deception.

Moreover, Lucy's humorous nonchalance, telling Michael Archangelis that "It's harmless enough" (107) further works to de-stigmatise Lucy's performance. This is further reiterated in their exchange:

> "A man. Yes. So what?" Lucy pulled at her gloves, in order to make her fingers even longer.
>
> "But you're a… you're a…"
>
> "Don't say man"
>
> "I wasn't going to. But you are male."
>
> Lucy shrugged. "I like dressing up," she said. "I always have you know that" (107)

By reducing her drag performance to 'dressing up', Lucy is camping her role in the novel. We know that she knows it's more than dressing up. Dyer's definition of camp reinforces this notion, as he states that 'it is a way of prising the form of something away from its content, of revelling in the style while dismissing the content as trivial.'[50] Lucy's deception and real identity as Satan becomes less of the concern and focus of the text then, and more figured as a means through which the narrative is subverted and problematized, playing with our conceptions of good and evil.

Lucy's refusal to conform to one gender, and to heteronormative relations, brushing off her marriage to Ham, means that she threatens to destabilize and disrupt both Yahweh's and Noah's rigid Edict, further reinforced through her disguise enabling her access to the ark. The heteronormative 'two-by-two' narrative that underpins the

[49] Esther Newton, 'Role Models', p. 111.
[50] Richard Dyer, 'Its Being So Camp As Keeps Us Going' p. 113.

foundation of the story of The Flood is queered and blown apart from within by Lucy's drag. As such, Wendy Pearson argues:

> It is thus difficult to contemplate a reading of *Not Wanted on the Voyage* that does not come to terms with the transgressions inherent in the character, transgressions that suggest, at the very least, the possibility that one might read Findley in a manner that is "Queerly Canadian". (124)

Pearson thus situates Findley within a queer Canadian literary tradition primarily through the 'transgression' that is Lucy. However, such an analysis of Lucy and of Findley's queer identity expressed through her, taken alongside Dickinson's arguments, fails to engage with Lucy's animal ethics in the novel. Not only is Lucy queer in her troubling of gender and sexuality, she also offers the oppositional position to Noah through her care and affection for animals, queering his speciesist logic and controversially aligning Satan with empathy. Mrs Noyes notices that 'Lucy's greatest fascination seemed to be with the outcasts and the pariahs, the strangely formed and excessively delicate.' (274) Her character therefore operates in structural opposition to Noah, who cares only for those at the centre of society – the powerful – as Lucy cares for those on the margins of society, to whom Findley is concerned also. He is therefore less interested in trying to re-write a narrative for Satan in which we empathise with his position, but more interested in the types of characterisations that might form useful means through which to radically re-think hegemonic binaries and centre an ethics of care.

The care that Lucy bestows towards animals is made evident when she forgoes her disguise in an attempt to save the unicorn from his mutilation, as a consequence of being used as an instrument of rape by Noah in the assault on Emma. As she holds her hands over him, her webbed fingers become visible, and Mrs Noyes' recognises these as a physical attributes of the angels in Yahweh's company. She stays silent however, as at this point Lucy is the unicorn's greatest hope at survival. Unfortunately, he is revived for only moments before he is too weak to survive, and he passes away. Lucy's grief is evident in her silent contemplation after his death. The novel states that 'Lucy sat on her hip in the straw, resting her weight on one hand, with the unicorn's head still lying in her lap.' (281) This tragic scene is somewhat eased through the affectionate nature of their close physicality and the peace that comes from this material and emotional proximity. Although she is not able to restore the unicorn's life, Lucy's readiness to expose her identity for the unicorn evidences her concern and care for his life, and moreover, her disdain for

the cruel logic of Noah and Yahweh that permitted his death. In this challenging of such cruelty, attempting to restore animal life in contrast to God's taking of life, affection for and kinship with animals is figured by Findley as a way of characterising a kind of resistance to domineering masculinity that he represents as heteronormative.

Findley's pro-animal, queer characterisation of Lucy also complicates our understanding of the rigidity of narrative, since such a depiction of an empathetic Satan radically undermines the textual history of this character. As such, it offers a similar counter-discourse to the biblical narrative of Lucifer in *Paradise Lost*, depicting a Satan figure who is misunderstood and easy to sympathise with and whom we hope will prevail to free them from the imprisonment of the lower decks. The determination of Milton's Satan 'never to submit or yield'[51] is mirrored by Lucy, who says after their first defeat and the deaths of many of their animal kin, including Crowe: "however many times it takes to win. If you're wise – you'll regard what we've done tonight not as failure, but as a rehearsal."' (304) Moreover, the war-like language of Satan in *Paradise Lost* is a fitting crossover for Findley's novel which emphasises the mass genocide of animal populations that must have occurred in the biblical Flood, because as Dinesh Wadiwel has argued regarding the human treatment of animals, 'it seems reasonable to suggest that if this mass-scale injury and death is systematic and directed, then perhaps it conforms to an understanding of 'war''.[52] Lucy is then, like Satan, fighting a war against systemic oppression both covertly through her queer aesthetic, and overtly by attempting to put an end to the violence that she and her kin, both human and non-human, are experiencing at the hands of Noah through physical revolution. As such, her optimism offers Mrs Noyes and the other animals on board the ark a site of hope, as she Lucy says 'somewhere – there must be somewhere where darkness and light are reconciled.' (284) Findley therefore employs and moulds Lucy around the biblical myth of the fall of Satan and Milton's antihero's search for a relationship with God and/or religion that is not based on hierarchy or worshipping as a suppliant, but rather on equality. His queer characterisation permits him to deliver a source of hope amongst Noah's oppressive regime – imagining a leader who cares for all living beings, refutes absolute authority and doesn't conform to heteronormative structural categorisation. Moreover, through the meta-textual nature of Lucy, Findley puts forth the argument

[51] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Line 108: https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/pl/book_1/text.shtml [accessed 14 December 2019].
[52] Dinesh Wadiwel, *The War Against Animals* (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2015) p. 7.

that the literary antidote to oppressive narratives is to subvert them from within by queering them through a camp stylization, re-creating and subverting them from within to destabilise and rework the heteronormative structures that oppress all.

Queering, Caring, Kinship: Conclusion

In my analysis of Findley's novels, *The Wars* and *Not Wanted on the Voyage*, I have attempted to trace a feminist code of ethics within these texts, imagined through an emphasis on care. In both texts affection for and kinship with animals is consistently figured by Findley a way of characterising a kind of resistance to domineering masculinity that he represents as heteronormative. In *The Wars* Robert struggles with his own sexuality within a highly politicised heteronormative masculine world and attempts to exert his kinship with animals over his military duty in a camp display of defiance. Such a repositioning of heroic duty contends that through an ethics of care we might abandon such heroic nostalgia that mourns a period of mass violence. In comparison, *Not Wanted on the Voyage* is a more explicitly camp novel that mobilizes anthropomorphism as a representational strategy of imagining human-animal relations that are built upon empathy and care, born out of oppressive hierarchies. The novel re-imagines and reconfigures the mythic biblical narrative and the impracticality and inevitable violence that would go into enacting such an Edict, but through its adoption of a camp framework it is able to undermine the seriousness of this violence and allow for a focus on the more intimate and caring moments of human-animal relations.

Much like Robert, the characters Mrs Noyes, Ham and Lucy battle with a religious duty and ultimately also privilege their ethical duty, at times succeeding and at others failing. Such a depiction permits more positive and sentimental moments of kinship and togetherness than realised in *The Wars*. Despite these differences in the way in which these concepts are played out in each novel, there is evidently a logic at play within both texts that exposes Findley's representational strategy as being a queering of the mythic narrative forms that he is working within to destabilize the masculinized and heteronormative foundations of the ideology upon which the original narratives existed. In addition, I have argued that there is an ethics of care at play within both Findley's novels that intersects with a queer ideology and imagines a kinship that moves beyond such socially oppressive constructions. Queer theory and the use of camp is presented, then, as a useful representational strategy within writing about animals because it is dedicated to a radically anti-hegemonic way of thinking, subverting particular mythic narratives and opening up the

possibility for a pro-animal ethics to emerge. Findley has thus built upon the critically self-conscious style of writing adopted by Engel and introduced a pro-animal element that opens up space for even further de-mythological development and understanding of material relationships between humans and animals.

Ch5. Unsettling Coyote: Engaging with Indigenous Concepts of Care in Gail Anderson-Dargatz's *The Cure for Death by Lightning* (1996).

Gail Anderson-Dargatz's *The Cure for Death by Lightning* (1996) is a novel whose narrative is haunted by the elusive Indigenous trickster figure, Coyote. The novel details a conflict between settler and Indigenous ways of living, in particular through the way in which both groups construct relationships with non-human animals. After what is believed to be a bear attack on a young girl in the settler community, the novel's protagonist, Beth Weeks, finds herself feeling that she too is being followed by something unknown. Her mother's Indigenous friend and matriarchal figure, Bertha, introduces the concept that the figure haunting the woods is not a bear, but is in fact men who have been possessed by Coyote.

In this chapter I will argue that this contrasting epistemological understanding of human-animal relations offered by Bertha removes blame from the animals and re-situates it with the human community. In doing so it exposes the limitations of settler knowledge in being a tool for understanding and navigating this landscape and all of its non-human inhabitants. In addition, this chapter will argue that there is a conflict at work in the novel that codes the settler community as oppressively heteronormative and patriarchal, evident through characters such as Beth's father, who is an embodiment of these ideals. He asserts a systematic authority over the bodies of both Beth and his wife, and the female non-human animals on his farm. In contrast, the Indigenous characters and their relationship to non-human animals is represented as situated in empathy and care, and as less grounded in binary definitions that confine animals anthropocentrically to specific physical spaces and justify their oppression. It is more in line with an eco-sexual framework, which I will define using the work of Kim TallBear and Melissa K. Nelson. Consequently, the novel's engagement with an Indigenous story, drawing upon it as a real means of comprehending human-animal relations, is an active decolonial process of de-mythologizing, which contends that Indigenous knowledge must be taken seriously as a valuable source for understanding how to construct more empathetic and nurturing relations, both human and non-human, and that this is an important part of moving away from oppressive settler hegemonies.

Despite the novel's success in Canada, becoming both a best seller and award winning piece of fiction, little critical attention has been given to *The Cure for Death*

by Lightning.[1] In particular little engagement has been made with the text's representation of human-animal relations, despite Coyote's animal status and the agricultural setting of the novel, which details numerous interactions with animals, such as cows and chickens. The criticism that does exist has largely focused on the novel's place within the Canadian Gothic tradition, through an emphasis on the haunting presence of Coyote and the seemingly supernatural elements surrounding their characterisation, or it has paid attention to the feminist aspects of the novel through a gendered critique. Marlene Goldman, in her comparison of the novel with Sheila Watson's *The Double Hook*, outlines the Canadian Gothic as detailing 'both the Old World castle and the New World land' as 'sites of ongoing struggles over possession.'[2] As such, she argues that in *The Cure for Death by Lightning*, the Gothic, haunting element of the text is underpinned by a postcolonial critique:

> Far from anti-realist fantasies, Watson's and Anderson-Dargatz's texts register the uncanny status of Canada and British Columbia, in particular, by representing conflicts between those aligned with the patriarchal, Christian, settler community and those aligned with the unsettling trickster-god Coyote. A transformer-god who provided sustenance for his people, Coyote embodies, for the settler-invader society, the uncanny, Aboriginal claim to the land. (53)

Such a reading then, argues that the text endeavours to capture the 'uncanny' nature of being a settler population, haunted by the Godly figures of the people who have been displaced. Differing in her critique, Heidi Slettedahl Macpherson argues that rather than symbolising an 'aboriginal claim', Coyote is:

> the unnamed 'it' who follows Beth Weeks, frightens her, and abuses her. Coyote is the name of her unmentionable fear: of her father, of other men, of

[1] In Canada: shortlisted for the Giller Prize (1996). Awarded the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize (1997). Bestseller in Canada (selling over 100,000 copies). In the UK: Bestseller & winner of Betty Trask Award (1998).

[2] Marlene Goldman, 'Coyote's Children and the Canadian Gothic: Sheila Watson's *The Double Hook* and Gail Anderson-Dargatz's *The Cure for Death by Lightning', in Unsettled Remains: Canadian Literature and the Postcolonial Gothic*, ed.by Cynthia Sugars, Gerry Turcotte (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2009) pp 51-73 (p. 66).

> boys. An adolescent, Beth is at risk of sexual assault both within the home and outside of it.[3]

She thus argues that through the haunting characterisation of Coyote, Anderson-Dargatz is able to symbolically reflect a feminist critique of a specific set of gender dynamics. However, Joanne Barker argues that feminist studies has 'not accounted for the great diversity of Indigenous gender and sexuality' and that there must therefore be more of an emphasis on Native concepts of feminism and social critique of such concepts.[4] As such, this chapter will draw upon Indigenous conceptions of feminism and queer critique when discussing the Indigenous characters and their ways of living and how these contrast to the settler hegemonies. This is a concerted effort to centralise Indigenous concepts and peoples within a chapter that is focused on a novel written by settler writer about Indigenous culture.

Inevitably, the use of an Indigenous myth by a settler writer raises questions regarding the complex issue of cultural appropriation, but this has also been notably absent from criticism of the text. Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, the founding chair of the Racial Minority Writers' Committee of The Writers' Union of Canada (TWUC), argued in 1989 that 'the stories and cultures of the First Nations (and, by extension, other minorities) should not be appropriated by non-native writers' (Moore).[5] She explains:

> "You know, in our culture, people own stories. Individuals own stories. Families own stories. Tribes own stories. Nations own stories. And there is a protocol if you want to tell those stories: you go to the storyteller. And if you don't and you start telling those stories, then you are stealing." (70)

By this argument, to overlook such a particularized relationship to these stories, is to expose either one's ignorance to cultural differences or one's wilful desire to steal and use these narratives despite these differences.

---

[3] Heidi Slettedahl Macpherson, 'Coyote as Culprit: The Coyote Aesthetics of Gail-Anderson-Dargatz's *The Cure for Death by Lightning*', *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 17.2 (2004) 175-185 (p. 178).

[4] Joanne Barker, *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017) p. 14.

[5] Taken from: Margery Fee, 'The Trickster Appropriation, Imagination in Moment, and the Canada Cultural Liberal', in *Troubling Tricksters : Revisioning Critical Conversations*, edited by Deanna Reder, and Linda M. Morra, (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010) p. 163.

In a similar critique, Diana Brydon has commented on non-Indigenous, settler-Canadian writers of fiction utilising Indigenous myths and aspects of culture in their work, arguing that it stems from a settler-anxiety regarding their Canadian identity. She says:

> The current flood of books by white Canadian writers embracing Native spirituality clearly serves a white need to feel at home in this country and to assuage the guilt felt over a material appropriation by making it a cultural one as well.[6]

There is some truth in what Brydon argues here. It is imperative to acknowledge that Anderson-Dargatz is not a member of a First Nations tribe and yet has created a novel in which the narrative is entirely constructed to portray an Indigenous figure. However, Brydon's good-bad binary definition warrants further investigation because the issue of cultural appropriation is too complex to be reduced to such terms, in particular with regards to the figure of the trickster Coyote, who specifically refutes simplistic categorisation. In some cases, this question of settler writers and the appropriateness of their handling Indigenous knowledge and beliefs seriously has been noted as a positive move towards the inclusion of Indigenous beliefs within wider cultural understanding. Daniel Morley Johnson says:

> The recent scholarship of North American Indigenous literary nationalist critics has emphasized the need for work that responds not only to the intellectual paradigms of Indigenous nations, but also to the needs of Indigenous communities. Unlike some Native Studies academics, I do not take this call for accountability to mean that only Native people can write about Native literature. In fact, nationalist critics explicitly state the opposite— they simply and rightfully demand a meaningful, informed engagement with Indigenous peoples and their texts. This approach, according to Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee), "is not a necessarily exclusivist act that seeks an idealized cultural purity," but rather "a deeply realistic and life-affirming act".[7]

---

[6] Diana Brydon, '"The White Inuit Speaks": Contamination as Literary Strategy' in *Post-Colonial Studies Reader,* edited by Bill Ashcroft (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994) p. 141.

[7] Daniel Morley Johnson, '(Re)Nationalizing Naanabozho: Anishinaabe Sacred Stories, Nationalist Literary Criticism, and Scholarly Responsibility', in *Troubling Tricksters: Revisioning Critical Conversations*, ed. By Deanna Reder and Linda M. Morra (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010) pp. 199-221 (p. 202).

Thus, rather than focusing specifically on the argument surrounding cultural appropriation, this chapter aims to explore what happens to the representation of species when settler-literary writing takes on Indigenous stories and engages meaningfully with the concept of an animal spirit figure, incorporating such a story as a serious epistemological approach to human-animal relations and thereby moving away from settler-colonial concepts of animality in a de-mythologized literary representation.

The importance I place here on actively moving away from settler epistemologies towards Indigenous ones means that this chapter will approach the novel's engagement with animal representation through the lens of Indigenous criticism. This is because, as Billy-Ray Belcourt argues:

> Critical Animal Studies (CAS) and mainstream animal activists have generally failed to center an analysis of settler colonialism and therefore operate within "the givenness of the white-supremacist, settler state."[8]

He explains that 'Black and Indigenous peoples are dehumanized and repeatedly inscribed with an animal status – which is always a speciesist rendering of animality as injurious' (22) and so it is imperative to approach 'our theories of animality' (24) through a decolonial lens if we are to successfully recognise and incorporate Indigenous epistemologies into the conversation:

> Animals thus must first be excised from their colonized subjectivities to be subsequently welcomed into a decolonial subjecthood animated by Indigenous cosmologies. (25)

The centring of Indigenous theories and epistemologies then, such as in my engagement with eco-feminists Kim TallBear and Melissa Nelson, and the story of Coyote the trickster figure, is the priority of this chapter, which pays attention to Anderson-Dargatz's de-mythologizing as decolonial work. It emphasises that through her depiction of the conflict between settler and Indigenous ways of relating to animals there is a unification with Belcourt's statement that 'indigeneity ought to be at the core of any theory of ethical living.' (25)

Violence within the novel is consistently racialized, gendered and speciesist, forming a shared sense of systemic victimhood between Indigenous women, Beth and the

[8] Billy-Ray Belcourt, 'An Indigenous critique of Critical Animal Studies', in *Colonialism and Animality: Anti-Colonial Perspectives in Critical Animal Studies*, edited by Kelly Struthers Montford and Chloë Taylor (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis Group, 2020) p. 19-29 (p. 20).

non-human animals – mostly cows. This suggests that for settler-writers, constructing a proximity between non-human animals and Indigeneity in opposition to settler culture can be implemented as a method of telling stories to enlighten settler characters' knowledge about non-human animals through Indigenous knowledge, rather than being employed symbolically to reflect a settler desire to assimilate into the landscape. The departure for criticism surrounding cultural appropriation then depends on the way in which this knowledge is relayed – mythologization, simplification or fetishization being the most prominent sources of disrespect. However, by depicting her Indigenous characters as inherently more empathetic and caring in their approach to animals, and in addition, as constructing their characterisation as matriarchal, queer and resistant to settler heteronormativity, Anderson-Dargatz figures the Indigenous way of relating depicted in the novel as an alternative, less-oppressive system because it operates outside of settler constructs such as heteronormativity and patriarchy, and is more grounded in an eco-sexual framework. The binary nature of the novel's gender politics does expose Anderson-Dargatz's settler identity and comprehension of social concepts, as Indigenous knowledge refutes such categorisation. However, in representing this conflict, there is an evident engagement with this notion: an decolonial advocating towards such ways of thinking that refuses the types of binaries that uphold both patriarchal heteronormativity and anthropocentrism by incorporating Indigenous epistemologies into the conversation about human-animal relationships.

Eco-Sexuality: Indigenous Resistance to the Colonial Regulation of Sexual Practice

The Cure for Death by Lightning presents a dichotomy between the settler and Indigenous characters that is played out through the way in which they construct their relations, both familial and inter-species. In order to understand and critique the way in which the novel codes these differences as a way of putting forth the value of Indigenous knowledge as a source for establishing relations, I will outline the theory of 'settler sexuality', coined by Scott L. Morgensen for defining settler heteronormative relations. I will then contrast this with Native scholars Kim TallBear and Melissa K. Nelson, and their respective work on 'eco-sexuality' as a decolonial, Indigenous way of constructing relations. These frameworks will then be applied to the text to permit me to identify the novel's support for a move towards these types of Indigenous ways of living

The novel depicts settler relations as being underpinned by patriarchal heteronormativity that governs all their relations, both between humans and other humans, and humans and non-humans. As Macpherson has also identified, both Beth Weeks and her mother are subject to the patriarchal control specifically of her father, who is characterised as a volatile and frightening man. Such a restrictive, traditional domestic dynamic is representative of the typical religious culture of settler communities, that which Morgensen has termed "settler sexuality". He argues that the heteronormative family-centred tradition favoured by settlers is a colonial relic that has not only defined hetero-marital life as the norm, but it has also been used to supplant Indigenous beliefs surrounding ways of relating:

> Colonization produced the biopolitics of modern sexuality that I call "settler sexuality": a white national heteronormativity that regulates Indigenous sexuality and gender by supplanting them with the sexual modernity of settler subjects.[9]

Sexuality, and the regulation of it, is then, an influential tool of colonization.[10]

In response to this relationship between sexuality and colonialism TallBear puts forth the argument that Native concepts of sexuality have the propensity to be liberating and offer a concept of relating to one another (both human and more-than-human) in an alternative, more sustainable way. She argues that settler relations and concepts of "family" must be interrogated because Indigenous communities have been forced to conform to such heterosexual, monogamous family ideals, and these types of relations are 'unsustainable kinship forms'.[11] By this she means that such ways of relating effectively turns beings into belongings, including more-than-human beings, through the ownership of land bodies and water as private property on which to 'settle'. TallBear borrows the term 'intimate privilege' to describe these kinds of normative, couple centred forms of relationships and argues that it 'goes hand in hand with discourses of evolution and race and imposition of marriage and monogamy as a technique for state management of indigenous bodies.' Consequently, TallBear argues that 'settler

[9] Scott Lauria Morgensen, 'Settler Homonationalism: Theorizing Settler Colonialism within Queer Modernities', *Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 16.1-2 (2010) 105-131 (p. 106)

[10] Beyond the more systematic imposition of heteronormative monogamy there are, of course, resistance sexual practices at work in Canada. Such are explored in Christopher Lane's *Ruling Passion: British Colonial Allegory and the Paradox of Homosexual Desire* (1995).

[11] Kim TallBear, lecture at the University of Winnepeg's Weweni Indigenous Scholars Speaker series in October 2018 titled 'Decolonial Sex and Relations for a More Sustainable World' [Accessed on Youtube September 2019].

attitudes towards sex and familial relations are not sustainable economically or materially' and that we should 'move towards Indigenous relationality to offer more sustainable intimacies.' Such a move however, brings about complications surrounding cultural appropriation and how settlers, specifically, might navigate such a transition. TallBear argues that the answer lies in 'eco-sexuality', which calls upon non-indigenous people to 'be in better relation to the land without appropriating indigenous identity' and does not divide the erotic between human and non-human bodies. Rather, eco-sexuality is about establishing good relations across familial and other, including more-than-human, relations. TallBear argues that sexuality 'might be powerful enough to soothe the pains of colonisation and internal-colonisation', rendering it a significant lens through which to examine relating and the sharing of power within these relationships.

In her focus on relating TallBear is working in proximity to Donna Haraway's concept of 'kinship', which is acknowledged by Anishinaabe critic Nelson, who says that she and TallBear 'share an interest in "greening" Indigenous queer theory and investigating how Indigenous stories portray social relations with nonhumans.'[12] Whilst TallBear does not specifically focus on non-human animals, Nelson does include them in her concept of eco-sexuality. She argues that interactions with other beings provide 'contact zones' in which a process takes place that she labels "getting dirty", stating that it is 'a messy, visceral, eco-erotic boundary-crossing entanglement of difference that can engender empathy and kinship and a lived environmental ethic.' (232) This 'getting dirty', Nelson argues, is intrinsic to the process of decolonization, but moreover, it is a vital part of constructing wider relations that reaffirm the types of relations with more-than-human beings that have historically governed Indigenous ways of being. She says:

> I call this re-Indigenizing our senses by relearning to listen, once again, to the languages of our four-legged, finned, and winged relatives, as well as those of our rooted and stationary kin: the plants and trees and stone grandfathers. Reawakening all of our senses, including the metaphoric mind but especially our kinaesthetic, visceral sense, helps us remember our primal intimacy with, and fluency in, the languages of the more-than-human world. (255)

[12] Melissa K. Nelson, 'Getting Dirty: The Eco-Eroticism of Women in Indigenous Oral Literatures', in *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies*, ed. by Joanne Barker (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017) pp. 228-260 (p. 234).

Kinship, in the Indigenous sense requires re-visiting the way in which we construct relations and abandoning concepts such as heteropatriarchy and settler sexuality and working towards more empathetic, sensory engaged experiences with our environment and its inhabitants.

Drawing upon Morgenson's, TallBear's and Nelson's work then, I argue that the novel's engagement with Indigenous characterisation and ideology is an attempt by Anderson-Dargatz to move beyond conventional heteronormative logic that has been constructed by settler communities and advocate towards the formation of relationships across species that are founded on intimacy and care, as depicted in the novel as in alignment with Indigenous belief systems. Through the agricultural setting, the novel demonstrates that heteronormativity, or settler-sexuality, expands across species boundaries. In contrast to this cross-species regulation of gender through heteronormative control, in Bertha's Native, female-centred house, chickens enter freely and lay their eggs amongst the human women, signifying the absence of regulated reproduction and the lack of spatial boundaries between human and animal spaces. The depiction of eco-sexuality operating within the novel's Indigenous spaces is further reinforced through Bertha's granddaughter, Nora, and her queer identity and Bertha's decision not to re-marry, as both Native women place emphasis on fostering relationships outside of colonial, heteronormative convention. Consequently, I will argue that Anderson-Dargatz's novel engages with Indigenous concepts and stories to imagines what it might look like to embrace more empathetic and sustainable relations with both humans and non-human animals within settler fiction.

Settler-Sexuality: Enforcing Heteropatriarchy across Species Boundaries

Beth's father is coded within the novel as the dominant embodiment and upholder of settler sexuality. His strict, patriarchal characterisation extends to controlling Beth's clothing, who she speaks to and policing her relationships with boys, whilst simultaneously sexually assaulting her himself. His settler sexuality then, is realised through his determination to uphold heteronormativity in both his relationships with his family and the animals on his farm, whose reproductive functions are entirely controlled by him. Furthermore, the anger and violence characterised by Beth's father is alleged to have developed after an interaction with an animal, namely his escape from being attacked by a bear. Prior to this interaction, Beth recalls her father as being a kind, empathetic man, particularly towards animals, which codes this bear encounter as a transformative experience around which her father's

subjectivity is constructed. In contrast to the bear narrative, the violent nature that has begun to underpin his personality is attributed, by the Indigenous characters in the novel, as a consequence of his possession by Coyote. Thus, Beth's father's characterisation and anger is understood, regardless of which community, only in relation to animals. The construction of inter and intra-species relations that occur throughout the novel are, then, sites for which the propensity for empathy and care can be examined. They reveal how each character's way of relating is underpinned by particular codes of living, specific to culture – settler or Indigenous.

The description of the transformative bear attack is presented as a liminal scene in a myth detailing her father's change and descent into violence. On the night of the attack, it is alleged that he pursued the bear into the woods and returned extremely shaken, but would not clarify what had occurred in the bush. Beth described that 'he was shaking and covered in bits of undergrowth and had strange claw-like scratches down each side of his face. Against the darkness his eyes looked big and crazy before he held his hands up against the light.'[13] His transformation from protective father to frightened victim is evident both in his physical injuries but also in his recoil from the light, which symbolically indicates his change from light to dark, from kind to abusive. The transformative experience of being attacked by this 'bear' is further reiterated by Beth's comment that even her father's experiences during the War did not impact him in the way that this encounter did:

> A head injury from the Great War had left my father sensitive to sound and bright lights and he had sometimes been irritable and demanding. But I had never really feared him, not until the bear attacked the camp the spring before. Now I feared his temper in public. I feared finding myself alone with him. (10)

The extremity of John's anger is reinforced by Beth's statement that he is volatile even in public, and moreover, a sexually sinister element is brought in by her fear of being alone with him. The ambiguity surrounding John's transformation, and the role of the bear, if any, is a topic of contention throughout the novel. Amongst the settler population his volatile temper means that he is shunned and labelled mentally unwell. However, the Indigenous character Bertha says to Beth's mother, "I think what's got hold of Coyote Jack's got hold of your John." (15) Coyote Jack is the name given by the Native characters to a young man living nearby, who is often

[13] Gail Anderson-Dargatz, *The Cure for Death by Lightning* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1997) p. 6.

seen running around the countryside, muttering to himself, and as such considered a dangerous outcast. It is his seemingly odd behaviour, creeping around like an actual coyote, which convinces the Indigenous characters to realise that he is harbouring Coyote's spirit. Bertha consequently draws a comparison between the two men, throwing into doubt the responsibility of the bear for John's transformation. Addressing Beth's mother again, she adds: "John didn't turn until that bear attacked. You said so yourself. Something got him in the bush. You be careful. You and the girl." (15) Bertha's warning is gendered; she specifically warns Beth and her mother, indicating that Coyote's possession of men is a threat to women, and echoing the gender-dependent and cross-species violence that Beth's father now practices.

This gender-species specific dynamic and the fear that this creates is reinforced through the ambiguous death of Sarah Kemp, a girl of Beth's age who is the alleged victim of a bear attack. Consistent with Bertha's warning of Beth's mother, it is the Indigenous characters that continue to emphasise that a bear is not responsible for Sarah's death. They instead argue that it was a man: a man like Beth's father. One of Bertha's daughters states: "that was a man that done the killing. Coyote's come and took him over." (72) This notion that the trickster Coyote may have entered another man, just like he has Coyote Jack and John, is the initial reference to the crossing over between material and legendary animal representation in the novel, connecting an animal spirit to the violence of men. Bertha explains that her daughter "means to say the spirit took hold of him and made him do it. A man stays out in the bush alone long enough, and the bush changes his shape." (72) The settler community's mythologizaton of a bear figure after Sarah Kemp's death through their repeated reiteration of the bear attack narrative encourages violence against non-human animals, and refutes human culpability. The introduction of this Coyote counter narrative however, offers an understanding of human violence, rather than animal, and the ways in which culpability and violence can be misplaced onto non-human animals when an understanding of human-animal relationships is formed through the anthropocentrism that underpins the settler colonial culture depicted in the novel.

It is this gendered construction of Coyote possession that Macpherson argues is 'the hardest aspect of the text for a feminist critic to grapple with, given that it appears to absolve men of their sexual crimes.' (180) It is relevant to note that this is a settler-feminist critique, which is limited in its approach to a figure of Indigenous culture and stories, as settler concepts of feminism have been criticised by

Indigenous gender theorists, such as Barker, for their inability to comprehend the breadth of Indigenous concepts of gender and sexuality. The insertion of this Indigenous story and knowledge into the narrative, and the doubt that it casts upon the bear figure that has been held responsible for the attacks, affirms Indigenous sources as a valuable alternative epistemology through which to approach human-animal interaction. It imagines relations beyond materiality and into the spiritual realm, thereby connecting men and animals through a nuanced proximity previously denied by settler binary thinking. The concept that an animal spirit can inhabit a human man challenges the species opposition put forth by the vilification of the bear, which seeks to distance species interaction. It also creates a nuanced way of thinking about gender relations because it introduces a spiritual and species based element to the understanding of gender and masculinity. To approach it through a settler-feminist critique then, may allow one to place responsibility solely on men, but in doing so it silences the Coyote element of the fiction, eradicating the Indigenous framework of the novel.

The connection that is forged between Beth's father's subjectivity and his relationship with animals, and the transformation that occurs after his Coyote possession is evidenced through Beth's description of his former empathetic character and his kindness towards animals. It is only after the bear attack/Coyote has possessed him that he becomes increasingly violent towards animals and it emerges that this violence is gender specific, not species specific, oppressing all female species through an enforcement of heteronormativity. His rapid transformation is recognised by Beth:

> This strange comparison my father once had for turtles and other things – the young robin hit the window and lay dazed on the ground until he warmed it in his hands, the heifer born with a bum leg which he didn't kill but put a splint on, the newborn lamb he carried around all morning in his jacket to keep alive – had been broken up somehow, cracked into little pieces that made no sense to me. This year my father slapped the reins against the horses' haunches, forcing them, as they whinnied and shied sideways over the moving road.' (47)

These particularly tender images of John nurturing newborn life born and actively trying to protect animals contrasts strikingly with the rough imagery of 'slapping' the horses with their reins and 'forcing' them to continue along a road covered with the struggling or dead corpses of crushed baby turtles that did not make it safely

across. The individual care he was willing to extend to the animals on his farm depicts a man of kindness and sympathy, and one that is invested in caring for animals. However, after the night of the bear attack, he no longer fosters such individualised relations with animals, and becomes instead a ruthless, business minded farmer that perceives animals as bodies to be regulated and exploited for financial opportunity.

Beth's father's violence becomes a way in which he enforces his settler-sexuality in his household and in his relationship with his wife and daughter, but it is also enforced on the animals on his farm through his regulation of their reproductive functions. This is first evidenced through her father's nonchalance towards killing kittens. When Beth is met with the horror of discovering the bodies of a litter of kittens, her father flippantly asks: "bury those cats, will you?" (42) The contrast in their perception of animal life is evidenced in Beth's response: 'as if he didn't know what he'd done, as if it were just another chore for me to do.' (42) Beth resents the indifference that has been shown towards the animals, lamenting that her father perceives killing them as just simply another duty to be done on the farm. However, for her father the kittens are the result of unregulated animal sexuality that he must exert control over, and so killing and burying them are just a part of his agricultural chores.

The novel's demonstration that the heteronormative control of society is visible through farming continues through the treatment of dairy cows. In a particularly cruel and gruesome moment in the novel, Beth's father decides to operate on one of the cows that is failing to become pregnant and therefore not producing milk. His reasoning is that by removing her ovaries she will gain weight and then he can sell her for meat, thereby not acquiring any financial loss. His depersonalised perspective of the cows as financial opportunities is highlighted when Beth's father states, '"we're going to operate on that brindle tonight", and in response Beth's 'stomach knotted up to nothing' because she'd 'named that brindled cow Gertrude.' (82) Beth's naming of the cow demonstrates her attachment and affection for the cow, contrasting with her father's dismissive and disconnected labelling of it as 'that brindle'. Beth feels empathy and attachment to the cow, whereas her father is concerned only with the financial loss of an unsuccessful surgery.

The scene becomes increasingly violent and gruesome. Beth describes how her father 'cut into the cow's hide just before the hipbone; he made sawing motions, as

if he were carving the Sunday roast.' (84) This graphic depiction of butchery renders the soon-to-be beef cow a piece of meat before she has even been sold to the abattoir. Moreover, it is a symbolic indicator that her body, no longer useful for producing milk for consumption, is to be consumed in a new way: as food. The description of her father cutting her body as he would a 'Sunday roast' reinforces the nonchalance with which he mutilates her. He does not perceive her as 'Gertrude', but rather a female body that is not functioning heteronormatively in a way that he can benefit from, and so he must re-exert control over that function by removing it entirely and ensuring her body can still be consumed. In addition, the idea that in slicing into a cow Beth is reminded of her father carving dinner is particularly melancholy because it indicates that family life and the preservation of nuclear family ideals, such as sitting at the table to eat a Sunday roast, are founded on inherently violent sources – both colonially through the displacement of the Indigenous who lived on the land that they now farm, but also to animals, through the exploitation and consuming of their bodies.

Further to this, there is cross-species gender specific logic at play within this scene that forges a connection between Beth and the cow by solidifying their mutual confinement by settler-sexuality. Beth's father removes the cow's ovaries and shows them to her, stating: "you have these… this is what makes you female." (85) By pointing out her shared bodily anatomy with the cow he is mutilating, Beth's father reinforces the concept that aspects of sexuality are spread out across species. In removing the cow's ovaries and taking away her reproductive function, he demonstrates a reproduction of gender relations through violence, enforcing the notion that Beth must recognise that her shared biology with the cow solidifies her position as an object that her father may access and control for his purpose. This he later does through repeated sexual assault.

The connection that this scene forges between sexuality and species, uniting Beth and the cow through their shared propensity for bodily exploitation and reproductive regulation continues in another scene in which she discovers her brother sexually assaulting a cow:

> Dan stood on a stumping powder box immediately behind her. His hands held the cow's pinbones and his face shone white in all the black of the barn. He pushed himself into the cow, and with each push the bell around her neck rang. He was making that other sound, the soft grunting. (206)

This scene is particularly shocking to Beth as her brother, unlike her father, is not violent towards her. Therefore, witnessing him in such an act shatters her image of him as a figure of protection and aligns him with the other men in the novel who exploit and use female bodies for their own means, regardless of species. The ringing of the bell around the cow's neck is a reminder of the cow's domestication, a symbol of its ownership on the farm, ringing with each violation. Moreover, Dan's position, standing on a 'stumping powder box' is a particular layer of violence for Beth, who states that she was 'sick with the image of my brother on my stepping stool doing his dirty business.' (207) By standing on the stool used to milk the cow, Dan grossly manipulates his role as a farmer and takes advantage of the cow's female biology by exploiting her body, whilst simultaneously harming Beth through the use of her stool for violent means. As a consequence of this multi-faceted assault, both Beth and the cow are left feeling unsettled. She states: 'I couldn't bring myself to lay my head on the cows. Their flanks were too hot, their stomach music disgusted me.' (207) The cow's body, its flanks and 'stomach music', are a reminder of her brother's bodily violation and of the shared biology of Beth and the cow that renders them potential victims of male sexual violence. As a consequence of their unease, Beth's mother declares '"there's been coyotes here in the night... you can feel it in them." (207) The attribution of the cow's fear to an animal echoes the same mythologization of the bear figure held responsible for Sarah Kemp's death and her father's transformation, again misplacing responsibility onto animals rather than confronting human violence. Through the connections that the novel forges between Beth and the cows, and through the male character's violent exploitation of female sexuality across species, the enforcement of settler-sexuality is revealed not to be an exclusively human issue, but rather is one that governs all types of relations, human and non-human.

Indigenous Female-Centred Eco-Sexual Spaces

As an alternative to the type of settler sexuality like that seen in the novel, which is oppressive across species, Indigenous critics TallBear and Nelson advocate for eco-sexuality. This approach to sexuality is in excess of the erotic. It publicises the usually private and abandons heteronormative logic by attempting to construct relations through a different approach, which involves a move towards Indigenous relationality. Such a move encourages more sustainable relationships to the land and all of its inhabitants.

Underpinning Indigenous eco-sexuality is the idea that more intimate relations can be formed with both humans and more-than-humans, outside of heteronormative, colonial ways of relating, of which I, like Nelson, implicate non-human animals within this category. Within *The Cure for Death by Lightning*, the types of relationships that are depicted between the female characters and animals embody elements of Indigenous eco-sexuality, in particular those fostered by Indigenous female characters. Macpherson argues that the female centred nature of the narrative is intrinsic to the 'coyote aesthetics' of the novel, stating that it is 'necessarily fragmented, incorporating historical truths with women's ways of knowing.' (183) The incorporation of the Coyote story then, is a strategic aesthetic means of positioning the female experience at the forefront of the novel and using it to fragment and critique the behaviour of the male characters. Such a representation of deep, empathetic female-centred relationships counters the oppressive patriarchal heteronormativity embodied by Beth's father by offering an a glimpse into both Indigenous matriarchal and queer ways of constructing relations through the characterisation of Bertha and Nora respectively. Their relationship with each other, with animals and with the figure of Coyote counters the settler characters behaviour towards animals and their ignorance of the haunting trickster figure by incorporating authentic and valuable Indigenous concepts that provide new ways of approaching human-animal relationships that are governed by a woman-centred framework.

Despite her non-Indigenous identity, Beth demonstrates a desire to foster better ways of relating to non-human animals, expressing empathy where her father shows indifference. This reinforces the triangular relationship between women, empathy and animals that the novel constructs, and positions Beth as a willing recipient of the Indigenous ways of being that are specifically coded as operating from within this triangle. As such, the relationship that Beth and her mother have with their cows starkly contrasts with her father's relationship to the cows, as it is represented in the novel as being a caring and intimate relationship that is closer to the Indigenous concept of eco-sexuality than the violence underpinning settler-sexuality.

Beth's and her father's opposing empathetic positions are particularly evidenced in Beth's desire to comfort the same cow that her father readily operates on. She states that 'the cow bawled and bawled. I wanted to stroke her, to offer her some comfort, but I had to keep her head straight.' (84) Once her father has finished his butchery, Beth is able to demonstrate her kindness towards the cow: 'I filled a bucket with water and put it in front of her and smoothed the hair between her

horns.' (100) The contrast between her father's previous 'carving' of the cow with her 'smoothing' touch re-situates the biological connection that her father created between her and the cow, reinforcing his concern with controlling their sexualities, and instead connects Beth and the cow through a relationship built on empathy and female-coded care. The significance of the sympathetic affinity between the female characters in the novel and the cows is further reiterated through the practice of milking. Whereas Beth describes her father's rough technique as 'yanking', and her brother's as extremely slow, she refers to the way in which her mother and herself milk as a time during which a type intimacy between the two female species is realised, culminating in a calm and intimate eco-sexual encounter:

> Mostly it was my mother and I, milking to the rhythms of our own heartbeats, so close sometimes that the milk squirted into the pails in unison, like an iambic drumbeat. My mother sang quietly, and we milked with our heads against the warm flanks of our cows. They knew us enough to trust us. (39)

By describing the rhythm of their milking as an 'iambic drumbeat', Beth likens the milking of the cows to a poetic metre, which emphasises the effortless musical flow of their practice and their synchronistic union. Beth also enforces the idea that the cows permit this intimacy, evidenced by their allowing of her and her mother to rest their heads against their flanks, in contrast to their tendency to kick her father. There is, therefore, an affinity between Beth, her mother, and the cows, that is dependent on their gender and fosters individualised, intimate relations that have moved beyond heteronormative logic and into an excess of the erotic through the repeated emphasis on touch and proximity. Beth's and her mother's gentle touching of the cows, in the practice of their milking and in the resting of their heads on their flanks, re-imagines an eco-sexual, cross-species intimacy that is not dependent on the violence underpinning settler-sexuality and the emotionless regulation of female bodies, and instead privileges and nurtures the female body and its reproductive capacity.

Consistent with the significance placed on female centred, eco-sexual human-animal relationships by Beth's characterisation, is the depiction of Indigenous female human-animal relationships. Whereas Beth's caring interactions with non-human animals are intermittent episodes between the violence that her father governs both the humans and animals on his farm, the representation of Indigenous characters and their home environments are female-centred and absent of such heteronormativity. This means that they are depicted as more liberatory spaces in

the eyes of Beth, who admires the way that the Indigenous women are able to express their gender more overtly through their clothing, and their relaxed and caring attitude towards interaction with non-human animals. Part of the process of Beth witnessing and admiring Bertha and her daughters' relationship with animals involves Beth inserting herself into Indigenous spaces and perceiving them to be spaces that offer refuge from the oppressive settler-sexuality that governs her life on her family's farm. Rather than focusing on the critique that this opens regarding a settler characters' place into these spaces as an intrusion, I want to argue that it is in these spaces that Beth is exposed to an alternative way of living and relating, both to the humans around her and non-human animals that is more closely aligned with Indigenous eco-sexuality. They are educational sites in which Beth can learn about a different way of living. Thus, through the non-heteronormative representation of Indigenous female-centred relationships, the novel presents Indigenous women as figures of resistance to Beth's father's settler-sexuality and to Coyote within him.

Beth describes the way in which non-human animals appear to be attracted to and comfortable around Bertha and her daughters: 'I followed the women a little way down Blood Road; the birds followed them too, attracted to their glittering jewellery and bright ribbons. Purple swallows zoomed around them.' (15) Their bright clothing, contrasting with the 'modest' and restrictive way of dressing that Beth, her mother, and the other women of the settler community dress, is described as being a factor in their attractiveness to the birds – symbolically reflecting their different way of relating to those around them and their kinship which is situated outside of settler-sexuality. Nelson argues that commonly Native stories have often indicated that 'women have a distinct role as mediators between humans and other beings' because 'they are fluid boundary crossers who can enter and maintain erotic intimacy and economic trade with nonhumans.' (244) This connection between gender and the crossing of boundaries to establish more intimate relations is evident in the novel when a chicken flies in through the window at Bertha's house:

> 'The women all laughed. I started to get up, to help catch the chicken, but Nora held my arm. We all watched the chicken nestle a place for herself among the magazines and rabbit fur on the mattress, cluck and croon and lay an egg.' (116)

Beth's instinct to try and remove the chicken from the house evidences her settler-based binary understanding of the space as a human domestic space, and thus not somewhere for animals to enter.

This conception of constructing spatial boundaries for animal presence is discussed by Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert, who determine that the transgression of animals into these determined 'human spaces' renders them 'beastly places' through the agency demonstrated by the animal entering such space:

> It is animals themselves who inject what might be termed their own agency into the scene, thereby transgressing, perhaps even resisting, the human placements of them. It might be said that in so doing the animals begin to forge their own 'other spaces', countering the proper places stipulated for them by humans, thus creating their own 'beastly places' reflective of their own 'beastly' ways, ends, doings, joys and sufferings.[14]

For Beth this is an assertion of agency by the chicken, which is unfamiliar to her. To her perspective, this chicken has crossed outside of the boundaries within which he is permitted to wander. However, the indifference of Nora and the other women indicates that this is a regular occurrence, supported by the chicken's willingness to 'nestle' in the house and their nonchalant laughter at it doing so. Bertha's house, then, seemingly draws no such strict spatial divisions between human and animal habitation, which reflects the absence of the type of species-centred relational divisions that are in place on Beth's farm. Philo and Wilbert recognise such a difference in understanding of human-animal spatial relations in Indigenous cultures, and argue:

> With the taking seriously of 'other' knowledges—notably non- Western 'indigenous' knowledges or ethnosciences—which provide a less dualistic account of the differences between humans and animals, many people (outside the West, but in it too) have started to deconstruct seemingly obvious claims about the privileged status of the human, in contradistinction to the animal, as the source of agency in the world. (15)

Through this contrast in reaction to the transgressing chicken, Anderson-Dargatz demonstrates a difference in knowledge regarding animals and 'animal spaces', reinforcing that within Bertha's Indigenous household, there are no such boundaries that privilege particular species in particular spaces. All spaces are shared and so all spaces are 'beastly places' as much as they are also human spaces, thereby

[14] Chris Philo; Chris Wilbert, 'Introduction' in *Animal spaces, beastly places: new geographies of human-animal relations* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000) pp. 1-36 (p. 13).

eradicating the concept of 'beastly places' entirely, and women are coded as the facilitators of this boundary removal.

In addition to the coding of the Indigenous household as challenging the dualistic conception of human-animal occupied space through the chicken's welcome presence, this scene and the chicken's nestling further perpetuates the link between women, empathy and animals, and figures it as entangled with Indigeneity. The significance of the chicken laying an egg is that it reinforces Bertha's house as a place that nurtures women and female energy, including other-than-human beings, such as animals, to the extent that female animals feel comfortable enough to enter it and lay their eggs amongst their female human relations. This nurturing energy echoes Nelson's argument that 'embracing our eco-erotic nature helps us recognise the generosity of creation, and our part in it, so we can truly embody the ethic of kinship.' (255) In Bertha's house then, a space governed by Indigenous knowledge systems that do not conform to a binary way of conceiving human-animal relations, all female bodies are celebrated, normalised and nurtured. In contrast, on Beth's father's farm, which is dominated by the concept of settler sexuality and the policing of 'beastly spaces' through the confinement of animals within specific enclosures away from the house, female bodies must be regulated and governed by a male figure of heteronormativity within specific agricultural or domestic guidelines.

Beth's kindness towards the cow, and her witnessing of Bertha and her daughters' way of relating to the chicken, positions her as a character that desires to engage with this Indigenous coded female-centred way of relating. This is evidenced through her admiration of Bertha as a figure of resistance against her father, the refuge that she finds in the Indigenous female spaces that Nora, Bertha's granddaughter shows her, and in her sexual curiosity towards Nora, which indicates her attraction to non-heteronormative ways of relating. Nora takes Beth to an underground 'winter house' (131) that belongs to Bertha. Nora explains that this 'winter house' was intended for women and was built underground because it was considered bad luck for a man to have a woman over him. Such seemingly misogynistic ideas are however, undercut by the concept that this house has, as a consequence, has become an exclusively female space, lived in, owned and inherited by the women in Nora's family. She states, '"Granny lived there when she was small. That was my great-granny's house. Then it was Granny's house. My mum wants nothing to do with it, so I guess it's mind now, eh?"' (112) This quotation reads like a metaphor for feminism as a movement, as a third wave feminism moves beyond oppositional feminism. However, the owning or inheriting of property by

women is an alien concept to Beth, who in response adds, '"my dad wouldn't give nothing to me"' and '"the farm goes to Dan when he's done with it, even though Dan wants nothing to do with it."' (112) This latter statement exposes the fallacy of patriarchal inheritance – even though Beth is invested in the farm, and has no intention of leaving, whereas Dan wishes to leave to fight in the war, Beth's father will still insist on Dan's right to inheritance as a man because the regulation of the female bodies on this farm must be continued by a male figurehead as to consolidate the practice of patriarchal heteronormativity. The winter house then, becomes a space in which Beth can seek refuge from her father and his strict control of her behaviour, and indulge in Indigenous ways of living, which includes the opportunity to perform the femininity that she craves:

> A place to go that my father wouldn't know about. A place no one would know about. I'd take my little treasures there, my violet perfume, my nail polish, the scrap of red velvet, and other things too, that I'd planned on getting, a pair of nylons, a tube of lipstick, a dress with a bit of red on it, maybe at the collar, a racy girl's dress, something to dance in. (131)

It is the absence of men and male control of the winter house that positions it as a safe space for Beth to carry out these gender performative fantasies. Evidently, Beth's life on the farm does not allow her to express her femininity in the way that she desires, both because her father does not allow her too, but also because in the presence of men, such as her father and Dennis, her femininity renders her vulnerable to their advances. Therefore, through spacializing the parameters within which Beth is able to explore her femininity without either threat from her dad, both physically and sexually, and the predatory nature of other men in the novel, Anderson-Dargatz implies that the way in which relations are constructed within these Indigenous female-centred spaces is the 'cure' for resisting and existing outside of settler-sexuality.

Beth's entering of Indigenous spaces extends beyond the material and into more spiritual concepts of space, such as ritual spaces. This occurs when Beth witnesses Nora performing what appears to be a kind of ritualised dance and enters the circle that she Nora has drawn to carry out her dance: 'she stamped out a circle in the dirt. Her movements were precise, as in a ritual, and the bell necklace sounded and shimmered to the beat.' (183) Nora's necklace contrasts with Beth's modest dress, and reinforces their governance by differing social ideology. But in addition, it also echoes the bell that hung around the cow's neck that was violated by Beth's

brother. In this Indigenous space, however, the ringing of the bell is not caused by male violence, but rather by a female-led ritualistic dance, reinforcing the feminine power produced by Nora.

By entering Nora's circle Beth symbolically demonstrates her desire to enter into Indigenous space and thus to access Indigenous ideology as a means of escaping her current patriarchal existence. Whilst this does invite criticism in that it is arguably exploitative for a settler character to enter a ritualised space, it is worth noting that Nora invites Beth in, demonstrating her affection for her: 'Nora stepped inside the circle and held out her arms. I stepped into the circle with her and wrapped my arms around her and we held each other until I heard my mother and father driving home.' (183) Moreover, that they were only able to hold each other until her parents returned indicates that Beth's position within these spaces is temporal, and that she does not have permanent access to Indigeneity because she is a settler: she must rely on the invitation of Nora and then return to her life under settler-sexuality on the farm. However, the significance of depicting a settler character that enters these Indigenous cross-species woman-centred spaces and experiences a way of relating that is less oppressive and thus desirable means that Indigeneity and the Indigenous spaces within the novel are coded as sites in which Beth learns. By spending time with Bertha and Nora in their homes, Beth identifies an alternative way of living and establishing better relations that incorporates non-human animals and does not centre on heteronormativity. Anderson-Dargatz's novel then, works to expose the violence and control that underpins settler-hierarchies and social relations by depicting Indigenous ways-of-relating as being kinder and more liberating through a pro-woman and pro-animal ethical proximity. She therefore forges a connection between settler-sexuality and violence towards non-human animals that aligns itself with both Nelson's and TallBear's arguments, in which she calls for an interrogation of the violence that underpins what she terms as colonial heteronormativity, which is destructive for both humans and more-than-human beings. In doing so, she presents Indigenous ways of relating, and concepts such as eco-sexuality, as viable sources of knowledge surrounding the discourse of and intersection between gender and species.

Bertha's Stories: Narratives of Human-animal Spiritual Interaction

Much like the material versus spiritual spatial representation in the novel, the species and gender discourse that the novel engages in through the female Indigenous characterisation is not only centred on material animals, but also on

animal spirits and the concept of Coyote possession. Bertha, the matriarchal Native grandmother, is the initial source of the Coyote myth, believing that men can be inhabited by this Native spirit and other predatory animal spirits, and thus become dangerous to women. Margery Fee says that the use of Coyote by Indigenous writers was popular during the 1980s because the figure offered 'a strategic rallying place for Indigenous artists across Canada to make strong political points in a way that was healing for them and their communities, while (somewhat) dampening the backlash against their revelations of continuing colonial abuse.'[15] As such, 'the choice of the trickster could be seen, then, as the work of compromise, as what has come to be known as a branding exercise; it could even be regarded as an act of cultural (re-)appropriation or repatriation.' (60) Coyote, then, is an important figure in Indigenous culture, permitting difficult conversations to be had through his characterisation in literature. The use of Coyote by Anderson-Dargatz opens itself up to critique regarding the cultural appropriation of the story. However, through the application of the story of Coyote in *The Cure for Death by Lightning*, the novel is able to engage seriously and meaningfully with Indigenous concepts, rather than use them symbolically and as temporal states to access proximity to animals as has frequented Canadian settler animal stories throughout the 1960s and 70s. This approach endeavours to dismantle patriarchal, colonial and anthropocentric understandings of both gender dynamics and human-animal relations, rather than continue to operate from within them. Not only does the Coyote story disrupt the narrative that vilifies animals by removing blame from the bear figure, but it also frames the narrative with a particular ambiguity through his elusive and haunting nature. This 'trickster' quality opens up the propensity to engage with alternative sexualities than that embodied by Beth's father because it introduces spirituality and human-animal transformation into the narrative through Bertha's story of Coyote.

Bertha's lived experience is represented as operating from within an entirely contrasting epistemology to Beth and her family's way of living on the farm. Her resistance to settler sexuality, evidenced by her female-centred way of living, is partnered with her understanding of species through a different epistemology than the settler characters, as she implicates men with animal spirits as a source of violence:

[15] Margery Fee, 'The Trickster Appropriation, Imagination in Moment, and the Canada Cultural Liberal', in *Troubling Tricksters: Revisioning Critical Conversations*, edited by Deanna Reder, and Linda M. Morra, (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010) p. 60.

> "When I was a girl I wasn't allowed to wear red either," she said. "You never knew who had a wild animal for his spirit. If somebody had a predator for a spirit, a bear or a coyote or a cougar, and he saw red, he might think it was blood and go crazy, eat you up. So no girl wore red." (118)

Bertha's explanation for why she was not allowed to wear red as a young girl demonstrates an epistemological departure from Beth and settler culture because it forges a connection between female vulnerability and male possession by animal spirits. This reason introduces a species-centred element to gender relations that is absent from Beth's father's rules governing her clothing, which associate the colour red with promiscuity and are thus founded on his patriarchal regulation of her sexuality. Both communities then, have built conceptions surrounding female dress with male sexual violence, but they differ through this implication of species in Indigenous knowledge systems. This addition and focus on species confronts men as the source of violence through their potential to attack vulnerable women, whereas Beth's fathers regulation of her clothing, forbidding her from wearing makeup, nylons or red clothing, implies that she is the threat to men, drawing them in through what he perceives as suggestive or lewd clothing, and thus demonising women and absolving men.

The responsibility that Bertha's story of Coyote and animal spirits places onto human male behaviour characterises her as a feminist empowering figure because she refutes patriarchal, heteronormative regulation and instead focuses on and nurtures female relationships. Her decision not to remarry after the death of her second husband, but rather to keep 'a house of women', (9) overtly demonstrates her rejection of settler sexuality. Moreover, her Indigenous identity is coded as an inherent part of this rejection, which is made evident through her clothing in comparison with Beth's mother's clothes. Bertha's hair was 'done up in a single braid that lay down the back of her red dress, and her sleeves were scandalously rolled up to the elbow' and she wore 'black stockings and moccasins decorated with porcupine quills and embroidery.' (8) In contrast, Beth's mother 'wore her milking clothes, a brown housedress and gum boots, and her long, long hair was tucked away in a blue kerchief, so you'd think she had no hair at all.' (8) Beth's mother's modest clothes, absent of accessories and the hiding of her hair, reinforce the control her husband exercises over her clothing, and in addition, her 'milking clothes' signify her role in the heteronormative regulation of cow sexuality on her farm, reinforcing her agricultural relationship to non-human animals. Comparatively, Bertha's clothing – moccasins with decorative porcupine quills – expresses both her

Indigenous identity and her feminine one, indicating towards a different kind of relationship with non-human animals: one that operates outside of heteronormativity and incorporates animal skins and feathers into a cultural aesthetic.

The novel's depiction of Indigenous female characters as more free and creative in their dress and also as incorporating non-human animals into their clothing is further reinforced through Bertha's daughters and granddaughters. Beth notes that 'each girl's hair was black, oiled with bear grease so it shone, and tied back with all manner of barrettes and ribbons.' (9) This quotation again demonstrates the use of materials from non-human animal bodies as a source of decorative aesthetic, much like Bertha's porcupine quills. It signifies a particular relationship with non-human animals that is integrated into their culture and uses all aspects of the non-human animal, rather than mass-producing specific cuts of meat and disposing of the unused bodies. Additionally, Bertha's relations are not forced to conform to gendered clothing stereotypes, nor are they forced to be modest, as 'one of the daughters' daughters wore boys' jeans and a western shirt that stretched a little at the buttons across her breasts' and, despite being Beth's age, 'she wore lipstick and a necklace of bells strung together.' (9) The freedom with which Bertha's relations are able to choose their own clothing is something that Beth envies. Throughout the novel she dreams of owning overtly feminine items of clothing, like lipstick and this necklace, that are considered promiscuous by her father. Of Bertha's daughter's necklace, she states: 'I coveted that necklace. She saw me looking at it and jingled it, and the room filled with tinkling notes that lit up everyone's face.' (9) The joy that the sound of this necklace brings to the room reflects a desire for a more libertarian way of living, which is coded within the novel as feminine and womanly, but also as Indigenous. It marks a departure from the settler sexuality that has constructed such patriarchal restrictions governing clothing and a move towards Indigenous eco-sexuality, a way of living that marks a different type of relationship with animals, intimately incorporating and showing an affinity for all beings, human and non-human in all aspects of life, including clothing.

Bertha's Indigenous identity and matriarchal rejection of settler sexuality is reinforced through the way that she explicitly challenges Beth's father's oppressive character. The assertion she makes that he exploits his workers Dennis and Billy because of their Native identity indicates that she is not frightened of confronting John, despite his violent nature. She states "You hire our boys because they don't know how to ask for what they're worth… You treat them as if they were slaves."

(14) She is, therefore, figured in the novel as a character that not only resists the kind of settler sexuality embodied by John through her lifestyle choices, but she is also a character that offers a direct challenge to settler-colonialism through her assertion of the settler exploitation of Indigenous communities. Her ability to challenge John is realised by Beth during this confrontation when John shouts at Bertha in response to her comment and Beth imagines Bertha's domination of her father through their shadows. Moreover, the scene places emphasis on the power of female solidarity in confronting Beth's father:

> The women moved forward and surrounded him. Bertha Moses's shadow gripped my father's shadow around the throat, forcing blood into his face. He began to shake and his face grew redder and redder until I thought he might explode. He stepped back through the women and pushed open the screen door. (14)

The imagery of Bertha's shadow physically assaulting and overpowering John's shadow is a powerful symbolic depiction of her emotional and social strength, directly challenging an oppressive male figure. Moreover, John's rapid exit after this encounter re-affirms his failure to fully exert his authority over her through intimidation. Consequently, Bertha's position in the novel as a strong, matriarchal figure that forms relations with those around her, both human and non-human through Indigenous knowledge systems and thus outside of oppressive settler sexuality, emphasises both the power inherent in fostering woman-centred relations and also in utilising Indigenous ways of relating as a means of challenging settler-patriarchy.

Queer Coyote: Indigenous Queer Opposition to Settler Sexuality

In addition to the novel's positioning of Indigenous ways of relating as a critical reconfiguration of the heteronormative knowledge system through Bertha's characterisation, the novel also develops queer representation as a means of disrupting settler sexuality through Bertha's daughter Nora. Jodi A. Byrd argues that 'the queer in Indigenous studies… challenges the queer of queer studies by offering not an identity or figure necessarily, but rather an analytic that helps us relocate subjectivity and its refusals back into the vectors of ongoing settler colonialism.'[16] Nora's characterisation then, becomes a source through which to further critique

[16] Jodi A. Byrd, 'Loving Unbecoming: The Queer Politics of the Transitive Native', in *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies*, ed. By Joanne Barker (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017) pp. 207-227 (p. 226).

and oppose the settler sexuality governing the novel, particularly in its coded relationship to Coyote. Nora is associated with the trickster figure through her tendency to repeatedly surprise Beth with her appearance on a number of occasions when Beth feels she is being followed by Coyote. Such a connection further reiterates the purposeful engagement with queer Indigenous identity, which is inherently de-colonial and useful in interrogating settler sexuality, and its connection to species through the incorporation of the animal trickster god, Coyote, further emphasising the importance of reworking settler colonial patriarchy within the context of species relations

Beth's interactions with Nora are physically affectionate and engaging on a sensory level, and they are absent of the abuse and coercion that marks the abuse she receives from her father, and her later attack by Coyote Jack. She remarks that Nora, 'ran her fingers along the back of my hand, petting me. The thing was so unexpected, so thrilling, so soothing, I just stood there breathless, letting it happen.' (73) Her surprise at having been touched in this way by a woman exposes the heteronormative lens she has become accustomed to, and her enjoyment of it reveals a queer curiosity. Beth acknowledges her confusion regarding her feelings for Nora, stating that 'Looking at her confused me… We were both just girls. Nora leaned her two-woman face into me and kissed me like a lover.' (132) Beth's bewilderment stems from both her immaturity and sexual innocence, being 'just a girl', and also because their same gender complicates Beth's heteronormative understanding of relationships. This is conceptualised in her description of being kissed 'like a lover', which reads as an internalised attempt to affirm the nature of their relationship as being beyond a friendship and into the realms of queer sexual curiosity. Nelson argues that 'Native oral narratives show us the adventures, benefits, risks, and consequences of following women's desires, and trickster stories show how ambivalent and complicated our desires can be.' (254) This narrative between Nora and Beth then, is a sub-story about desire that is influenced by Nora's association with the trickster figure. Beth is repeatedly drawn into Nora, stating: 'She kissed me with all of her body and went on kissing me even when I tried to pull away, kissed me until I didn't want to go anymore. Then she stopped me, leaving me pumped with desire, sweating in it.' (271) Nora's ability to leave Beth 'pumped with desire' emphasises the queer sexual awakening that the relationship offers Beth, drawing her further out of the confines of her heteronormative world and into a one that is sexually ambiguous, absent of specific labels pertaining to sexuality, and full of curiosity and desire.

Shane Phelan argues that there is a convincing connection between trickster figures and lesbianism more broadly. This, he argues, is because both involve a state of 'fluidity in the formation of one's identity – that which he terms shape-shifting' – and the social benefits of being able to disguise oneself:

> The shape-shifting is the product not of some unique facility of lesbians, but of the rigidity of social codes that make lesbians invisible unless they are conforming to dominant stereotypes. It is in Coyote's "nature" to appear as not-Coyote when it suits his purposes. Some may recognize, or suspect, Coyote when he is transformed, but Coyote has the ability to fool most people and to get his way. Coyote uses our own expectation to slip under our radar. One implication of this analogy might be that lesbians can gain power from sneakiness and subterfuge, from masking themselves. (139)

Nora, like Coyote, is able to slip under the radar undetected, as her lesbian identity is not outwardly visible, and she is able to haunt Beth in the same way as Coyote through her affiliation with a tempting desire towards a sexuality that would be deemed subversive by Beth's father. In the same way that the story of Coyote brings into question the validity of the 'bear attack' perpetuated by the settler characters, disrupting settler conceptions of human-animal relationships, so too does Nora become a 'trickster figure' through her queer-ness: challenging settler-sexuality and navigating the landscape in a stealthy fashion, like the animal trickster himself. Beth states: 'I saw a motion in the grass coming towards me, a splitting of the grass as if an animal or a man were running through it.' She then adds: 'the swishing of the grass filled up my ears and came at me faster than anything possible. Then a hand was on my shoulder. I swung around and Nora was there.' (129) The appearance of Nora in the place of a 'man or animal' is a relief for Beth, but it still aligns Nora with mystery through her sly ability to approach Beth so undetected and reinforces the trickster nature of her character through the elusive and animal-like nature of her physical form in the grass. This ability to go unnoticed, Marlene Goldman argues, contributes to a ghost-like characterisation of Nora:

> Scene after scene aligns Nora with Coyote, rendering her phantomlike perhaps because, as Terry Castle asserts, "to love another woman is to lose one's solidity in the world, to evanesce, and fade into the spectral."[17]

[17] Marlene Goldman, 'Coyote's Children and the Canadian Gothic: Sheila Watson's The Double Hook and Gail Anderson-Dargatz's The Cure for Death by Lightning' in *Unsettled Remains: Canadian*

Such an argument positions Nora's lesbian identity as that which renders her a 'ghostly', elusive presence, much like Coyote. This queer characterisation is integrated as part of the Coyote aesthetics of the novel, contributing to the tension of the ambiguous haunting of Beth, and offering her a tempting pathway towards a sexuality that would undermine the settler sexuality she has been indoctrinated into.

The complexity of the trickster figure, and his refusal to be categorised in one specific way is made evident through the way in which Nora, who is aligned with Coyote, is depicted as a figure of comfort and protection for Beth, in contrast to the uncomfortable haunting Beth feels from the male Coyote figures. Nora often appears during moments in which Beth is particularly frightened and offers relief through her presence. As such, Nora and Beth's relationship is coded differently. It is depicted as an extension of the female-centred way of relating visible in Bertha's house, moving beyond familial and kinship like relations and into the erotic. It is possible to connect this to still important forms of queer critique established in relation to lesbian feminism in the 1980s, in which lesbianism was reclaimed as 'an assertion of sexual agency and feelings, but autonomous from men, a reclaiming of erotic drives directed toward women, of a desire for women that is not to be confused with women identification.'[18] Nora's lesbian identity figures her as a character that inherently challenges the patriarchal regulation of sexuality by way of excluding them through her sexual orientation. Thus, her alignment with Coyote in the novel symbolically reflects the propensity for the Indigenous 'trickster' figure to shed a nuanced light upon feminist politics. Shane Phelan states that:

> Coyote can refresh lesbian and feminist politics by offering us a less stable understanding of identity and a looser and lighter, and therefore more empowering, interpretation of the political cosmos and human action. (123)

Thus, by including this Indigenous story and queer characterisation within her novel, Anderson-Dargatz positions Indigenous knowledge systems as a viable alternative and way of understanding the complexities and multiplicities of feminist approaches, and the limitations of settler feminism to incorporate Indigenous women's' experiences. Moreover, Nora's alignment with an animal trickster figure incorporates the question of species into the feminist equation, as it suggests that Indigenous concepts of feminism are complicated by spiritual human-animal

---

Literature and the Postcolonial Gothic, ed.by Cynthia Sugars, Gerry Turcotte (Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2009) pp51-73 (60).

[18] Taken from Teresa De Lauretis, 'Sexual Indifference and Lesbian Representation', *Theatre Journal*, 40.2 (1988) 155-177 (p. 162).

relationships, and figures such as Coyote. Through such a characterisation, Coyote aesthetics are positioned as valuable framework for reconfiguring settler sexualities because through the trickster's very nature, cultural hegemonies can be troubled and resisted.

Man, Coyote, coyotes: Indigenous Possession and Haunting of Settler Characters

The fluidity that the Coyote aesthetic applies to the character of Nora is more prevalent in the sinister characterisation of the male characters that are allegedly possessed by Coyote himself. The descriptions of these men repeatedly shifts and interchanges between man, coyote and Coyote, conflating the three and consequently muddying species boundaries and troubling the responsibility that has been placed upon non-human animals in the vilification of the bear at the beginning of the novel. Such a depiction, destabilising norms, embodies the characteristics of the trickster figure, creating an ambiguous, elusive and 'shape-shifting' narrative that plays with fixed conceptions of species relations. Anderson-Dargatz's use of the Coyote story then, encourages us to broaden our epistemological understanding of human-animal relations by problematizing the anthropocentrism underpinning the settler culture in the novel by widening the understanding of animal species beyond just the material, lived animal and into the spiritual realm. This undermines Eurocentric humanist secularisms' work as a guarantor of human exceptionalism.

Phelan argues that trickster figures are complex and cunningly versatile:

> Tricksters can adopt the shape of other beings for camouflage or to get what they want, though some people recognize or suspect tricksters despite their disguises. Coyote may appear as a human, another animal, or even an object such as driftwood when it serves his purposes. This attribute facilitates deceit and contributes to Coyote's bad reputation, but it serves to remind us that things are not always as they seem.[19]

Thus, whilst Coyote is on the one hand, a being that Bertha warns Beth about, fearing its ability to inhabit anyone of its choosing and attack women, it is simultaneously a figure that, because of this elusive behaviour, has the capacity to bring about disruption to the social status quo, opening up the possibility for

[19] Shane Phelan, 'Coyote Politics: Trickster Tales and Feminist Futures', *Hypatia*, 11.3 (1996) 130-140 (p. 135).

change, particularly in the realm of species, due to Coyote's animal identity. This centres the question of species within the context of reworking settler patriarchy because, through an engagement with this Indigenous story and the transformative nature of Coyote – his physical movement between human and animal – Anderson-Dargatz is able to demonstrate that there is an anthropocentrism and heteronormativity at work in the way in which Beth's father approaches both his animals and his relationship with his family. Bertha's story regarding Coyote offers an alternative narrative that repeatedly clashes with and resists the confines of a traditional settler narrative and settler sexuality.

The novel's representation of the inter-changing of man, coyote and Coyote becomes increasingly sinister, haunting Beth throughout the novel. Whereas the sexuality and sexual experiences that Nora brought inspired desire, the coding of the men possessed by Coyote in the novel renders them threatening and frightening. Beth notices frequent sightings of coyotes stalking or hovering around the farm, particularly in proximity to male characters. For instance, Beth describes the way in which 'unseen by [her] father, a coyote skulked through the long grass behind him' (210), seemingly forging a connection between coyotes and violent men. Moreover, in an exchange between Beth and Nora, the proximity yet distinction between coyotes and Coyote is evidenced:

> "Billy thinks I got Coyote following me," I said.
>
> "Coyotes will follow anything," she said. "They're as curious as dogs."
>
> "No, he means Coyote, that spirit thing your granny talks about." (259)

This characteristic of curiosity that Nora attributes to coyotes goes some way to explaining the haunting presence of coyotes in the novel, as it attempts to make sense of why the Indigenous 'trickster' figure is often depicted as a coyote by establishing a connection between the two. Macpherson argues that 'Coyote is a compelling figure, not least because of his connections to the coyote, or Canis latrans, who is stereotypically seen as a wily scavenger, with a sly smile and a mangy appearance.' [20] Moreover, Phelan implicates the historical resilience of the coyote species in comparison to other canine species, such as the wolf, in its' connection to its 'trickster' configuration. He states that 'the coyote is scorned as a pest but it

[20] Heidi Slettedahl Macpherson, 'Coyote as Culprit: The Coyote Aesthetics of Gail-Anderson-Dargatz's The Cure for Death by Lightning', *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 17.2 (2004) pp. 175-185 (p. 177).

survives.' (134) As such, he adds: 'the coyote provides an ideal animal for trickster tales. Tricksters are noted for their ability to die and then show up again; even dismemberment and decomposition do not spell the end.' (134) Subsequently, the continued appearance of coyotes throughout the novel works in relation to the framing of the narrative by the trickster Coyote figure, attempting to capture the relationship between the species and the spiritual being that is represented in that same species' form. The novel thus plays around with these coyote stereotypes, using the material characteristics of actual coyotes and their repeated 'haunting' of the North American plains, to narratively breakdown our comprehension of what is haunting Beth and so submerge us within a Coyote aesthetics.

The second narrative level to the Coyote representation in the novel is its conflation with men. Beth tells Nora: '"Sometimes I think I'm being followed," I said. "I never see it, exactly. But it leaves footprints. It's got hands."' (120) This description, determining that the figure has 'hands' suggests that it is human. However, later, in a more tense moment of haunting, Beth states: 'I saw a motion in the grass coming towards me, a splitting of the grass as if an animal or a man were running through it.' (129) Her inability to distinguish between animal and man contributes to a ghostly and indecipherable conception of the figure that underpins Beth's fear. This is well evidenced in a scene of sexual assault involving her father within her own bedroom, when Beth describes a set of dead coyote skins that are hanging on her bedroom wall as coming alive and entering her dreams, only for her to realise that she is awake, and for the coyotes to turn into her father:

> A darkness crossed the window and fell on my chest. When I cried out, the coyotes put their claws over my mouth. They lifted my nightgown. They rubbed their wet tails between my legs and over my belly. They told me to keep quiet. I hid my dream self in the darkest corner of my room and watched the shadows of the coyotes suck the breath from my body. When they had their fill, the shadows sighed deeply, came together, and took the form of my father. He lifted his weight from my body and left the room. (264)

Beth's dream-like state is likely to be a state of self-preservation, as she detaches her emotional 'dream self' from her physical body. In this haunting description, her father's violent ferocity is akin to an entire pack of coyotes, amalgamating the numerous coyote figures that have haunted her like 'darkness' throughout the novel into one horrific encounter that continues to blur human and animal bodies. This conflation distorts the clarity of the situation, further echoing the complex Coyote-

like narrative framing of the novel and the spiritual element that underpins the possession of the men through the constant shape-shifting.

This shifting between man and coyote occurs also in an encounter with Coyote Jack, a ghostly figure that haunts the backdrop of the novel's narrative in a similar fashion to the numerous coyotes. Nora states:

> "Coyote Jack's not shy, he's bushed. He really is a coyote. He fades into the trees like magic. I've seen him. Granny says he's lived too long in the bush. The bush makes you change shape, takes away your man-body, makes you into an animal." (132)

Nora's adjective 'bushed' indicates that Coyote Jack's condition is a familiar result to her of spending too long in the wilderness, echoing Bertha's earlier statement about the bush being capable of changing a man's shape. Moreover, this description solidifies the concept of Coyote possession by suggesting that Coyote Jack really is a literal shape-shifter and is therefore neither exclusively human nor animal. Instead, he has been 'made into' an animal, which implies both a physical and mental transformation, yet he remains primarily visible in his human form. This concept of shape-shifting – losing your 'man-body' and surrendering to animality through a blurring of these boundaries rather than a binary perception of them – is later confirmed when Coyote Jack attacks Beth in the woods, throwing her to the ground:

> Suddenly he got up. He twisted, batted the air, and screamed, and the scream became a howl. His body flitted back and forth between man and coyote, then the coyote dropped on all fours and cowered away from me. He bristled and growled. I stood slowly and clapped my hands, as I would to scare off any wild animal. The coyote turned and trotted off and disappeared into the bush. (272)

Coyote Jack's transformation here appears like an internal battle of wills – himself against Coyote, 'flitti[ng] back and forth' – struggling between attacking Beth as Coyote and restraining himself in his human form. Eventually, when he is in coyote form she is able to frighten him off the way that she normally scares off wild animals. This shape shifting appears to Beth to confirm Bertha's stories, and the concept of Coyote, to be true. Thus, the depiction appears to validate the Indigenous story and the concept of being 'bushed'. As such, it validates the inaccuracy of the bear attack narrative that absolved human responsibility for violence by displacing it onto

animals and introduces an entirely new epistemological understanding of human-animal relations through the notion that a human can be possessed by a non-human animal spirit, and that Indigenous stories can provide useful ways of rethinking human-animal relationships when they are taken seriously.

Macpherson argues that these distinctions between man, coyote and Coyote are not actual transformations but symbolic ones, and that Beth's haunting by Coyote is reflective of her fear of male sexual violence:

> Coyote is the unnamed 'it' who follows Beth Weeks, frightens her, and abuses her. Coyote is the name of her unmentionable fear: of her father, of other men, of boys. An adolescent, Beth is at risk of sexual assault both within the home and outside of it.[21]

Such an analysis is too simplistic. It suggests that there is no specific 'Coyote' figure within the novel, but rather that every man is Coyote because of the sexually predatory threat they offer to Beth. In addition, this argument opens up onto a disappointing anti-feminist implication of such a representation, stating that 'to explain repeated and prolonged sexual abuse away as Coyote possession is to reiterate the worst aspect of an anti-feminist stance: that men cannot control the 'beast' within' (180) and moreover, that 'it appears to absolve men of their sexual crimes.' (180) However, this perspective overlooks the complexity of the trickster figure, neglecting to consider Coyote in his Indigenous context and trying to approach the text and its narrative framing through a settler-colonial epistemology. Reinforced by the multi-layered narrative and elusive depiction of Coyote and his alignment with numerous characters within the novel, Coyote cannot be explained away as one singular symbolic line of narrative. Moreover, by suggesting that a settler writer is simply co-opting an Indigenous myth for symbolic means, this argument disregards the Indigenous story as a source of truth and as knowledge to be handled seriously. Furthermore, such an argument refutes the implications for species relations that arise through Coyote's disruption of species-boundaries, which troubles the distinction between man and human through his possession of male bodies and through the constant reminder of his existence echoed in the appearance of literal coyotes. Rather, comprehending that Beth's encounters with men, coyotes and Coyote remain undecipherable and complex because they are framed by the concept of the story of Coyote and his possession of male characters

[21] Heidi Slettedahl Macpherson, 'Coyote as Culprit' p. 178.

considers the novel within the Indigenous framework it is trying to represent. In addition, and counter to Macpherson's criticism of the novel as anti-feminist, if the Indigenous Coyote figure is considered as a real being operating within the novel and not as symbolic, the novel is actually positioned as a feminist piece of literature. This is because, as Phelan states: 'we can use Coyote's duplicity to become more creative about feminist politics.' (143) The multiplicity, elusiveness and disruptive nature of the trickster figure opens up the possibility for considering a multitude of differing perspectives and undermining the status quo.

Conclusion: Taking Indigenous stories seriously

If considering Coyote in the Indigenous context as a real presence within the novel means that *The Cure for Death by Lightning* depicts a settler character as being haunted by an Indigenous mythic figure of animality, and other settler characters as being possessed by him, what are the implications of this in a postcolonial context? The struggle brought on by Coyote possession is reflective of the way in which Indigenous knowledge systems and ways of being are at conflict with settler ones. The two characters in the novel that are depicted as being overcome by Coyote are Beth's father and Coyote Jack, both of whom are male, settler characters, and upholders of settler sexuality through their behaviour towards Beth, and other animals in the context of her father. As such, Coyote's possession of them explicitly represents the potentiality for Indigenous ways of relating to challenge settler-sexuality and the potential that lies in this decolonial move in terms of conversations surrounding species relations. This is reinforced through the way in which Beth's father's dominant personality wanes as the novel develops, culminating in his institutionalisation and later in Beth's standing up to his advances. Therefore, the novel depicts Indigenous knowledge as an alternative system that is capable of destabilising settler foundations of knowledge that are inherently heteronormative and oppressive. In doing so it foreshadows the kinds of arguments put forth by TallBear, Belcourt and Nelson, pre-empting this need for settler writing to be actively decolonial in its incorporation of Indigenous epistemologies into the conversation by engaging with their stories and lifeways in meaningful and respectful ways as sources for knowledge about constructing more empathetic and sustainable relations.

As such, Anderson-Dargatz's novel takes a specific interest in settler-Indigenous relationships across literary, cultural and species boundaries. Although Beth does

not leave the farm with Nora, her confrontation with Coyote Jack and her father, and her choosing of Billy, an Indigenous boy as her partner, does indicate that a change has occurred both within Beth and on the farm. She asserts herself over her father, ending his patriarchal reign, and so she can begin to run the farm with the Indigenous led, woman-centred, caring, eco-sexual way of relating that she and her mother practice with the cows and that she observed in Bertha's home. The novel is therefore a demonstration of what a de-mythologized animal story might look like, and is an example of the development of writing about animals in Canada across this thesis into a mode that engages meaningfully and isn't dismissive of Indigeneity through confining it to the realm of the symbolic, and centres empathetic and caring human-animal relationships. It is a critically engaged novel that acknowledges the need for settler literature to decolonize itself by self-consciously engaging and destabilizing the types of oppressive hierarchies that underpin both species and settler-Indigenous relations, namely settler-sexuality and anthropocentrism. Such a move emphasises the value in engaging with Indigenous stories and concepts of animality as a means of thinking through the relationship between literature, species and the contemporary idea of nation.

Conclusion

The critical project that I have undertaken in this thesis is the first systematic study of animal fiction in Canada focusing on the late twentieth century. It has demonstrated that animal fiction in the late twentieth century in Canada saw a development towards more critically engaged representations of animals that sought to take animals seriously within literature by recognising and responding to the demands that animals' interests place upon human characters. The thesis shifts discussion from terms established in the earlier twentieth century that sought to claim the "wild animal story" as a peculiarly Canadian genre. Established at the start of the thesis's period of coverage by Atwood and Polk, this is an analysis that traps the representation of animals, and the questions about animal lives that fiction asks, within a nationalist and anthropocentric imaginary. Rather I have demonstrated that writing about animals in Canada across the period of 1960-2000 evidences a move away from the idea that there is a single, homogenous Canadian identity that is or can be represented through animals. I have argued that this period of writing about animals in Canada saw a move away from mythologised understandings and symbolic representations of animals and consider them as reciprocal agents within human-animal relationships.

The thesis moves chronologically so as to trace the forms of social identity-based, critical de-mythologizing that occur differently and which develop in these texts across this period. Mowat reconfigures myth, supplanting one anthropocentric mythic understanding of wolves for another, and Atwood uses mythic understandings of animals to interrogate heteronormativity. There is momentary empathy with animals in her novels, but this is finally put in service of the recognition and incorporation of victimhood into her protagonists' identity. The thesis then demonstrates a distinctive critical development, as Engel resists this mythic configuration of animals. She instead constructs a story that centres on the incomprehensible materiality of the bear. Building on this resistance to myth, Findley's novels demonstrate a pastiche of myth in which he subverts and camps versions of mythic narratives. This allows him to expose and undermine hierarchical structures of oppression and emphasise the moments of defiance and care that characterise his perception of more caring relations. Finally, Anderson-Dargatz's novel demonstrates what a successful de-mythologized engagement with animal representation and Indigenous stories might look like. Anderson-Dargatz takes seriously both animal representation and an engagement with Indigenous stories to

depict a story in which in constructing relations with animals built on empathy and care involves moving away from colonial practices and the privileging of settler knowledge systems.

I have carried out this analysis through a triangulation of species, nation and personal identity, through which I have demonstrated that the representation of animality in the novels intersects and interacts in multiple and complex ways with aspects of both personal and national identity. I have applied the term personal identity to refer namely to questions of gender, sexuality and Indigeneity that are figured in the texts as lenses through which relationships with animals are constructed and influenced. A particular pervasive configuration I have demonstrated is that Indigeneity is consistently coded throughout these settler texts as offering a kind of proximity or closeness to animals; this both mythologizes Indigenous culture and situates Indigeneity in a binary relation outside of 'culture' by way of a connection to nature.

Whereas Mowat and Atwood indulge in this characterisation, Engel satirises it. Findley's approach to this configuration works a particular postmodern manoeuvre in which rather than evoking and reimagining the myth of Indigenous-animal connections he focuses on parodic reworking of the terms of settler master discourse itself which – as the rest of the thesis shows – the trope is pervasive. Finally Anderson-Dargatz takes Indigeneity seriously as a source for knowledge about constructing relations. This evidences a development in the way in which Indigeneity is characterised in the novels in association with animal representation. In addition, gender and sexuality thread throughout the thesis as a means of exposing the broader operation of hierarchical and oppressive power structures that influence all relations, including human-animal relations. Mowat's wolves are admired and empathised with because they uphold the traditional image of heteronormative family unit, led by the patriarchal father figure. Atwood identifies the oppressive nature of heteronormativity and relations with patriarchal practices, like hunting, through the representation of dead animal bodies on display. Findley characterises queer sexuality and camp aesthetic as a form of resistance to an oppressive structure that he also identifies as heteronormative. And finally Anderson-Dargatz codes feminine spaces as more empathetic sites of human-animal encounter. This critical engagement with these issues of personal identity, and the development that occurs across this period towards rejecting the settler patriarchal emphasis, demonstrates the value that holding together questions of identity and species has in undermining dominant hegemonies. Incorporating

serious – which is to say just, respectful, appreciative – consideration of animal lives into a reconfigured notion of social life, these contemporary fictions in Canada present a radically anti-hegemonic way of writing.

By tracing this path the thesis moves away from the nationalist logic of Polk and Atwood, and from the type of responses to animal fiction in nineteenth-century critiques, such as the 'nature fakers' debate and the focus this placed on the idea of 'truth' within representation by way of asking new questions regarding the representational politics that underpin the construction of particular narratives about animals. I have done so by holding together this set of novels and looking closely at the process of de-mythologizing that occurred across this period of writing. I have argued that as the texts become more invested in moving away from mythologized understandings of animals, the representational strategies they adopt encourage a more serious engagement with animals. In addition, by taking animals seriously within these representations these stories then began to focus on reciprocated interspecies relationships that are built on empathy and care. Contemporary Canadian identity then, develops across the thesis in the writing into a more fragmented and cosmopolitical notion, existing alongside relations with animals, not from within it. The novels in this thesis then, become stories about stories about animals. They encourage us to think through the politics of representation and the structures and practices that underpin both identity, national and personal, and relationships, both human and non-human, and how this can be brought under interrogation through critically engaged animal fiction.

Bringing together this triad of nation, identity and species in a contemporary example that gestures towards to continuing relevance of this relationship in Canada, there was an incident involving a bear on Hanson Island in British Columbia's Broughton archipelago in April of this year that encapsulates this dynamic. A bear swam ashore on the island in search of food. His proximity to humans became of concern to the wildlife management organisation in the area, whose normal practice is to kill bears that get too close or become too comfortable in human company. However, local Indigenous groups, namely the Mamalilikulla First Nations, whose territory encompasses this island and by whom the bear was affectionately named Mali, put up resistance to this method of handling the bear, asserting their right to govern their territories and the human-bear relationships within them. Mike Willie, hereditary chief of the Kwikwasut'inuxw Nation, who oversaw the campaign to protect Mali stated: "We don't want our bears killed any more. We have the right to govern within our own traditional territories and we have

inherent rights and we have title." [1] As such, the article written on the incident in *The Guardian* states:

> This bear's death was averted through an unlikely partnership between local Indigenous groups and conservation officers, raising hopes of a more holistic approach to wildlife management with greater Indigenous input.

Mali was instead captured and relocated to a site on the province's mainland. The success of this outcome, George Heyman, the province's minister of environment, says, was motivated by "desire for reconciliation" with Indigenous peoples, which 'helped guide the process'. But more than this, the outcome gestures towards a growing autonomy of the First Nations People, as Willie states: "it feels that this could be a blueprint to move forward – for us and for other First Nations on the coast… it was a really good ending." Contemporary settler Canada then, is still engaging in this process of finding a means of reconciling its relationship with Indigenous First Nations through its relationship with animals. There is an on-going recognition that in order to build more sustainable, caring relations, there must be a serious de-mythologised incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and an acknowledgement of the autonomy and role that Indigeneity and animals can play in the moving forwards in the construction of better personal, national and species relations.

[1] Leyland Cecco, 'Indigenous input helps save wayward grizzly bear from summary killing', *The Guardian*, Sunday 19 April 2020.

Bibliography

Primary Texts

Anderson-Dargatz, Gail, *The Cure for Death by Lightning* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1996)

Atwood, Margaret, *Life Before Man* (London: Bloomsbury, 1993)

Atwood, Margaret, *Surfacing* (London: Virago Press Limited, 1979)

Engel, Marian, *Bear* (Jaffrey: Nonpareil, 2002)

Findley, Timothy, *Not Wanted on the Voyage* (New York: Arrow Books Limited, 1986)

Findley, Timothy, *The Wars* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2001)

Mowat, Farley, *Never Cry Wolf* (New York City: Back Bay Books/Little, Brown and Company, 1963)

Secondary Material

Adams, Carol J., *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015)

Adams Carol J., 'Caring About Suffering: A Feminist Exploration', in *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics* ed. By Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007) pp. 198-227

Adams, Carol J., and Donovan, Josephine, *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007)

Aguila-Way, Tania, 'Beyond the Logic of Solidarity of Sameness: The Critique of Animal Instrumentalization in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* and Marian Engel's *Bear*', *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment,* 23.1 (2016) 5-29

Alberti, Samuel J. M. M. *The Afterlives of Animals* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011)

Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991)

Armstrong, Philip, *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2008)

Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth, and Tiffin, Helen, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 2002)

Asma, Stephen T., *Stuffed Animals and Pickled Heads: The Culture and Evolution of Natural History Museums* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

Atwood, Margaret*, Strange Things: The Malevolent North in Canadian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)

Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature (Toronto: Anansi Press, 1972)

Barker, Joanne, *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017)

Barrett, Paul, '"Animal Tracks in the Margin": Tracing the Absent Referent in Marian Engel's *Bear* and J. M. Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals*', *Ariel,* 45.3 (2014) 123-149

Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies* (London: Vintage, 2009)

Belcourt, Billy-Ray, 'An Indigenous Critique of Critical Animal Studies', in *Colonialism and Animality: Anti-Colonial Perspectives in Critical Animal Studies,* ed. by Kelly Struthers Montford and Chloe¨ Taylor (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020) pp. 19-29

Beran, Carol L, *Intertexts of Margaret Atwood's Life Before Man, American Review of Canadian Studies, 22.2* (1992) 199-214

Berger, John, *About Looking* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991)

Bieder, Robert E. *Bear* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2005)

Billig, Volkmar '"I - lands": The Construction and Shipwreck of an Insular Subject in Modern Discourse', in *Shipwreck and Island Motifs in Literature and the Arts*, ed. By Brigitte le Juez and Olga Springer (Leiden; Boston: Rodopi, 2015) pp. 17-33

Brydon, Diana, 'A Devotion to Fragility: Timothy Findley's *The Wars*', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 26.1 (July, 2008) 75-84

Brydon, Diana, "It could not be told": Making Meaning in Timothy Findley's T*he Wars*', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 21.1 (March 1986) 62-79

Brydon, Diana '"The White Inuit Speaks": Contamination as Literary Strategy', in *Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, ed. by Bill Ashcroft (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994) pp. 136-143

Burt, Jonathan, *Animals in Film* (London: Reaktion, 2002)

Byrd, Jodi A. 'Loving Unbecoming: The Queer Politics of the Transitive Native', in *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies*, ed. By Joanne Barker (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017) pp. 207-227

Colpitts, George, 'Howl: The 1952-56 Rabies Crisis and the Creation of the Urban Wild at Banff', in *Animal Metropolis: Histories of Human-Animal Relations in Urban Canada*, ed. By Joanna Dean, Darcy Ingram and Christabelle Sethna (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2017) pp. 219-253

Clarke, Adele. E. Clarke and Haraway, Donna, *Making Kin Not Population* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2018)

Cleto, Fabio. *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999)

Darbyshire, Peter, 'Sexing the Beaver: Sex, Nation, and Identity in Carnal Nation', *Essays on Canadian Writing*, 74 (2001) 121-128

Davey, Frank, *Canadian Literary Power* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1994)

Davidson, Peter, *The idea of North* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2005)

De Lauretis, Teresa, 'Sexual Indifference and Lesbian Representation', *Theatre Journal*, 40.2 (1988) 155-177

Dean, Joanna, Ingram, Darcy, Sethna, Christabelle, *Animal Metropolis: Histories of Human-Animal Relations in Urban Canada* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2017)

Deleuze, Gilles, 'Literature and Life' in *Critical Enquiry*, 23.2 (1997) 225-230

Denis, Claude, *We are not you: First Nations and Canadian Modernity* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1997)

Derrida, Jacques, *The Animal that Therefore I Am* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008)

Dickinson, John A. and J. Young, Brian, *A Short History of Quebec* (Montreal: McGill-Queen University Press, 2002)

Dickinson, Peter, '"Running Wilde": National Ambivalence and Sexual Dissidence in *Not Wanted on the Voyage', Essays On Canadian Writing*, 64 (1998) 125-146

Dodd, Adam, Rader, Karen A., Thorsen, Liv Emma, *Animals on Display: The Creaturely in Museums, Zoos, and Natural History* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013)

Donovan, Josephine, 'Attention to Suffering: Sympathy as a Basis for Ethical Treatment of Animals', in *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics*, ed. By Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007) pp. 174-198

Donovan, Josephine, 'Animal Rights and Feminist Theory', in *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics*, Ed. by Josephine Donovan and Carol J. Adams (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007) pp. 58-87

Doty, William G, and Hynes William J, *Mythical Trickster Figures : Contours, Contexts, and Criticisms* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997)

Dworkin, Andrea, 'Beaver and Male Power in Pornography', *New Political Science*, 1.4 (1980) 37-41

Dyer, Richard, 'Its Being So Camp As Keeps Us Going', in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*, ed. By Fabio Cleto (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999) pp. 110-116

Fee, Margery, 'Articulating the Female Subject: The Example of Marian Engel's *Bear'*, *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice*, 14.1 (1988) 20-26

Fee, Margery, 'The Trickster Appropriation, Imagination in Moment, and the Canada Cultural Liberal', in Troubling Tricksters : Revisioning Critical Conversations, ed. by Deanna Reder, and Linda M. Morra, (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010) pp. 59-77

Fisher, Susan, 'Animalia', *Canadian Literature: a quarterly of criticism and review*, 170.171 (2001) 256-261

Fenn, Stewart, 'Grey Owl in the White Settler Wilderness: "Imaginary Indians" in Canadian Culture and Law', *Law, Culture and the Humanities*, 1.1 (2014) 1-21

Foucault, Michel, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias', *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité*, (1984) 1-9

Fromberg Schaeffer, Susan, '"It Is Time That Separates Us" Margaret Atwood's "Surfacing"', *The Centennial Review*, 18.4 (1974) 319-337

Gamson, Joshua, Taylor, Verta, and Rupp, Leila, 'Performing Protest: Drag Shows as Tactical Repertoire of the Gay and Lesbian Movement', *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, 25 (2004) 105-137

Goldie, Terry, *Pink Snow: Homotextual Possibilities in Canadian Fiction* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2003)

Goldman, Marlene, 'Coyote's Children and the Canadian Gothic: Sheila Watson's The Double Hook and Gail Anderson-Dargatz's *The Cure for Death by Lightning'* in *Unsettled Remains: Canadian Literature and the Postcolonial Gothic*, ed. by Cynthia Sugars, Gerry Turcotte (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2009) 51-73

Guth, Gwendolyn '(B)othering the Theory: Approaching the Unapproachable in *Bear* and Other Realistic Animal Narratives', in *Other Selves: Animals in the Canadian Literary Imagination*, ed. By Janice Fiamengo (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2007) pp. 29-50

Haraway, Donna, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008)

Haraway, Donna 'Making Kin in the Chthulucene: Reproducing Multispecies Justice', in *Making Kin Not Population*, ed. By Adele. E. Clarke and Donna Haraway (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2018) pp. 67-101

Haraway, Donna, 'Otherworldly Conversations; Terran Topics; Local Terms', *Science as Culture*, 3.1 (1992) 64-98

Harrod, Howard L. *The Animals Came Dancing: Native American Sacred Ecology and Animal Kinship* (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 2008)

Heninghan, Stephen, *When Words Deny the World: The Reshaping of Canadian Writing* (Erin: The Porcupine's Quill, 2002)

Howard, Cardinal, *The Unjust Society* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre/Vancouver, 1969)

Howells, Carol Ann, *Cambridge Companion to Margaret Atwood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

Huggan, Graham, *Territorial Disputes: Maps and Mapping Strategies in Contemporary Canadian and Australian Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994)

Huggan, Graham, Tiffin, Helen, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* (London: Routledge, 2010)

Hurn, Samantha, *Humans and Other Animals: Cross Cultural Perspectives on Human-Animal Interactions* (London: Pluto Press, 2012)

Hutcheon, Linda, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1988)

Hutcheon, Linda, *A Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 2002)

Ingerson, Earl G. *Margaret Atwood: Conversations* (London: Virago, 1992)

Johnson, Brian, 'Viking Graves Revisited: Pre-Colonial Primitivism in Farley Mowat's Northern Gothic' in *Unsettled Remains: Canadian Literature and the Postcolonial Gothic*, ed. By Cynthia Sugars and Gerry Turcotte (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009) pp. 23-47

Johnson, Daniel Morley, '(Re)Nationalizing Naanabozho: Anishinaabe Sacred Stories, Nationalist Literary Criticism, and Scholarly Responsibility', in *Troubling Tricksters: Revisioning Critical Conversations*, ed. By Deanna Reder and Linda M. Morra (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010) pp. 199-221

Johnson, Lisa, *Power, Knowledge, Animals* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)

Jones, Karen, 'Never Cry Wolf: Science, Sentiment, and the Literary Rehabilitation of Canis Lupus', *The Canadian Historical Review*, 84.1 (2003) pp. 65-93

Kirtz, Mary K. ''Facts Become Art Through Love': Narrative Structure in Marian Engel's *Bear*', *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 22.3 (2009) 351-362

Lane, Christopher, *Ruling Passion: British Colonial Allegory and the Paradox of Homosexual Desire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

Lawlor, Leonard, *This is not Sufficient: an Essay on Animality and Human Nature in Derrida* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007)

Lawson, Alan, "Postcolonial Theory and the 'Settler' Subject" in *Unhomely States: Theorizing English-Canadian Postcolonialism,* ed. By Cynthia Sugars (Peterborough: Broadview Press Ltd, 2004) 151-164

le Juez, Brigitte and Springer, Olga, *Shipwreck and island motifs in literature and the arts* (Leiden; Boston: Rodopi, 2015)

Lee, Dennis, 'Cadence, Country, Silence: Writing in Colonial Space', *Boundary 2*, 3.1 (1974) 151-168

Lippit, Akira Mizuta, *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000)

Loo, Tina, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006)

Lopez, Barry Holston, *Of Wolves and Men* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978)

Mackey, Eva, 'Becoming Indigenous: Land, Belonging, and the Appropriation of Aboriginality in Canadian Nationalist Narratives', *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Anthropology*, 42.2 (1998) 150-178

McClintock, Anne, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (London: Routledge, 1995)

McHugh, Susan, 'Marrying My Bitch: J. R. Ackerley's Pack Sexualities', *Critical Inquiry*, 27.1 (The University of Chicago Press, Autumn 2000) 21-41

McKay, Robert, '"Identifying with the animals": Language, Subjectivity, and the Animal Politics of Margaret Atwood's Surfacing' in *Figuring Animals*, ed. by Mary Sanders Pollock and Catherine Rainwater (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) pp. 207-227

Miller, John, 'Zooheterotopias' in *The Globalization of Space: Foucault and Heterotopia*, ed. by John Miller and Mariangela Palladino (London: Routledge, 2014) pp. 149-165

Mohtadi, M. F, *Man and His Environment: Proceedings of the Third International Banff Conference on Man and his Environment* (Exeter: Pergamon Press Ltd, 1980)

Morley Johnson, Daniel '(Re)Nationalizing Naanabozho: Anishinaabe Sacred Stories, Nationalist Literary Criticism, and Scholarly Responsibility', in *Troubling Tricksters :*

Revisioning Critical Conversations, ed. By Deanna Reder and Linda M. Morra (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010) pp. 199-221

Morgensen, Scott Lauria, 'Settler Homonationalism: Theorizing Settler Colonialism within Queer Modernities', *Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 16.1-2 (2010) 105-131

Nelson, Melissa K., 'Getting Dirty: The Eco-Eroticism of Women in Indigenous Oral Literatures', in *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies*, ed. by Joanne Barker (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017) pp. 228-260

Neumann, Anyssa, 'Ideas of North: Glenn Gould and the Aesthetic of the Sublime', *VoiceXchange*, 5.1 (2011) 35-46

Newton, Esther, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972)

Newton, Esther, 'Role Models', in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*, ed. By Fabio Cleto (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999) pp. 976-109

Pearson, Wendy, 'Vanishing Acts II: Queer Reading(s) of Timothy Findley's *Headhunter* and *Not Wanted on the Voyage*', *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 33.4 (1998/99) 114-131

Phelan, Shane, 'Coyote Politics: Trickster Tales and Feminist Futures', *Hypatia*, 11.3 (1996) 130-140

Pick, Anat, *Creaturely Poetics: Animality in Literature and Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011)

Piercy, Marge, 'Margaret Atwood: Beyond Victimhood', *The American Poetry Review*, 2.6 (1973) 41-44

Philo, Chris; Wilbert, Chris, *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: New Geographies of Human-Animal Relations* (London: Routledge, 2000)

Plumwood, Val, 'Human Vulnerability and the Experience of Being Prey', *Quadrant*, 39.3 (1995) 29-34

Poiana, Peter, 'The Traumatic Origins of Representation', *Continental Philosophy Review*, 46.1 (2013) 1-19

Reder, Deanna, and Morra, Linda M., *Troubling Tricksters: Revisioning Critical Conversations* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010)

Rhodes, Shane, 'Buggering With History: Sexual Warfare and Historical Reconstruction in Timothy Findley's *The Wars*', *Canadian Literature, A Quarterly of Criticism and Review: Gay and Lesbian Writing in Canadian Literature*, 159 (1998) 38-53

Rothberg, Michael, '"Ensnared in Implication": Writing, Shame and Colonialism in Contemporary Literature', *Contemporary Literature*, 53.2 (2012) 374-386

Sandlos, John, 'From Within Fur and Feathers: Animals in Canadian Literature', *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*, 4 (2000) 73-91

Scholtmeijer, Marian, *Animal Victims in Modern Fiction: From Sanctity to Sacrifice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993)

Shukin, Nicole, *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009)

Sliwinski, Sharon, 'The Gaze Called Animal', *CR: The New Centennial Review,* 11.2 (2011) 61-81

Smith, Julie A. Mitchell, Robert W. *Experiencing Animal Minds: An Anthology of Animal-Human Encounters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013)

Sontag, Susan, 'Notes on 'Camp'' in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*, ed. By Fabio Cleto (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999) pp. 54-66

Sorenson, John, *About Canada: Animal Rights* (Nova Scotia: Fenwood Publishing, 2010)

Stanton, Kim, 'Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Settling the Past?', *International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 2.3 (2011) 1-18

Slettedahl Macpherson, Heidi, 'Coyote as Culprit: The Coyote Aesthetics of Gail-Anderson-Dargatz's *The Cure for Death by Lightning'*, *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 17.2 (2004) 175-185

Sugars, Cynthia, *Unhomely States: theorizing English-Canadian Postcolonialism* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2004)

Taylor, Sunaura, 'Beasts of Burden: Disability Studies and Animal Rights', *Qui Parle*, 19.2 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011) 191-222

Taylor, Verta; Rupp, Leila and Gamson, Joshua, 'Performing Protest: Drag Shows as Tactical Repertoire of the Gay and Lesbian Movement', *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, 25 (2004) 105-137

Tolan, Fiona, *Margaret Atwood: Feminism and Fiction* (Leiden: Brill, 2007)

Tiffin, Helen, 'Post-Colonialism, Post-Modernism and the Rehabilitation of Post-Colonial History', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 23.1 (1988) 169-181

Wadiwel, Dinesh, *The War Against Animals* (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2015)

Wakeman, Pauline, *Taxidermic Signs: Reconstructing Aboriginality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008)

Walsh, Sue, 'Nature Faking and the Problem of the "Real"', *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 22.1 (2015) 132-153

Webb, Peter, '"At War With Nature": Animals in Timothy Findley's *The Wars*', in *Other Selves: Animals in the Canadian Literary Imagination*, ed. By Janice Fiamengo (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2007) pp. 227-244

Wolfe, Cary, *Zoontologies: the question of the animal* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003)

Wolfe, Cary, Elmer, Jonathan, 'Subject to Sacrifice: Ideology, Psychoanalysis, and the Discourse of Species in Jonathan Demme's Silence of the Lambs', *Boundary 2: An International Journal of Literature and Culture*, 22.3 (1995) 141-70

Wonders, William C. *Canada's Changing North* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1971)

Wyile, Herb, 'Regionalism, Postcolonialism, and (Canadian) Writing: A Comparative Approach for Postnational Times', *Essays On Canadian Writing*, 63 (1998) 139-161

Wright, Laura, *'Wilderness into Civilized Shapes': Reading the Postcolonial Environment* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010)

Yeung, Heather H, 'Adventures in Form: The Hebrides and the Romantic Imaginary', in *Shipwreck and island motifs in literature and the arts*, ed. By Brigitte le Juez and Olga Springer (Leiden; Boston: Rodopi, 2015) pp. 85-97

Newspapers

Baker, Katherine, The Associated Press, December 13, 1988. New York. Tuesday, PM cycle. Section: Entertainment News.

French, Marilyn 'Spouses and Lovers, Life Before Man by Margaret Atwood' in *The New York Times* (February 3, 1980)

Sainato, Michael and Skojec, Chelsea, *The New York Observer*, Thursday January 5th 2017.

Websites and Youtube

Bible Gateway:
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+22&version=CEB

Canadiana: Parliament of Canada Records.
http://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates_HOC2102_03/1016?r=0&s=1

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, http://www.cbc.ca/archives/topic/pelts-pups-and-protest-the-atlantic-seal-hunt

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1414152378639/1414152548341 [Accessed: 2/06/2019]

Paradise Lost:
https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/pl/book_1/text.shtml

https://www.raincoast.org/2015/01/alberta-wolf-slaughter/

TallBear, Kim, lecture at the University of Winnepeg's Weweni Indigenous Scholars Speaker series in October 2018 titled 'Decolonial Sex and Relations for a More Sustainable World' [Accessed on Youtube September 2019]

Vintage Ad Browser: http://www.vintageadbrowser.com/airlines-and-aircraft-ads-1980s/8

http://westernwildlife.org/gray-wolf-outreach-project/biology-behavior-4/

Appendix

This thesis focuses on animal fiction in Canada between 1960-2000 and the research conducted allows for the compiling of a substantial bibliography of animals in contemporary Canadian fiction that is included here.

Graeme Gibson – *Five Legs/Communion* (1969)

Margaret Atwood – *The Edible Woman* (1969), *Cat's Eye* (1988), *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), *MaddAddam* (2013)

Joy Kogawa – *Obasan* (1981)

Judith Thompson - *White Biting Dog* (1984)

Michael Ondaatje – *In the Skin of a Lion* (1987), *The English Patient* (1992)

Barbara Gowdy – *The White Bone* (1998)

Yan Martel - *Life of Pi* (2001)

Larissa Lai – *Salt Fish Girl* (2002), *The Tiger Flu* (2018)

Gail Anderson-Dargatz – *Turtle Valley* (2007), The Spawning Grounds (2016)

Rawi Hage – *Cockroach* (Penguin Books, 2008)

Jessica Grant – *Come, Thou Tortoise* (2009)

Don LePan – *Animals* (2009)

Madaleine Thien – *Dogs at the Perimeter* (2011)

Colin McAdam – *A Beautiful Truth* (2013)

Emily St. John Mandel – *Station Eleven* (2014)

André Alexis – *Fifteen Dogs* (2015)

Helen Humphreys – *The Evening Chorus* (2015)

Susan Juby – *Republic of Dirt* (2015)

Esi Edugyan – *Washington Black* (2018)

Kim Fu – *The Lost Girls of Camp Forevermore* (2018)

Emma Hooper – *Our Homesick Songs* (2018)

Fiction from Quebec

Jacques Godbout – *L'aquarium* (1962)

Marie-Claire Blais – *Une saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel* (*A Season in the Life of Emmanuel*) (1966)

Yves Beauchemin's – *Le Matou* (1981)

Marguerite-A. Primeau – *Le totem* (1988), *Savage Rose* (1999)

Elise Turcotte – *The Body's Place* (2003)

Éric Dupont – *Life in the Court of Matane* (2008)

Indigenous Fiction

Richard Wagamese – *Terrible Summer* (1996), *A Quality of Light* (1997) *One Native Life* (2008), *Indian Horse* (2012)

Thomas Highway, *Kiss of the Fur Queen* (1999)

Thomas King – *Truth and Bright Water* (1999), *Green Grass Running Water* (1993)

Eden Robinson – *Monkey Beach* (2000), *Son of a Trickster* (2017), *Trickster Drift* (2018) (Last two are part of her Trickster Trilogy)

Tracey Lindberg – *Birdie* (2015)

Waubgeshig Rice – *Moon of the Crusted Snow* (2018)

Tanya Tagaq – *Split Tooth* (2018)

Joshua Whitehead – *Jonny Appleseed* (2018)